

3.3 RELIGION IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

How can minority religious groups preserve their cultures in a pluralistic society?

C3 Framework Indicator	<p>D2.His.5.9-12. Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s perspectives.</p> <p>D2.Rel.5.9-12. Explain how religious identities shape and are shaped by the beliefs people hold, the behaviors they exhibit, and the ways people experience membership in intersecting communities.</p> <p>D2.Soc.10.9-12. Analyze how social structures and cultures change.</p>	
Staging the Compelling Question	<p>After reviewing the provisions of the Basic Law regarding religion, students will research what life is like in Germany for people who practice Islam, Judaism, and other religions in Germany.</p>	
Supporting Question 1 As a pluralistic society, how does German Law establish religious rights?	Supporting Question 2 Which religions do people in Germany practice?	Supporting Question 3 What challenges do individuals describe that they face in Germany as they practice minority religious traditions, and how do they meet those challenges?
Formative Performance Task Students will write a one paragraph summary of what they understand the Basic Law ensure in terms of religious protection in Germany.	Formative Performance Task Students should research which religions are practiced by people living in Germany and the percentage of the population each faith represents.	Formative Performance Task Students will watch a video featuring a young person in Germany who is Muslim noting any difficulties described by the person being interviewed.
Featured Sources Source A: German Basic Law and Religion (Handout 3.3.1) Source B: Springfield Technical Community College	Featured Sources Source A: German Basic Law and Religion (Handout 3.3.1) Source B: Religion in Germany (Handout 3.3.2) Source C: Islam in Germany (Handout 3.3.3) Source D: Judaism in Germany (Handout 3.3.4) Source E: Transcript—Video of Prof. Heins (Handout 3.3.5)	Featured Sources Source A: Goethe Institut
Summative Performance Task	<p>Argument: Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical or contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views.</p> <p>Extension: Students will design a project about their community that traces its development over time, and compares the experiences and contributions of diverse groups which contributed to their community’s pluralism.</p>	
Taking Informed Action	<p>Understand: Not all communities are welcoming of people who practice religions that are not widely understood.</p> <p>Assess: What different ethnic groups, languages, community customs, religious beliefs, and cultural practices are there in your community?</p> <p>Act: Consider attending an event at a venue frequented by members of a minority culture.</p>	

? COMPELLING QUESTION

- How can minority religious groups preserve their cultures in a pluralistic society?

INQUIRY OVERVIEW

This inquiry will focus on religion in Germany today. After reviewing the provisions of the Basic Law regarding religion, students will research what life is like in Germany for people who practice Islam, Judaism, and other religions in Germany. Students will discuss the impact of pluralism on religion in German society. Students will have the opportunity to do research about minority cultures found in their own communities.

***Note:** *The topic of religion can be controversial in many schools. The purpose of this lesson is to teach about religions that exist in contemporary German society, not any religious doctrine.*

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Article 4 of the German Basic Law protects freedom of religion. It reads: "Freedom of faith and of conscience, and freedom to profess a religious or philosophical creed, shall be inviolable. The undisturbed practice of religion shall be guaranteed."

Religion has always played a major role in German history. The actions of Martin Luther, a Roman Catholic monk from Wittenberg, resulted in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century and splintered powerful Christianity in Europe. Today over half of Germany's population claims affiliation with either Roman Catholic or the Protestant Church¹. In 2005 the Conclave of Cardinals elected Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, a German, as head of the Roman Catholic Church for the first time in 482 years as Pope Benedict XVI.



Islam is the largest minority religion in Germany with approximately 4.5 million Muslims². It has gained importance through migration. The large majority of Muslims in Germany are of Turkish origin, followed by smaller groups from southeast Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Although there has been a Muslim population there since the 18th century, the major influx resulted from the "guest worker" program of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Before World War II, over one-half million Jewish people lived in Germany. Following the Holocaust only a few thousand Jewish people remained or returned. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and its satellites in the 1990s, Jewish immigration has resulted in growing numbers, ranging from ultra-orthodox to reform congregations. While statistics vary on the exact number of Jewish people who currently live in Germany, in 2015 the Ministry of the Interior of Germany reported that 215,000 people were members of Jewish communities in Germany.

