

## Midterm Essay Exam

The three primary purposes of this assignment are (1) to assess your ability to communicate effectively in formal essay writing, (2) to gauge your knowledge of the material covered in the textbook, lectures, and class discussions, and (3) to invite you to demonstrate critical and creative thought in weighing in on the subject matter.

Use Modern Language Association (MLA) citation style for all writing assignments in this course. For assistance with MLA style, you may consult the library or the web. Here is a good online reference guide: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>. Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct and will not be tolerated. On your paper include your name, Panther ID number, course number, and the name of the professor. It must be double spaced, have 1 inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) and be typed in 12-point font, Times New Roman or Calibri. Include one Works Cited at the end.

All writing will be submitted through Canvas using turnitin technology. Use the following credentials to add this class:

Answer 2 of the 3 questions below. The total word count for this midterm exam must be at least 1,000. You may divide the 1,000 words between the two essays in whatever way works best for you to answer the questions thoughtfully. For **each** essay, cite your **textbook** plus at least **one other academic source**. Include one Works Cited listing all sources (the textbook, 1 academic source for the first essay, 1 academic source for the second essay, and any other works that you cite) at the end of the exam.

1. Our textbook is entitled, *Anatomy of the Sacred*. What is "the Sacred?" Utilize the contributions from individual scholars or thinkers. Include considerations of sacred space, sacred time, and religious experience.
2. Select a rite of passage that you consider unfamiliar. Provide historical background for the practice and explain why it qualifies as a rite of passage. Explain how this 3-stage ritual transformation functions for the individual and for the community.
  - Stage 1 = Departure/Separation
  - Stage 2 = Initiation/Transition/Liminality
  - Stage 3 = Return/Reincorporation
3. Identify a contemporary controversy that has a religious component of some kind. Demonstrate how an understanding of religion can (a) shed light on the causes, details, and context of the controversy, (b) provide decision-makers with insight into finding

solutions to problems arising from the controversy, and (c) offer a social strategy for dealing with similar problems should they arise in the future.

NOTE: For the purpose of this assignment, "academic source" refers to a work of scholarship such as a peer-reviewed journal article or monograph. Students are invited to consult the instructor or a librarian if they need further clarification. In the field of Religious Studies, it is important to identify when sources are providing an insider perspective such as the faith-based theological interpretation of a religious adherent. These are allowed and valuable sources for reporting how religious persons understand their beliefs, practices, etc., but they are not considered "academic sources." Academic sources aid analysis by providing an outsider perspective, treating religious beliefs, practices, etc., as objects of history and scientific inquiry. For examples of different types of sources, student will consult sheet provided by instructor.

**20% of final grade**

Grading Criteria

5%	Includes proper works cited with textbook plus at least 2 other academic sources (1 for each essay)
5%	Uses MLA style correctly to cite sources
10%	Demonstrates adequate use of grammar, sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, spelling, organization, and other style guidelines mentioned here or in the syllabus
20%	For the first essay, demonstrates knowledge of material in order to provide informed answers to all questions asked
20%	For the first essay, demonstrates critical and original thought: weighs in on the issues
20%	For the second essay, demonstrates knowledge of material in order to provide informed answers to all questions asked
20%	For the second essay, demonstrates critical and original thought: weighs in on the issues