Hanna-Mary Cook

Mr. Speice

Independent Study and Mentorship - 3A

21 December 2018

**Assessment 11**

**Name of Professional:** Jamie Johnson, PhD.

**Profession/Title:** Professor of Anthropology

**Business/Company name:** University of North Texas

**Date of Interview:** November 30th, 2018

**Assessment:**

My interview with Dr. Jamie Johnson, an anthropology lecturer at the University of North Texas, was the longest and most informative that I have had so far. Dr. Johnson’s enthusiasm about the field of anthropology was contagious, and she provided me with valuable knowledge about the field as well as suggestions about where to turn next to learn more about anthropology. Dr. Johnson spends most of her time studying cultural, development, and urban anthropology. She also enjoys learning about infrastructure and material studies.

Dr. Johnson told me about the classes that she teaches at UNT, including her unique approach to teaching introductory courses without dividing the curriculum into the typical subfields. She shared that when introductory anthropology courses are taught with defined barriers between the subfields, students do not get the sense that subfields of anthropology are integrated in most careers and research situations. For example, Dr. Johnson does not consider herself as an expert in any one branch of anthropology, but she has done research and lectured about several aspects of each. This approach to introducing anthropology seems like a more accurate way to convey to students what working in anthropology would actually be like. I think that it is important to stress that the branches of anthropology overlap, as it is one of the unique qualities of the field that set it apart from other similar careers.

Dr. Johnson also shared that she views creating new courses and projects for her students as anthropological research. As I have not been interested in anthropology in academia, I thought that this outlook of hers was very interesting. I can understand how creating new classes and assignments for anthropology students could be seen as a research project for the teacher, just not how a form of research like this could be at all comparable to field work or ethnography. Aside from research through class and project creation, UNT allows Dr. Johnson to complete more field work off-campus than she would be allowed to do in most other jobs. She receives grants to pay for her research and is allowed to conduct research with her students as a part of their learning experiences at UNT. Easier access to research funding and field work opportunities sound like a positive aspect of working in education, however, I am still not sure if anthropology in the academic field is the right fit for me.

Near the end of our interview, Dr. Johnson shared with me a list of recommendations of things that I should do to learn more about anthropology. These include attending the Anthropology Expo at UNT on World Anthropology Day, looking on the United Nations website, and reading several books. I appreciated the ideas that she gave me and plan on looking into each of them in more detail.

In conclusion, my interview with Dr. Johnson was a great opportunity to learn more about anthropology in education, urban and development anthropology, and to witness the excitement and passion of an anthropologist sharing her research and experiences.