

HOW TO WRITE THE WORLD RELIGIONS PAPERS
RELS 105
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There will be TWO papers due for this class. They should be at least 8 pages, plus title page and bibliography page).

PAPER #1- VISIT PAPER

Your visit paper will describe your visits to THREE religious sites- churches, synagogues, mosques, yoga centers, Hindu temples, Buddhist meditation groups, etc. You should try to pick three that are very different- do not just go to three Christian churches or three Jewish synagogues. At least one place should be totally new to you. You are there as an observer, to learn about what religious people do. For each visit, you should observe a ritual, and you should make sure to know these 8 elements of the religion:

Sacred text	Doctrine (beliefs)
Ritual (actions)	Ethics/ morality
Religious Experience	Institution (community)
Material culture	The Sacred

While you are there, after the services, ask people around you questions about what is happening and the reasons for it. This is a good way to gain knowledge. You can find places for your visits in the Saturday edition of the *Post and Courier* newspaper (they have a listing of local services), and in the Yellow Pages. When you write up your visits, begin with a general introduction, which tells the reader what you are going to do. You should have a paragraph or two on the general history of each religion. Your paper should end with a general conclusion, including your personal opinion of the sites you have visited. You can use the pronoun "I." *If you cannot find sufficient data to describe the 8 elements in your visits, use library sources as background!*

You should have at least A PARAGRAPH for each element, and put each term (DOCTRINE, RITUAL etc) in CAPITAL LETTERS, so I can make sure you have included it. Describe one religious site at a time. List the name of the site, its religion, and the date that you went there. Students will get extra credit for original observations on behavior, clothing, ritual objects, etc. How are the religions that you observe similar to or different from what you are used to in terms of religion?

Writing this paper gives you skills in field research, and your grade will be based on how clearly and well you can analyze the presence of the above elements of religion, and on your powers of observation.

PAPER #2- TERM PAPER

The term paper is more formal than the visit paper. You should choose one religion, and do research on it, including on the 8 elements of religion. You should focus on an argument within the religion, an issue that is important or debated, and explain the different views. The first half of the paper should be on the 8 elements. The second half of the paper should be on the argument.

Choose a small religion, or a type of a larger religion. The whole of Islam or Buddhism would be too large- if you want to work on one of the larger religions, choose a subtype (like Sunni Islam or Theravada Buddhism).

The term paper is intended to develop skills in library research. You need to use at least **THREE BOOKS** for your topic. The Internet does not count as a source, nor do encyclopedias, magazine articles, textbooks, Dummies books or Idiot's Guides. There are many problems with Internet sites, especially in religion. Beware of Wikipedia- it has much wrong information.

Citing your sources is important. If you have a mistake and it is the book's fault, you can still get an A on your paper. But if you do not cite your sources, then the error is your own responsibility. You should have about one citation per paragraph. The easiest way to do this is to have the author and page number in parentheses, for example (Turabian, p. 20). You should list your books on your bibliography page, in alphabetical order by the last name of the author:

Turabian, Kate L. *Student's Guide for Writing College Papers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

For your term paper, you should have **TWO SECTIONS**. You begin with a general introduction, and give some history of the religion that you are studying. Then you should describe the **EIGHT ELEMENTS** of religion, with a paragraph for each. That is the first half of your paper.

For the second section, focus your paper on one argument within the religion, and show how it has affected that religion's growth and development. For instance, different understandings of the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper were a major reason why Catholic Christianity split from Protestant Christianity. Explain one important argument over belief or ritual that has been important in the religion.

I will give extra credit for longer papers, but points will be deducted if the paper is shorter than 8 full pages (not counting the title page and bibliography).

FOR BOTH PAPERS:

Each paper should have a title page, with your paper title, name, class section and time, and the semester and year. Double space the paper.

Extra credit is given for extra work- if you include ritual objects, films, photos, anything unusual that adds to what your paper is saying, this can raise your grade. If the paper is late, 10 points will be deducted per class late.