Request for Renewal of REL 150 as an FGC course

Kapi‘olani Community College, Fall 2013

Page  Contents
2 Course Description and Changes
3 Hallmark 1 Sample Materials
6 Hallmark 2 Sample Materials
8 Hallmark 3 Sample Materials
10 Hallmark 4 Sample Materials
12 Hallmark 5 Sample Materials
15 Hallmark 6 Sample Materials

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I. Course Description (from Course Outline)

COURSE INFORMATION:  date of outline (01/02/12)

REL 150 Introduction to the World’s Major Religions (3)
KCC AA/FGC and KCC AS/AH
3 hours lecture per week
Prerequisite(s): none
Recommended preparation: Qualification for ENG 100 or ESL 100

REL 150 is a historical survey of the world’s major religious traditions. The course is designed to provide students with an understanding of these traditions, and to enable students to think both sensitively and critically about the religious world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/COMPETENCIES:

Upon successful completion of REL 150, the student should be able to:

1. Identify the myths, rituals, ethics, and art of each major religious tradition.
2. Describe significant historical developments within each major religious tradition, from the time of its origins until today.
3. Describe his/her own religious background and that of the surrounding community.

II. Changes

No major changes have been made to REL 150 since the previous request for foundations designation renewal was approved.
III. Assessment of Course. Below are samples of course materials that illustrate how the course meets the Foundations Hallmarks. Original course materials may be viewed upon request.

**Hallmark 1. Provide students with a large-scale analysis of human development and change over time. (Note: The two FG courses will together cover the whole time period from pre-history to present.)**

REL 150 provides a large-scale analysis of religious traditions from pre-history to the present, meeting the FG course requirements for category C. Hinduism and Judaism are both analyzed from the second millennium BCE until the present day. Buddhism is analyzed from the first millennium BCE until today. Christianity is examined from the first century CE until the present day, while Islam is covered from the seventh century CE until today. Because of its unique historical circumstances, Native Hawaiian Religion is examined from approximately the fourth century CE until 1820, when the first Christian missionaries arrived in the Hawaiian Islands. Sample materials addressing the distant and/or recent past include:

**Assigned Readings**

- **Ch. 1: Understanding Religion** (pp. 3–31)
  - Speculations on the Sources of Religion (pp. 10–13)

- **Ch. 2: Indigenous Religions** (pp. 33–71)
  - The Modern Recovery of Indigenous Religions (pp. 37-38)
  - Indigenous Religions Today (pp. 63-68)

- **Ch. 3: Hinduism** (pp. 73–121)
  - The Origins of Hinduism (pp. 75–80)
  - Timeline 3.1, the history of Hinduism (p. 77)
  - The Upanishads and the Axis Age (pp. 80–86)
  - Hinduism: Modern Challenges (pp. 107–117)

- **Ch. 4: Buddhism** (pp. 123–179)
  - The Beginnings of Buddhism: The Life of the Buddha (pp. 124–129)
  - The Early Development of Buddhism (pp. 137–139)
  - Timeline 4.1, the history of Buddhism (p. 138)
  - Buddhism and the Modern World (pp. 171–188)

- **Ch. 5: Jainism & Sikhism** (pp. 181-203) (not required by all instructors)
  - Mahavira and the Origins of Jainism (pp. 184-186)
  - Timeline 5.1, the history of Jainism and Sikhism (p. 184)
  - Nanak and the Origins of Sikhism (pp. 193-194)
  - Sikhism and the Modern World (p. 198)

- **Ch. 6: Daoism & Confucianism** (pp. 205–253) (not required by all instructors)
  - The Origins of Daoism (pp. 210–216)
  - Timeline 6.1, the history of Daoism and Confucianism (p. 212)
  - Daoism and the Modern World (pp. 226-227)
  - Confucianism and the Modern World (pp. 246–249)
Ch. 7: Shinto (pp. 255–279) (not required by all instructors)
   The Origins of Shinto (pp. 256–259)
   The Historical Development of Shinto (pp. 259–262)
   Timeline 7.1, the history of Shinto (p. 260)
   Shinto Offshoots: The New Religions (pp. 272–274)
   Shinto and the Modern World (pp. 275–276)

