

Global Studies

Reflection Journal 23/24

Instructions

1. Write all your reflections (events, trimester, etc) in this doc.
2. Be sure to title and date all reflections.
3. Place the most current reflection at the top of this file.
4. Do not remove Ms O'B's comments- keep them as a record.
5. Do not print. All reflections will be assessed in this doc.
6. Event reflections may have specific prompts that will be given to you. Reflections on any event can include: new learning, connections to experiences, prep assignments or other classes, important takeaways, questions you have or the skills we are working on:

The goal of the Global Studies Program is to develop active, engaged global citizens by developing the following skills...

- Thinking critically and creatively, including adopting a multiperspective approach that recognizes the different dimensions and angles of an issue
- Apply systems thinking to analyze the interdependence of contemporary and historical economic, social and environmental issues
- Demonstrating civic and community engagement
- Going deeper through dialogue with those who have different opinions and backgrounds

Global Studies Themes: the arts, the environment, globalization, global public health, human rights, non-violence and war, religion, sustainability and technology/communication.

NEVER TURN IN this doc [Link to shared photos](#) [Link to 23/24 Events](#)

ALWAYS PLACE THE MOST RECENT REFLECTION AT THE TOP.

10 here!!

Religious Reflection

5/24/24

Friday Prayers

For my senior year religious service I chose to reflect on Friday Prayers at the Mosque in Avon. I went to this same service last year, but did not reflect on it then. Looking back to last year, I recognised how I was more comfortable this year with the process and routine because I knew what to expect. Everyone at the mosque was super friendly and open to answering any questions that we had. Last year, the religious service I chose to write about was Rosh Hashanah at Elizabeth Park. Rosh Hashanah was a similar experience to Friday Prayers in the sense that everyone wanted to talk to us and wanted to teach young students about their religion and faith. One difference between the two services was the actual routine and events that were taking place. Rosh Hashanah is a big holiday in the Jewish calendar, so there was a lot of celebrating. This included singing, dancing, snacks, and lots of mingling. It was a more relaxed service because it was outside and everyone was enjoying nature and music while also celebrating the holiday. On the other hand, Friday Prayers had a more structured service, mostly consisting of prayers and a sermon. There was the mingling aspect before and after the service, with people connecting and talking with one another, but it was more casual. It was not a special holiday at the mosque, so it is hard to truly compare the two services, but it was clear to me that there were different purposes at each service. Another difference I noticed was the level of individualism at each service. At Friday Prayers, it was evident that the focus was on oneself during the service. People prayed alone, listened to the sermon individually, and mostly kept to themselves. There was only one time during the ending prayers

where everyone went through the practices together and in sync with one another. When looking back at Rosh Hashanah, it seemed like there was an acknowledgement to be with one another during the service, appreciating everyone's company and common beliefs. This was the biggest difference I noticed when thinking about these two religions. It could have just been the difference in the actual services themselves, but Friday Prayers was definitely for people's personal prayers and benefits while Rosh Hashanah's purpose was to bring the community together.

I read "What Religion Gives Us" by Stephen T. Asma from the NY Times. He explained that even though some people do not see any positives in religion, especially scientists, it is important for people to have that sense of belief in their brains. It comforts a part of their mind and eases their emotions when nothing else can. I truly do agree with what Mr. Asma says. Religion has the ability to comfort someone because they believe in something that they have been invested in and associated with. I found it very interesting when he was describing the different parts of the brain and how religion benefits the emotional part but not the rational part. It makes sense that it works like this, especially when people rely on their religion during times involving death or other mourning periods. They have something to lean on when nothing rational will help. Overall I find Mr. Asma's opinion makes perfect sense. I also like how he recognised that there are negative aspects to religion too, which can hurt people and their brains. Religion is a topic that can be talked about forever, but I think it is important for people to be understanding of one another so the conversations about religion can be beneficial.

