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Professor Robert Leston

English 1710

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Dear Professor Leston,

This semester was the first in where I joined the professional and technical writing major. Much thought went into choosing this major and I wanted to prove to myself that I made the right decision. Originally, I never thought writing was in the realm of possibility, however a certain friend of mine helped improve my skills so much in just a year. As a result, I joined your class with a new goal in mind, to become a writer.

In order to prove to myself that I had what it takes, I promised myself that I would do my absolute best and work even after falling apart in all assignments from ENG 1133, 2700, and your class, ENG 1710. Despite how hellish producing writing for all these courses at the same time seemed, I knew from the beginning they would help hone my skills. The blog posts for example, created consistency. I don’t recall ever writing so much in just a week, so it was a helpful experience. Not only did it create consistency, but it improved my writing overall as I learned things via trial and error. Reading the posts from my peers also helped me as I gathered information on different writing styles and figured out how to incorporate the things they used into my writing.

Meanwhile, the readings that we have done were quite interesting and challenging at times. Some boggled my mind and caused frustration as I was not used to the language used, while others were more simple and easy to understand. But in the end, I learned something new from all of them as I never went deep into the topics they talked about myself. I also picked up some vocabulary words that I used later on, and once again, learned different writing styles as I never really do any reading in my spare time.

One reading that I enjoyed the most was Ricardo Dominguez’s “Electronic Disturbance: An Interview.” I loved how Dominguez described his journey of becoming a great impact in the community by committing acts of electronic civil disobedience. Before reading this piece, I didn’t know what electronic civil disobedience meant, however I now know it is defined as a way for protesters to carry out their actions via the internet or online technologies. Another reading I enjoyed was Stephen Duncombe’s “Politics in an Age of Fantasy” as I find his ideas of what captivates an audience to be accurate. Interesting narratives have kept even me along for the ride! Duncombe’s piece was also useful as it helped create ideas for future projects, specifically for our group project. On the other hand, readings such as Marshall McLuhan’s chapter entitled “Reversal of The Overheated medium” just created confusion as I, with great effort, tried to understand his concepts. As I stated, his language, or the way he writes, was a big part of why I did not understand what was being stated. But despite the difficulties, I somehow managed to understand enough of what McLuhan was discussing to create a blog post about it.

While the readings were interesting, I felt like the films about the Zapatistas and corporations were even more so as they opened my eyes. At first, The Corporation seemed somewhat boring as it discussed things that I wasn’t interested in. However it picked up within twenty minutes or so and hooked me in. One part that I remember in particular is about Monsanto and how they produced GMO milk with infected cow udders. I was so shocked by this that I decided to create a creative detournement about it. The creation of this detournement was rather easy as I was able to use the feeling that I had of the subject and convey it with my Photoshop skills. The creative detournement project was one of my favorites as I was able to put those Photoshop skills that I first acquired from high school to use. But before I created the detournements, I realized that no one in the class really had enough experience with Photoshop. I would have loved to teach everyone in the class about the basics of using Photoshop but that wasn’t possible since, of course, the class had to go on.

Another project that I enjoyed doing was the exploratory paper. I enjoyed it because creating research papers is what I like to consider, my forte. I love learning about new things from the internet and discuss those finding in writing. For example, I talked about the death penalty, police brutality, and the right to privacy in the digital age. Police brutality being the one that I chose to talk about in the issue paper, one that I am not proud of as I knew even before handing it in, that I could have done better. But honestly, despite receiving a high grade on the exploratory project, I wish I had given it more time as the entire project, from the research to writing the five pages, was all done in merely a day, specifically the day before it was due.

Now that the semester is done, I reflect back on all the troubles that I overcame. From Professor Corbett’s impossible assignments with vague directions, to group work that made me want to pull my hair out, and to finally, your difficult reading and writing assignments; I managed to compete all of them with just pure determination. I now realize that writing is indeed something that I can do and as a result, will continue to pursue my goal of one day becoming a writer and ultimately prove to myself that I have what it takes as this is only the beginning. I would like to thank you and everyone in the class for giving me this opportunity, perhaps we will see each other again one day and I can show you how much I have improved. Until then, I have decided to improve on my reading and writing skills over the vacation by reading world renowned books and creating my own projects. I wish you good luck in your future Professor Leston.

Sincerely,

Christopher Navarrete