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Intellectual Autobiography

I came to NKU with a Philosophy major and Religious Studies minor. I had plans to study Abrahamic religions and realized a philosophy major would not allow me to fully delve into that world. Within my first semester, I transferred into an Integrative studies degree with history, religious studies, and anthropology. I was able to take classes in many disciplines to explore my passion of Abrahamic religions. I have ended with my focuses being History, Computer Science, and Women and Gender Studies. Throughout every shift in study, I have continued to embed myself in Abrahamic religions. I was able to apply what I learned in anthropology into my analysis of scripture and community and other religions that were covered in religious studies classes could often be connected and/or compared. The only thing that has truly changed with my research interests was it became more focused on feminist and queer plights and added computer science.

The classes I have taken in this degree have elevated my research and analysis of complex issues. I also have learned to read journal articles and academic books with ease. I have already used the interdisciplinary teachings outside of classes. I recently participated in a ten-week research program in which I was able to combine archaeology and computer science to perform research on using drones and LiDAR sensors to create maps of digging sites. My professors in the program expressed to me that being interdisciplinary allowed me to have more creative ideas, great comments on peers work, and ability to work without constant connection to another department.

Abrahamic religions are the backbone of much of society. They include Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These big three religions are what many societies are based upon, and communities are formed around them. Many world conflicts are based in religious conflict, which is just another reason to familiarize with the largest and most influential religions. There are also internal problems within these communities. Many of these internal problems, especially within fundamentalist sects, revolve around women and queer people. I identify with both these groups and the issues they face. Removing my ties when analyzing is extremely important, and it was not something I was able to do before these classes.

To approach these issues is to do so with extreme caution and awareness. One way to learn this awareness is to take classes that teach it. Anthropology is a discipline that teaches about bias and how to attempt to remove it from your studies. Different history classes also taught me about bias, and they also discussed how intertwined religion is with society. Religious studies seem an obvious connection to Abrahamic religions, but it delves into doctrine and societal norm and expectation. Religious studies classes were especially good at educating me on separating and analyzing what people are and what is considered untouchable truth. However, theology classes- which were often Women and Gender Studies – taught me how to decipher the idea of truth and analyze what else these historical writings could be interpreted as.

Multidisciplinary studies with Abrahamic religions are important in exploring both modern and past problems. These religions affect every aspect of life, and therefore should be explored with every lens. It is especially beneficial in theological studies as there has not always been viewed with feminist and queer ideas. Integrative studies allow more identification of issues. There is not a clear path to a solution, especially as these issues run up to thousands of years deep. However, the opportunity to begin deconstruction of these issues do appear with interdisciplinary study.