NYC

4/17/24

Single Reflection

While on our trip to New York City, we watched the Broadway musical *Suffs*. This play took us through the women's suffrage movement from the perspective of Alice Paul and her coworkers. I think that this play was one of the best plays I have ever seen just because of all of the emotions it carried and how moving the music and storyline was. When it was over I felt happy, sad, and overall inspired. I saw how confident and empowered the women were while fighting for what was right, and it made me want to be like them. The play writers definitely did a good job of showing just how important it is to be an independent and determined person. While the play was going on, I was taking in all of the information that I did not know. It was surprising to me how much of the story was new in my eyes, especially since it is such a popular time in history. It goes to show that they should be pointing out these events in history class, because they are just as if not more important than some of the other topics that history covers. Women's suffrage changed the structure of our country and the government, the two major things history teaches us about. Another thing I wanted to point out about the play is how the two different sides of the suffrage movement operated. There was Alice Paul's side, where she stood up for exactly what she knew was right, not compromising at all. Then, there was Carrie Chapman Catt, who tried to work with the people who stood against her to find a common ground. Alice Paul's ideals and beliefs seemed like the better option to me because she didn't take the easy way out. It seemed that Carrie wanted women's suffrage but not enough to go against what a man says. To me she was kind of like a fake feminist. Yes, men had all of the power at that time but there was still a way for women to gain power without begging the men for it. Overall, I really enjoyed this play and would totally watch it again. The music was amazing, the message was inspiring, and the actresses portrayed the male parts perfectly. Especially the president referring to women as ladies whenever he had to address them. That was so accurate in the saddest way possible.

ADL Never is Now

3/7/24

The ADL Never is Now conference has a goal of stopping hate that is spread around the world. The first workshop that I went to focused on a violent event that happened on January 15, 2022 in Colleyville, Texas. Four people were held hostage in a synagogue by a man who had a gun and claimed he had two bombs as well. The gunman's goal was to get his sister out of prison, and he went to the synagogue because he thought that they were powerful enough and controlled the government, so they could release her. Rabi Charlie, one of the people held hostage, knew he had to do something to save himself and the others who were inside. He threw a chair at the gunman when he was not paying attention, and that distraction allowed everyone to run out of the synagogue to safety. This talk was really interesting to me because of the gunman's ideas of Jewish people. It was weird that he went to try to force them to help him. Most acts of anti-Semitism are because of a hatred for Jewish people and the religion, but this was kind of like an act of admiration that involved force. Rabi Charlie was at the talk on the panel, and mentioned the issue with the stereotype that the gunman was following. The stereotype is the belief that Jewish people control things like the government and the economy, and that they are able to because of their presumed power and wealth. Before this talk I had not heard of that belief. It was interesting to me that the reason why the gunman chose violence was because of his sister in jail. He wanted her to be let out of prison, and believed the best way to do that was to threaten a Jewish community. Obviously this is an act of hate, but it seems to be a different type of hate than what has been seen in the past. The so-called "influence" that Jewish people have is believed to be so powerful that it can change other people's lives. This fact was one of the more interesting ones that I learned about throughout the day.

The second part of the day was a conference-wide closing session that also held a few short talks. My favorite talk involved the two comedians conversing about when a joke can be funny, and when it can be taken too far and become offensive. I think this is especially important during this day and age. I have heard a lot of instances where people think they are saying something funny, but it is actually extremely offensive to someone else. The comedians were voicing their thoughts and Zarna Garg, one of the comedians (the actually funny one), was talking about her experience with the topic. She is an immigrant mother who is raising her family in New York City, and makes a lot of jokes about her family and the stereotypes that come with her heritage. Not only did she make the conversation funny, she knew what was and wasn't funny to other people. I think that younger people, especially teenagers, need to be more cautious with what they say and the jokes they make. It is good to make jokes, but those jokes should be carefully crafted. Hurting someone else is not worth the one laugh someone may receive. I have seen this specifically at Watkinson, and I am sure it happens everywhere else. I think the main issue is that people are thinking about themselves before they are considering other people's feelings. That selfishness hurts others. Someone will want to get a laugh out of somebody to make themselves feel funny, not thinking about how badly they are hurting another person's feelings. Overall, the ADL conference was a good experience, mostly because of the messages being spread. Stopping hate is important in the world because of how much hate has been uncovered and exposed.

