Dear Robert,

Over the course of this semester I have come to understand myself as a student, citizen and a reader in a way which probably cannot be explained simply through a letter. I will try my best to explain, however. At this point in the letter I am still unaware as to how best approach this writing assignment without getting too personal about myself. After all, everything I have intellectually gained from this learning experience has been of the most personal type.

Also, I completely agree with what you expressed to me regarding my intellectual satisfaction during our discourse in class on December 16, 2015. All that I have is my mind and my body. Let me emphasize. That is one hundred percent in correlation with how I feel about my existence as well. That reason is reason enough for me to disclose to you from the very beginning that there is a chance of this letter including a more personal touch.

As I looked over a few of my blog posts throughout this semester, I came to realize just how diverse the topics discussed in class were. Even if they may all be categorized under 'social change' in any athenaeum, the thoughts and questions raised in my head upon reading the articles are on complete different planes from each other. That may be the case due to difference in time periods when these documents were published. The concepts expressed in many of the documents published decades ago are concepts which apply to the world today, almost as though current affairs were prophesied.

As a writer I feel more  confident in my ability to express my feelings about worldly topics without too many inhibitions now. The feeling of inhibition has always been a part of me in expressing my views and personal takes on topics that others seem to be opinionated about. This inhibition roots from an inability to find myself  worthy of having a meaningful contribution in a discourse involving dynamics as explained above. (This is not a  cry for sympathy, more so a detailed explanation of myself to the close-to-best of my knowledge)
I have come to feel more courageous in expressing myself to others without fear of rejection. That fear may simply be a part of growing up. But along the course of this semester I have gained some perspective in finding the "little me" that is more inclined towards giving itself a little bit more credit. I think that must be the key to feeling more confident in what I have to contribute as a writer and an intellectual.

As a reader I can say that I have a better understanding of the need to read materials more thoroughly. I find myself becoming a better reader in knowing the difference between when to skim and when to read a document thoroughly. On a more technical note, I have expanded my vocabulary during the course of this semester. Some of the reading material in class touched me on a very personal note. David Graeber's "On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs" hit me very close to home. Literally. Most of what my concerns were regarding that article's topic is explained in some detail on the blog post associated with that reading.

"The Corporation", although not reading material, spoke to me as well. It provided a clearer image of how no single person seems to be the culprit in all of the corporate "douchebaggery" which exists in our  world. Douchebaggery is a word, just so you know. Whenever I am considering a situation, I like to be objective without impartially handing out blame to whatever seems like the popular choice to be antagonistic towards. That is why I was able to connect to the documentary. It looked at our world from a bird's-eye point of view, just the way that I prefer to look at things. It presented the facts. Unfortunately, I was not able to finish watching the documentary in class. However, I look forward to watching/completing the video even after this class comes to an end.

After having discussed the concepts of horizontalism and defensive architecture in class, I feel my horizons broadened. There are so many cruel and harmful things which are simply a part of our lives today that it is hard to even begin to recognize what is wrong with the system. As a citizen I now feel more empowered to take action. Even the smallest action can help me and my society take another step forward in creating a world that is not hostile. This positivity of mind and can-do attitude was not always the case with me  while taking this class. Many times while having discussions in class or reading the required material I felt absolutely hopeless about life and society. I think that the creative detournement and final group project helped me in coming to terms with my state-of-mind now.

After learning about the Zapatistas and their work I feel inspired and hopeful in ways that I cannot explain. There are so many things which I was absolutely oblivious to that this class has opened in front of me. I am grateful for that.

One of the many things that I have noticed changing in my own behavior is that I am more cautious about my word choice now. Instead of saying "write", I feel compelled to say "type" when speaking about an assignment or letter to someone. I can see that people find it somewhat peculiar in the way that they look at me afterwards, or even the pause that they take. But they basically ignore this slight shift of word choice not deeming it important enough to point out. It is important to me, however. Very important. This slight change in conversational words helps me to come to terms about the technological world around us for at least even three seconds.

I have also learned many things from the people I shared this classroom with. One of the people in class, for example,  was George. I'm sure he thinks that I am a weirdo by now, but I have a tremendous amount of respect in him. I share another class with him and can feel just how internalized he is about the things which we learn in class. His issue presentation was a huge shocker for me. His topic, the deep web and the dark web, are things which I have never even heard  of. That seemed absurd to me considering how it seems to be the ninety five percent of all things present in the Web. Thaer and Fola are also people I admire greatly on an intellectual level. During class discussions I always felt very interested in their thoughtful and innovative input!

I believe that your teaching style was effective with me. I cannot vouch for anyone else. Your laidback and understanding stance in the classroom allowed for me to continue and keep trying. I look forward to whenever else I come into contact with you after the end of this class.

Sincerely,
Rownak C.