Growing pluralism and increasing secularization typify the religious landscape in contemporary Germany.

1 "Gezählt 2017." *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*, 2017, http://archiv.ekd.de/download/broschuere_2017_internet.pdf.

2 "Islam in Deutschland." *Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat*, <https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/heimat-integration/staat-und-religion/islam-in-deutschland/islam-in-deutschland-node.html>.

► Further background information

- “Freedom of Religious Worship.” *Facts About Germany*, 2018, <https://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/en/chapter/society/freedom-religious-worship>.
- Germany 2017 International Religious Freedom Report. *US State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/281154.pdf>.

 **TIME:** 4–5 45-minute classes

CONCEPTS LIST

- Minorities
- Separation of church and state
- Church tax
- Immigration
- Protestant Reformation
- Culture
- Religion
- Islam
- Christianity
- Judaism
- Protestant
- Catholic
- German Basic Law
- Pluralism
- Martin Luther
- Secularization
- Migration
- Guest worker
- Ultra-orthodox
- German Democratic Republic (GDR)
- Inviolable
- Denominational

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

- German Basic Law and Religion (**Handout 3.3.1**)
- Religion in Germany (**Handout 3.3.2**)
- Islam in Germany (**Handout 3.3.3**)
- Judaism in Germany (**Handout 3.3.4**)
- Transcript—Video of Prof. Heins (**Handout 3.3.5**)
- “Freedom of Religious Worship.” *Facts About Germany*, 2018, <https://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/en/chapter/society/freedom-religious-worship>.
- Germany 2017 International Religious Freedom Report. *US State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/281154.pdf>. PDF Download.
- “Gezählt 2017” *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*, 2017, http://archiv.ekd.de/download/broschuere_2017_internet.pdf.
- Hamilton, Marci A. and Michael McConnell. “Common Interpretation: The Establishment Clause.” *Official Website of the National Constitution Center*, <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-i/the-establishment-clause-hamilton-and-mcconnell/interp/31>.
- “Islam in Deutschland.” *Bundesministerium des Innern für Bau und Heimat*, 2018, <https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/heimat-integration/staat-und-religion/islam-in-deutschland/islam-in-deutschland-node.html>.
- “Jigsaw instructions.” *The Teacher Toolkit*, last updated January 2018, <http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/jigsaw>.
- “Muslims in Germany.” *Goethe-Institut*, 2019, <https://www.goethe.de/ins/id/en/kul/dos/mid.html>.
- Norman, Richard. “The Idea of Pluralism in the United States.” *Springfield Technical Community College*, 2018, <http://ourpluralhistory.stcc.edu/resources/Curriculum/TheIdeaofPluralism.pdf>.
- “The rights and freedoms the Charter protects.” Department of Justice. *Government of Canada*, Updated 13 September 2018, <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/rfcp-cdlp.html>.
- “Volker Heins on the future of Germany as a pluralistic society.” *Bertelsmann-Stiftung.com*, 2018, <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/media-center/media/mid/volker-heins-on-the-future-of-germany-as-a-pluralistic-society/>.

All handouts
can be found at
[www.goethe.de/
germanyinfocus](http://www.goethe.de/germanyinfocus)

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

USA: What rights does the U.S. Constitution guarantee regarding religion?

Canada: What rights regarding religion are protected under the Canadian Charter?

Explore the primary sources that define those protections.

► Resources

- Hamilton, Marci A. and Michael McConnell. "Common Interpretation: The Establishment Clause." *Official Website of the National Constitution Center*, <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-i/the-establishment-clause-hamilton-and-mcconnell/interp/31>.
- "The rights and freedoms the Charter protects." Department of Justice. *Government of Canada*, Updated 13 September 2018, <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/rfcp-cdlp.html>.



? SUPPORTING QUESTION #1

As a pluralistic society, how does German Law establish religious rights?

