

Name of unit: Minorities and Their Experience: Why Did the Intolerance of Jews and Muslims in Spain Prevail the Late Middle Ages?

Grade level: 10th-12th grade

Length of unit: 4-6 weeks

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Core Standards: Standard 4 (culture)

Core Benchmarks:

4a: Analyze sources and characteristics of cultural, religious, and social reform movements.

4f: Examine examples of syncretism, acculturation, and assimilation in the context of belief systems and culture.

4g: Evaluate the religious dimensions (creed, code of behavior, rituals, community) of non-religious belief systems.

1b: Critique historians' interpretations of the past using a variety of sources.

2d: Analyze how cooperation and conflict influence the development and control of political, economic, and social entities.

2f: Evaluate effects of political conflict on national unity.

3d: Evaluate the impact of human migration on human systems.

Core topics and/or themes:

Standard 1 topics – when cultures meet.

Standard 4 topics – minorities.

Standard 5 topics – religion, minorities/ethnicity.

Supporting benchmarks:

1f: Understand how ideals and institutions of freedom, equality, justice, and citizenship have changed over time from one society to another.

2b: Evaluate issues concerning historical and contemporary disparities between ideals and realities.

2c: Evaluate examples in the history of conflict and its effects.

4d: Examine different theories of religion.

5a: Analyze how sociological circumstances (e.g., class, heritage, ethnicity) influence an individual's perceptions and reactions to the world.

5b: Analyze the socialization of individuals by groups, organizations, and institutions.

7e: Analyze relationships between economic activity and patterns of trade and migration.

Content Topics: The religious situation in late medieval Iberia, the unions of the crowns of Spain (Castile and Aragon), and the expulsion of the Jews and Muslims.

Driving questions:

Why is religious tolerance so often viewed positively? Are there benefits to religious *intolerance*?

What are often the intended consequences of religious intolerance? What are some examples of unintended consequences?

How is religious intolerance linked to power? To authority?

Why is genuine religious tolerance hard to attain? Are sacrifices necessary? What forms of cooperation does religious toleration require and encourage?

Culminating assessment (scoring rubric is attached at the end): The culminating assessment is an in-class essay (the question given in advance) answering the title question of the unit: Why did the intolerance of Jews and Muslims in Spain win out in the late Middle Ages? The essay will be largely historical, based upon the first two portions of the unit (a mock trial of a converso) and a research paper/seminar presentation on another example of religious intolerance in the early modern world period. However, because the third portion of the unit, watching

either *Schindler's List* or *The Pianist*, will allow students to consider some of the relevant concepts in an entirely different time, place, and historical circumstance, their essays will ideally include or consider forms of non-historical argumentation.

Unit Overview:

This unit is broken into three sections.

Section one: Mock trial.

This portion of the unit should take from six to eight lessons. Students will learn about/research the religious situation in Castile and Aragon in the late Middle Ages. The teacher will assign students various roles (inquisitor, neighbors, parish priest, husband/wife, business associate, friends, etc.), which the students further research. This section of the unit will culminate in a mock Inquisition trial of a "Judaizing" converso or backsliding Morisco. Once debriefing of the trial has occurred, the teacher will lead some type of activity (lecture, in-class analysis of quantitative data, reading of primary documents, etc.) addressing directly the consequences of expulsion of Jews, Muslims, and the enforcement of religious uniformity in Spain.

Section two: research paper on other examples of religious intolerance in the early modern world.

This portion of the unit can vary in length, depending on what resources and the total curriculum of grades nine through twelve. Research papers could be brief, based largely upon a limited number of secondary sources, with section-culminating assignment of a two to three page paper. If in the overall curriculum map of grades 9-12, there is a need for a major research or term paper, this assignment could be expanded, depending on the grade-level, to a major research paper (five or six pages for tenth graders up to ten to twelve pages for twelfth graders). The time allotted would have to vary (as would the grading rubric) according to how long and to what standard the teacher wanted.

