

My Journal: Identity and Spirituality

You can use this document as your personal journal of reflection. As you work through the first four lessons, you should transfer your thoughts on each of these important questions into this journal. This will help you later on in the course as you complete your assignments and then at the end of the course as you consider how your viewpoint may have stayed the same or changed.

These questions will help you see how a person's identity can be related to or strongly linked to their religious and spiritual beliefs.

Lesson 1

What are your beliefs or values? Would you consider yourself spiritual?

How have your family or your friends shaped your beliefs?

What culture do you identify with? Do you also identify with a religion?

In what ways does studying religion and different beliefs or traditions enhance the ability to understand and appreciate diversity?

In what ways might the study of religions reduce the tendency of people to negatively judge those who are different from them?

How would you answer the question “What is religion?”

Lesson 2

Can you think of a time in your life when you might have judged someone who held beliefs different from yours? Did you use the same standards and processes you use for yourself? Was it fair to use those methods?

You have had a quick overview of the anthropological, theological, historical, and sociological approaches to studying religion. Which approach would you choose to examine your own beliefs? Why?

In terms of your personal belief system, what is something that you have faith in?

What is your spiritual background, and what are your beliefs? How might those beliefs influence your point of view towards a different set of beliefs or religion?

Why will it be easy or difficult for you to be open to exploring religions and spiritual traditions?

Lesson 3

Who are you? Take a moment and reflect on the question.

Do your beliefs have an impact on who you are? Why or why not?

Lesson 4

Have you ever had an experience where you tried to discover who you are? Briefly describe the process you went through. Do you believe you have a purpose for being here on earth? If so, what is it?