



# Writing for Change

RAISING AWARENESS OF DIFFERENCE, POWER, AND DISCRIMINATION

## 4.13 Reporting on Religion

### **Objectives**

Create an awareness of societal assumptions about the “norm” in religion.

Analyze effects of those assumptions, as they relate to a particular major or field, on a person outside of the religious “norm.”

### **Materials needed**

Pen and paper, or copies of the handout

### **Time needed**

Sixty minutes or more

### **Instructor directions**

Have your students interview a person in their class, major, or profession who is open about practicing a religion different from theirs (i.e., not just a different sect or denomination, such as Baptist and Episcopalian, but a different faith tradition, such as Christianity and Islam, or Judaism and Wicca).

Have them write a report describing that person’s firsthand experiences, as they relate to that religion, in their major or profession.

### **Variation**

Have your students interview a person in their major or field who is open about having a sexual orientation that differs from their own.

Ask them to report that person’s experiences, as they relate to that sexual orientation, in their major or field.



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## 4.13 Reporting on Religion Handout

### Directions

Interview a person in your class, major, or profession who is open about practicing a religion that is different from yours (i.e., not just a different sect or denomination, such as Baptist and Episcopalian, but a different faith tradition, such as Christianity and Islam, or Judaism and Wicca).

Write a report describing that person's firsthand experiences, as they relate to that religion, in your major or profession.

Answer the following questions:

How do assumptions about the "norm" in religion operate in your major or field? How do these assumptions operate in the academic setting generally? In social situations at the academic institution?

Does your interviewee recognize any challenges or disadvantages in the major or field related to her or his practice of a religion outside the "norm"? How does she or he respond to those challenges? OR Does your interviewee recognize any privileges or advantages associated with practicing a "normative" religion? How does he or she react to that recognition?

What disadvantages and advantages were conferred by your interviewee's religious affiliation?

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What does that person cite as being sources of strength or support?

How does or will that person's experiences affect you and your participation in the major or field?

**Variation**

Interview a person in your class, major, or profession who is open about having a sexual orientation that differs from yours. Answer the questions above.