

## Field Visit #1 Report Assignment

*Task:* Attend a worship service in a setting with which you are familiar. This could be at a church or campus ministry you frequent; or at a church of the denomination you grew up with, that members of your immediate family attend, or that is closely related to such a denomination..

In a short paper (less than 1500 words), describe the service in terms of gender roles, norms, expectations, and messages. It's unlikely that gender will be an explicit topic addressed in the service, so pay attention to what is assumed and how things are done. Do the hymns, prayers and creeds use gendered language for God? Who participates in the service, and in what roles? Do the styles of presentation and dress communicate gender norms and expectations? (Of course, if gender comes up explicitly, note how it is discussed.)

Finally, identify and react to the underlying ethical principles -- whether consistent or conflicted -- that seem to govern the ideas about gender that are communicated and the gender norms that are performed in the service.

*Purpose:* Religious institutions, like other parts of culture, are made up of traditions and structures that convey messages about gender. Messages are overt and covert, assumed and intentional; they are communicated through words, texts, behaviors, presence, and absence. Until we put on the "lenses" of gender analysis, we are unlikely to notice much of this material. Attending a service with these lenses on reveals another set of stories and meanings beneath the surface. Bringing this material to conscious awareness enables us to apply ethical and historical frameworks so that we can more deeply and thoroughly understand the religious community. We are also practicing this mode of awareness so we can deploy it in other settings. It becomes a tool for "holding our time in our hands."

*Criteria:* To receive the full point value of this assignment, submit a carefully observed report\* that is well organized, grammatically correct, stylistically sound, responds to all aspects of the prompt, and meets all requirements of word count and formatting. You will have a chance to rewrite to raise your grade.

\*Careful observation includes attention to what is expected as well as what is unexpected, to what is familiar as well as to what is strange. The careful observer does not shrug their shoulders at elements of experience that are mysterious or cryptic research; instead, those elements prompt the observer to ask questions of those around them (if the opportunity arises) or to research later. The careful observer engages in informed speculation about meaning, while remaining aware of what they are not in a position to know or state definitively.

Your paper must follow all guidelines for formal writing, as laid out in the About section. Submissions that do not follow these guidelines will not be accepted.