► Formative Performance Task

Using the resources below, students will write a one paragraph summary of what they understand the Basic Law ensures in terms of religious protection in Germany.

► Resources

- German Basic Law and Religion (**Handout 3.3.1**)
- Norman, Richard. "The Idea of Pluralism in the United States." *Springfield Technical Community College*, 2018, <http://ourpluralhistory.stcc.edu/resources/Curriculum/TheIdeaofPluralism.pdf>.



? SUPPORTING QUESTION #2

Which religions do people in Germany practice?

► Formative Performance Task

Students should research which religions are practiced by people living in Germany and the percentage of the population each faith represents. Which religions would be described as minority religions according to current statistics?

Handouts 3.3.2, 3.3.3, and 3.3.4 will be used for this jigsaw activity. Divide the class into groups of 4. Each student within a group is responsible for a different segment of the reading. Suggested segments for the readings are: segment 1, **Handout 3.3.2** first three sections; segment 2, section on Church Tax; segment 3, **Handout 3.3.3**, "Islam in Germany"; and segment 4, **Handout 3.3.4**, Judaism in Germany.

Give each student time to read and process the information in their assigned segment. Next, put students with the same segment together to talk about and process the details of their segment. Then the students return to their original groups and take turns sharing the segments they have become experts on.

Teachers may want students to view the video of Volker Heins on the future of Germany in a pluralistic society. A transcript of the video is available on **Handout 3.3.5**.



***Note:** "Jigsaw instructions." The Teacher Toolkit, last updated January 2018, <http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/jigsaw>.

► Resources

- Religion in Germany (**Handout 3.3.2**)
- Islam in Germany (**Handout 3.3.3**)
- Judaism in Germany (**Handout 3.3.4**)
- Transcript—Video of Prof. Heins (**Handout 3.3.5**)
- “Volker Heins on the future of Germany as a pluralistic society.” *Bertelsman-Stiftung.com*, 2018, <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/media-center/media/mid/volker-heins-on-the-future-of-germany-as-a-pluralistic-society/>.



❓ SUPPORTING QUESTION #3

What challenges do individuals describe that they face in Germany as they practice minority religious traditions, and how do they meet those challenges?

► Formative Performance Task

Watch a video featuring a young person in Germany who is Muslim. Take notes of any difficulties described by the person being interviewed. Compare those notes with the ideas shared in other sources by people of minority faiths who live in Germany. Summarize what you understood about how that person faces and meets related challenges.

► Resources

- “Muslims in Germany.” *Goethe-Institut*, 2019, <https://www.goethe.de/ins/id/en/kul/dos/mid.html>. (Features articles, video interviews, and photo stories of Muslims who live in Germany).



✓ SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE TASK

How can minority religious groups preserve their cultures in a pluralistic society?

Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical or contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views.

⊕ EXTENSION (OPTIONAL) TASK

Students will design a project about their community that traces its development over time, and compares the experiences and contributions of diverse groups which contributed to their community’s pluralism.

The “Our Plural History,” a project of Springfield (MA) Technical Community College, is an examination of the idea of pluralism in the United States. Their website (<http://ourpluralhistory.stcc.edu/index.html>) focuses on immigrant and ethnic groups in the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts. A “How To Guide” for designing an oral history project can be found at: <http://ourpluralhistory.stcc.edu/resources/Curriculum/HowToGuide.pdf>.



TAKING INFORMED ACTION

UNDERSTAND Although freedom to practice the religion of your choice may be guaranteed by law, not all communities are welcoming of people who practice religions that are different from theirs.

ASSESS What different ethnic groups, languages, community customs, religious beliefs, and cultural practices exist in your community?

ACT Consider attending an event at a venue frequented by members of a minority culture (for example: a festival, a concert, a youth group meeting, etc.). Call ahead and arrange to be introduced to another young person from that community who can show you around. If you feel comfortable asking questions of your new acquaintances, speak with members of that group about what they do to keep their cultural heritage alive.