

Religions in Africa (HPAN5046/6046)

Article for an encyclopaedia (30% of the overall module assessment)

Word count for level 5: not more than 1500

Word count for level 6: not more than 1700

Guidelines

1. An encyclopaedia article will enable you to display your analytical and presentational skills and to demonstrate your ability to select relevant material and to present that material in a succinct and accessible manner. Remember that encyclopaedia articles are intended to introduce a particular topic to a fairly wide readership.
2. You are advised to start this assignment by consulting some encyclopaedia articles to determine what should be included and how it should be presented. There are numerous encyclopaedias in the university library and the tutor will be able to advise you on which items to consult, depending on your chosen topic.
3. As you read sample entries, ask the following questions: How is the article structured? How much detail is included (e.g., references, quotations)? How does the author of the article strike a balance between description and analysis? Are sub-headings used? What about illustrations, diagrams or charts?
4. If you can find entries on your chosen topic in published encyclopaedias (such as *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* or *The Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women*), you can incorporate some of the analyses you find there into your answer. Work that demonstrates some level of additional research alongside reading these entries will impress the examiners. Additional research can be drawn from monographs, book chapters, journal articles or, in some cases, web articles. You will also find that the module tutor will address some of the key issues in lectures for this module.
5. You may wish to include a short introductory paragraph. This would be for the benefit of the marker before the encyclopaedia article itself, rather than as part of the article, in which you explain in what kind of encyclopaedia your article would appear. For example, it could be designed to appear in a general encyclopaedia, such as *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, or in a subject-specific encyclopaedia such as *Encyclopaedia of Religion* or *Encyclopaedia of the Bible*.
6. Remember only to include material of direct relevance to the topic under

consideration. In 1500 / 1700 words you will not be able to cast the net too widely and therefore you should not include sections on general background issues, extensive quotations from primary or secondary sources, or detailed comparisons of the views of a wide range of scholars. The focus should be on outlining key themes and issues that relate to the topic under consideration.

7. While footnotes should be avoided in encyclopaedia articles, you are strongly advised to use the Harvard referencing system (e.g., Smith 2000: 456) within the main text. This is the method of referencing normally used in encyclopaedia articles because it does not disrupt the flow of the narrative. If you wish, you can also set out your encyclopaedia article in two columns.
8. You are expected to include a short list of books that you have consulted while preparing the encyclopaedia article.