Ch. 8: Judaism (pp. 281–331)
   An Overview of Jewish History (pp. 282–285)
      Timeline 8.1, the history of Judaism (pp. 283)
   Biblical History (pp. 287–301)
   Cultural Conflict during the Second Temple Era (pp. 302–304)
   The Development of Rabbinical Judaism (pp. 305–309)
   Judaism and the Modern World (pp. 310–312)
   Divisions within Contemporary Judaism (pp. 320–325)

Ch. 9: Christianity (pp. 333–405)
   Timeline 9.1, the history of Christianity (p. 336)
   Early Christian Beliefs and History (pp. 343–352)
   The Early Spread of Christianity (pp. 352–357)
   Influences on Christianity at the End of the Roman Empire (pp. 357–360)
   Christianity in the Middle Ages (pp. 366–370)
   Christianity Faces the Modern World (pp. 397–401)

Ch. 10: Islam (pp. 407–469)
   Timeline 10.1, the history of Islam (p. 410)
   The Historical Development of Islam (pp. 427–435)
   Islam and the Modern World (pp. 454–466)

Essay Exam Question:

Discuss the sociological distinction made between orthodox and orthoprax religions. In categorizing Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which are considered orthodox, which are considered orthoprax, and why? Be sure to explore, in as much detail as possible, the historical, regional, and sectarian variations within these traditions.

Writing Assignment:

Media Analysis: Utilizing the media resources on the course website, find a news article about one of the religions we are studying this semester. The article must refer to events that occurred this semester, and a copy of the article must be submitted with the paper. Provide the following information in your opening paragraph: date, title, author, and source of the article, as well as a brief summary. What religious or political biases might one expect from this particular author or this particular media resource, and why? How have those biases been revealed or concealed in this article? What tone does the article adopt towards the religion(s) it discusses? What stereotypes are promoted and/or critiqued in this article? What assumptions does the author make about religion and his or her reading audience? What impressions are created by the language used in this article? Cite specific examples. Overall, do you feel this was an example of high quality journalism? Why, or why not?
Hallmark 2. Analyze the development of human societies and their cultural traditions through time in different regions (including Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania) and using multiple perspectives.

REL 150 is a survey of the world’s major religions. It explores religions that originated in Asia (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Shinto) and the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and their transformations as they spread throughout the world, including Europe, Africa, the Americas and Oceania. The course also includes a section on Indigenous Religions that contains a significant unit on the traditional religion of Hawai‘i and smaller units on indigenous religions in Africa and the Americas.

REL 150 is primarily a historical survey of the religions listed above. The course traces the development of these traditions from their beginnings through the modern period and examines various issues in the contemporary religious world. The time periods will vary greatly depending on the tradition under investigation. In addition to historical methods, instructors may also employ sociological, anthropological, psychological, philosophical, and other approaches.

Sample materials include:

Assigned Readings

Ch. 1: Understanding Religion (pp. 3-31)
   Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Religion (pp. 20–24)

Ch. 2: Indigenous Religions (pp. 33–71)
   Australian Aboriginal Religion (Australia) (p.40)
   Religion of the Pueblo Peoples (North America) (pp. 44–46)
   The Igbo: An Indigenous Religion in Transition (West Africa) (p. 51)
   Traditional Hawaiian Religion (Hawai‘i) (pp. 54–56)
   Personal Experience: Gods in Hawai‘i (Hawai‘i) (pp. 62–63)

Ch. 3: Hinduism (India) (pp. 73–121)
   Hindu Influence beyond India (pp. 114–117)

Ch. 4: Buddhism (pp. 123–179)
   The Influence of Indian Thought on Early Buddhist Teachings (pp. 135–137)
   Theravada Buddhism: The Way of the Elders (Southeast Asia) (pp. 140–146)
   Buddhism in Thailand (p. 143)
   Mahayana Buddhism: The “Big Vehicle” (East Asia) (pp. 146–163)
   Buddhism and the Japanese Arts (Japan) (pp. 162–163)
   Vajrayana Buddhism: The “Diamond Vehicle” (Central Asia) (pp. 164–168)
   Origins, Practice, and Literature of Tibetan Buddhism (pp. 167–173)

Ch. 5: Jainism & Sikhism (India) (pp. 181-203) (not required by all instructors)

Ch. 6: Daoism & Confucianism (China) (pp. 205–253) (not required by all instructors)

Ch. 7: Shinto (Japan) (pp. 255–279) (not required by all instructors)
Essay Exam Questions:

Analyze pre-contact Native Hawaiian Religion in light of our class definition of “religion.” Provide specific details about the myths, rituals, ethics, and art of pre-contact Native Hawaiians and analyze the ways in which the system helped construct a meaningful life in pre-contact Hawai'i.

