

Nathan Fierston
3/1/16
Second Trimester

To start off the trimester, *Human Flow* gave a great look into how major the immigration really is. With its amazing cinematography, it showed the scale of the issue. These shots showed piles of life jackets and wide shots of camps that these people are in to express to the viewer in pictures what some of the numbers mean. It is too often that on the news we see numbers that have no image to go along with it, and Ai Weiwei does a fantastic job showing the scale of millions in visually stunning ways. It is because of this that I was showed a new perspective in the larger issue that is at hand. I always thought it was an issue some thousand miles away, but *Human Flow* forced me to empathize with these people and want to help them. Through this I was also given a greater appreciation of cinematography and how documentaries and movies can change someone's perspective and emotion on a certain topic.

Later in the trimester, *Bangsakol: A Requiem for Cambodia* exemplified the theme of sustainability in how Cambodia is trying to

educate their people, and the world, about the tragedies, but also how they are ready for a brighter future with traditional music in their culture. It caused me to think of how we view our own culture and our past. The questions that came to mind are: What do we value about our past? What are we proud of in our culture today? In addition this event brought many themes together like the arts, globalization, human rights, and sustainability. With this many themes involved in one event it is easy to see the importance of the issue to the viewer and the culture in Cambodia.

The last event I went to in the trimester was the Meaning Of Jerusalem at Infinity Hall. This event was incorporated the themes of religion, globalization, and human rights. These topics of rights to the city was most prominent after the obvious theme of religion. I was shocked by some of the facts about what religion had control of the city in the past, and being Jewish, it caused me want to go deeper into this topic. It pushed my thinking of what I learned as a kid in Hebrew school in relation to the history of the city in other religions. More than ever, I was intrigued to know more about Jerusalem and what it means to the United States and more importantly other religions.

This trimester was a great one for events that brought different themes together and through this there was lot of examining of my own perspective and what I thought I know. They also forced me to dig deeper into some topics I use to turn my head to.

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3/1/16
Jerusalem Reflection

While a Rabbi, A minister, and a Palestinian mayor sounds like a start of a joke, I thought the panel was both insightful and meaningful. All three had different viewpoints and interpretations on the true meaning of Jerusalem and with this came some great back and forth conversation in hopes to find the middle ground. I was impressed with the three leaders ability to see the other side and to ask questions that invoked thought in the other two men. As a Jew I was a little upset that I don't know more about Jerusalem in how other religions see the holy place. I was always taught what the Rabbi said, as it is a very holy place and that it is the highest place of worship in our religion. However, when the Mayer talked about how long other religions have been in control of

the city, I was shocked in how much I don't know. More than ever, I have been provoked to learn more because it is so imperative to my religion and also in our news today. And now I feel even more inclined because the United States is getting involved by moving the embassy to the holy city.

Nathan Fierston
2/26/18
Ghenwah Kharbeet

The skype with Ghenwah was both intriguing and memorable. In the US we hear so much about Syria without actually seeing it or hearing from Syrians first hand. With this opportunity, I was able to ask what she thinks needs to change to make Syria a better. I was shocked when she answered this question of we need to kill our president and close our borders. As the US and European countries that will not let in Syrian refugees, it is interesting that they would close their borders to outsiders. The skype was also memorable because of happy story. A lot of what we hear in the news is upsetting when it comes to refugees, but it was uplifting to hear someone that had a good experience getting a

visa and living a meaningful and happy life after moving to another country.

Nathan Fierston
1/17/18
Ya Rath

Ya Rath was a unique speaker as he gave an interesting insight on how he was affected by the cambodian genocide and the downfall of the traditional arts there. From a young age Ya was taught music by his father in hopes that he would not fall into the gang culture in his town in Massachusetts. Learning traditional Cambodian music as a young age caused Ya to have a very interesting view of his home countries music. Most young people in Cambodia do not care for their ancestors music, rather they have latched onto the western culture that includes rap. While Ya is very much attuned to American culture and music he does respect and hopes to preserve the music his father taught him. For this, I respect and admire Ya.

As I am Jewish, there are a lot of customs and traditions I was taught and abided by as a kid. However, some of these are being lost in my generation because they are seen as boring. For instance my father

as a kid went to synagogue for close to 3 hours on high holidays and now we only go for close to an hour. I feel that the next generation will go for less and even question how the sunday school is run for children. For this reason, I admire what Ya is trying to do with his culture. While most of his generation is moving on from its past Ya wants to honor what his ancestors have been through by passing on their music to the next generation. It seemed that Ya could have given us more about his first time back in Cambodia and what he learned about the genocide and the music there, he did cause me to think of his issue and how he is trying to preserve what he was taught and how it related to my Jewish traditions.

B+. Good insights and connection to your personal experience. I agree...I too wanted to hear more. Inviting him, I knew he wasn't a professional speaker, but wanted to hear about his unique experience. -Ms OB

Nathan Fierston
12/1/17
Human Flow: Ai WeiWei

Ai WeiWei uses devices like one on one conversations, zooming out shots, and filming himself into his movie to achieve his goal of

expressing the refugee crisis as more human and showing how massive this issue is. Throughout the documentary WeiWei interviews different refugees and in all of these conversations there is one goal; to have others see these people as human. One woman even got sick trying to talk about her story and how much she wants the security of a free nation. As a viewer it is impossible to hold back feelings for the suffering people and this is exactly what WeiWei wants. In addition to this he shoots himself into the documentary which accentuates these personal interactions. WeiWei talks, dances, and even gives haircuts to some of the refugees to show the viewers and the people he interacts with that these people are more than just numbers. For myself, it is in these conversations that I saw the gravity of the issue beyond just what is on the news. Lastly, WeiWei utilizes zoom out shots of life jackets and the ocean to express how large the crisis is. The life jackets representing all the refugees that have come over by boat, and the ocean to show how many miles these people will go to get to freedom and away from their unstable countries. To see how many life jackets there were on just that one shore was unbelievable and sometimes viewers need a visual to

see the numbers that are being talked about and these jackets did the job to perfection.

