

## TEACHING RELIGION IN HISTORY COURSES: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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[Barton, Keith C. and Jennifer Hauver James. 2010. Religion in History and Social Studies. \*Perspectives on History\* 48\(5\).](#)

Barton and James address issues surrounding the introduction of religion into social studies courses. Recognizing that many teachers do not get specific training in the teaching of religion, Barton and James outline some key requirements for discussing religion in the classroom, emphasizing straightforward examination of controversial topics and balanced, comprehensive conversation.

Bonomi, Patricia U. 1996. "Hippocrates' Twins": Religion and Politics in the American Revolution. *The History Teacher* 29(2): 137-144.

Bonomi's article is an example of the integration of religious themes into already-existing historical paradigms- in this case, considering the role of religion in the political and civic dynamics surrounding the American Revolution. Contributions of religious institutions and civic religion to the atmosphere of Revolutionary-era America are considered and explored. Bonomi demonstrates how teachers may introduce the religious environment of a historical period as an important factor in understanding the past.

Boyer, Paul. 1996. In Search of the Fourth "R": The Treatment of Religion in American History Textbooks and Survey Courses. *The History Teacher* 29(2): 195-216.

Boyer addresses whether or not religion has been the subject of neglect in history texts and courses, part of the larger question of whether religion suffers from disinterest in other areas of American civic life. Further, Boyer explores the charge that religion is actually subject to mistreatment and snubbed from educational texts as a victim of secularist bias. Towards this end several factors are discussed that could be linked to religion's relative omission from history texts and courses, including reticence at introducing controversial topics into the classroom, tacit acceptance of secularization/modernization narratives, and affinities for preexisting paradigms of describing historical periods. Boyer concludes that religion is, on the whole, neglected in history teaching resources, even when accounting for political-religious rhetoric, and efforts should be made for its full integration as a topic of interest.

[Schaefer, Richard. 2010. Let's Talk about Religion. \*Perspectives on History\* 48\(5\).](#)

Schaefer, as assistant professor of history at the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, discusses his personal experiences teaching religion and offers advice about what has been effective among undergraduate students. He advocates greater openness to discussing religion in classroom settings and examines ways that historians in particular can contribute to the introduction of religion to social studies.



Tishken, Joel E. 2000. Ethnic vs. Evangelical Religions: Beyond Teaching the World Religion Approach. *The History Teacher* 33(3): 303-320.

The first part of this article argues that the teaching of religion in historical and comparative religion courses has been biased towards the study of a certain kind of religion: 'living' and 'textual' religions, religions that resemble Christianity and those that adhere to a Eurocentric notion of 'global' religion. These biases have led to the omission of many religions and cultures from the teaching of world history and are the result of the historical environment in which the disciplines were formed. The second part of the article introduces a new method for teaching religious history, wherein the emphasis is on the ethnic origins and functions of religion rather than those that have spread and survived over time. Tucker argues that this method draws more attention to neglected parts of the religious history of humanity.

Tucker, Carlton H. 1994. From the Axial Age to the New Age: Religion as a Dynamic of World History. *The History Teacher* 27(4): 449-464.

Tucker argues for the deliberate inclusion of religion as a major dynamic in world history and details the structure of a two-semester pre-collegiate world history course that uses religion as the primary backdrop for exploration. Tucker briefly explains several models for incorporating religion into the teaching of world history before going into his own course. This course covers the entirety of human history, from the pre-civilization Paleolithic age to modern societies, and integrates the influence of religions from both Eastern and Western societies. There is detailed discussion about the classroom use of religion in exploring changes in human history and the development of societies and philosophies, as well as ways to educate students about the religious traditions they are unfamiliar with. A helpful appendix at the end of the article shows a sample syllabus for such a course, complete with a course description, list of texts, course themes and outline of a semester schedule.

Young, Carleton W. 1995. Religion in United States History Textbooks. *The History Teacher* 28(2): 265-271.

Young examines the claim that history textbooks have downplayed the role of religion and religious figures in American history. Using reports from the Department of Education published in 1985, Young compares American textbook content over several decades to informally test this idea; as part of this testing, he provides a helpful list of what he considers major religious events in American history. He finds that 19<sup>th</sup> century American textbooks contained fewer references to religious events and people than might be assumed, and coverage of major religious events in early American history actually increased each decade. Even considering more recent religious events in American history shows that textbooks have increased coverage over time; however, compared to college-level texts high-school resources still have room for improvement.