Explain, in detail, the similarities and differences between the teachings of the Upanishads and the teachings of the Pali Canon (Tripiṭaka). Be sure to describe the historical settings in which these texts were composed and written, and explain the roles of these texts within their broader religious traditions. Also, describe the ways in which the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama directly challenged the social and religious norms of South Asia at that time.

Describe the similarities and differences between Mahayana Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism. Be sure to include descriptions of their texts, their conceptions of the word ‘Buddha,’ their saints, and their paths to salvation. Also explore their relationships with the indigenous religious traditions of East Asia and Southeast Asia.

Discuss the sociological distinction made between orthodox and orthoprax religions. In categorizing Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which are considered orthodox, which are considered orthoprax, and why? Be sure to explore, in as much detail as possible, the historical, regional, and sectarian variations within these traditions.
Describe in detail the similarities and differences between Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Christianity. Be sure to include a thorough comparison of their beliefs, practices, art, and institutional structures, and describe any significant regional differences within each of these traditions.

Hallmark 3. Offer a broad, integrated analysis of cultural, economic, political, scientific, and/or social development that recognizes the diversity of human societies and their cultural traditions.

The study of religion necessitates an understanding of the surrounding political, economic, cultural and social contexts in which the religions develop and thrive. REL 150 takes all of these elements into consideration, examining the interconnectedness of religion with other aspects of social life. Art, architecture, literature, ethics, economics, and politics are all examined as part and parcel of the religious world. These various aspects of social life are analyzed as integrated worldviews.

REL 150 recognizes diversity through its extensive coverage of different religious traditions, from Asia and Europe, from the Middle East and Africa, from Oceania and the Hawaiian Islands. Students are introduced to a multitude of worldviews and come to appreciate the diversity of meanings constructed by various groups. The course also highlights the incredible diversity that exists within the world’s major religions, exploring historical, sectarian, and regional differences. In addition to the many themes and examples presented in the hallmarks above, the following materials demonstrate REL 150’s emphases on integrated analysis and diversity:

Assigned Readings

Ch. 1: Understanding Religion (pp. 3-31)
   Patterns among Religions (pp. 13–20)
   Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Religion (pp. 20–24)
   Key Critical Issues (pp. 24–26)

Ch. 2: Indigenous Religions (pp. 33–71)
   Studying Indigenous Religions: Learning from Patterns (pp. 39–48)
   The Green Movement: A New Global Religion? (pp. 66-67)

Ch. 3: Hinduism (pp. 73–121)
   Hinduism: Modern Challenges (pp. 107–117)

Ch. 4: Buddhism (pp. 123–179)
   Some Major Schools of Mahayana (pp. 155–160)
   Figure 4.2, Branches and Schools of Buddhism (p. 155)
   Contemporary Issues: Environmental Buddhism (p. 175)

Ch. 8: Judaism (pp. 281–331)
   Questioning and Reform (p. 309)
   Divisions within Contemporary Judaism (pp. 320–325)
   Culturally Based Divisions (pp. 320–322)
   Observance Based Divisions (pp. 322–325)
   Jewish Identity and the Future of Judaism (pp. 325–327)
Writing Assignments:

**Relativism:** Relativism is the theory that truths, values, and norms are different for different people depending on the social, cultural, economic, political and religious contexts in which those people live. The theory of relativism requires students to tolerate different beliefs and practices based on the conviction that there are diverse and equally legitimate modes of being. But if one truly believes something, is one able to recognize that belief as a belief, or do people simply take their own beliefs to be “the truth”? Can we ever step outside of our own belief systems? Why does the academic study of religion require us to adopt relativism as part of our methodology? How is cross-cultural learning impaired if one does not adopt an attitude of relativism? Are there any situations, academic or otherwise, to which the theory of relativism should not be applied? Should a person tolerate intolerance? Does a student of Religion have a responsibility to respect all the beliefs and practices of others? Who determines what is legitimately ‘religious’ (or ‘Hawaiian,’ or ‘Hindu,’ or ‘Buddhist,’ or ‘Jewish,’ or ‘Christian,’ or ‘Islamic’) in the first place?

