***Mr. Nelson – Sociology 101***

***Assignment 1***

**Directions:** Choose any 1 of the following 3 assignment choices dealing with culture and/or gender.

**Format**: 2 pages (500 words, minimum \*more is fine), typed, double spaced, emailed as an attachment.

**Due Date**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Culture Assignment – An Analysis of Body Ritual Among the Nacirema (Miner, 1956)**

[](http://www.grahamtall.co.uk/family_history/Ball%20Family/migration%202.htm)

Read Horace Miner’s (1956) famous anthropological satire, “The Body Ritual of the Nacirema” and do the following: <https://www.sfu.ca/~palys/Miner-1956-BodyRitualAmongTheNacirema.pdf> (google the title “Body Ritual of the Nacirema” and it will be the 1st result- it’s a 6 page pdf)

1. **Identify 3 aspects of American culture** that Miner is satirizing. Describe what he’s really talking about (for example, television), then describe it how he does. **\*So, for example, on page 503, when he talks in detail about the ‘shrines’ that Nacirema people have in their homes, what is he actually talking about?** You’ll describe any 3 things he discusses.
2. Choose **3 aspects of whatever you consider your culture** (\*this does not have to be traditional “American” practices, though you may of course include that). Any aspects of your culture counts – you could choose Instagram from American culture and fasting for Ramadan in the same project.
3. **Describe each of these 3 practices from an outside perspective**, as Miner did of American culture. Imagine that you are an anthropologist visiting your own culture for the first time – describe it like you are writing a book.

**Option 2: Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism**

Choose a cultural practice that interests you and that has multiple persepctives (Female Genital Mutilation, for example) (Dorkenoo & Elworthy). Research the practice and then:

1. Summarize this controversial practice including geography (where does it take place), cultural reasons behind it, and beliefs about it (based on the author’s point of view) – **1 page**
2. Describe this practice from **BOTH** an ethnocentric viewpoint (e.g., why is it ‘strange’ or ‘wrong’ to you – what cultural values does it offend?) **AND** from a relativistic standpoint (why might this not be the concern of other cultures? Why might this be ok? **1 page**

\*Remember, you don’t need to personally believe what you’re writing, just be able to write academically from 2 opposed viewpoints.

**Option 3: Gender & the Media Analysis**

Choose any 2 songs, shows (individual episodes are fine), or songs whose themes pertain to several of the themes of gender (gender itself, sexual orientation,

\*for songs, list the lyrics (either a sample or the entire song – **this doesn’t count towards the length of your paper, so it doesn’t matter**. No need to censor the lyrics, it’s fine)