Global Changemakers International Women's Day
3/5/24

This talk featured H.E. Roya Rahmani, the Former Ambassador of Afghanistan to the U.S. She was introduced by four high school girls who came to the United States from Afghanistan as refugees. They talked about their experiences in Afghanistan and how many more opportunities they have already received in America. I really enjoyed hearing from these girls because they have been through so much in such a short span of time. I think it really helped me understand the situation better. They are the same age as me or younger, and yet they have faced so much adversity. Their short speeches gave me insight into what is really happening in Afghanistan and how bad it is for women and girls living there.

This event was held on International Women's Day, so the main focus of the talk was on women in Afghanistan and the troubles they face. Ambassador Rahmani's main points were about the empowerment of women, especially based around their education. I learned that Afghanistan is the only country that banned girls and women from going to school and receiving an education. This fact really surprised me since I know there

are a lot of countries where women do not go to school, but the difference is that they are not allowed to go in Afghanistan. The government simply forbids it. But there is also no recognized government. My question is why do they forbid women from receiving an education? I do not know what benefits they are obtaining by not educating half of the population. I think it would be hurting them more than it is helping them. The Former Ambassador also mentioned that Afghanistan is economically isolated. In my opinion, these two issues are connected. If women were involved in Afghanistan's economy through things like jobs, businesses, and knowledge, there would be a growth in the economy and the country's success. The point that she made which made me think the most was to make sure to not look at Afghanistan as a security threat or a charity basket because that will not help the country. After she said this, I realized that many western countries look down on countries that are maybe struggling or have less than the western countries do. It is a common trend that does not seem to be helping the other countries, even if people believe it will. All countries should be recognized as places that can grow and adapt, which means they should all have respect for one another.

The last thing I want to touch on is the impact of International Women's Day. Ambassador Rahmani ended her talk by saying that the day should be a day of making change instead of reflecting on the past and what has already happened. I think this should be the case for all days that are focused on a group or minority of people. Yes, it is important to celebrate what has happened, but it is even more important to keep improving the world and the people in it. There is still plenty of change to be done.

Oscar Nominated Short Documentaries

3/4/24

The one documentary that I found the most interesting and meaningful was *The ABC's of Book Banning*. This short documentary stuck with me because I love to read, and know the importance of books from all backgrounds and perspectives. These different books allow readers to broaden their understanding of the world, and when specific books are banned, education becomes more limited. I also really enjoyed how the film used children to tell the story and explain why book banning is wrong. It forces the viewer to have more sympathy towards the issue, specifically when those children are explaining why they think the books are impactful.

One aspect of the film that surprised me was how many of the books being banned are famous, inspiring novels that have been taught in schools like Watkinson for years. James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* was an example of a book that was banned. When they showed the cover of the book on screen I thought to myself, "I've read that book in school, how is it banned?" From what I can remember about the book, it was an inspiring yet alarming novel about racial injustice. I would never think that people would want to get rid of such a powerful story. Another book that was banned was a children's book about a strong and fearless little girl. It seemed to be focused around feminism and girls feeling confident enough to achieve whatever they want to. Once this popped up on the screen, I started shaking my head at how ridiculous the banning of books really is. To me, it seems like whatever books are educating children about newer, sometimes controversial (even though they shouldn't be) topics are the ones being banned. Topics that would never be accepted in the 1700 United States, but that have an impact on the people living in the world today.

The last book I am going to mention is *The Hate U Give*. I read this book when I was in middle school, and it quickly became one of my favorites. It is written well, and I found the story to be very moving and significant. The story explores the life of a black teenage girl who has to witness her childhood best friend being shot and killed by the police. It then shows the aftermath of that event and how it impacted her daily life after the incident. This book was yet another book that showed up on the "banned" list during the film. I would never want children to not have access to this novel, especially if they have lived through a similar event or can relate to it in any way. People who want to ban this book have weak reasoning. Whether it makes them uncomfortable that a white police officer shot a black man, or whether they think it is inappropriate to expose children to the truth, they are wrong. Children these days are growing up in a world where these issues need to be taught to

them so they can stay safe and educated. Banning books that display these issues only hurts the children and their understanding of the world around them.