In this paper, students research and write about one other example of the intolerance of religious minorities in the early modern world (Michael Servetus, Bloody Mary, Roman Inquisition in Italy, Huguenots, The Wahhabi Movement, Spanish in the New World, expulsion of Christians from Japan, etc.) or discrimination against religious minorities, however comparatively modest it may have been in some settings (the Ottoman Empire). Using the specific historical circumstance that they researched, students would address in some fashion the guiding questions of the unit in an analytical paper. Over one to three classes, depending upon the number of students in the class, students would present the results of their research to the group, which would give the group numerous other examples of intolerance to minorities to consider.

Section three: watch *Schindler's List* or *The Pianist*. Following the film and a brief discussion of it, students will write an in-class essay answering the overarching question of the unit: Why did the intolerance of Jews and Muslims in Spain prevail in the late Middle Ages?

There are several purposes to the film. Firstly, it considers the persecution of a religious minority in an entirely different time and place than those already considered, thus any generalizations "easily" drawn following the first two sections would require reexamination. Secondly, it draws the issue into a significantly more current context, thus raising the awareness that such a phenomenon, even in extreme form, is not restricted to the very distant past. Finally, both of these two films bring vividly to life the individual and collective consequences of extreme intolerance and persecution.

Students would close the unit with an in-class essay. See the grading rubric for final essay

Additional Instructional activities

Unit Hook: Lesson one of the unit should open with a contemporary example relevant to the students in the class tension/conflict arising from the presence of a religious minority in a local community.

Section one: During research phase for section one, students should learn the core aspects of any religion (creed, code of behavior, rituals, community) and evaluate them in context. Students should also learn the term syncretism, acculturation, and assimilation and be instructed to look for examples thereof.

Also in section one, especially if the unit is for older students, students should be given short passages from textbooks/surveys that present/evaluate this phase of Spanish history differently. Students would compare the two treatments and determine questions that they can look to answer when doing their research.

Analyze quantitative data regarding the expulsion of the Jews and Moriscos.

Section two: Section two is design to reinforce concepts/principles learned in section one (guiding questions; terms such as code of behavior, rituals, community, syncretism, acculturation, and assimilation) by applying them in a new context (a higher-order thinking activity). It also gives breadth and depth.

During section three, the period devoted to watching the movie (two to four lessons, depending on which film the teacher selects), students should be encouraged to read literature or novels on the Holocaust or to watch other film at home (*A Beautiful Life*, for example).

Grading Rubric for In-class Essay:

Minorities and Their Experience:

Why Did the Intolerance of Jews and Muslims in Spain Prevail in the Late Middle Ages?

Criterion A: Structure, Organization, Style	20 points
Criterion B: Use of evidence	20 points
Criterion C: Knowledge of historical background and religious concepts	20 points
Criterion D: Treatment of driving questions	20 points
Criterion E: Analysis and Evaluation	20 points

Criterion A: Structure and Organization 20 points

<i>Points awarded</i>	<i>Descriptors</i>
0 – 4	The essay has no apparent organization or is poorly organized. Student has failed to present a central argument answering the question, and virtually no guidance is given to the reader throughout (e.g. lacks topic sentences).
5 – 8	The essay follows a formulaic structure (e.g. has an introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion) but execution is so weak that reader still struggles to fol

the argument. A thesis sentence, if given, either addresses a different question than the one asked or is so vague or inappropriate as to prevent a cogent argument from being made. In the case by case basis, paragraphs may have topic sentences, but overall organizational weakness prevents a satisfactory argument from emerging.

9 – 12 The organization of the essay is satisfactory though it is hampered by lack of clarity and focus. The essay includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion, as well as a thesis sentence. The thesis may be too broad or vague for a satisfactory argument to be sustained or proven. Topic sentences, though providing some guidance to specific paragraphs, may lack specific connections to the overall argument. Writing is satisfactory, though does little to strengthen the overall effect of the essay.

