

**Oral History
Capturing Quarantine
Spring 2020
Final Reflection**

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1. How did you feel when you read the email notifying students the oral history project would change from *Interfaith Chicago* to *Capturing Quarantine* due to the transition to remote learning?

I was relieved that the project had shifted. I feel like I didn't know enough about my narrator and I didn't know how I would connect with them, considering their age. When the project shifted, the pressure was off to present myself like a "real oral historian" and successfully complete an interview on a subject I didn't know or think much about. A big gamble taking this class is not knowing what the project will be, and I was relieved that I didn't have to take on the interviewer role in a project directly related to religion, because I am not religious and I don't identify with it.

2. What were your initial thoughts about participating in an oral history project documenting your classes' experience during the first months of the global pandemic?

I thought it was a perfect idea. There is history being made in the present and I think that the activities of college-aged people capture so much of what shapes them. We are all experts of our own experiences and stories, and this project gave us the platform to be heard.

3. How do you feel about the project now?

I'm glad that I was part of this experience. It was great to work with my classmates and create essential questions. I thought it was cool to compare my experiences with others'.

4. As an interviewer:

- a. How did you prepare for the interview?

The discussions we had in class helped prepare us for the project. I spoke with my narrator throughout the process and we built a relationship stronger and in much less time than when I was in contact with the Interfaith narrator.

- b. What was it like to interview a classmate?

It was hard not to want to interject and make it more of a conversation. I was engaged and excited about the interview. It felt natural and there was no pressure.

- c. How did you feel after the interview?

There were certain moments when the answer to a later question would appear. It was a bit frustrating as the interviewer, but I quickly realized that follow up questions were key to a successful interview. It was hard to stay chronological so the time frame of things had to jump around a bit.

- d. What is the most important thing you learned as an interviewer?

Always pay attention to answers being given so you don't ask something twice.

- e. What advice would you give to future interviewers?

Go in confident and know what question you're going to ask next before your narrator is done answering the previous one.

5. As a narrator:

- a. How did you prepare to be interviewed?

I didn't do much.

- b. Describe your experience being interviewed.

I was so focused on asking the questions that I never thought about how I would answer them. It felt unique because there were questions I was asked that I wish I could have asked my narrator.

- c. How did you feel after the interview ended?

I compared the two interviews I took part in and I realized my answers were so weird. I felt like I came off as cold or negative. It made me kind of nervous how short the interview was when I was the narrator. I felt like I wanted it to go on longer so I could redeem myself by giving better answers.

- d. What would you tell someone who is hesitant to be interviewed?

There's no pressure. The only one judging you is yourself. Sometimes it won't go the way you expected it to, but that's okay. You expressed your feelings in that one moment, it doesn't mean that that's who you are forever.

6. (OPTIONAL) Questions about narrators' private lives and personal relationships were not included in the formal interview, how do you feel about this?

This could have made the interviews become something that the title and goal of this project didn't set out for. I think these resonate questions would be good to do in its own project.

- a. How has your gender, sexuality, race, and/or ethnicity affected your experience during the global pandemic?

Understanding how disproportionately the virus has impacted people of color is definitely eye opening. As a mixed Black woman, I realize that healthcare is so hard to access for so many Black and a Brown people. It's really scary how America's health care system really doesn't care about who is in need. Especially since millionaires and getting richer and the wealth of the country is so centralized to them. It shocks me how politicians and citizens deny racism and discrimination while people of color are being hit the hardest and nothing is being done about it.

- b. Exploring and developing new relationships is an important part of the undergraduate experience, how has this aspect of your life been affected?

My relationship with friends is virtual and we are all restless. It's really sad that I can't just hang out with them like how we used to, especially because we are all back at home, just a few miles away from each other. When they came home from their college towns, we were excited, but it soon faded when we realized that we couldn't engage with each other the way we usually did. We have tried to make up for it by doing video calls or gathering at the park at a distance. It's really rough. I didn't really see my relationship with my friends and very physical but not even giving them a hug before saying bye and parting ways is a drag.

- c. How are you dealing with the absence of physical contact?

This has been really rough in my relationship with my boyfriend. We feel distant and alone, even though we can talk virtually. Just being able to hug or hold hands in public feels awkward to me, like we are being judged by passers by. When we do see each other, it is brief and feels rushed.

7. Is there anything else you would like to include?