

Professor David Campbell  
POLS 30028 Religion in American Politics  
University of Notre Dame

**PAPER TOPIC: EXPERIENCING A DIFFERENT RELIGION**

Due: November 15, 2011  
Length: 1,250-1,500 words

- ▶ **Submit your papers by noon on November 15 (remember that there is no class that day). Bring them to Professor Campbell's office at 422 Decio Hall, where there will be a box to collect your papers. No electronic submissions.**
- ▶ **List the number of words in the essay below your name on the title page**
- ▶ **Use a 12 point font**
- ▶ **No late submissions will be accepted. (Computer problems are no excuse for late work. Computers crash; plan accordingly).**

Your assignment is to select a religious tradition other than your own and write a paper about the general beliefs held by members of that tradition and, specifically, political involvement within the tradition.

The assignment has two parts.

One part is to research the history, beliefs, practices, and political involvement of your chosen tradition. You will need to consult *both* scholarly research and what the religion says about itself in its own literature (including websites, books, pamphlets, etc.).

The second part is a visit to a congregation representing the tradition you have chosen to study. Since you will be ambassadors of Notre Dame, please be sure to dress and act appropriately during the service. Learn when the service starts and ends so that you can arrive early and stay until the end. If you have questions about the service many congregations have a website to consult, or you can call the congregation's office and ask about appropriate attire, length of the service, etc. You are welcome to attend a service in the South Bend area, in your hometown, or anywhere else of your choosing. Students in the class are also welcome to attend a service in small groups, keeping in mind the need not to be disruptive. You will find that nearly all congregations are very welcoming to visitors, so you should not be shy about introducing yourself and explaining the purpose of your visit.

You are also welcome to interview members of the tradition you are studying, although it is not required.

Your paper should include the following:

1. A brief history of the religious tradition, and a synopsis of its distinctive beliefs and practices
2. A discussion of political involvement within that tradition
3. A description of the service you attended, including personal reflection on what you observed. How was the service different than what you have experienced in other places of worship? How was it similar? What did you learn from the service? Was there any political content to the service? Even if politics was not explicitly mentioned, are there political implications to what you observed?

