**RLG101H FIELD RESEARCH ANALYSIS – INSTRUCTIONS**

Submission and Deadlines

* The deadline to submit this assignment without a late penalty is 11:59 pm on **December 6.** Your assignment will be penalized 5 marks (out of 100) per day late.
* You must submit your assignment to **URCourses** as a Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) file Pages, PDF, RTF, or other files will not be accepted. If you do not have Microsoft Word, please use the library computers for your final submission. Paper copies will not be accepted. If you do not wish to submit your work to Turnitin.com, you must consult with the course instructor.

Assignment

You and your group (a total two or three students, including you) must attend and observe a **religious service** and then analyze the data that you collect. Specifically, you are to interpret selected observations you made during the ritual using your theory from Malory Nye’s *Religion: The Basics*. While you visited your site togethers, assignments must we written and uploaded on your own. **This is NOT a group project**.

Essentially, your analysis will take two observations you made and analyze them with respect to:

* Ritual and Power?
* Ritual and Society?
* Ritual and Memory?

You must also **reflect** on what you learned by doing this assignment (see “Reflection” below).

For the site visit, you must select a religion to which no one in your group (including you) belongs, and with which no one in your group is familiar. The less you know about the religion, the better! (Really!)

For the analysis, imagine you are writing to a **friend or family member** who knows nothing about the religion you have observed, and has not read Nye’s text. This means that you must clearly explain both your observations and the theories you use to analyze them.

Important: each member of a group must use theories from a DIFFERENT chapter of Nye’s text. If one person is using Ritual and Power, then no one else in the same group can write on Power. If more than one member of the same theory of ritual the assignments of one or both students may be penalized up to 50 marks.

Steps

1. As a group, attend the religious ritual (stay for the entire activity, from start to end).
2. Make notes of *everything* you see, hear, feel, smell, and taste before, during, and after the ritual.
3. Consult with the other members of your group to compare observations.
4. Write your Field Research Analysis and submit it to URCourses by **December 6.**

Goals

One of the themes in this class is identifying religious phenomena within the realm of human behaviour. Related to this is the task of making the strange familiar, and the familiar strange. What we mean by this is that we often interpret the differences present in the behaviour of others as (potentially strange) and our own behaviours as familiar. You will observe religious behaviours unfamiliar to you and be tasked with using theories of religion from Nye to explain them, or, “make them familiar.” One aim of this project is for you to gain some insight into a religious tradition with which you are not familiar. In this respect you will be attempting to consider aspects of a tradition from the “outside.” Another goal is to help you acquire a first-hand understanding of the challenges and rewards faced by scholars of religion. By the time you are done the assignment, you will have produced an entirely original contribution to this field of study. Pretty exciting, eh? ☺

I also hope that you are able to have some fun and sincerely enjoy this assignment! It’s not often that people visit a religious site that is not connected to their own tradition. With any luck you’ll find this to be a really interesting and memorable experience.

Requirements

Your Field Research Analysis must consist of exactly **FIVE paragraphs.** In the first and third paragraphs you will identify and describe a ritual that you observed at your field site. Part of this identification will require you to draw on Nye’s discussion of what constitutes ritual behaviour. It is not enough to say “I observed a prayer and that prayer was a ritual.” You need to tell me why it should be seen as a ritual. In the second and fourth paragraphs you will examine the practice, artifact, or interaction from the previous paragraph using a specific theory from one chapter of Nye’s text. Please begin each section by briefly explaining your theory: “according to Nye, rituals are related to society/memory/power in the following ways…” In total you will spend two paragraphs **describing** selected observations, and two paragraphs **analyzing** them*.* The fifth paragraph will consist of your reflection on what you have learned by doing this analysis. Your assignment in the end will be structured like this:

* Paragraph 1: identify and describe a ritual (D1)
* Paragraph 2: analyze of D1 using your theory
* Paragraph 3: identify and describe a second, **DIFFERENT** ritual (D2)
* Paragraph 4: analyze of D2 using your theory
* Paragraph 5: reflect on this assignment

Note: It is fine to include some of the **same observations** in each of the two rituals you describe. But you must use them to identify **two different** rituals.

Make sure to consult the following two documents that will be posted on **URCourses**:

* RLST100 Field Research Advice
* RLST100 Field Research Analysis Theories

As before, you must do **no additional research** on the religious community you are writing about beyond the site visit that you have already completed. Your analysis must be based *entirely* on the observations that you and your group members made during your visit. If you use additional research on the religious tradition you visited, your assignment grade may be penalized up to 50 marks.

Reflection

In the final (fifth) paragraph of your assignment, please reflect on something that you learned about religion, or the *study* of religion from doing this assignment. **DO NOT** tell me something you learned about the religion that you visited, I am more interested in what you learned about the category or study of religion, not any one religion. Once again, absolutely no additional research is required. **The use of additional sources may be penalized with a deduction of up to 50 marks.** Pick something you learned that *matters* to you in some way. Your reflective paragraph should be comprised of three parts:

1. Past: What did you used to think about religion (or the study of religion) before this assignment?
2. Present: After doing this assignment what do you now think about religion (or the study of religion)? Why/how did the assignment affect your view(s)?
3. Meaning: Why does what you learned *matter* to you? How have you been affected by having done this assignment? Think of this as the “So what?” question.

When considering what to write your reflection about, keep in mind that I am interested in more than simply what new information you might have absorbed about the religion you visited. That is to say, I am interested in the ways in which what you learned might mean something to you, how it might impact your understanding of people, religion, yourself, etc., after this course is done.

Here are some questions that might help you start your reflection:

* What does your experience with this assignment tell you about the assumptions you used to have about religion in general, or about the study of religion, or about the tradition you visited?
* Why did you think what you used to think about religion in general, or about the tradition you visited, before doing this assignment?
* Did your experience with this assignment affect the way you see your own religious tradition?  
  If so, how/why?
* Did using theories to analyze your observations help you understand what you experienced at the religious site better? If so, how/why?
* Did anything about doing this assignment surprise you?

Once again the point of reflective writing is not to simply state your opinions or reactions, but to *think* about them. There is no right or wrong “answer” that you are expected to give; what we are “looking for” is simply a frank and thoughtful appraisal of your experience.

As before, when offering your reflections you must provide **reasons and evidence** to account for your responses. In other words, it’s not enough to tell us *what* you learned from doing this assignment – you need to explain *how* you learned this and *why* this matters to you.

Format

Your assignment must:

* Be no longer than 1500 words in length (not including the title page, bibliography, or citations). This is a hard cap, if your assignment exceeds the 1500 words limit, by even 1 word, you will lose 5 marks;
* Include a cover page based on the template below (include ALL elements of the sample cover page, replacing the yellow highlighted portions with your own information);
* Be double-spaced and use Times 12-point font;
* Show page numbers in the top right of each page (with page 1 starting after your title page);
* Consist of five paragraphs (as outlined in “Requirements” above);
* Include in-text citations to Nye’s text that conform to The Chicago Manual of Style (author-date format);
* Include a bibliography that conforms to The Chicago Manual of Style (author-date format), and that appears immediately below the final paragraph of your analysis;
* Include a copy of the grading rubric (available on BB) after your bibliography.

RLST100

Introduction to Religious Studies

Instructor: Ian Brown

**Title of Analysis**

By Your Name

Your Student Number

Date of Submission

Word Count: Number

Group Member 1 Name: Power Religious Site Name

Group Member 2 Name: Society Religious Site Location

Group Member 3 Name: Memory Date and Time Ritual Attended