MLK Day

1/12/24

This year, while attending MLK Day, there were definitely both ups and downs. To start off the day, Mr. Kenny Carter came and taught us about Freedom Songs that were used during the Civil Rights Movement. During his introduction, he talked about what his life was like growing up, and while those stories were very interesting, I was ultimately hoping for him to play music for longer. I really enjoyed hearing the different Freedom Songs, and by listening to the lyrics it was easier for me to understand the emotions and thoughts that were going through peoples heads' at the time.

Later in the day, I went to my first workshop. This workshop focused on the multitude of civil rights leaders who made a difference. While learning about these people, our job was to imagine what the Civil Rights Movement would be like without MLK, and talk about who would have been of greater influence if he was not there. I think that MLK was obviously such a huge part of Civil Rights, but others were just as important. Hearing about these people and giving them the recognition they deserve made it easier for me to see how large of an impact this movement had on people across the country.

The second workshop that I took part in talked about MLK's opinions on riots as well as commission reports that were issued after major police brutality events occurred. MLK was all about the non-violent approach to change, so when he spoke about riots anyone could tell that he was not a fan. I agree with him. I believe that riots happen because people want to make a change but do not know the right way to do it, therefore choosing violence and not getting their point across. Riots can also seem like an excuse for some people who do not care about the actual issue at hand. These people are rioting for their own personal benefit. The last half of the workshop was based around the language used in different commission reports. After a severe police brutality event happened in the 1960's, the government released a list of what needs to be done to improve the country and its racist ways. After similar events during the early 2000's, another report was issued, but this one was different. The report during the 1960's was very straight-forward and minimalistic, stating exactly what the problem was and exactly how to fix it. This report was not afraid of calling anyone out on racist problems, and even seemed to encourage it. On the other hand, the report in the early 2000's was lenient and unspecified, saying what could be done instead of what should be done. The overall difference was that the older report was not afraid to hurt people's feelings as long as it ended in change, while the newer report seemed scared of offending the people who were in the wrong. I learned a lot throughout the day, and was able to connect topics that I learned about to topics that are issues in our world today.

Watkinson Course

1/18/24

This year, I have been taking Forensics. So far, we have talked about DNA, hair, blood, and fingerprint evidence, along with the OJ Simpson case. Learning about the different ways to collect evidence showing a person committed a crime provides justice and equity to the victim. In my opinion, the most beneficial type of evidence is DNA evidence. This method uses the DNA of certain individuals and compares them to the DNA found at the crime scene, matching suspects and victims. We not only learned about the process of collecting the DNA, but also the controversies that surround DNA evidence. If a person is trying to find their relatives through a DNA collection website, their DNA sequences and identities are then stored forever and can be accessed whenever necessary. Say a person used a site like 23andMe, and then committed a crime while leaving DNA evidence behind. The DNA they shared with the database can be accessed by law enforcement officials and used in court against them. This relates to the Global Studies theme of Human Rights, because one popular right is the right to privacy. The argument is that it is hard for a person to have privacy when their DNA can be found

by any government official. This has been one of the key issues relating to DNA analysis, and there is a lot of debate surrounding it. Connecting this topic to Human Rights has helped me understand the deeper meaning behind what Human Rights actually are. Human Rights seem like things that are normal and accepted in the world because of societal norms. These rights are what allow us to live our daily lives, not considering how messed up the world could be if Human Rights were not a thing.

Another topic that we have discussed is the OJ Simpson case. This case was one of the most important cases in forensics history, and not just because of the forensics itself. The underlying topics in this case were race, fame, and wealth among other things. OJ Simpson was a professional football player who had a complicated relationship with his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson. One night, Nicole and her friend Ron were murdered outside of her home, and OJ was suspected of the crime. This led to an eleven month murder trial, and a lot of discussions about how OJ's money, fame, and race impacted the overall case. OJ is a black man, but he lived in a wealthy, predominantly white neighborhood in California. Many black Californians felt a connection to OJ, wanting him to be considered "not guilty" so that he could break barriers in the legal system. Although they felt this connection, OJ seemed to care more about his fame and money than he did about the black community. Multiple Global Studies skills are associated with the case, for example, using a multiple perspective approach. This allows a person to step back and understand all sides of the case, which may even change their viewpoint for the better. Another skill this connects with is civic and community engagement. Understanding the court system and the factors that play into it, along with fighting for what a person believes is right can make a huge difference. Learning about DNA evidence and the OJ Simpson case not only broadened my knowledge about forensic science, but also taught me more about the way different people see the world.

