

# RLG101H FIELD RESEARCH ANALYSIS – INSTRUCTIONS

## Submission and Deadlines

- The deadline to submit this assignment without a late penalty is 11:59 pm on **April 4**. Your assignment will be penalized **1 mark (out of 100) per day late**.
- You must submit your assignment to both BLACKBOARD and TURNITIN.COM as a Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) file. The version of your assignment on Turnitin.com will be the one graded. 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; for details see the course website: <https://rlg101h.wordpress.com/grading/writing-assignments>

## Assignment

You and your group (a total two or three students, including you) must attend and observe a **religious ritual** and then analyze the data that you collect. Specifically, you are to interpret selected observations you made during the ritual using TWO theories from Malory Nye's *Religion: The Basics*. **BOTH of these theories must come from SAME chapter of Nye's text: chapter 2, 3, or 4 (i.e., "Culture," "Power," or "Gender").** Essentially, your analysis will respond to ONE of the following questions:

- What do your observations reveal about the site you visited in relation to **two theories of culture**?
- What do your observations reveal about the site you visited in relation to **two theories of power**?
- What do your observations reveal about the site you visited in relation to **two theories of gender**?

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 two theories from chapter 3 (Power), then no one else in the same group can use theories from chapter 3. One of the other group members must use two theories from chapter 2 (Culture), and the remaining group member must use two theories from chapter 4 (Gender). **If more than one member of the same group uses theories from the same chapter, the assignments of one or both students may be penalized up to 50 marks.** Similarly, if you use a theory from a chapter OTHER than chapter 2, 3, or 4 from Nye's text, your assignment 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. Before or after the ritual (not during!), take a selfie of everyone in the group either inside or out in front of the building where the ritual takes place (e.g., synagogue, temple, etc.). Submit the photo to Bb right away! **Each** member of the group must submit the photo to Bb by **March 16**.
5. Write your Field Research Proposal! (On your own!) Submit your proposal to Bb and Turnitin.com by **March 16**.
6. After receiving feedback on your proposal from your TA, write your Field Research Analysis and submit it to Bb and Turnitin.com by **April 4**.

## Goals

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? ☺

We 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 a common theme or pattern in your observations. In the second and fourth paragraphs you will examine the theme/pattern from the previous paragraph using a specific theory from one chapter of Nye’s text. In other words: 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: description of observations (O1) that comprise the first pattern/theme
- Paragraph 2: brief explanation of first theory (T1); analysis of O1 using T1
- Paragraph 3: description of observations (O2) that comprise the second pattern/theme
- Paragraph 4: brief explanation of second theory (T2); analysis of O2 using this T2
- Paragraph 5: reflection on this assignment

Note: It is fine to include some of the **same observations** in each of the two themes or patterns you describe. But you must use them to identify **two different themes/patterns**. For example, “blue hats” could fit a theme of “hats” for Paragraph 1, and could also fit a theme of “blue things” for Paragraph 3.

Make sure to consult the following three documents that will be posted on Blackboard:

- RLG101H Field Research Advice
- RLG101H Field Research Example Paragraphs
- RLG101H 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. 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 we’re interested in more than simply what new information you might have absorbed about the religion you visited. That is to say,

we're 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.

Finally, make sure to discuss something *new* that you learned about religion or the study of religion. In other words, **you must not discuss the same point** you reflected on for the Film Analysis assignment.

### Format

Your assignment must:

- Be no longer than **1300 words** in length (not including the title page, bibliography, or citations);
- 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.

RLG101H  
Introduction to the Study of Religion  
Prof. Ken Derry  
TA: Name

Title of Analysis  
By Your Name  
Your Student Number  
Date of Submission  
Word Count: Number

Group Member 1 Name: Culture  
Group Member 2 Name: Power  
Group Member 3 Name: Gender

Religious Site Name  
Religious Site Location  
Date and Time Ritual Attended