

Assignment: Comparing Religious Rituals and Spaces Across Traditions

Overview:

Religious practices take many forms, shaped by theology, community needs, and physical space. In this assignment, you will select two different religious rituals from *Immersive Religion*'s resource suites and compare them. You will analyze not just the rituals themselves, but also how space, community roles, language, and atmosphere contribute to religious meaning. You are encouraged to integrate 360 videos, virtual tours, and interviews to deepen your understanding.

Learning Objectives:

- Compare and contrast religious practices across different traditions.
- Analyze the relationship between ritual, space, community, and belief.
- Critically engage with multiple types of primary sources (visual, spatial, oral).
- Reflect on the value and limitations of immersive digital resources for religious studies.

Step 1: Select Two Rituals

Choose two rituals from different traditions featured in *Immersive Religion*, such as:

- **Jummah Prayer** (Islam)
- **Catholic Mass** (Christianity)
- **Durga Puja** (Hinduism)

Tip: Pick rituals that interest you or that you know little about — this will make your reflection stronger!

Step 2: Explore the Materials

For each ritual, engage with as many available resources as possible:

- **360-degree videos** (ritual in action)
- **Virtual tours** (exploring the sacred space)
- **Enhanced interviews** (with religious leaders and scholars)

Take notes using these prompts:

- How is the space designed and used?
 - What actions or movements define the ritual?
 - What sounds, prayers, or chants are present?
 - How is leadership structured (e.g., clergy, prayer leader)?
 - What emotional or communal dynamics are noticeable?
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Step 3: Write a 750–1000 Word Reflection Paper

Your paper should be structured around three sections:

1. Description (200–300 words)

- Briefly describe the two rituals you selected.
- Note key features: participants, actions, location, and timing.

2. Comparison and Contrast (400–500 words)

- How are the rituals similar?
- How are they different in structure, purpose, or style?
- How does the design and use of space support or shape each ritual?
- What role does sound, movement, or language play in each experience?

Tip: You don't need to compare everything — pick 2–3 meaningful points of comparison.

3. Critical Reflection (150–200 words)

- How did engaging with multiple forms of media (video, tour, interviews) deepen or complicate your understanding?
 - What were the advantages and limitations of studying the rituals through *Immersive Religion* rather than in person?
 - What surprised you the most?
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Formatting Requirements:

- 12-point font, Times New Roman or similar
- Double-spaced
- Include word count at the end

- Use brief citations for any quotes or specific references from the site (e.g., "Interview with Imam Hegazy")

Rubric (40 Points Total):

Category	Excellent (9-10 pts)	Good (7-8 pts)	Satisfactory (5-6 pts)	Needs Improvement (0-4 pts)
Use of Sources (10 pts)	Skillfully integrates multiple resources (video, tour, interviews) for each ritual.	Uses most resources but integration could be deeper.	Uses some resources; limited connection to analysis.	Minimal use of resources; missed key materials.
Description (10 pts)	Clear, vivid descriptions of both rituals with key details.	Mostly clear descriptions; minor missing elements.	Basic descriptions; lacks vividness or clarity.	Confusing or incomplete descriptions.
Comparison & Analysis (10 pts)	Insightful comparisons that go beyond surface-level differences.	Some thoughtful comparisons; could be deeper.	Basic comparisons; more description than analysis.	Weak or unclear comparisons; minimal analysis.
Critical Reflection (10 pts)	Thoughtful, nuanced reflection on digital ethnography and insights gained.	Some critical reflection, but could be expanded.	Limited reflection; mostly superficial comments.	Little or no critical reflection; very superficial.