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Critical Writing – ENG 120

Professor Wattley

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Reflective Essay

This English class has been a serious learning experience for me during the semester. I have always had a love for writing, but I feel that by being a part of this class I have sharpened my writing skills even more than I had done before. I didn’t have very much experience with writing arguments before taking this class. However, this class taught me how to create a solid argument and all of the details to include when writing this type of piece. For example, it taught me to always consider the audience that one is writing for because it will strengthen the argument when it is directed at those who are expected to read it. I am aspiring to become a journalism minor, therefore, I believe that what I have learned through this class will be of great help in the future. I will definitely put my knowledge to work.

Furthermore, the subjects that were covered in our writing assignments were extremely relevant to current events, which is also helpful to my partial want to pursue journalism. For example, learning about the dangers of technology, the role of journalism in society, and becoming better informed about the military were all included in my experience this semester. These, along with other various subjects, create a fairly broad range of relevant issues that I have covered through this class. Furthermore, I not only learned about these various subjects in depth, but I was also able to form my own opinions in a reasonable argument for each of the issues, which is definitely a worthwhile experience.

I spent a lot of time on my research paper, mostly because it was about an issue that is close to my heart. I wrote about animal testing for cosmetic purposes and why it should no longer continue to be used because of the existence of valid alternatives to such violent experimentation. The research that I put into this paper was a little difficult, mostly because my topic was so narrow. After reading through all of the sources that I could find on animal testing, I reduced my sources to the ones that included a discussion of animal testing for cosmetic use. It took more time than I thought it would, but it was worth it. I believe that it is mostly my strong opinion on the issue of animal testing that made this entry my best for the semester. I not only, as aforementioned, did much research to support a side, but I put my heart and soul into my stance on the issue at hand. Therefore, I am proud to include it in this project.

I have also included my third writing assignment for this project because I believe that it was well-developed and my best use of sources in my writing this semester. The subject for this assignment was the 21st century draft, which I feel I created a strong argument against implementing. Also, I feel that my revisions that I made for the completion of this portfolio were of the most benefit to this assignment. If others are able to see this improvement too, then the revisions would prove to be valuable to my work. Additionally, I included three homework assignments that I believe truly exemplified my ability to summarize and analyze articles while demonstrating my writing style. I think that these assignments do the best in enhancing the effectiveness of my portfolio.

My main weakness when beginning this class was figuring out how to argue for something that I felt strongly about, without being one-sided. I learned that by properly including opposing viewpoints, an individual’s argument can become stronger. Before this class, I would never think to describe opposing views in my argumentative writing because I would probably think that it would weaken my stance. However, I now know how to include an opposing viewpoint and refute it by using evidence from my stance on the issue. This is definitely a valuable lesson I’ve learned and weakness I’ve overcome.

I believe that after completing this course I am now a more powerful writer, thinker, student and researcher. As I have already expressed, my writing skills have improved tremendously from the work that I have done in this class. It is also from the work that I have done that I have become a much more concise thinker. This class has improved me as a student because it helped me in time management and learning to deal with massive amounts of writing without stressing too much. I definitely learned to prioritize and do a satisfactory job on assignments when bombarded by numerous things at once. This will be helpful in my years as a college student, as well as while on the job. Finally, I have improved as a researcher because I now know what to look for in sources in order to find the most useful and credible information to use. I am grateful for all that I have learned from this class and hope to utilize all of the lessons that I’ve learned in the near future.