**Theory of Knowledge with Dr. Neal**

**Exploring Religious Systems of Knowledge**

***“How do we decide between the competing claims of different religious knowledge systems? Can there ever be a basis for religious knowledge that is independent of the culture that produces it? Is atheism as much a matter of faith as religious belief?***

“Religious knowledge systems offer answers to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of human life. This area of knowledge incorporates a diverse range of different beliefs and systems; for example, varieties of theism, pantheism and polytheism. Some people believe that there is one true religion whereas others, known as religious pluralists, argue that the different religions are just different reflections of the same underlying truth. Religious knowledge has both a shared and personal dimension and offers a concrete context, within the TOK classroom, to explore the links between the two.

“Religion is often regarded as a sensitive area in which discussions should be had with caution, in part because people have very personal and deeply held convictions regarding religious matters. However, for many people their religion has a major impact on how they understand the world, permeating their thinking and influencing their understanding of other AOKs, for example, the idea that ethics and religion are inextricably linked. In any case, for many, religion provides a backdrop to all the other knowledge they have.” (Quote taken from official IB TOK Guide 2015.)

**How to Proceed:**

* Form a team of two to four students. Select a totally new group of people that is different from those your worked with on the Archetype Project.
* You will have **15-20 minutes** to present your topic of a Religious Knowledge System to the class.
* Determine a relevant **Knowledge Question** you wish to investigate for your chosen **Religious Knowledge System**. Consider the Knowledge Framework and potential Knowledge Questions listed above.
* The goal is to **analyze a knowledge question** as it applies to the religious knowledge system and to other real life issues.
* You should identify knowledge claim(s), counterclaims, differing perspectives, additional subsidiary knowledge questions, shared vs. personal knowledge, and links to ethics.

**Dates:**

Team Prep Time In Class: Wednesday, April 5

Friday, April 7

Presentations: Thursday, April 13

Monday, April 17

Wednesday, April 19

**Some pointers for successful PowerPoint presentations:**

* Create your PowerPoint presentation in GoogleDocs so that everyone in your group has access to the file and can add information and share in the design. That way, no one person is stuck putting all the slides together. One person should volunteer, however, to clean up the final product so that it looks like one consistent presentation and not one pieced together at the last minute.
* Include visuals to supplement your topic—at least **one visual for each slide**. Do **not** make the visual the background image. A valuable tool is to give the audience a visual to look at while you are discussing points related to the visual. The visual and bullet points can be placed side by side.
* Choose a font size, style, and color that is **easy to read**.
* Do not overload a slide with information. It is better to have more slides rather than slides too full of details.
* Use key phrases or words for bullet points—**keep the wording to an absolute minimum**! Follow the 7 x 7 rule (max 7 points, max 7 words per point—less is preferred.)
* Talk to your audience, not the SmartBoard.

~Do not read from the SmartBoard. Look at your audience.

~Hold a note card if you need notes to remind yourself what to say.

~Do not read aloud from this card.

* **No complete sentences on slides** (unless quoting an author directly). If you place a quote in your presentation, you should read it aloud and not assume the audience can read it while you are talking about other things.
* Include a **works cited to credit your sources**—these should include titles and authors/sponsors of websites and dates of website, along with date of access, as well as the URL (web address).
* Include me in your GoogleDoc participants: [tneal4lhs@gmail.com](mailto:tneal4lhs@gmail.com).
* **Practice** so you can present to the class in the allotted time (**15-20 minutes**)
  + Be sure to face the class—not the screen
  + Know who is speaking when
  + Share the information with each other so everyone knows specifically what the other members will be saying.
  + Present as a team. (Side-by-side reports will earn no better than a C.)
* **Dress professionally** for your presentation.