Bethel Woods

10/17/23

The Bethel Woods field trip taught me a lot more about the counterculture movement and the events that really changed because of Woodstock. After the museum and tour of the grounds, I was able to come up with a better mental image of how large Woodstock was and the effect the music festival had on the people there. When looking at the location where the stage was, I first found it crazy how roughly 400,000 people could fit in that field, but when someone ran to the other side of it, the size made sense. One main idea and concept of Woodstock was non-violence, antiwar, and peace, and it was really impressive to hear that so many people can co-exist in such a small amount of space with little to no issue. Another cool fact that I learned while at Woodstock was that the concert became free after it began. This was because there were so many more people than expected, and they kept pushing through the fences and ticket booths, causing lots of chaos. This chaos led them to make the decision to make the festival free, which was unforgettable but costly. Another chaotic element of Woodstock was the fact that everyone was high either from marijuana or LSDs. People may have had a lot of more fun this way, but it also was dangerous and led to multiple overdoses. A lot happened at Woodstock during the three day music festival, and the idea of counterculture became popular because of it.

Counterculture means that people have different morals and behaviors than that of their standard social norms. Woodstock was such a large center for counterculture because it was a younger generation, along with it happening during the Vietnam War. Woodstock brought up the ideas of peace and freedom that were not really present in everyday life during 1969. I believe that counterculture movements happen more regularly now after the movement that happened during the time of Woodstock. Younger generations are always trying to change the values and ideals of American culture, and it really started in the late 1960's with their young generation. Nowadays, I think counterculture movements can be seen more commonly, although maybe not as large or famous as the one at Woodstock.

Rosh Hashanah

9/15/23

When going to Rosh Hashanah in the park, even if it was for the second year in a row, I was able to learn more about Judaism and specifically the holiday of Rosh Hashanah. I wanted to go to the event again because of how much fun I had last year and how welcoming the community was. While writing my reflection last year, I reflected mostly on the musical aspect of the service and how I really enjoyed how much of the prayer and message was told through music. I still completely agree with that point and how much the music connects people, but I also observed this year that the setting of the service also seems to have a huge importance to the tradition. Holding the service outdoors makes it feel light and peaceful, especially with the setting sun in the background. The nice weather didn't hurt either, and with the sunny day, everyone was cheerful and glad to be in the park and to see one another. I don't know if the Rosh Hashanah service would have the same appeal to it if it was in a synagogue every year. Personally, I would much rather sit outside on a nice blanket in the park than sit in a chair inside. Without the gorgeous early fall allure, along with the fun music, the Rosh Hashanah service would seem kind of sad to me. Those are two of the things that really stick out to me the most because they are so different from what I am used to at any type of religious service.

Bilal Sekou Talk
9/26/23

While listening to Bilal Sekou talk, I was intrigued by his mentality to “change (not save) the world.” This mentality stuck out to me because of the difference between those two adjectives. Changing means making a difference and developing something into something different, while saving means fixing or rescuing something. Our world, and specifically our country, need changing way more than we need saving. Saving the world would mean solving all of its problems, something that is near impossible to do. On the other hand, if people put effort into changing the world, starting with their own country, modifications can be made that will slowly make the world better and better. When Bilal went through his action plan on how to change the world, the first thing he mentioned was that we must understand as much as we can about the world we live in. Nowadays, I think it is a common occurrence for people to try to change something that they believe needs changing, but they aren't able to do it because they are not educated enough on the topic at hand. This can result in misinformation which is a problem when you want to educate others to show them what needs to be changed. While taking us through the next steps of his plan, Bilal explained that an action plan along with taking action are the largest steps. Although these are the most important, it is crucial to keep your eyes open to what is happening, who is affected, and how things change while we act. People get set on one goal and believe that they must strive for that goal no matter what, but the truth is that things can shift and adjust, altering plans of action. Hearing what steps need to be taken to make a change in this world helped me understand how important each step is by itself, and that one of these steps can not be completed without the others if a person wants to be successful in making a change.

