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Engl 211C

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Dear Reader,

Throughout this English 211C course, we worked on improving our writing through practice. On the syllabus, there is a list of objectives for this course that includes improving audience consideration in our writing, developing critical thinking skills, developing a dependable draft process as well as improving overall grammar. There were many writing skills that I excelled at but there were some that I needed to work on.

The assignments that we completed gave me practice with word choice and tone. This was especially the case with the Rogerian and Toulmin papers. Although my topic was not highly controversial, it had two prevailing opposing opinions which made word choice especially important in keeping the reader's attention. Neutral word choice also helped to retain the audience's consideration as inflammatory or one-sided speech could easily turn the audience against whichever side I chose to take. While I generally did well with word choice, I still find tone confusing to introduce into a paper and was even told that I forgot to include it into my rhetorical analysis paper. I was, however, able to include it into my Toulmin argument.

I also developed critical thinking and evaluation skills through the process of writing each paper. The three main course papers required analysis of sources to understand its rhetoric which was then used to develop our own arguments within each paper. This was especially the case with the Toulmin argument which required the analysis of at least eight sources to correctly

argue for a chosen point of view. A clear understanding of each source also helped with the order and structure of each paper to improve clarity as well as to form a better argument.

Each paper also required a workshop, initial draft, and final draft to gain all possible points. The mandatory workshop and initial draft helped to simplify the final draft as it spread out the workload. Requiring the initial draft incentivized me to slow down and section the writing process to allow for deeper contemplation of each topic. The draft process was especially useful in the formation of the Toulmin argument as it was a relatively long paper. Having a draft and outline to reference from minimized confusion and helped to structure my argument.

I also tried to improve my grammar, usage and citation with varying levels of success. I was able to figure out what I needed to do to improve. Most of the grammar mistakes I made were avoidable if I had better allocated time to rereading. I was also able to refresh my knowledge of creating MLA citations, although I still made a few mistakes. Many of the citation mistakes I made involved punctuation and sources that excluded certain types of information such as the author's name.

Some strengths that I worked on include word choice, sentence structure, and word variation which helped me to retain these skills. I was able to practice these three skills by rereading my papers to check for repeating words as well as sentence variation. Some weaknesses I had to work on was grammar, transitions, and length. While my initial lack of transitions was easily fixed, improving my grammar usage and meeting the required length was, personally, much more difficult. There were many grammar mistakes that cost me points on each paper even though I reread my final drafts and I struggled with essay length, especially on the Toulmin argument even though I had planned the essay in advance.

Throughout this course my understanding of my chosen topic, price gouging during natural disasters, was improved by the research process for the Rogerian and Toulmin arguments. Although I did not entirely agree for the elimination for price gouging laws that so many economists seem to argue for, I obtained a better understanding of their arguments. I also learned different tactics for forming an argument and developed a research process, both of which helped me improve my writing. The skills I learned from this course will have its uses in my future classes. It has already had its uses as I was assigned a research paper for my IT 150 course which was taken at the same time as ENGL 211c. I applied the draft process to this assignment which helped to simplify and organize my IT 150 research paper. While I griped about this class in my spare time, this course provides much needed writing experience and helps to develop writing skills that will help me in the future.