**Name**: Roman Joseph

**Date**:

**Cohort**: (Francom, French, McMahan)

*In what follows, reflect on your learning and personal growth at this point in our course. Consider this week’s readings, multimedia sources, presentations, discussions, activities, etc. To your best ability attempt to integrate these experiences into our own developing understanding of the ‘Good Life’.*

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Before learning about India in *The Geography of Bliss,* I was under the impression that happiness was more or less associated with comfort, success, and stability. However, Weiner’s experience in India challenged this assumption as he showed how it’s possible for so many people to be happy amidst chaos and poverty. He claims that they embrace this confusion in their daily lives, and they derive their happiness from close personal relationships and religious beliefs.

Despite being absent for the lecture in which we discussed Utopias and Ashrams, I read the lecture slides and have managed to learn about this aspect of Hinduism. Ashrams are founded upon principles like truth and discipline, and they encourage you to strive for happiness through concentration, as opposed to pleasure. Ashram is also known as profound effort and demonstrates incredible self-discipline.

Studying utopian societies has also allowed me to explore a social aspect of happiness. These societies are devised by individuals who are unhappy with their current society. They imagine societies with equality and harmony. This kind of thinking made me understand that happiness is not solely individual and can be achieved through a community. Utopian s

Ultimately, this chapter has made me reconsider how I think about happiness. It’s not necessarily measured by pleasure, plain and individual success. Rather, it’s a matter of enduring your character and values/principles amidst the chaos, similarly to how Indians do daily.