**ANTH 411 Fieldwork: RELIGION & RITUAL INTERVIEW**

Religion—and ritual—belief and practice are highly personal for many people; for others, it is places, rituals, rites, and norms that are followed out of habit. For still others, it has very little meaning or influence. In this assignment, you will **1)** interview a friend or family member, and ask them about the role that religion, spirituality, and/or ritual behavior plays in their lives. After the interview, you will **2)** reflect on the role of religion and ritual in your own life in the box next to their answers. Finally, you will **3)** do a comparative analysis of the two sets of answers.

IMPORTANT: The responses will not be shared or reproduced outside of our class space.  As you’re interviewing someone, remind them they can choose NOT to answer any of the questions.

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| **Your partner’s answers:** | **Your answers:** |
| Would you consider yourself a religious person? What faith do you subscribe to? If not, would you consider yourself a spiritual person? Why or why not? If you consider yourself neither religious nor spiritual, what ritual activities reflect your core beliefs, values, & traditions?  I consider myself a spiritual person, not a religious person. I practice Yoga daily and that helps me with my spirituality. | Would you consider yourself a religious person? What faith do you subscribe to? If not, would you consider yourself a spiritual person? Why or why not? If you consider yourself neither religious nor spiritual, what ritual activities reflect your core beliefs, values, & traditions?  I consider myself slightly religious. I don’t consider me spiritual at all. This is because I barely every think of God or Jesus. I don’t believe in any divine intervention. |
| How often do you attend a place of worship? What is the atmosphere there? Is it recognizable as a place of worship by others? If you don’t attend a place of worship, is there something you do to support your spiritual and/or ritual beliefs (places, spaces, actions, etc.)?  I do not visit any religious place. I visit my Guru’s ashram at least once a year. I plan to spend the next one year of my life in his ashram doing seva in the Dhyanalinga, a consecrated space for people irrespective of religion. | How often do you attend a place of worship? What is the atmosphere there? Is it recognizable as a place of worship by others? If you don’t attend a place of worship, is there something you do to support your spiritual and/or ritual beliefs (places, spaces, actions, etc.)?  I occasionally go to church services on special holidays like Christmas and Easter. I used to go more when I was younger. Most of the members are elderly people or families with young children. When I go to church, it's a very typical, somewhat large church with around one hundred members during holidays. |
| Who leads the religious events that occur at your place of worship? Do they have any special training or education?  If you don’t attend a place of worship, do you have any special training or practice related to your spiritual beliefs? How did you develop them? If you don’t consider yourself religious or spiritual, where did you learn to rely on/practice the important ritual behaviors in your life?  My Guru consecrates the spaces by a process known as ‘prana pratisthita’ a process that brings deities to life. | Who leads the religious events that occur at your place of worship? Do they have any special training or education? If you don’t attend a place of worship, do you have any special training or practice related to your spiritual beliefs? How did you develop them? If you don’t consider yourself religious or spiritual, where did you learn to rely on/practice the important ritual behaviors in your life?  My church is led by a woman pastor. Her education is unknown to me, but I would assume it is like my uncle’s degree in theology who is currently a pastor in Keene for the same denomination. |
| How long have you been a follower of your religion? Did you choose it, or grew up with it? Does this circumstance affect the fervor of your own faith?  If you are not religious, but consider yourself a spiritual person, have you always thought of yourself in this way?  How did you learn about your spiritual beliefs? If you are neither religious nor spiritual, for how long have you been practicing your most important ritual behaviors?  I was introduced to Yoga when I was 19. I was initiated by my Guru before I turned 21. The initiation changed my life and my perspective on life. | How long have you been a follower of your religion? Did you choose it, or grew up with it? Does this circumstance affect the fervor of your own faith?  If you are not religious, but consider yourself a spiritual person, have you always thought of yourself in this way?  How did you learn about your spiritual beliefs? If you are neither religious nor spiritual, for how long have you been practicing your most important ritual behaviors?  I was baptized by a Methodist Christian pastor as a child. This means I did not choose since my family was all the same denomination. Even though I had no choice I could not care less about what denomination or religion I am. |
| To what degree does your religion and/or sense of spirituality and/or reliance on ritual behaviors define who you are as a person?  My spirituality has changed me completely in the last two and a half years of my life. I never feel depressed or sad. I have become extremely conscious and aware of the divinity that Exists in all life forms. | To what degree does your religion and/or sense of spirituality and/or reliance on ritual behaviors define who you are as a person?  I don’t really know what the beliefs of a Methodist are. I just go to church when my parents tell me to. On a broader level, Jesus probably wasn’t resurrected. In my eyes, his grave was robbed. |
| Are your religious/spiritual beliefs/ritual behaviors and practices dominant ones in this society? Do you think this part of your identity positively or negatively affects how you (as a believer or practitioner) are seen by the community?  Yes, over 5 million people have been initiated by my Guru and he’s known by 4 billion people, from all religions and walks of life. His goal is to raise human consciousness so that we can end human problems like war, genocide, world hunger, and climate change. | Are your religious/spiritual beliefs/ritual behaviors and practices dominant ones in this society? Do you think this part of your identity positively or negatively affects how you (as a believer or practitioner) are seen by the community?  Most Americans follow some version of Christianity and that has led to many laws and customs to be influenced by these ideals. I do not feel as though I am better or worse off being Christian because most of my peers are secular and could not care less. |
| One more question your conversation raised: | One more question your conversation raised: |

**Final Reflection:**

**H**ow would you compare your classmate’s answers with your own answers to these interview questions?

* Similarities, differences, overlaps, surprises?
* Was anything you heard particularly striking or surprising?
* Did anything you heard pose a direct challenge to your own belief systems and/or identity?
* What is one way you can tie what you heard in your conversations back to something specific from class materials?

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| My partner and I are not similar at all when it comes to religion/spirituality. I have not viewed Yoga as a spiritual activity before so hearing that they practice it as so surprised me. I was also surprised that their Guru is known by so many. I’m not sure if I entirely believe that but you learn something new every day I suppose. |