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February 15, 2010

The Birth of Religious Freedom in the New World: A Global Perspective

<http://sites.google.com/site/religiousfreedomproject/home>

Teaching Thesis:

The doctrine of religious tolerance and the separation of church and state matters is a unique signifier of the United States Constitution. Through an exploration of primary source documents and secondary analysis of history, students will gain insight into the early colonists, their place of origin and the persecution that drove many of them to flee Europe for the shores of North America. By working backward from the colonists in America to their European origins, students will become aware of the motivating factors, spiritual, economic, and political, that brought the desire and the need for religious freedom in the New World.

Significance and Relevance:

This unit will provide students an opportunity to explore and research the various historical factors that lead to the adoption of religious tolerance doctrines in the English colonies of North American. Through collaborative research and presentation groups, students will examine various religious groups who sought to escape religious persecution by immigrating to the New World. Primary source documents that highlight both the persecution and the growing demand for tolerance of religious difference will serve as starting points for guided research of the events and people that played a part in the establishment of religious liberty in colonial America.

The materials and activities of this unit underscore the origin and continued relevance of the ongoing debate over the place of religion in national policy. The place of the historian in our understanding of the past and its influence on our present should become clearer as students apply the discipline of inquiry, analysis, and synthesis of causes and effects to historical documents as well as current events issues and present-day policies and laws.

Time Allotment:

This unit will require three full (90 minute) class periods in which students will research, plan, and present their explorations to classmates.

Subject and Appropriate Grade Level(s):

U.S. History for Grades 9 through 12

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Learning Objectives:

At the completion of the this unit, students will know:

- (K1) the diverse origins of early settlers in the British North American Colonies.
- (K2) the history of religious intolerance and persecution in Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries.
- (K3) the key figures and promoters of religious freedom in the American colonies.

At the completion of this unit, students will understand:

- (U1) the pre-colonial historical factors that lead to the policy of religious freedom in America.
- (U2) the connection and interplay between religious, political, and economic forces in shaping policies.
- (U3) the influence of historical events on contemporary issues (i.e. prayer in school, abortion and the supreme court, etc.).

At the completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- (D1) identify connections between the formation of American colonial culture and economics and European and global history.
- (D2) conduct internet-based research.
- (D3) analyze and synthesize sources to draw conclusions.
- (D4) conduct collaborative problem solving to create a group project.
- (D5) present information of research findings via multi-media presentation tools.

National History Standards, Part II.

Students Should Understand: How political institutions and religious freedom emerged in the North American colonies.

2A Demonstrate understanding of the rise of individualism, the roots of representative government, and how political rights were defined by:

- Analyzing how the rise of individualism affected the ideal of community. [Assess the importance of the individual]
- Explaining how the growth of individualism challenged European ideas of hierarchy and deference and contributed to the idea of participatory government. [Examine the influence of ideas]
- Compare how early colonies were established and governed. [Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, behaviors, and institutions]

Demonstrate understanding of religious diversity in the colonies and how ideas about religious freedom evolved by:

- Describing religious groups in colonial America and the role of religion in their communities. [Consider multiple perspectives]
- Explaining how Puritanism shaped New England communities and how it changed during the 17th century. [Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, values, and institutions]
- Tracing and explaining the evolution of religious freedom in the English colonies. [Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration]

Virginia Standards of Learning

- USI.1 **The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship, including the ability to**
- a) identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history to 1865;
 - b) make connections between the past and the present;
 - d) interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives;
 - e) evaluate and discuss issues orally and in writing;
- USI.4 **The student will demonstrate knowledge of European exploration in North America and West Africa by**
- a) describing the motivations for, obstacles to, and accomplishments of the Spanish, French, Portuguese, and English explorations;
- USI.5 **The student will demonstrate knowledge of the factors that shaped colonial America by**
- a) describing the religious and economic events and conditions that led to the colonization of America;
 - b) describing life in the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Southern colonies, with emphasis on how people interacted with their environment to produce goods and services, including examples of specialization and interdependence;
 - d) identifying the political and economic relationships between the colonies and Great Britain.

