**Project Based Learning (PBL) Packet**

Fall 2015

RELG 212: Asian Religions



**I. What is PBL and why are we doing it?**

Secondary education emphasizes the mastery of facts and concepts. The types of problems (on tests, in papers, etc.) encountered in high school courses are often well-defined—the tasks are clear; the information is readily available; the answers are relatively straightforward; and it’s generally pretty easy to figure out what you are supposed to do. But “real-world” problems hardly ever work that way! In your personal and professional lives, you will encounter problems and tasks that you may not completely understand—problems that are complex, with many relevant factors and many possible solutions. You’ll have to work hard to recognize and correct your own ignorance. (Recognizing and correcting your own ignorance may, in fact, be the hardest part of real-world problem solving!) You’ll also have to work with people of different backgrounds who have different strengths and weaknesses.

PBL is an open-ended pedagogical method, encouraging exploration, creativity, and the development of complex problem-solving skills in a group setting. You will be presented with a multifaceted problem, and it will be up to you (and your group) to figure out how to solve it.

PBL encourages:

* Exploring a problem, rather than answering a narrow question.
* Using “I don’t know” as a starting point rather than a roadblock. (If you don’t know, how can you find out?)
* Collaborative expertise. (Your skills and talents may complement those of others with whom you’ll work.)
* Practice working in a group. (Like it or not, everyone has to work with others in the professional world!)

While your group’s final results will be important, it is also vital that each individual be held accountable for his/ her own performance. Your group’s first task will be assigning roles. Some suggested roles are included in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Task Master | Keeps everybody on topic and talking about issues that are helpful to the group. Completes group work report… |
| Recorder | Keeps notes on the discussion, identifies goals and learning issues. |
| Reporter | Summarizes and writes up information; communicates results… |
| Skeptic/ Accuracy Coach (aka Fact Nerd) | Intentionally challenges assumptions of the group, poses alternative opinions, challenges facts, checks facts… |
| Philologist (aka Source Nerd) | Addresses issues related to research sources, such as source quality, authorship, etc., produces bibliography… |
| **Everyone** | **Pursues objectives, does research, brings ideas to the group, tracks down answers, completes individual tasks, etc.** |

**II. Procedure**

In our two PBL projects, we’ll begin with a short introduction from me. Then you’ll split up into group, assign roles, and begin to formulate your ideas. Your group will submit a progress report (distributed in class) after each day of group work. You will also complete an individual work log (distributed in class), which you will submit to me at the end of the project.

Tasks for day one of group work:

1. Assign roles and establish ground rules. What are each member’s obligations? Under what scenario may a member be dismissed from the group?
2. Read and consider the problem, and then establish what you think the major question(s) is/are and any subsidiary questions. In your first meeting, you can begin to formulate some basic ideas and identify major problems. Your questions and ideas may change as you learn more about the problem.
3. Establish objectives for your second meeting. Agree on specific tasks to be completed before/ during your second meeting.
4. Complete group progress report. Update individual work log.

Tasks for day two of group work:

1. Report on what you’ve found (each member should report his/ her findings)
2. Assess. What do you still need to know? What doubts do you have about the research thus far? What don’t you understand? What should you ask about?
3. Plan your write-up/ presentation. What is the best way to present your findings to the class. (Be creative! A creative presentation is more compelling!) Who is doing what? When will they be submitted to the “reporter?”
4. Complete group progress report. Update individual work log.

Tasks for day three of group work:

1. On the last day of PBL, your findings will be presented publicly.
2. Final versions of your presentation should be submitted on Moodle by midnight.
3. Each individual will complete a group feedback form (distributed in class).

**IV. Grading**

There are two components the grade for your group project: an individual grade (40%) and a group grade (60%).

*Individual Grade:*

Your individual grade will be based on three things:

1. My observations of you.
2. Your evaluation of yourself on the individual work log.
3. Feedback from your group members about your work.

*Group Grade:*

Your group grade will be based on the quality of your final product.

1. Clarity of the primary problem(s) or task(s) as recorded on your group progress reports.
2. Judicious use of scholarly sources.
3. Quality of the product. (Is it polished, persuasive, and professional?)
4. Achievement of goals outlined on your progress reports.
5. Quality of project presentation.