**Identity:** One’s identity is not determined by who they are, but by who they think they are. Who do you think you are? With which groups do you identify yourself (e.g., humans, females, Asians, Americans, Muslims, loners, stamp collectors, students, etc., etc.)? Why do you identify yourself in this particular manner? How else could you identify yourself, and how might this change your sense of self and the way you interact with others? How does religion affect your identity, and why do you believe the things you believe? Every identity creates imaginary boundaries between ourselves and those we imagine to be different, or ‘other’. We typically construct our sense of identity in opposition to others. We decide who we are by delineating who we are not. Boundaries of identity are sometimes created out of fear, insecurity, or ignorance. How might your identity change through travel, study, and/or close interaction with other peoples and cultures?
Hallmark 4. Examine processes of cross-cultural interaction and exchange that have linked the world's peoples through time while recognizing diversity.

REL 150 examines the interaction of various religious traditions within multicultural settings, including the United States. It also examines the historical spread of several traditions: the spread of Buddhism throughout Asia; the spread of Christianity into Europe, the Americas, and the Pacific; and the spread of Islam into Africa and Asia. Such examinations allow students to see the manners in which religions transform cultures and cultures transform religions. By examining religiously pluralistic societies, such as those found in East Asia or the Middle East, students come to understand the extent to which religions influence one another and the boundaries of identity which keep them separate. Sample course materials that address cross-cultural interaction and exchange include:

Essay Exam Question:

Describe the similarities and differences between Mahayana Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism. Be sure to include descriptions of their texts, their conceptions of the word ‘Buddha,’ their saints, and their paths to salvation. Also explore their relationships with the indigenous religious traditions of East Asia and Southeast Asia.

Lecture Topics:

Traditional Hawaiian Religion
- Tahitian influences on Native Hawaiian religion

Hinduism
- The blending of Aryan and Dravidian cultures
- Hindu influences in Southeast Asia

Buddhism
- Buddhism in China (its relationship with Taoism and Confucianism)
- Chinese influences on Buddhist beliefs
- Buddhism in Japan (its relationship with Shinto)
- Japanese influences on Buddhist institutions

Judaism
- Zoroastrian influences on Judaism
- Christian influences on Judaism

Christianity
- Zoroastrian and Jewish influences on Christianity
- Greek and Roman influences on Christianity
- Germanic influences on Christianity
- Catholicism in Latin America and the Philippines

Islam
- Jewish and Christian influences on Islam
- Muslim influences on Christianity
- Sufism in North Africa and South Asia
Writing Assignments:

**Relativism:** Relativism is the theory that truths, values, and norms are different for different people depending on the social, cultural, economic, political and religious contexts in which those people live. The theory of relativism requires students to tolerate different beliefs and practices based on the conviction that there are diverse and equally legitimate modes of being. But if one truly believes something, is one able to recognize that belief as a belief, or do people simply take their own beliefs to be ‘the truth’? Can we ever step outside of our own belief systems? Why does the academic study of religion require us to adopt relativism as part of our methodology? How is cross-cultural learning impaired if one does not adopt an attitude of relativism? Are there any situations, academic or otherwise, to which the theory of relativism should not be applied? Should a person tolerate intolerance? Does a student of Religion have a responsibility to respect all the beliefs and practices of others? Who determines what is legitimately ‘religious’ (or ‘Hawaiian,’ or ‘Hindu,’ or ‘Buddhist,’ or ‘Jewish,’ or ‘Christian,’ or ‘Islamic’) in the first place?

