

Ahner Rouse

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ENGL 211C

Trapani

Letter to Portfolio's Reader

Throughout the course of this semester, this English 211C class has been very beneficial to me. I have learned different skills by doing different assignments, done work I had no idea I could do, and pushed through all of the lengthy papers. Learning how to pertain to certain audiences, how to use critical thinking & evaluating skills, writing multiple drafts to perfect a paper, and learning better grammar, usage & citation skills have been huge accomplishments for me. I have learned a lot of my strengths and weaknesses throughout this entire process. The weaknesses are going to be things that I will definitely work on in the ongoing future. This class has benefited me greatly, and I will remember these skills for an extremely long time.

Learning how to write to different audiences has been a skill that I most enjoyed learning how to do. Throughout the semester, different kinds of papers were written. The major papers were the Rhetorical Analysis, Rogerian, and Toulmin papers. The Rhetorical Analysis was written to the people who want to know about the source without reading or watching it. The Rogerian Paper was written to somebody who knew nothing about the topic the author was writing about. The Toulmin paper was written to the people who sided with the writer's views or even people who disagreed. The point of the Toulmin paper was to persuade, so most likely, it

should pertain to those who disagree with the writer's view. Writing these papers has helped me decipher who I should be writing to at the present time.

My critical thinking & evaluating skills have gotten a lot better in this class by doing a lot of different assignments. Assignments varying from reflections to E-portfolios to essays have helped me a tremendous amount because I realized how versatile my writing can be. Writing several different kinds of papers has helped me because now if I am given a prompt, I can think back to what I learned in this class and I will not have as much trouble when figuring it out. A lot of different assignments helped me think critically just as much as writing multiple drafts for one paper has. When writing multiple drafts and getting help from different people, it becomes easier to find and fix the mistakes in your essay. For example, for each major paper, the class had to write a rough draft, a peer review draft, and a final draft. For the first two papers, we got feedback from each other and our teacher. This helped my critical thinking and evaluation skills a great deal.

Grammar, usage and citation have always been a problem for me throughout my entire educational career. This class has helped me, but it is still considered one of my weaknesses. It is one of my weaknesses to cite correctly because I never correctly learned how to do so in high school, so this class was really the first time I worked so intensely on it. I am not perfect at it, but I definitely have gotten a little better at doing citations. Citing articles, videos or journal articles was a bit of a struggle for me this semester and is something that I need to work on throughout the rest of my time here at Old Dominion University.

My other weaknesses that I need to work on for a while after this class are the way that I have trouble explaining myself in essays and my tendency to be very biased in my writing. For

example, in a paper I have a lot of trouble explaining a certain point that I have. When I mention one of my points, it is hard for me to expand on it for more than two sentences. It is hard for me because sometimes critical thinking can be a little hard when I just want to get an assignment done. Instead of rushing, I should take a breath and just take my time. My bias when writing can be extremely prominent in a lot of my assignments. For example, in my Rogerian Paper, a paper that is supposed to be neutral, I was biased throughout it. A way for me to work on this is, to say bluntly, get out of my own head. If I did this, it would be easier to look at other viewpoints.

Although I have a lot of weaknesses, I also believe that I have some strengths as well. When writing papers, my strengths are that I can craft an essay out of any prompt, I am excellent at backing up arguments, and being clear about the points I am making. Throughout the semester, I have strengthened these with the assignments given in this course. All three of these strengths came out in my Toulmin paper because it was the last major assignment we had to do. I think because it was the last, I was at my best because I had been practicing them all semester.

To conclude, this entire course has been focused on the topic I have been working on. Every single assignment we did related to and helped the topic we wrote major papers about. At the beginning, my topic kind of made no sense, but at the end, I realized what I could do to fix it. At first, my proposal was “How White Criminals Use the Insanity Plea as a Scapegoat,” and it ended up being, “How Mass Shooters Using the Insanity Plea Harms the Mentally Ill.” Small assignments like reflections made me realize that my topic was a little on the weak side and that I needed to tweak it a little. This course has helped me a lot; every assignment helped get me to my endgame. This endgame was something that I did not think I would reach, so I am pleasantly

surprised that I did. Throughout the rest of my educational career, I will remember this class and how it has helped me become a better writer & thinker.