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Final Essay Assignment for RS 370: Religion and Ecology

Spring 2020

**Assignment Overview:**

For this final essay, you will imagine that you are a consultant who has been hired by an American environmental organization to help improve their diversity efforts. As you know from the "State of Diversity" report (see the Week 2 Module), American environmental organizations have struggled to attract and retain diverse members and leaders. Your assignment is to provide concrete advice, based on the material you have studied this semester, that can help one organization improve its diversity efforts.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this assignment is to synthesize the material you have learned this semester, and apply it toward solving a real-world issue.

**Instructions:**

Write a letter to the leaders of the American environmental organization that you analyzed in Week 14. The letter should consist of these elements (see estimated word lengths as a guide, not a strict rule):

1. A summary of the ways you see the organization creating an environment that is welcoming to diverse communities, and ways that they might be limiting inclusivity. [Approximately 150 words]
2. A set of concrete suggestions for they could more effectively extend their reach among African Americans. These suggestions should be supported by evidence from the material you read in Unit 2. For example, you might suggest they could more effectively engage with African Americans by developing programs to acknowledge, and overcome, the racist legacy of American environmentalism. Then explain that there is extensive research conducted by scholars of religion and the environment, that indicate A, B and C (e.g. you could offer three pieces of evidence from the readings that would support your recommendation.) [Approximately 300-500 words]
3. A set of concrete suggestions for how they could more effectively extend their reach among Latinx communities, especially Catholics. These suggestions should be supported by evidence from the material you read in Unit 3, following the same model that I summarized for your recommendation for involving African Americans. [Approximately 300-500 words]
4. Optional - lessons learned from Unit 4 readings
5. A concluding paragraph that sums up the report. [Approximately 150 words]

 **Requirements:**

* Include evidence from *at least  2* essays/articles from Unit 2 and *at least*2 from Unit 3. (And using more evidence than that will only strengthen your argument).
* Typed, can be single-spaced or double‐spaced
* Standard 12‐pt. font (Times New Roman)
* 1” margins all around
* AUDIENCE: Keep in mind that you are writing this for the leaders of an environmental organization, so they have not taken this class and have not read the articles that you are discussing. YOU are the experts on these issues now, and it is your job to explain the issues to your audience. You can write in sophisticated language and assume they will understand it, but you have to provide all necessary information from the articles you've read, because your reader has not read them.
* Proper citations
	+ You should carefully give credit to the sources you use and their ideas, whether or not you cite them verbatim. Your paper should follow Chicago style, APA or MLA and include a bibliography or works cited page at the end of the paper.
	+ The essay will be evaluated for the depth of its engagement with the texts, the quality of its critical analysis using the approaches of the course, and its success in using standard academic English and proper formatting.

Your essays will be graded based on the attached rubric.

**Example:**

You may use the model given below to structure your letter.

**MEMORANDUM**

Date:  April 29, 2020

To: Michael Brune, Executive Director, the Sierra Club

From: Amanda Baugh, CSUN Student and Managing Director of Environmental Diversity Associates

RE: Diversity Report and Recommendations

Dear Mr. Brune and members of the Sierra Club Executive Committee,

Thank you for hiring our firm to conduct a diversity report for your organization. I am pleased to offer the following analysis of your current efforts, along with research-based recommendations for strengthening your efforts in the future.

Based on our analysis of your current efforts, you already have taken numerous steps to create a welcoming environment for diverse participants. [Name several specific things the organization does].

There are also some areas for improvement, especially around issues of XXX [here is where you will discuss some limitations that you have identified.]

With your particular circumstances in mind, we would suggest that you undertake the following measures to create an environment that is more welcoming to African American communities. [Add your suggestions, and supporting evidence here].

We also have some suggestions for improving your outreach among Latinx communities, and especially Catholics. [Add your suggestions, and supporting evidence here].

In conclusion, we recommend that XXX.

Thank you for entrusting our firm with this important task. I am happy to discuss our report with you, and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Amanda Baugh