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For our group project, we interviewed members of the Davidson community and town about how they define the body and the humanities.

Transcript:

Interview 1:

Saskia: Hi, what's your name?

Rand: Hi, my name is Rand.

Saskia: What year are you?

Rand: I'm a freshman.

Saskia: What's your definition of the humanities?

Rand: The humanities is the study of human produced culture, so anything man-made, whether that be societal or whatever, instead of like, rocks or atoms.

Saskia: And what's your definition of the body?

Rand: The physical manifestation of the person I guess, so there's the emotional manifestation, which is the soul, and then whatever like physical stuff is attached to that, that's the body!

Saskia: Great, thank you!

Interview 2:

Sky: Hi, what is your name?

Brillon: Brillon.

Sky: Okay, I have two questions for you. First one is, how do you define the body?

Brillon: The body is the material part of our beings, it is the physical manifestation of who we are.

Sky: And the second question is, how do you define the humanities?

Brillon: The humanities is the discipline that explores humans and their culture, and their experiences.

Sky: That's all?

Brillon: Yeah!

Sky: Fabulous. Thank you so much.

Interview 3:

Sky: Hi, what's your name?

Christina: Hi, my name is Christina.

Sky: And what's your class year?

Christina: I am the class of 2025.

Sky: So we have two questions for you. First one is, how do you define humanities?

Christina: I think I'm going to define the humanities as the product of human culture, the study of it. So like the study of history relating to humans, and thought relating to humans, so like art history or philosophy or topics of the sort.

Sky: Great. And how do you define the body?

Christina: I'd say that this is like the simply physical part of a human, and just like the physical part of communities in general, if thinking of it in that sense.

Sky: Thank you so much.

Interview 4:

Amelia: Hi, what's your name?

Jan: Hi, I'm Jan Blodgett. I was the archivist at Davidson College for 23 years, I taught 2 semesters of Humes, way way back.

Amelia: That's amazing. We wanted to ask you what your definition of the body is.

Jan: Alright. I think the first thing that comes to mind is the biology of the physical body, which is tricky because it's constantly moving, like ourselves change every seven years, some cells happen faster than that. So you know, it's the physical body, which then has so many layers. The cells, the bones, the muscles, and then what's in those, the trauma that your body carries, or the joy that your body carries, how your brain and your memory work, so it's a really complex set of mechanisms and ideas and actual physical cells that manifest itself in a head, two arms, two legs.

Amelia: That's great. And what about your definition of the humanities?

Jan: So, as someone who's worked for a college, the standard definition would be as a course of study. That is a course that looks at the way cultures have looked at themselves to find themselves, to help ask questions about what is the meaning of being human in a world where we forget we're animals, and our connection. So humanities for me has to have an awful lot of environmental and social justice and philosophy and art encompassing it to be the full picture of it.

Amelia: Perfect! Thank you so much.

Interview 5:

Sky: Hi, what is your name?

Robert: Robert.

Sky: We have two questions for you, first one is, how do you define the humanities?

Robert: Hmm, to be honest, I don't know really what that means. Yeah, I don't know.

Sky: Okay, it's ok. And the second question is how do you define the body?

Robert: I guess it depends on how you're looking at the question, whether it's literally like what's made up of the body, or how you view your own self and your body, or how other people view your body. That's it.

Sky: Thank you so much.

Interview 6:

Saskia: Hi, what's your name?

John: Hi, I'm John Corso-Esquivel, and I'm an associate professor of art history here.

Saskia: What's your definition of the body?

John: The body... this is a tough question I think. And I would say that that definition changes depending on the context. So, of course we've got these organic organisms that we live in, but the way that we experience bodies changes depending on our setting. So when we're talking about our body, say, with our doctor, we're in a doctor's office, then we are talking about these biological organisms that we study through science. But when we go to, say, a concert, and we start dancing all night without necessarily talking, we have our experience of the body without the definition. It's a kind of live experience. So the reason that this is such a great and difficult question is, for me, bodies are always defined based on the discourse and the conversation that you're having. So the same definition wouldn't necessarily work in a different situation. So I think that bodies, again, kind of get their definition based on how the body's being used and perceived and the group that we're in. Does that work?

Saskia: Yeah, that's great. And what's your definition of the humanities?

John: The humanities, that's really great. That's a tough one as well. I think for me right now, I understand the humanities in contrast, to say the sciences, where in the sciences, we work with hypotheses and test them and observe, and we use a kind of method to examine knowledge. But for me, the humanities are not quite as testable. So they might be everything outside of that, the way that we explore ethics, the way that we understand relationships with each other, not necessarily studied through science, but maybe studied through different kinds of qualities, interactions, the study of language, and then something current right now is the study of our lives outside of ourselves.

John: I think I would just end by saying that for me, this is where the arts, the things that are not so systematic get studied, often from a systematic way, but still really about our relationship to each other and the places that we live.

Saskia: Great, thank you.

John: Thanks!