

For this capstone project the Ethnography of You I have chosen to focus on the topic of religion. In my project I will be going through the different stages of my life, and in each stage speaking on what religion looked like in that portion of my life. The reasoning behind focusing on religion for this project is twofold. First, this semester many of my classes have discussed or are completely focused on the topic of religion, so due to this I feel like not only is it something I am thinking about a lot, I have also learned a lot this semester. Second, religion has played a big part not only in my life, but the lives of my family. It is because it has been such a constant force in my life that I believe this topic would allow for a compelling capstone project. As for how the project will be structured there will be 5 distinct sections. Background, elementary school, middle school, high school, and the present. I believe this structure will best show the differing ways in which religion looked and affected me throughout my life, while telling a compelling and cohesive narrative.

The first section of my project is the background, and this portion is incredibly important to setting up the rest of the project. In this section I will mainly be discussing my family's long history in regards to religion. This will establish how religion has been such a constant part of my life from the very beginning. Also, this is important as it introduces a theme present throughout the rest of my project, the illusion of free choice. What I mean by this is that for the most part no one chooses their religion, the vast majority of people will only ever follow the religion they are born into. Throughout the rest of my project I touch on some of the ways in which religion is structured to reinforce this concept. Next, I will be discussing what religion was like in elementary school or really the early stage of my life. The main takeaway from this portion of my project is

how home and religious spaces were distinct and separate in my life. This separation is important as I believe this is what first made me question religion in a lot of ways. This made religion a constant part of my life, yet in a strange sense it felt very minor. The only constant was we went to church on Sunday, and as a child this led to a lot of confusion. It was never really explained to me why we did this, just that this is what we do. This undoubtedly shaped my perception of religion for years to come.

The next and perhaps most important section of my project is the middle school portion. This section focuses on how religion affected my socialization during this period of my life. I would say this is the most important section as it is the first truly negative experience I had regarding religion, and would form the basis for how I approach religion for the rest of my life. I had a very negative experience going to a Catholic middle school, that really affected my relationships and personality for years to come. Following this I will be going over my experience with religion in high school. In this portion I touch on one of the aforementioned ways in which religion is structured to reinforce the illusion of free choice. Also, I will be going over a story that became the turning point in completely stopping all religious activities. In many ways this section is just the culmination of all of the previous ones.

Finally, I will briefly be going over what religion looks like for me in the present. This is to really bring the project full circle, and show how this has been a lifelong process for me. In conclusion my capstone project is *The Ethnography of Me: Religion*. I will be showing the influence religion has had in all stages of my life. The goal of this project is not to determine whether religion is good or bad. Rather, I wish to tell my story with religion, and acknowledge the ways in which it can affect people. Also, important is

I believe this project offers me the opportunity to come to terms with what I am discussing. While I have definitely thought on this matter previously, this is the first time I believe I am fully acknowledging and coming to an understanding how religion has shaped my life.

Works Cited

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