**Northern Exposure: “Our Tribe”**

Setting: Fictional town in Alaska in the mid-1990s

Characters: Joel (Jewish doctor from NYC), Marilyn (his Native American assistant), Ms. Noanuk (his patient   
and tribe elder), Ed (his Native American friend), Chris (town DJ), Dizzy (goat)

1. Social control
   1. What norms are being learned and questioned by the main character? Folkways/mores?
   2. How do these norms reflect differences in values and beliefs?
   3. What sanctions are used to achieve conformity to the norms? Pos/neg – formal/informal?
   4. To what extent is internalization of these norms achieved?
2. Communication
   1. What symbols are used to convey meaning between characters? Visual/verbal/physical/etc?
   2. To what extent do differences in language and communication styles affect interaction?
   3. When does miscommunication occur? Causes/effects?
   4. What theatrical devices are used to reinforce meaning for the audience?

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1. Cross-cultural comparison and Diversity
   1. What different cultures, social categories, and subcultures are portrayed?
   2. In what ways are they similar?
   3. How much cultural diffusion appears to have taken place over time?
   4. To what extent do the characters exhibit ethnocentrism or cultural relativism?

Pick one of the big questions raised and answer for yourself:

* *What does belonging to your own tribe mean to you?*
* *Is there such a thing as an American tribe – or just a zillion special interest groups?*
* *Has the rise of the global village (due to technology) made it so we’ve outgrown tribes?*
* *How hard is it to escape the rampant materialism of our culture?*
* *Is the richest man the one who has nothing?*
* *Why is the moon supposed to engender visions?*
* *Do you have to believe in visions to have one?*
* *How hard is it to avoid the happiness of others?*