Nathan Fierston

11/17/17

Ambassador H.E. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

The Ambassador was extremely knowledgeable and he exemplified the notion he explained to the students which was “knowing your stuff.” It was great to hear him talk about what he thinks about the world order and he even mentioned *A World In Disarray*. I was definitely taken back by his harsh view on the world and how he did not seem to have much optimism for the future. However, one way he kept his diplomacy was saying how it is in the best interest of the United States and Pakistan to stay in relation with each other through this rough patch. He also does not say his feelings about the Trump administration, he rather says that he has different policies just like the presidents before him. He had a good message of having to work with that they have. In this he is stays impartial as all he wants to do is maintain the bond the two countries have. In addition, he mentioned the story of how Pakistan eliminated terrorism once to the students and

another time for the whole group, and I think the motive of this was to show off his nation's accomplishment, but also to show that with Pakistan's help other countries can do the same. In the end, while the relation between the two countries is fragile Pakistan and the United States will both be better nations with their bond.

Nathan Fierston
11/5/17
Oneika Raymond

Oneika Raymond got my attention by relating what she does for a living and give every person she spoke to some advice on how to get the most out of their travels. While I did take away her key pointers about getting into the culture of everywhere you go and interact not study the people you see, what struck me more was her take on why you should travel. I have been fortunate enough to have traveled around the U.S. and some internationally and after hearing Oneika speak I have a goal to encourage my family to only travel places we all find appealing for a meaningful reason. I think people often travel to places because others say it is great, but not because they find the destination meaningful to travel to. The line that caught my ear was

when Oneika said “tailor your travel to your interests”. While this is so simple, I believe this is something everyone should abide by. I think more research should be done before we spend money to fly or drive to these places to have a vacation. In the end, I feel this goal is very obtainable as all we have to do is find out what we want to accomplish or see and search for a place that can fit our needs. Whether it is finding great food, culture, or even an amazing golf course, I want to travel with a purpose. Because I heard Oneika talk, I know my travel will be much more meaningful and I will come back feeling I have accomplished what I wanted to.

Nathan Fierston
8/5/17
Freshly Squeezed

The conversation at freshly squeezed was thought provoking. Through the topics and discourse there were times of optimism, but also a scene of fear and sadness for the way America is heading. Starting with the optimism, the takeaways were that how the panelists could agree that most people in our nation's capital, and in the rest of America, want the same thing; a prosperous country. However, with our

two party system politicians are too busy worrying about what their party wants, but not what the public needs. In these few optimistic moment questions rose. For example, could we make a party that represents the majority of Americans? Also, could a president that is close to the center of the aisle unify the country? For myself, the clear divide in political views with Bill Curry and Suzanne Bates brought me back to pressing issue and what I think will be the downfall of American politics. Even when two people get together at a high school to talk about how we can fix the broken system that we have right now they still make faces when the other talk about their views. It was clear that Curry and Bates made childish moves in their facial reactions. While this is minor, I think both did a good job in entertaining the audience and posing some interesting questions and propositions as it pertains to the future of America.

Nathan Fierston

9/28/17

Caitlin Wolfe

Caitlin Wolfe gave insight to a wide range of topics in public health. She mentioned her time in Senegal and how some diseases affect the people there, but also how they can combat them. She also

answered questions on domestic affairs like the controversy over vaccinations. While doing this she gave her views on the issue as she believes that the vaccinations are for the greater good and people have to think beyond themselves. Towards the end I asked a question about what defences the US has for diseases and she gave an answer about sprays that we can administer that can kill the carrier such as bugs. Finally, she informed us on why she went into the field of public health. Wolfe said that she wanted not only to help people, but to enforce the greater good worldwide.

Nathan Fierston
8/1/17
Adam Alter

Adam Alter was great to listen to through skype as it gave a voice to *Irresistible*. While I was not there in person, I think the other students asked questions that produced informative answers about his take and perception of the book. I particularly like the question of whether Alter thought his book was going to be controversial and how he answered with that he was surprised that generally people know that they are spending too much time on technology. In addition, through the talk, Alter shared

his views of the next generations and while some thought it would be optimistic it was just the opposite. Alter said that he would even control his own kids time on screen to insure that they would not fall into the trap that he knows so well. Adam Alter was pleasure to listen to as he not only have us more insight into his book, but offered his opinion on what is to come for the next batch of kids.

Nathan Fierston
8/1/17
Justice Breyer

I think the most interesting topic Justice Breyer talk about was the argument of whether to put cameras in the private justice debate rooms. In this argument I believe I side with Breyer. I feel as though it may change what some justices say because they know they are being filmed. As Breyer said with Stephen Colbert, the nine justices have very professional discourse, but he also notes that they try not to hold anything back in their options as long as they stay within themselves. However, with a camera on them it may hinder the ability of some of the Supreme Court justices to do so and provide the best verdict.

One thing justice Breyer mentioned that I did not know about the Supreme Court was that how meeting go behind closed doors. He said that they may agree some days on a case, but, regardless of their political party, they could disagree the next. He also joked that the new justice in the group has to open the door to the meeting room. While these meeting seen very exclusive justice Breyer did teach me a little more about then and the structure of how they run.

The videos gave a nice look into justice Breyer and the inner workings of the Supreme Court. He details the private talks of the justices and his views on how the Court should proceed in the future.