13 – 16 The essay is well organized. An introduction presents the topic and narrows to a precise thesis sentence. Subsequent body paragraphs are properly introduced, connected to the argument of the paper, and sequenced for logical coherence. Overall, the argument is convincing but may lack full force. Though the argument is logical and sequenced, for example, transitions may be inadequate. Some repetitiveness may exist from the introduction to the body paragraphs to the conclusions. Writing may be too wordy or have sufficient weakness such that it occasionally weakens overall coherence and logic.

17 - 20 The essay is well organized, and execution and writing consistently advance the argument of the paper. A clear, sustainable thesis is proven with well organized and properly sequenced paragraphs. Argumentation within the essay and within paragraphs advances without repetitiveness. Transitions are smooth and effective, and sentence structure and word choice consistently clarify and add force. Wordiness is avoided by effective use of action verbs and active voice and of phrases, appositions, and dependent clauses. Overall impression of the essay is that it is a highly convincing and smooth essay.

Criterion B: Use of evidence

20 points

<i>Points awarded</i>	<i>Descriptors</i>
0 – 4	The essay contains virtually no evidence supporting assertions or the evidence cited is consistently inaccurate or inappropriate.
5 – 8	Some attempt has been made to provide evidence for assertions but the essay still suffers from inadequate, inaccurate, or inappropriate evidence.
9 – 12	Generally speaking, assertions are supported with evidence. Some unsubstantiated claims still exist in the paper, and at times the evidence cited is inaccurate or inappropriate. Evidence may at times be inappropriately used repetitively or without appropriate contextual setting.
13 – 16	Assertions are consistently supported with relevant evidence. Occasional inaccuracies emerge. Though relevant, evidence cited may not always be among the best examples.
17 – 20	Assertions are consistently supported with highly relevant, excellent examples drawn from an appropriate range to provide both depth and breadth to the essay.

Criterion C: Knowledge of historical background and religious concepts *20 points*

<i>Points awarded</i>	<i>Descriptors</i>
0 – 4	Essay demonstrates little to no evidence of knowledge of historical situation or the religious concepts contained in the unit.
5 – 8	Essay demonstrates some vague understanding of the historical setting and religious concepts but that understanding suffers from considerable inaccuracies and lack of conceptual depth.
9 – 12	The essay demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the historical situation and the religious concepts contained in the unit. Some inaccuracies may exist and there may be some lack of depth to that understanding. The range of the knowledge may be limited or the essay fails to treat the concepts in a relevant and accurate way.
13 – 16	The essay demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge. Occasional inaccuracies may emerge or, in the case of a historical analysis or reconstruction, some relevant and appropriate elements of the historical record may be absent or incorrect but not so frequently as to detract from an overall solid impression. Understanding of religious concepts is accurate, and the essay demonstrates appropriate use of them.
17 – 20	The essay demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge, as well as sufficient understanding to use and compare concepts appropriately across time and place. Virtually no inaccuracies emerge in the essay and appropriate knowledge is demonstrated, with virtually no gaps, according to the needs of the essay.

Criterion D: Treatment of driving questions

20 points

<i>Points awarded</i>	<i>Descriptors</i>
0 – 5	The essay contains virtually no treatment, either direct or indirect, of the driving questions.
6 – 10	The essay suggests some reflection on the driving questions but may lack actual treatment of them, either directly or indirectly. Thus, though the reader might reasonably infer some understanding on the part of the essayist, the essay fails to give any meaningful sense of mature reflection.
11 – 15	The essay satisfactorily addresses the driving questions, but evidence of deep understanding is lacking. Either the student answered (literally) the driving questions in a direct, out-of-context manner or answered them in a perfunctory manner that failed to consider them in historical settings.
16 – 20	The essay addresses the driving questions in an appropriate and integrated fashion. Understanding is nuanced, evidenced by contextualized treatment and comparisons of settings. Treatment of the driving questions is smooth and integrated comfortably into the argument of the essay.

