

Please read over rubric carefully. And remember that there is a lot of information that could appear on your Mini-Exam

Here you will submit your rough draft and the TAs will provide you feedback. The paper should be complete even though this is the draft - your works cited page and in text citations should all be included. Points will be deduction for incomplete drafts.

You also need to submit the two sets of questions for the Maasai videos- you can place them both on a separate word doc or PDF.

The idea is for the TAs to make sure that your final paper is in such good shape that you can earn an excellent score on it - the entire paper is worth 100 points.

START HERE - GELO Assignment - Maasai and Ethical Relativity

GELO PAPER → START HERE: ETHICAL RELATIVITY, THE MAASAI, AND CIRCUMCISION

START HERE before beginning this project and read carefully

Sections:

1. Why we have General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs)
 2. Structure of the assignment
 3. Watch the *Becoming Maasai Women* video and answer the questions
 4. Watch the *Maasai Culture in Loliondo* video and answer the questions
 5. Read the paper rubric
 6. Meet up at the weekly Zoom meeting
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- 7. In case you didn't know SFC is consistently ranked top 10 in the nation. One of the reasons that they meet this benchmark of excellence is because teaching is a priority. SFC uses **GELO assignments** to assess the quality of learning at the college. This means that your GELO assignment could be sampled for evaluation

(anonymously) by the college to assess how teachers and students are working together to meet educational goals. The primary General Education learning outcome for this course is **Multicultural and Global Awareness**. Students must demonstrate an understanding of pluralism/diversity in the world community and an awareness of civic and social participation and ethical and informed decision making. I will assess your achievement of this learning outcome through this GELO assignment, it involves a synthesis of varied materials that will allow you to appreciate the complexity of global citizenship and the power and importance of enculturation.

2.

1. The structure of this assignment is as follows:

- Start by thoroughly **reading this document** and following all instructions
- You will be **watching two short videos** on the **Maasai**, each video has a set of questions that you must answer (posted below). It is a good idea to print them out and read them over before watching each of the videos so that you know what you what information to look for while watching.
- Meet for the live **Zoom lecture** (if possible). We will watch the videos and answer the questions posted below. You can earn extra credit points by attending. If you cannot attend the lecture will be posted in the module 3 section.
- **Prepare a paper draft & submit the answers to the two sets of questions.** Submit to canvas – I will be offering feedback (**Due Nov 13th @ 11:59PM**).
- **Submit your revised paper** based on the feedback (**Due Nov 26 @11:59 PM**).

3. Watch the video **Becoming Maasai Women**, revisit the concept of **Rites of Passage**, and answer the questions below (you will need to submit the answers to these questions with your paper: [Becoming Maasai Women \(Links to an external site.\)](#))

4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5w3PEHsnr8&feature=youtu.be>

***** Review Rites of Passage *****

Arnold van Gennep was the first anthropologist to recognize cultural rituals and ceremonies are used to mark an individual's change in status – he called these rituals **rites of passage** (essentially passing from one status to another). van Gennep identified four major rites of passage that are nearly **universal**. They are **birth**, **puberty**, **marriage**, and **death**. As you will see, human sexuality plays a primary role in every category, especially the first three. In both videos you will observe puberty rites within the Maasai culture. Do your best to note the importance

of these rituals within Maasai culture. Their importance extends far beyond the ceremonies themselves.

Becoming Maasai Women Questions:

- Begin by noting any **statistics** that are presented in the video
- What is the **alternative rite of passage** outlined in the video? What is the traditional rite of passage? You should be able to describe both.
- Who is **Teri Gabrielson** and what is her role in **the Alternative Rite of Passage (ARP)**? (Hint: She is part of an NGO)
- Teri would be considered a **stakeholder[1]** or a person that will be interested in or affected by a change to this cultural practice or rite of passage. As you watch the film you should note all the stakeholders and how they might be affected.
- Create two columns one titled “good” and the other “bad”. List what is good and bad about the **traditional rite of passage** (clitoral circumcision) from a **Maasai girl’s perspective**. One example that goes in the “good” category is offered by one of the girls in the video, she says “you will be respected by your family”. List all points that are discussed.
- Do some Maasai girls seem **worried** or **concerned** about **not** getting the traditional form of the rite of passage?
- What does the mother of the Maasai teacher say about the **Bible**?
- What does she say about being **cursed**?
- What language are the T-shirts Teri gives away at the end of the ceremony printed in? Why do you think this is?
- What kinds of jobs do the Maasai girls want when they graduate college?
- Can the girls afford to go to college? What will they do if they can’t?
- How long has the school in the village been available to the girls?
- Is it a sure thing that the school will continue to be funded?
- What will happen to the Maasai village if all its girls – women - leave the village to train to be pilots and chemists? For example, could they continue to live in the Maasai village if they become pilots?
- How long is the ARP program funded? Will they follow up to see if the girls with the ARP accomplish their goals AND receive good treatment from their community? Remember there are dire consequences for women who do not get the traditional rite of passage, including being forced into prostitution because they are rejected by their community.
- **NOTE:** during the **Zoom lecture** I will discuss how the puberty rite of the Maasai also function to foster relationships between village and impact the economics of the Maasai.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcOegPjhkn0>