The other main topic that Bilal touched on was voting. He talked about the importance that voting has on a civil society, and how “political participation” is at the center of the political process. When he mentioned how voting is a habit, I really understood more about why some people vote and others do not. If someone doesn't vote when they are first eligible, they probably won't see the need to vote in the next election either. Once people get used to not voting and putting in that effort, they don't see a need to start doing it again because it may not affect their personal lives even if it is affecting the country as a whole. Bilal brought up the idea of lowering the voting age to 16, which I had never really thought about before. For several decades, legislative leaders have been trying to lower the voting age to 16, but have been unsuccessful. Personally, I think that lowering the voting age could be beneficial to get a younger generation's voice on issues that will matter to them. Then again, 16 and 17 year-olds may not be educated or mature enough to vote for what they want. Because there is such a problem with voting habits, if the voting age is lowered, it will increase voter turnout and develop lifelong voting habits. Overall, I think that lowering the voting age will be beneficial for our country.

Summer Reading Reflection

9/18/23

While reading *The Bill of Obligations*, I was able to learn more about the purpose of our government and how to benefit the most from it, while also making sure the country benefits as a whole. A lot of this was explained around the idea of being a global citizen. Haass talked about the different “obligations” that a person should fulfill to have a large impact on their society and government, as well as the world. I agree with a lot of these obligations, and I noticed how a lot of people in the United States today do not participate in them. One of these obligations is to stay open to compromise. This obligation stuck out to me the most because nowadays, people only think their opinion is right, not allowing them to learn from others. This is such an important issue, especially in relation to our country. Compromise doesn't only happen in government. People have to compromise every day, yet some are too stubborn to see the other person's side or give up a part of what they think is right. This makes legislation and other government tactics especially hard to pass. For example, when someone is going to vote in an election, they may not like any of the candidates, but they have to vote for one. Compromising with their choices and having to choose the candidate who they like the least, (maybe because the candidate has similar views on some subjects but not others) may benefit them in some areas but not others. I think people need to start realizing that compromising is a good thing to do. They need to see the glass as half full instead of half empty. Having to fulfill compromises and the multiple other obligations that Haass explained makes someone a better citizen, nationally and internationally.

I enjoyed reading this book this summer, because I was able to connect it to a lot of things that I had learned in civics the previous year. Learning about the Bill of Rights, and now learning about what obligations go with it is a useful tool to understand the best ways people can contribute to their government and communities. Currently in day to day life, I do not see as many people practicing the obligations that Haass talked about. People seem to have the mentality that when they don't like a part of something, they give up on the entire thing, bringing us back to the need for compromise. Overall, I found the book to be one of the better school books I have read, especially because I benefited from reading it. I really enjoyed how Haass walked us through each obligation one by one, explaining the importance of it. I think that focusing on and teaching students more about government will help them in the future, especially when it comes to people wanting to make changes. *The Bill of Obligations* taught me a lot more about our government and what people can do to improve it outside of voting and creating ideas for legislation.

Walk With Amal

9/12/23

While on the Walk With Amal, it was cool to see all of the children there in support. There were kids from a bunch of different schools walking with Amal, and seeing them and their excitement to be there made the walk better. The walk through the park was nice, but I was confused about the squirrel factor and their acorn. When researching what the squirrels were for, it said they were a part of the walk. The squirrels were apparently there to teach Amal a lesson about testing her determination. They also showed Amal that “chasing squirrels can be a kind of dance.” I found this a bit strange, but it got people excited and I guess that's one of their main goals.

The overall walk was a cool idea and definitely got people to show up, but I think there could have been more focus on what the walk was actually for and how we could help out the child refugees through the Walk With Amal. I know the point was to raise awareness, but I felt like I should have done more than just walk down the street following a puppet.

One thing I did think was really cool about the walk was the actual puppet of Amal. I found it interesting to see the wooden structure and the way they decorated her. She was a little creepy looking at first because of her eyes and mouth moving, but after a while I realized that it takes a lot of artistic talent to create something like that. Overall, I wish the walk was more beneficial for everyone including the child refugees.

