

Do You Need Religion To Clean Up the Ganges River?

Writing Assignments that Inject International Perspectives into Any Course

Participants in this workshop will learn how to develop writing assignments that help students understand the profound impact that culture has on thought and action in any field, including ones that many students believe transcend cultural influences.

For example, by asking students to write about the ways that religion has both helped and hindered efforts to clean up the Ganges River in India, faculty in engineering, environmental science, health studies, and other fields can teach their students about the ways culture impacts their disciplines. I will explain an array of strategies for making writing assignments that can be used in undergraduate and graduate courses in any field, from the natural sciences and humanities to business and fine arts. My examples will be drawn from the subcontinent of India, but the strategies can be used with any part of the world. During the workshop, participants will have a chance to apply the strategies by drafting assignments for their own classes.

This workshop will be especially useful to faculty who want to introduce international perspectives in courses that are typically taught in a Eurocentric way in American universities. Faculty teaching courses that already include international and intercultural perspectives will gain new ideas for creating writing assignments that capture student interest and enhance student learning.