**Identity:** One’s identity is not determined by who they are, but by who they think they are. Who do you think you are? With which groups do you identify yourself (e.g., humans, females, Asians, Americans, Muslims, loners, stamp collectors, students, etc., etc.)? Why do you identify yourself in this particular manner? How else could you identify yourself, and how might this change your sense of self and the way you interact with others? How does religion affect your identity, and why do you believe the things you believe? Every identity creates imaginary boundaries between ourselves and those we imagine to be different, or ‘other’. We typically construct our sense of identity in opposition to others. We decide who we are by delineating who we are not. Boundaries of identity are sometimes created out of fear, insecurity, or ignorance. How might your identity change through travel, study, and/or close interaction with other peoples and cultures?

**Field Research:** Attend a service in a Hindu temple, a Buddhist temple, a Jewish synagogue, a Christian church, or a Muslim mosque, or visit a Hawaiian heiau. Students must have had no prior contact with the religion whose service they attend. Provide the following information in your opening paragraph: time, date, address, name, and sectarian affiliation of the service you attended. Describe, in detail, the art and architecture you saw. Describe, in detail, the clergy and the laity who were present. Describe, in detail, any rituals that were performed and any myths or ethics that may have been enacted, portrayed, or discussed. Did you feel comfortable in this setting? Why, or why not? With what stereotypes, assumptions, and expectations did you come into this field research experience? How was the experience different from what you expected? How did your own beliefs, ideas, and assumptions affect your interpretation of the experience? Do not plagiarize. Cite your sources (e.g. plaques and brochures).

**Hallmark 5. Include at least one component on Hawaiian, Pacific, or Asian societies and their cultural traditions.**

Approximately 33% of the course is dedicated to the study of Asian religions, and approximately 10% of the course is dedicated to the study of Hawaiian religion. Course materials include:
Course Calendar (Lecture Topics):

**Week 3**  
Monday, September 9th  
Wednesday, September 11th  
The Academic Study of Religion  
**Traditional Hawaiian Religion**

**Week 4**  
Monday, September 16th  
Wednesday, September 18th  
**Traditional Hawaiian Religion**  
**Traditional Hawaiian Religion**

**Week 5**  
Monday, September 23rd  
Wednesday, September 25th  
**Introduction to Asian Religions**  
**Hinduism**

**Week 6**  
Monday, September 30th  
Wednesday, October 2nd  
**Hinduism**  
**Hinduism**

**Week 7**  
Monday, October 7th  
Wednesday, October 9th  
**Hinduism**  
**Buddhism (South Asia)**

**Week 8**  
Monday, October 14th  
Wednesday, October 16th  
**Buddhism (Southeast Asia)**  
**Buddhism (East Asia)**

**Week 9**  
Monday, October 21st  
Wednesday, October 23rd  
**Buddhism (Central Asia)**  
Slide Presentation (Asia)

**Assigned Readings**  

- **Ch. 2: Indigenous Religions** (pp. 33–71)  
  Traditional Hawaiian Religion *(Hawai‘i)* (pp. 54–56)  
  Personal Experience: Gods in Hawai‘i *(Hawai‘i)* (pp. 62–63)

- **Ch. 3: Hinduism** *(India)* (pp. 73–121)  
  Hindu Influence **beyond India** (pp. 114–117)

- **Ch. 4: Buddhism** (pp. 123–179)  
  The Influence of Indian Thought on Early Buddhist Teachings (pp. 135–137)  
  Theravada Buddhism: The Way of the Elders *(Southeast Asia)* (pp. 140–146)  
  Buddhism in **Thailand** (p. 143)  
  Mahayana Buddhism: The “Big Vehicle” *(East Asia)* (pp. 146–163)  
  Buddhism and the Japanese Arts *(Japan)* (pp. 162–163)  
  Vajrayana Buddhism: The “Diamond Vehicle” *(Central Asia)* (pp. 164–168)  
  Origins, Practice, and Literature of Tibetan Buddhism (pp. 167–173)

- **Ch. 5: Jainism & Sikhism** *(India)* (pp. 181-203) (not required by all instructors)

- **Ch. 6: Daoism & Confucianism** *(China)* (pp. 205–253) (not required by all instructors)  
  Basic Elements of Traditional Chinese Beliefs (pp. 206–210)

- **Ch. 7: Shinto** *(Japan)* (pp. 255–279) (not required by all instructors)
Essay Exam Questions:

Analyze pre-contact Native Hawaiian Religion in light of our class definition of “religion.” Provide specific details about the myths, rituals, ethics, and art of pre-contact Native Hawaiians and analyze the ways in which the system helped construct a meaningful life in pre-contact Hawai‘i.