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Materials/Resources needed

Students will need access to computers with internet capabilities and presentation design software (i.e. Powerpoint, Keynote, i-movie, etc.)

Access to websites databases at Library of Congress and Library of Virginia as well as the Google Site hosting links to primary source documents, excerpts from secondary sources, and uploaded files of rubrics and instructions

<http://sites.google.com/site/religiousfreedomproject/home>

Research binder to collect information and take notes

Device for collecting electronic information (i.e. flash drive, laptop, external hard drive, etc.)

Instructional Procedures

Day 1

Personal Response (U3, D1)

- Students will be asked to respond in writing (and then in discussion) to the following prompt –

What is your position on prayer in public school? Why should prayer be allowed or prohibited in school? Remember to support your opinion with examples and facts.

- Teachers may opt to have students read an op-ed or blog on the issue of school prayer as a way to stimulate student thinking. For example:

<http://www.allabouthistory.org/pros-and-cons-of-prayer-in-school-faq.htm>

- After a period of writing, a monitored discussion will follow.

Observing Primary Sources (K2, D1, U3)

- Students will then be shown several engravings depicting religious persecution in Europe during the 16th and 17th Centuries. Students will be asked to record their observations of each image and analyze them for any significant connections to each other or to other relevant ideas and issues facing people today.

Answer Key for Persecution Matching Quiz

1. is (d), the massacre of French Huguenots in France, 1552
2. is (a), the disembowelment of a Jesuit priest in Scotland, 1615
3. is (b), the drowning of Protestants in Ulster, Ireland 1641
4. is (c), Dutch Mennonites burned at the stake in Ghent, 1554
5. is (f), Jesuit priest beaten to death in London, 1643
6. is (e), Catholics tortured and massacred by Huguenots in France, 1607

<http://sites.google.com/site/religiousfreedomproject/home/old-world-persecution>

Forming Collaborative Research Groups (D4)

- After observation and comparisons are made and discussed, students will be divided into four or five groups (dependent on class size and scope of abilities). The collaborative groups will each be given a group label, this will indicate that group's research topic (i.e. Maryland Catholics, Pennsylvania Quakers, Virginia Anglicans, Rhode Island Dissenters, Massachusetts Puritans, New Amsterdam Jews).
- Project instructions and rubrics (Appendix A) will be distributed to each group.

Day 2

Collaborative Research Lab (U3, D2)

- Research Groups will begin researching the history of their particular group. Each group will be directed toward a secondary source (textbook paragraph, journal article, book excerpt) that will give a brief history of their sect and some leads to other primary and secondary source documents.

<http://sites.google.com/site/religiousfreedomproject/home/resources>

- Hand out guided research questions (Appendix B). Students will have 45 minutes to research, save, and print any materials, articles, images that they can find to support their presentation of their research.

Presentation of Research (All)

- With the remainder of class time, students will design their presentation to the class according to the guidelines and rubrics presented. Students will have to option of reading or planning outside of class or for homework.

Day 3

- Students will use the first 15 to 20 minutes of class to finish putting their presentation together, rehearsing delivery and review facts.
- Each group will have 8 to 10 minutes to present their research, tell their story, and answer questions from the audience.

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Summative Assessment

Final assessment for the unit will be based on the outcome of the collaborative project. The research/presentation rubric reflects the Virginia Standards of Learning and National History Standards.

The research essay that is assigned as part of the overall research project can be assessed separately or as part of the larger whole. Students may need additional time to compose the essay outside of the three-day allotted time for the unit.

Suggested Tiered Assessment

Pre-Assessment Writing Activity = 10%
Essential Question Responses = 10%
Research Project and Presentation = 60%
Research Essay (Summary and Analysis) = 20%