Heather Salazar’s Grading Criteria for the Social Science Unit

1. Quality of Research: Research should be thoroughly and thoughtfully-performed in order to compile a body of information as complete as possible. It should strive to accurately represent the group that is being studied as it pertains to both general information of the group and the topic on which the writing will focus.

2. Organization of Research: Research should be analyzed and synthesized so as to create a thematic or progressive introduction of the research as it pertains to the thesis statement. In other words, the themes of the research should govern the paper’s organization and the research should be brought in to support these themes.

3. Clarity and Reasoning: The paper should be both reader-friendly and researcher-friendly, making difficult concepts and studies clear and clearly relevant for the reader, and using precise language for the researcher who is interested in the details of the studies performed and who might either want to replicate or extend the research in the paper. HINT: Data must be interpreted and it should be clear when you are presenting data vs. how you are interpreting that data. The interpretations should be carefully-reasoned.

4. The Form of the Portfolio: The portfolio should conform to the standards of an APA paper as explained below.

5. Professionalism: The paper should be professionally-presented. Grammar, punctuation, logical transitions and tone should be clear and professional. The paper should present the material in a coherent way. In other words, the research, interpretations, and conclusion that you draw should all support your thesis. Note: there may be points on which you decide to depart from the thesis in order to draw a conclusion that does support the thesis. That’s OK, but signal it to the reader. If your thesis statement is that the Christian community you investigated does not support abortion, but someone does support it, then your thesis statement should be changed. Perhaps, “does not generally support” or “does not support in certain contexts” would be better.

Form of the Paper:

Proposal
Abstract
Introduction with a precise Thesis Statement: This section should introduce both the group and the topic briefly, explaining the interest of the investigation of the group and giving a thesis statement.

Background about the group
Discussion: This is the bulk of your paper. You will not present the methods and results separately, as you did in the science paper, but you will integrate them as evidence for the themes that you discuss throughout the paper. This section will also contain the limitations of your studies, etc. For example, you might start with a statement about how younger members of the group believed in a more liberal form of women’s rights than the older members. Then you might discuss one or two studies that you performed which support this. You might introduce a survey, explaining your methods briefly, the results, and the interpretations and limitations of those results. It is not uncommon to use diagrams and figures for the results, but everything is usually more succinctly-stated than in a science paper since much more information is used and it is filtered for relevance to the topic being discussed.

Conclusion: The Conclusion should recap the Thesis Statement and discuss how everything came together to demonstrate it very briefly. It could also gesture at how this information could be used either by society or by future researchers to expand the information on this group or similar groups.

References
Supporting Materials: Surveys and other resources that you use that may be important to the study may be supplied as an Appendix. Appendices are labeled according to their source type or information content and are generally labeled ‘Appendix’ if there is one and ‘Appendix A,’ ‘Appendix B,” etc., if there are more than one.

Note: this paper should follow APA guidelines generally, but does not have the headings that we used in the science paper. However, please use a header with a page number, and place your abstract and references on separate labeled pages. If you use an Appendix, label that as well. Please also use a cover sheet.