Criterion E: Analysis and Evaluation

20 points

<i>Points awarded</i>	<i>Descriptors</i>
0 – 4	Essay lacks meaningful treatment of question.
5 – 8	The analysis and evaluation are very limited and the discussion is superficial. The ideas and references are too dispersed and lacking in coherence and order. Though some argument may be advanced, it is either too vague or too poorly treated to be

convincing.

9 – 12

The analysis and evaluation are limited and the discussion tends to be superficial. The essay has sufficient order and sequencing such that the argument is understood and, in the absence of counter-arguments, might be plausible, though not necessarily convincing. The essay tends toward description rather than analysis.

13 – 16

The analysis and evaluation are generally appropriate and reasonably convincing. Generally, the treatment is probing, though at times is unnecessarily descriptive. Ideas are logical and sequenced. Some counter-arguments are treated, either directly or indirectly, but not consistently or coherently. In general, the argument is convincing, though some gaps are evident.

17 – 20

The analysis and evaluation are excellent. The treatment is probing, in-depth, and informative. There is excellent integration of ideas and issues in a coherent manner. Appropriate counter-arguments have been anticipated and addressed. The essay demonstrates critical, reflective thinking and the argument is highly convincing.

Suggested Grade Boundary

The grading rubric and marks boundaries for this unit were written with eleventh- or twelfth-grade section in mind. This unit could well be taught to tenth-graders, though in that case the grading rubric might be a bit too demanding. One could keep the grading rubric above and lower the grade boundaries. Probably a better solution would be to write the rubric with expectations more appropriate for that younger age group.

Points awarded
Traditional grade
Descriptor of performance
Level of understanding

0-40

F

Failing

Limited ability to explain and interpret

41-50

D

Passing, but less than satisfactory

Some ability to explain and interpret

51-60

C

Satisfactory

Ability to explain and interpret and some ability to apply. Perspective is limited.

61-70

B

Strong but not excellent performance

Ability to explain, interpret, and apply. Student demonstrates perspective on the problem and is empathetic to other points of view.

71-80

A-

Overall excellent work, though some lack of consistency

Deep understanding: ability to explain, interpret, and apply. Student demonstrates perspective on the problem, is empathetic, and demonstrates self-knowledge.

81+

A

Excellent

The culminating assignment should be the primary basis for the unit grade—to earn 71+ marks on the final essay would require consistent effort, application, and understanding throughout the unit. If a teacher is working in an traditional grading environment and the students do not yet understand assessing for understanding, some intermediate grades might have to be given and the teacher would have to determine what value, if any, would be given to give to other assignments.

The major exception to the grading principle advanced above would be with the paper in section two of the unit. Were that paper a substantial research paper (aka a “term paper”) and were fulfilling a research and writing criteria within the overall curriculum map of the school, a separate grading rubric and assessment procedure would be necessary.

Grading Rubric, Version 2 for Minorities and Their Experience:

Why did the Intolerance of Jews and Muslims in Spain win out in the late Middle Ages?

This rubric was written with eleventh- or twelfth-grade students in mind.

- 1 – attempts the standard**
- 2 – approaches the standard**
- 3 – meets the standard**
- 4 – exceeds the standard**

Treatment of driving questions

The essay contains virtually no treatment, either direct or indirect, of the driving questions.

The essay suggests some reflection on the driving questions but may lack actual treatment of them, either directly or indirectly. Though reader might reasonably infer some understanding on the part of the essayist, the essay fails to give any meaningful sense of mature reflection. The student may have answered the driving questions literally, in a direct, out-of-context manner or answered them in a perfunctory manner that failed to consider them in historical settings.

The essay satisfactorily addresses the driving questions in an appropriate and integrated fashion.

Treatment of the driving questions is smooth and integrated comfortably into the argument of the essay. Understanding is nuanced, evidenced by contextualized treatment and comparisons of settings

Analysis and Evaluation

Essay lacks meaningful treatment of question entirely, or the analysis and evaluation are very limited and the discussion is superficial. Ideas and references are too dispersed and lacking in coherence and order. Though some argument may be advanced, it is either too vague or too poorly treated to be convincing.

