

HIST4200

Prof. Philip Napoli

Journal Entry #3

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Assignment: *Write 300 words about your memories of the transition from in-class to online learning in the spring. First, tell me what happened—literally, the blow by blow of the shift to online learning. Second, do your best to remember and explain how you felt about the transition. What are the dominant emotional memories from March and April? Fear? Anxiety? Exhaustion? Why?*

Metamorphosis

I, personally, happen to feel affiliated to a transitional age group; hence a lot of things in my life remind of metamorphosis, anyways. Why it is transitional because I have seen the clash of Super Powers where Capitalism overthrew Communism and then the world setting switched to Cold War; because I saw computers of the size of a 200-square-foot-room and today, I have a 10" touchscreen chromebook that weighs around a pound; because I saw Clint Eastwood as an actor and nowadays I watch movies directed by him; because I watched Frank Lampard playing for Chelsea whereas currently, he coaches his home club. The list can be prolonged for a couple of pages. However, regardless of how much transitions I have experienced, 2020 took it to an unequivocally different level.

I am a full-time worker and only attend evening classes. Since there are usually a couple of available required classes that are scheduled after 6 pm, for my Spring 2020 term, I only enrolled in one class taught by Prof. Louis Fishman. An eccentric class about Ottoman History, along with unique stories and teaching techniques by one of my favorite teachers. We both speak Turkish and sometimes have personal conversations during the class. He already graded me with A+ in previous classes I got with him, and he knows what a hardworking student I am. What could go wrong, right? Well, COVID19 had its own plans.

While attending classes in February, we had discussed COVID cases around the globe. It seemed so distant as if the Kamchatka volcano erupted. I even asked how come deaths in India are not growing as in Italy, thus this country has drastic hygiene issues. Trump administration was not taking it all seriously, so we were not concerned as well. Weeks passed proving that carelessness wrong. My daughter's teacher at Big Apple Academy died of Corona Virus. She was the closest victim we knew. When numbers grew in March, we were informed about another upcoming transition in my life. It is not like I was digitally illiterate and was afraid of computer based education. My biggest issue was the lack of personal contact – I am in need of constant human interaction. Otherwise, I would have chosen one of the numerous online BA courses. Call it a conservative approach, but I can't engross all essential knowledge and practical skills via Zoom. Video class is like an online nanny. She can teach your daughter some letters and numbers, but she can't shape her character or prohibit cheating.

Nonetheless, until the last day, I was hoping that in the Fall Semester, we will go back to "normal," but regretfully we have to continue following safety regulations. Even though I utterly understand the anxiety and partially support state preventive rules, somewhere inside, I hope this metamorphosis starts to reverse soon, and we can shake hands again.