ACTIVITY EIGHT

Guided Graduate Entry

SUMMARY
This activity was created to help guide graduate students through the process of completing an entry for the database, as an expert in their own right. Advisor feedback is encouraged, but not required.

PURPOSE
These instructions can help introduce graduate students to the process of completing an entry for the database. This can provide them with a digital publication, and give them experience contributing to a professional, digital research project.

INSTRUCTIONS
Before beginning an entry, please browse through the Database of Religious History (DRH), to get a better idea of the structure of the system. You could also go through Activity Two: Browsing the DRH, if you want a bit more of an introduction.

For students completing a Master’s degree, or for those in the early years of their PhD:
   • It is recommended that you complete a “Secondary Source” entry
   • This is an entry on a religious Group, Place, Text, or Object, based solely on a published, secondary source.

For advanced PhD candidates:
   • You can choose to either complete a “Secondary Source”, or write an entry based on “Personal Expertise”, highlighting your own expertise in a religious Group, Place, Text, or Object.

1. To begin with the database, you will first need to reach out to one of the editors at the Database of Religious History (DRH). You can find a list of editors and their region of expertise here: https://religiondatabase.org/landing/about/people/editors
   • Make sure to introduce yourself, explain your region of expertise, and what type of entry you wish to complete. They will work with you to try and find a good fit, and help you work on a title and choose a poll type.

2. Once your editor has provided their approval, sign up as an expert on the database here: https://religiondatabase.org/accounts/signup/

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3. When you are ready to start an entry, sign in and click on the “Contribute” button at the top of the page. This will take you to the set up page for your entry.

4. Set up your entry:
   a) Entry source: you can leave it as “Personal expertise”, or select the “Secondary Source” entry, depending on what you and your editor decided.
   b) Data source can remain “Database of religion history”
   c) The “Name” is the title of your entry - you may want to discuss this with your editor, if you have not already done so.
   d) The “Description” serves as the introduction or abstract for your entry. You should treat this as if you are introducing the topic to complete beginners, and write somewhere around 200-300 words (you can always change this later, however, so for now you can write something brief as a space filler).
   e) Default year covered: fill in the time frame to which your entry pertains.
   f) Poll: Select the poll type - you should have discussed this with your editor.
   g) Status of Participants: select the status of the individuals that your entry will cover. You can select as many as are applicable.
   h) Click Save & Continue

5. Add organizational tags to your group: Select all the tags that you want to be associated with your group. This will help users find your entry. If you can’t find the tags you want to add, you can always suggest your own.

6. Define GIS Region: In this section, you define the geographic region related to your entry. You can start by seeing if an appropriate map already exists, or create a new map. To create a new map, add a general region name and description, and select the related regional tags. Then use the polygon tool on the map to outline your region. Click Save. You will then have set up your entry, and will be taken to the questionnaire.

7. When you reach the questionnaire page, you will see a map and the introductory information that you just entered. You can edit this at any time by clicking “edit” beside the title. Scrolling down the page, you will see a selection of categories that contain the questions for your entry.

If you are completing a “Secondary Source” entry:
   a) Use only the source to answer questions. This will likely mean that you are unable to answer all the questions. After answering the questions with a
multiple choice answer, be sure to add a note explaining what in the source backs up this answer.

b) Continue through until you have answered all the questions that you can with your source.

c) Once you are finished, you may wish to ask your academic advisor to look over your entry, but this is your choice.

d) When you are satisfied with your entry, contact your editor. They may suggest additional changes before they publish the entry.

If you are completing a “Personal expertise” entry:

a) Work through the questions, answering as many as possible. Some of the questions will not seem relevant to your topic, but still try to answer with “I don’t know” or “field doesn’t know”. This is still valuable data when using the database to compare religious data.

b) Remember, just because you are working as an expert, we still encourage you to add in a number of sources both in the “Sources” section, and to add references throughout the entry, when appropriate; however, only input files when you have permission to do so, being aware of copyright considerations. When in doubt, simply cite the source instead.

c) Add as many notes as possible. Simple “yes” or “no” answers are often not particularly helpful, especially when the user has no background in your region. It is therefore far more valuable to add notes whenever possible in order to explain your answer.

d) If you think there is more than one answer to your question, feel free to answer the same question twice, by clicking “Add another answer”. You can also change the status of the participants, date range, or region if you want to note specific exceptions. In these cases, be sure to explain your differing answers.

e) Once you are finished (ideally it should be at least 90% complete), you may wish to have your academic advisor look over it, but this is up to you.

f) When you are satisfied with your entry, contact your editor. They may suggest additional changes before publication.

*Note: Once the entry is published, it will be globally accessible. Please be sure that you are satisfied with the quality of your work, and are happy to have it viewed and possibly critiqued by other users that may include your peers.