**Flight from Death: The Quest for Immortality**

Available through the Rutgers library site (you must login with your net ID):

<https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C2247001>

Also, available for free via YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivlLiG0ZAMA>

Also, available for purchase on YouTube, on Netflix, and Amazon Video.

In order to begin our discussion on the study of religion, please view: *Flight from Death: The Quest for Immortality*. This film presents one possible root cause for religion: death anxiety. What this group of scholar’s is presenting, is the argument that our death anxiety—our fear of death and forgotten-ness—are the universal impulse for why religion exists and why people “do religion”. One questions that scholars have historically asked is why does “religion” present itself globally. Why do people “do” religion? Why do religions emerge? Why are they a continued presence in our societies? Whether or not there death anxiety argument is compelling is part of our discussion. However, it is only one of the critical questions that you need to ask yourself.

Watch the film. Please respond to these questions:

1. What is death anxiety and why does religion exist as its remedy?
2. Is this a compelling argument? Why or why not?
3. What is the meaning/importance of death rituals? Religious rituals in general?
4. What is the relationship between religion and culture?
5. Who was Ernst Becker?
6. What is the difference between symbolic and literal immortality? Explain and provide examples.
7. According to Becker, why do humans create culture? What function does it have?
8. According to Becker, what is death denial? Why do humans have a death denial?
9. According to the film, and Becker’s writing, why does death anxiety manifest in violence? Explain.
10. Other thoughts? Questions? Comments?