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475W Reflection

The experience I had outside of the classroom that related most to this class was the leftist reading group I had started at ODU. The topic of my investigation being decolonial thought, I obviously had to pull a lot from my previous knowledge of critical theory and philosophy. In the reading group, we ended up reading materials which were pertinent to my topic. For example, we read *Imagined Communities* by Terry Benedict which provided an interesting way for me to talk about the topic of my paper with other people aloud. This is similar to the video assignment, since the goal is to hear how our ideas flow aloud to see if there are any holes in our thinking. When I explained my topic of investigation to my peers, I was able to witness what parts I didn’t understand as well as I thought and how my peers reacted to it. The commentary they had, such as connections to Fanon and Foucault, provided interesting new ways for me to think about the topic of decoloniality, which would eventually make their way into my final essay.

The content of my investigation was able to be connected to my other class this semester which was a Mexican Cinema class, which by its very nature had a lot of discussion about Mexican national identity. And specifically, many of the films featured a sort of commentary surrounding border identities. Here is a [link](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1K3Qah9QWWAVvJTNGi-VeILVN1OIrn-icFJCVWj0m-mY/edit?usp=sharing) to a document answering questions about the film *El Mariachi* by director Robert Rodriguez. This film can be considered a border film mainly through its Mexican-American film production and its reversal of traditional American Western film expectations from a Mexican perspective. I thought that this tied in well with the topic of decoloniality because it deals with symbols that largely have formed their identities in the processes of colonialism. Also, the class being a film class, I was able to use my knowledge of psychoanalysis in film theory, which I also used somewhat as a jumping off point in this class.

The requirements and assignments of the course have prepared me for researching topics in the future. As I am graduating, I will not have to research anymore for future classes, but should I continue my intellectual endeavors outside of a university setting, I now have a good foundation on which I can plan future investigations. A specific assignment which interested me was the creation of a 10 minute video in which we presented our investigation. I won’t include a link in this paper, because you can just scroll down near the bottom of the webpage you accessed this essay from. Video creation has been an interest of mine for a little while, but I have never tried to make a so-called ‘video essay’ before, except for another class. In the video, I tried to avoid using any words on the screen, since the content is in what I’m saying and the pictures are just there to support my words and to give the audience something to look at. I think I could use this video presentation skill in other facets of life. For example, if I have a job where I become knowledgeable about certain protocols, I could make tutorials that could be used for newcomers.

I envision the knowledge I acquired in this class as being useful to me in a twofold manner. First, I think I was able to learn a little more about myself in terms of my efficiency in getting things turned in on time. I struggled to turn in most assignments on time, but looking back I realize that there are things I could have done differently to avoid that from happening. I especially noticed the difference in quality of work depending on how, when, and even what mentality I had with starting assignments. By the end of the class, I had learned better methods regarding time management and workflow that helped to ease my stress. The other way that I envision the knowledge of this class helping me is through the way I will interact with philosophical texts in the future. I think I overall have become much more content with the fact that philosophy is often a fruitless endeavor. It’s not completely fruitless, but there are a lot more moments of frustration or frenetic squabbling than actual rewarding moments of clarity. This however is possibly a good sign, since I have thought that the goal of reading philosophy or theory is to interact with it, rather than to passively look at it.

So to conclude, this class ultimately helped me reflect on my own habits and how they can add or diminish my productivity. I was already requiring a reflection into that aspect of myself, but the workload of this class necessitated that I look into this further. And these new habits and ideas that I have developed will surely follow me into other positions where I may be responsible for turning in projects on time, or having to multitask a large workload.