5. Watch the video ***Maasai Culture in Loliondo*** and answer the questions below:



Maasai Culture in Loliondo (Links to an external site.)

Maasai Culture in Loliondo questions:

- Who is responsible for the content of this video, an NGO or the Maasai?
- Is the rite of passage limited to those in the village or do many villages gather together? Based on this what can you infer about the importance of this ritual to the Maasai?
- How do the men feel about their Maasai culture? What evidence supports this?
- How do the men feel about church?
- How do they feel about the Bible? **Compare this to what is said about the bible in the first video.**
- Are they made to feel shameful about their cultural practices?
- What do the men say about the Maasai women and church and their willingness to attend the ritual?
- Most Maasai do not attend college to study geology and climate, how do they feel about climate change? On what evidence do they base their opinion?
- Do they seem to be in conflict with the government?
- How do you think these Maasai men would respond to Teri's alternative rite of passage?
- This is site that is run by the Maasai, it gives more detail on the ritual involved in male circumcision: <http://www.maasai-association.org/ceremonies.html> (Links to an external site.)

6. READ THIS RUBRIC CAREFULLY - The Maasai and Ethical Relativism

In this essay/response you will be exploring the differences between **cultural relativity** and **ethical relativity**. Your stance on ethical relativity and circumcision will inform your thesis. Now, you must naturally be asking what *is* the difference between cultural relativity and ethical relativity? So. let's start by defining ethics:

eth-ics ('eTHiks/) noun 1. moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity. "medical ethics also enter into the question"

synonyms: moral code, morals, morality, values, rights and wrongs, principles, ideals, standards (of behavior), value system, virtues, dictates of conscience. Example: "your so-called newspaper is clearly not burdened by a sense of ethics"

7. the branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/> (Links to an external site.)

While **cultural relativity** requires that you judge a culture by its own traditions and values, **ethical relativity** goes a step further and requires that you judge a culture by its own morality (ethics) and not by your own. The main difference is in the degree of “judgement”. Some might argue that ethical relativity cannot truly exist because most humans are incapable of abandoning their own moral compass. Remember that your morality is the most culturally regulated practice that you have, sanctions against immoral behavior in any given society usually come with swift and grave consequences. This is very different from one culture choosing to wear a finger ring to signify married status and another culture that uses a chin tattoo to designate marriage status.

Now, let’s think about **circumcision** and basic **human rights** and what it means on a global level to violate a basic human right. This brings us to Eleanor Roosevelt who championed “**The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.” Violations of human rights are often used as justification by one or more countries to intercede in other countries’ state affairs. If a government or other political entity violates fundamental human rights, another country may come to the aid those individuals whose rights are being denied or transgressed. Further, the violating country may be sanctioned economically and otherwise. So, in this assignment you will be addressing circumcision on a global scale and will be required to exercise to the best of your ability – **ethical relativism** – that is you will need to assess female circumcision from within its own cultural context (as we did in class when we discussed what was “good” about Maasai female circumcision). In essence, you could say that you are judging whether the NGO in the Maasai film (or any NGO for that matter) has the “right” to interfere with the Maasai’s or any other culture’s circumcision practices. Could the NGO be violating Maasai human rights by pressuring its children to abandon a functional cultural practice? Is the NGO putting those girls at risk by encouraging them to go against an established cultural practice (remember that the NGO is not a permanent fixture and will eventually leave the area)? Or, are the Maasai violating their daughters’ human rights according to the UN declaration?

