ANALYTIC ESSAY 4

DUE	FIRST DRAFT, 1000 words	Monday, November 9th, 11:59 PM (via Canvas)
	SECOND DRAFT, 1300 words	Sunday, November 16th, 11:59 PM (via Canvas)
	FINAL DRAFT, 1700 words	Sunday, November 21st, 11:59 PM (via Canvas)

TEXTS

Your essay must cite and analyze passages from the following readings:

Armstrong, Karen. "Homo religiosus." *The case for God*. Random House Digital, Inc., 2009.
Foer, Franklin. "Mark Zuckerberg's war on free will." *World without mind*. Random House, 2017.
Watters, Ethan. "The Mega-Marketing of Depression in Japan." *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche* (2010): 187-248.

PROMPT

Throughout the semester, we have looked at the relationship between individuals and society, exploring the tension between individual aspirations and societal representations and expectations, which are sometimes driven by corporate interests. As we navigate and negotiate our place in society, we are both producers and consumers of meaning. As Ethan Watters points out, such meaning, or cultural representation, does not remain a simple "explanatory model" (Watters, 540) that helps us make sense of the world, but can guide our behavior. In another extreme case described by Franklin Foer, the forces influencing our behavior do not even coalesce in a cohesive representation but are guided by an algorithm that has become, even to his creators, opaque and incomprehensible. Karen Armstrong helps us see the relationship between representation and behavior in a broader historical and cultural context. She points out that religion also should be seen more as a "myth" that generates meaning and eases us into a daily moral practice, rather than as "dogma" that impedes rational inquiry.

One characteristic of the modern era is that the community we live in is not the tribe or the town, but the nation; and the present time seems to have brought together the whole world (or a sizable chunk of it) in a global society of connected TV viewers and social media users. The community we live in (and with whom we share meaning and cultural representations) has become increasingly virtual. **How have the construction of social meaning and myth, and the behaviors and practices associated with them changed, now that the social communities we may participate in have millions - if not billions - of virtual members?**

THOUGHT-PROVOKERS

Below are some further questions that may be useful to consider in generating your argument. *Remember that you only need to address the above prompt in bold:*

- ➢ Does our relationship with technology resemble, at times, the religious?
- ➢ People sometimes "lose" themselves in a feed for hours on end. What has this experience taken the place of? Is it an effective substitute?
- ➢ Each online community has its own set of rules and its own funding myth. Have we become "citizens" of social platform?
- ➢ Nature used to be a vehicle for a religious or ecstatic experience. Has our relationship with nature changed?

FORMAT

You must proofread carefully.

Quotations should be carefully transcribed, punctuated, and attributed. For bibliographic conventions, you may use MLA (preferred), APA, or Chicago style. Please follow the conventions of standard edited American English. Use 1.0-inch margins on all sides, double-spacing, and twelve-point serif font (e.g. Times New Roman, Garamond, Palatino, or Baskerville). Number all pages. The paper should have your name, the

date, and course information on the first page (as outlined in the attached "Style Guide"). Title your paper. Submit your paper electronically via Sakai's "Assignments." Email submissions are not acceptable.