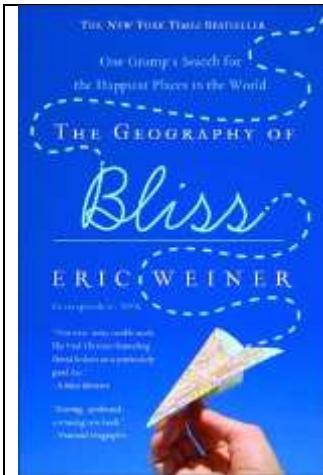


# GLOBALIZATION 10<sup>TH</sup> WORLD LIT SUMMER READING



## *The Geography of Bliss* by Eric Weiner

Part foreign affairs discourse, part humor, and part twisted self-help guide, *The Geography of Bliss* takes the reader from America to Iceland to India in search of happiness, or, in the crabby author's case, moments of "un-unhappiness." The book uses a beguiling mixture of travel, psychology, science and humor to investigate not what happiness is, but where it is. Are people in Switzerland happier because it is the most democratic country in the world? Do citizens of Qatar, awash in petrodollars, find joy in all that cash? Is the King of Bhutan a visionary for his initiative to calculate Gross National Happiness? Why is Asheville, North Carolina so damn happy? With engaging wit and surprising insights, Eric Weiner answers those questions and many others, offering travelers of all moods some interesting new ideas for sunnier destinations and dispositions. – Amazon.com

### Assignment:

1. Read the book! Annotate by asking questions in the margins or underlining things that stick out to you. We will have a Socratic seminar in the first week or so and you will want to be able to skim through the book and look at your highlights and notes beforehand.
2. The following journal questions will be **due by Friday, August 7**. I will give you instructions on how to turn in via Google Classroom. Discuss these prompts as thoroughly as you can, giving examples from your life or previous knowledge. Feel free to wax philosophical. Your responses should be informal, but thoughtful and academic.
  - a. In the Netherlands chapter, Eric talks about the World Database of Happiness. Do you think happiness can be quantified into numbers and data? In other words, can it be reduced to lists and measurable numbers? If not, why not? If you think it can, explain why.
  - b. The Swiss have a real connection to their past and to their hometowns. Is that a prerequisite for happiness? Are Americans disconnected from their roots? If so, what can be done to reverse this trend?
  - c. Bhutan has been isolated from the rest of the world for many centuries. Does this contribute to their happiness? Why do you think they are so happy?
  - d. In Qatar, Eric explores the relationship between money and happiness and concludes that money erodes happiness by putting up barriers between people. Do you agree? Doesn't money allow us to buy the "good things" in life, things that bring us joy?
  - e. Eric meets an Icelander who tells him the key to happiness is to "embrace failure." What does he mean by that? Is he right? Do Americans embrace, or even tolerate, failure?
  - f. In the Moldova chapter, Natasha says that the people are unhappy because they "...have no money for the life." What is the relationship between money and happiness? Can it buy happiness? If it does, then why are some people so happy even without money?
  - g. Eric learns that the Thais have an expression: "Don't think too much." Are they on to something? What about the unexamined life not being worth living, as Socrates put it?

Is there a good balance between overthinking and underthinking? How does this apply in your life?

- h. In England, Eric explores whether or not people can change psychologically. Do you think this is possible at all ages? Or do things get “fixed” after a certain age? Give some examples that you can think of.
- i. Eric decides that national culture has a lot to do with happiness. Is this true? Aren’t we individuals first and citizens of a nation second? Explore this idea. How much does being American contribute to your happiness? Give examples!
- j. What IS happiness? I’m just going to let you go crazy on this one.