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ENG 1710

Dear Professor Leston,

This class has truly changed the way I look at the world around me. I always believed myself to be a progressively thinking person, someone who viewed life in an outside the box way. However, through this semester I’ve grown much more than I ever imagined I would. I see now that before this class I was not reading works by people who really want to see change in the world. There are so many people who put their heart and soul into trying to right the wrongs in our society and their efforts are unnoticed by people like me who see activism as a hashtag and the occasional rally. Throughout the past few months, I’ve read articles and passages that will shape my view and understanding of the injustices in the world and how things should play out if only it was a fair one.

The readings we went through had the biggest effect on me. I was one of those annoying hypocritical people who used words like “slacktivism” to try and shame people into thinking they weren’t doing enough while I was literally doing nothing. I thought that the majority of movements led to nothing and changed nothing. Very narrow minded thinking I see now. Even if someone isn’t going out and marching on the frontlines at least they are bringing attention to something. The best example of this was when we were reading about the Occupy Movement. A large number of people were actually at those rallies and sleeping in those tents and fighting for those causes. But they had the support of everyone online who was writing #Occupy on their tweets. Maybe 999/1000 of those tweets were scrolled past and didn’t change a single thing but that one outlier changed someone’s outlook on the situation. Maybe that one person contributed their time and money to the cause or even recruited a few more people to follow along. A person out there in the world created the meme surrounding the pepper spray cop. They didn’t go out and step up to the police force and demand change, but through a funny twist on a very serious situation they created a necessary controversy and helped bring it to the attention of millions. This is something that I’ve learned lately through the readings and on my own, that the most gratifying thing we can do in this world is spark a feeling in our fellow human. Many of the readings we went through began with someone seeing an injustice and taking small steps in trying to correct it. While they all weren’t huge encompassing efforts they all brought about an emotional charge in other people who learned of what was happening and felt the same way and wanted to bring about the same kind of change. Some of these readings were definitely kind of long and…dry would be nicest word to use here, but other were inspiring and potential life changers.

The blog posts we made were pretty helpful as well. Its easy to read something and then move on forever. If you just read it and go, you’re not really sure if you digested the work, if you even have a clue what you just read. But with these blog posts it forced you to at least try and understand what was happening as you were going along. They were a chance to try and flex your brain and come up with a condensed version of what you just went through. To comprehend these readings and then see if our peers got the same message. A few of these blog posts were actually pretty fun to do. (I’m sure even a few of the ones I didn’t do were pretty cool too.) But reading comprehension hasn’t always been my greatest strength and this class definitely helped me out in that regard.

The projects were a whole different kind of beast. The ethics paper made me dive deep on a topic that I always found pretty interesting but never had a real reason to do research into. It made me pick a topic and dissect it, going through it from a number of angles and trying to take a ton of research and not only try to understand it, but help those would be looking at my paper or talking about it understand as well. This final project was an interesting twist on the traditional group project. Most group projects I’ve been a part of involved the group, meeting each other in the class a single time and then going our separate ways and completing our parts completely on our own. Then possibly coming together on the last day to present something. This group project felt kind of different though. The size of the class definitely helped I believe. Even though it wasn’t a 100% collaborative effort at all times, it really felt like our small group came together and created something. We’re not going to change the world but I really hope that we might have changed each other as people. Looking back on it all I wish I would’ve been more outspoken on the project and the class overall but I’m still happy with the work we put together because I know all the sections worked together and put forth their best effort. The project I enjoyed most however was the creative detournement. Not only was it my highest grade (!!!!!!) but I actually enjoyed doing it. We all have so many ideas and beliefs floating around our head and being able to bring it to life in a visual medium is a beautiful thing. We all obviously weren’t all graphic designers but that was the great thing about this assignment. We weren’t critiquing each other on the sharpness of the image or discussing which tools would have been more effective, but we were just talking about the message involved and how it made us feel.

I love the fact that everything we submitted was freely available to the other members of the class. I think it made us all aware of each others beliefs and ideas and quality of work. When I say quality of work I don’t mean, who has the most proofread work, but who actually believed and put their heart into what they were doing. I think that the entire class really wanted to be here and it showed in the assignments. I loved the fiery discussions we had in class, the respectful arguments that were taking place. Even if two people didn’t agree on something and were going at each other you could clearly see the passion that they felt towards the topic. It also made me realize just how bright people in the world are. Some of the blog posts I read were absolutely genius to me. Some of the opinions that my peers had were just so on point and insightful I was pissed off at myself for not even coming close to thinking in that light. It also made me want to pick up my work, since some of the writing my classmates produced was top notch and made mine look like absolute crap at times. I even loved the presentations we made since it showed that some people who didn’t make a peep during class were brave as all hell and able to weave a narrative that permeated through their shy exterior.

Overall this class was truly priceless to me, I really think it changed the way I’ll look at things around me and I’m not just saying this in a bullshit way because I think its what you want to hear. The world is so much bigger than what we experience daily and people around the world are living in complete different ways from me. I genuinely want to thank you for the semester and I wish you the best of luck in your journey of writing your book and I promise if it gets published I’ll definitely order a copy on Amazon and I expect you to sign my cover.

Sincerely, Jordan