The analysis and evaluation are limited and the discussion tends to be superficial. The essay has sufficient order and sequencing such that the argument is understood and, in the absence of counter-arguments, might be plausible, though not necessarily convincing. The essay tends toward description rather than analysis.

The analysis and evaluation are generally appropriate and reasonably convincing. Generally, the treatment is probing, though at times might be unnecessarily descriptive. Ideas are logical and sequenced. Some counter-arguments are treated, either directly or indirectly. Though some gaps may be evident, in general, the argument is convincing.

The analysis and evaluation are excellent. The treatment is probing, in-depth, and informative. There is excellent integration of ideas and issues in a coherent manner. Appropriate counter-arguments have been anticipated and addressed. The essay demonstrates critical, reflective thinking and the argument is highly convincing.

Knowledge of historical background and religious concepts

Essay demonstrates little to no evidence of knowledge of historical situation or the religious concepts contained in the unit.

Essay demonstrates some understanding of the historical setting and religious concepts, but that understanding suffers from inaccuracies and lack of conceptual depth. The range of the knowledge may be limited or the essay fails to treat the concepts in a relevant and accurate way.

The essay demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge. Occasional inaccuracies may emerge or, in the case of a historical analysis or reconstruction, some relevant and appropriate elements of the historical record may be absent or incorrect, but not so frequently as to detract from an overall solid impression. Understanding of religious concepts is accurate, and the essay demonstrates appropriate use of them.

The essay demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge, as well as sufficient understanding to use and compare concepts appropriately across time and place. Virtually no inaccuracies emerge in the essay and appropriate knowledge is demonstrated, with virtually no gaps, according to the needs of the essay.

Use of evidence

The essay contains virtually no evidence supporting assertions or the evidence cited is consistently inadequate, inaccurate, or inappropriate. Although assertions are generally supported with evidence, some unsubstantiated claims exist in the paper and at times the evidence cited is inaccurate or inappropriate. Evidence may at times be inappropriately used repetitively or without appropriate contextual setting.

Assertions are consistently supported with relevant evidence. Occasional inaccuracies may emerge. Cited evidence is consistently relevant, but though it may not always be the best of examples.

Assertions are consistently supported with highly relevant, excellent examples drawn from an appropriate range to provide both depth and breadth to essay.

Structure, Organization, Style

The essay has no apparent organization or is poorly organized. The essay does not contain a central argument answering the question, and virtually no guidance is given to the reader throughout (e.g. lacks topic sentences).

The essay follows a formulaic structure (e.g. has an introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion) but execution is sufficiently weak that the reader struggles to follow the argument. A thesis sentence, if given, either addresses a different question than the one asked or is vague or inappropriate enough to prevent a cogent argument from being sustained or proven. On a case by case basis, paragraphs have many topic sentences, but overall organizational weakness prevents a satisfactory argument from emerging. Writing does little to strengthen the overall effect of the essay.

The essay is well organized. An introduction presents the topic and narrows to a precise thesis sentence. Subsequent body paragraphs are properly introduced, connected to the argument of the paper, and sequenced for logical coherence. Overall, the argument is convincing but may lack full force. Though the argument is logical and sequenced, for example, transitions may be inadequate. Some repetitiveness may exist from the introduction to the body paragraphs to the conclusions. Writing may be too wordy or have sufficient weakness such that it occasionally weakens overall coherence and logic.

The essay is well organized, and execution and writing consistently advance the argument of the paper. A clear, sustainable thesis is proven with well organized and properly sequenced paragraphs. Argumentation within the essay and within paragraphs advances with precision and without repetitiveness. Transitions are smooth and effective, and sentence structure and word choice consistently clarify and add force. Wordiness is avoided by effective use of action verbs and active voice and of phrases, appositions, and dependent clauses. Overall impression of the essay is that it is a highly convincing and smooth essay.