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REL 101

**Journal Entries**

Week 1- Hinduisms

Entry 1- It the first day of class, and I’m very excited to learn about all the religions. I’m very cultured in food and have tried many different foods from many different cultures. I am looking to expand my cultural knowledge into the backgrounds of all the food that I have tried, and apply this knowledge to my profession. I hope to be a CEO of a tech company, and being able to relate to all cultures will be important for global enterprises. I only possess the knowledge of the background of Christianity, and hope to expand on and build that from a different light.

Entry 2- We covered Hinduism this week, in which I learned the background of many of my friends that are Indian. The bagavad ghita was my assigned text, and I learned about the various gods Shiva, Vishnu, Kali, Ganesh, and Hanuman in poetic form. I also learned the 4 noble truths of Hinduism being all life is suffering, the cause of suffering is desire, tat if there is no desire then there is no suffering, and that the path is 8-fold. This is a very interesting way to look at the world in my opinion.

Week 2- Buddhisms

Entry 1- Today in class we did the breathing exercises zazen and shikantaza to start off our lesson covering Buddhism. This was very strange to me, as I have never done these type of exercises in a classroom setting. It was harder to do the zazen counting than the shikantaza counting for me. I also learned about the basic types of zen meditation, being sitting, walking, landscaping, archery, calligraphy, and the Ko’an.

Entry 2- At the end of the week, I was left with a better understanding of Buddhism. It was interesting to watch the video on preparing tea, and the video on the Canadian who decided to become a monk. We learned about other facets of the religion regarding the theosophical society. This was aimed towards mixing Hinduism and Buddhism with the occult and spiritualism. Helena Blavatsky, Henry Olcott and Anagarika Dharmapala founded the society. We also learned that the schools of Japanese Buddhism are Rinzai and Soto.

Week 3- Judaisms

Entry 1- This week in class in Judaism week, and from the media, I know Jews from making the pyramids and the Holocaust. I’ve also heard the terms quit being a Jew, relating to a person being stingy about their money. This week really opened my eyes onto their practices, and what it means to follow Judaism. The biggest thing for me that there is no one thing that one has to believe to be a Jew. Indeed, it is impossible to name any one thing that of itself suffices to make one a Jew.

Entry 2- Another interesting concept that I never knew was that Judaism is not a race. I also learned of the line of prophets in relation to the circle. These are moses, Elijah, Abraham, Isaac, and David. Also that in the 1940’s, there were an equal number of Jews and Arabs living in Palestine. There was also a mass immigration following the end of world war two, and the Israelis weren’t prepared for this. The pictures of the beards were funny and a comic relief to class, along with the video about the Amish family. The best thing to apply to life is that if you will, it is no dream.

Week 4- Christianities

Entry 1- This is my dominant religion, and so I was excited for this week to start. I wanted to learn outside views on my religion, how other people saw it, and if what I was taught in bible school is actually real. My Christian background includes going to bible school as a kid, being baptized, and going to church on Sunday morning. I have led a very Christian life as I believe in the Ten Commandments, and extremely ‘husbandy’ as northeasterners would put it. It was an extreme culture shock coming to my religion to the northeast religion.

Entry 2- One thing that I found extremely interesting was the Pentecostal religions. It was something so foreign and abstract to me that I couldn’t relate to their followers at all. The video with the snakes was very cool to me, as the handlers seemed to suppress the snake bestial tendencies with song. This shed a new light on my view of Christianity, and opened by eyes onto other interpretations of the religion. I learned to accept other forms of Christianity rather than stay so close to my own interpretation of it.

Week 5- Islams

Entry 1- Islamic culture is seen very negatively in America. With the media interpretations of Muslims having bombs strapped to their chest and being extremely gruesome, it’s hard to see this religion in another light. Another common image is Osama Bin Laden. To start off class, we discussed this fact, and just how wrong the media is. This week I set aside all of my preconceptions at the first lecture to take a fresh look at the religion.

Entry 2- After learning about Islam, it came to me as an interesting culture. The whole concept surrounding a pilgrimage to Mecca was very cool and fascinating. Also, all the prayers facing towards Mecca, and the culture as a whole relies on Mecca. Mohamed is seen as a prophet in this religion, and it was interesting that no one is allowed to have a picture of such an iconic character. In my religion, you cant go very far until you find a picture of Jesus, but the glory of Mohamed’s image remains unknown.

Week 6- Indigenous Religions

Entry 1- Going into this week, I didn’t know much about Native Religions except that they were a heavy influence in America until we conquered the land and took it for ourselves. I have had multiple experiences with Indian casinos, as the gambling age is lower, but haven’t had real experiences with the culture. I remember from the week covering Christianity that most Native Americans are now Christians, which was caused mainly by the conquest.

Entry 2- After examining this culture further, I came to realize how horrible Americans and the early settlers were towards this religion. The fact that Indian scalps were currency is a non-humanistic thing to do, and that the value ranged between what type of scalp it was is just unbelievable. I enjoyed learning about the Onondaga community, and how closely they follow their native traditions. Also, that the lake is so disgusting that it falls second behind a lake in Chernobyl for most polluted body of water.