Explain, in detail, the similarities and differences between the teachings of the *Upanishads* and the teachings of the *Pali Canon* (*Tripitaka*). Be sure to describe the historical settings in which these texts were composed and written, and explain the roles of these texts within their broader religious traditions. Also, describe the ways in which the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama directly challenged the social and religious norms of South Asia at that time.

Describe the similarities and differences between Mahayana Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism. Be sure to include descriptions of their texts, their conceptions of the word ‘Buddha,’ their saints, and their paths to salvation. Also explore their relationships with the indigenous religious traditions of East Asia and Southeast Asia.

**Hallmark 6. Engage students in the study and analysis of writings, narratives, texts, artifacts, and/or practices that represent the perspectives of different societies and cultural traditions.**

REL 150 includes extensive analysis of religious writings, narratives, texts, artifacts and practices that represent the perspectives of each religion under examination. Introductory textbooks will typically include selections from sacred texts and mythologies that are integral to such an introductory course. Instructors often assign other reading materials, introducing students to religious philosophy, poetry, mythology, and law. Introductory textbooks also include photographs of religious art, architecture, and artifacts from around the world. Instructors bring religious artifacts into the classroom, such as ritual implements, sacramental garments, and other paraphernalia, enabling students to handle such objects. Likewise, instructors require students to participate in field research projects, taking them out of the classroom and into the sacred spaces of different religious communities. Honolulu, with its richly diverse, multicultural community, is an ideal learning lab for such a course. Students are able not only to witness other traditions in practice, but to participate in ritual activities which might otherwise be far removed from their field of experience. Instructors may also show videos of rituals and play music from around the world, bringing different modes of cultural expression into the classroom. Specific examples include:

**Sacred Texts:**

Hawaiian Religion  
*Kumulipo*

Hinduism  
*Upanishads*  
*Bhagavad-Gita*  
*Ramayana*
Buddhism
    *Pali Canon*
    *Lotus Sutra*

Taoism
    *Daodejing*

Judaism
    *Torah*

Christianity
    *Gospels*

Islam
    *Qur’an*

Audio Recordings:


    “Islamic Call to Prayer.” Mustafa Ozcan Gunesdogdu, 1999.

Religious Paraphernalia:

Hinduism
    Etched *Ramayana* from Bali, Indonesia

Buddhism
    Leaf from the *Bodhi tree* in Bodh Gaya, India
    *Rosaries* from Japan, Tibet, and Honolulu
    *Prayer wheel* from Tibet
    *Bronze sculpture* of Amida Buddha
    *Carved sculptures* of Hotei (the “Laughing Buddha”)

Judaism
    Hebrew collection of the *Psalms*
    *Yarmulke* from Jerusalem

Christianity
    Roman Catholic *crucifixes* and *images of the Virgin Mary*
    Roman Catholic *holy water*
    Eastern Orthodox *icons*

Islam
    *Rosaries* from Afghanistan, India, and Turkey
    *Prayer rug* from Saudi Arabia
    *Veils* from Afghanistan and Jordan
Slide Presentations:

“Hinduism and Buddhism.” Slides from research trips to Asia.

“Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.” Slides from research trips to North Africa, the Middle East, and the Balkans.

Writing Assignment:

Field Research: Attend a service in a Hindu temple, a Buddhist temple, a Jewish synagogue, a Christian church, or a Muslim mosque, or visit a Hawaiian heiau. Students must have had no prior contact with the religion whose service they attend. Provide the following information in your opening paragraph: time, date, address, name, and sectarian affiliation of the service you attended. Describe, in detail, the art and architecture you saw. Describe, in detail, the clergy and the laity who were present. Describe, in detail, any rituals that were performed and any myths or ethics that may have been enacted, portrayed, or discussed. Did you feel comfortable in this setting? Why, or why not? With what stereotypes, assumptions, and expectations did you come into this field research experience? How was the experience different from what you expected? How did your own beliefs, ideas, and assumptions affect your interpretation of the experience? Do not plagiarize. Cite your sources (e.g. plaques and brochures).