Any policy that is adopted on a global scale requires cooperation and agreement – no small task. Some might question whether it is possible to develop global moral codes because they require **ethical relativity**. Your thesis for this paper will revolve around a discussion on whether you think that circumcision – either male or female - is a violation of basic human rights. You will be essentially making a policy recommendation to the UN. In order to accomplish this, you will need to review the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to see how it might pertain to circumcision. Remember that basic human rights pertain to everyone regardless of sex or gender, therefore, any policy recommendation you make will apply to both males and females. Think about how your recommendation might affect U.S. circumcision policy.

Maasai and Ethical Relativism Formatting Rubric

Name and info: On the left side of the document, type your name (one line), the course title (one line), and the semester and the year (one line).

Title: you should title your paper and the title should indicate your thesis

Below the title cut and paste the following paragraph:

In the next session held by the United Nations, the policy regarding the regulation of circumcision will be resolved. Here, the body will decide whether the practice of **circumcision** violates Human Rights as described in the United Nation's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. In this session, it will also be decided if the United Nations will support or sanction those who perform circumcision and/or condone the surgical practice. The document below presents research designed to inform the members of the United Nations council on the preferred course of action in regard to the regulation of circumcision.

The body of your paper needs to include:

8. First, a policy must be specific in what it is regulating. Therefore, you need to explain the differences between the surgical processes of male and female circumcision. You need to be specific and describe how each is done and to what part of the male and female anatomy. Be careful to discuss the physiological outcomes including long-term health and effects on sexual response.
9. Second, the policy needs to acknowledge the reasons that circumcision is performed for both males and females. This includes medical, social, cultural reasons (ritual and control of sexuality).
10. Third, lay out your policy in clear terms that define what it is and the consequences for violating that policy. Remember you must state the reasons for your policy.
11. You can certainly conclude your paper by commenting on any personal experiences you have or might have with circumcision that might sway the committee.
12. You must also end by stating whether your policy recommendation was actually ethically relative or whether you were unable to practice ethical relativity because of your own moral opinion.

Abstract: After writing your paper, you need to include an abstract that lets the reader know what your thesis is AND the major findings of your research that support your thesis. It should be no longer than 100-150 words and it is not included in the overall word count of this assignment.

How to make sure that you get all your points for this assignment: .

- You will be submitting a draft and receive general feedback. Once you get the feedback you will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit.
- You need to reference and utilize in-text citations from each of the required sources. This means that you need a works cited section as well. Each of the required sources are listed on the following page. Don't forget you are required to find your own peer reviewed source for any arguments for or against female circumcision. Remember, a peer reviewed resource is one that has been thoroughly reviewed by academic professionals to ensure its quality and verifiability. These articles will most often appear as academic journal articles and edited book volumes.
- You have 1,500 to 2,000 words. This means you must be succinct and make your points in a concise manner without a lot of fluff.
- Your required references are listed on the next page. **You will also need to find at least one peer reviewed resource to support your perspective on female circumcision also known as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).**
- You will be graded on composition, grammar, and how completely and specifically you answer the prompts. Support your thesis well with evidence. I would recommend the Writing Lab for this assignment. This requires that you finish the essay in a timely manner with enough time to have the lab review. Have a copy of your draft and the assignment rubric handy – the lab is available via zoom in the Virtual Learning Commons.

REQUIRED REFERENCES ARE BELOW:

Required Film: Becoming Maasai Women, [Becoming Maasai Women \(Links to an external site.\)](#)



Pay special attention to the consequences for Maasai women if they do not go through the traditional rite of passage to womanhood. Make note of ALL who are guiding the Maasai girls through this rite of passage and what their role is within Maasai culture.



Required reference: Above you see Eleanor Roosevelt who chaired the committee that approved *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Your task is to read the document and see whether circumcision could be interpreted as a violation of any of these rights. Here is the link to the PDF.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.pdf 



Required reference: This Scientific American article discusses historical and cross-cultural perspectives on male circumcision. This will provide you with material to make gendered, cultural, and historical contrasts and comparisons. Here is the link to the article:

CircumcisionDilemma.pdf 

DON'T FORGET: You will also need to find at least one peer reviewed resource to support your perspective on female circumcision also known as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

13. Meet up at the weekly Zoom meeting. EXTRA CREDIT will be offered for attendance. The meeting will be recorded for those who are unable to attend.

<https://sfcollege.zoom.us/j/94472441479> (Links to an external site.)

[1] **Stakeholder:** a person with an interest or concern in something