Dear Professor Leston,

 I’d like to be completely honest in this letter that I’m writing to you so I’ll start from the beginning. When I registered for classes for the spring semester, I was just going off the list of classes given to me by Professor Lansiquot. I didn’t know anything about you other than what I could read from your rating on ratemyprofessor.com. When I looked up your name I was hoping for a patient professor that was willing to explain and work with me, especially since this was my first semester in the Professional and Technical Writing major. I didn't know what to expect and I’d be continuing to work a part-time job while juggling school, homework, home life, and other responsibilities. The first day of school I came in as prepared as I could be for the class. As a writer, I came into your class extremely over confident, in my mind I was the shit and no one couldn’t tell me any different. As a reader, I’ll say that I was ok but always wanted the opportunity to read more on my free time outside of school work. As a student, I was good I always got my work done no matter how much I procrastinated. As a citizen, I have to say before this Presidential election I was utterly uninterested. As far as I was concerned the rich people would always stay rich and the system made sure everyone else stayed broke, and that’s just the way the world worked.

 Our first assignment was to write an introduction to the class on Openlab, we were asked to tell a little about ourselves and plans for the future. Remembering my post I’ll say my plans have changed a little, I want to continue to express my ideas because that’s all I have. Some people do well at many things and in some ways I guess I’m the same, but expressing my ideas, thoughts and emotions having power to create is all I could ever see myself doing seriously. So for the future I plan on writing a book, a screenplay and anything else my mind will allow basically building my business off my ability to create. My next memory is our first reading in your class “The Judgement of Thamus” it was a long story but it had an important lesson to teach. This was the first time I learned to look at technology and writing as a controlling agent in our everyday lives. Reading the story in context with “the Corporation” film showed how the power that technology gives can work against us in the most cruel and unimaginable ways. Out of all the things that disturbed me about film I think the most troubling for me was how it dissected the Corporation’s personality. At the end of the day it had no real feelings or emotions but its motivation was to gain profit at the cost of people.

 Out of all of our essays throughout the class the easiest would have to be the Tech-Lit narrative. It was our first essay in the class, we were asked to reflect on our relationship with reading, writing, technology, and orality. In this essay, I wrote about my struggles as a child to where I am now as an adult. As a student, I think I enjoyed this because I got to reflect on how far I had come from a girl that could barely read in the first grade to a freshman in college.

 Some of the hardest assignments in the class in my opinion was the issue paper and recently the creative detournement. The issue paper was hard for me because it came at a time where I was really feeling the pressures of college, this class and my life all together. I knew that the semester was nearing an end but honestly couldn't see it for myself. At this point, I was going to school Monday thru Thursday using my breaks between classes to get an early start on my homework, working 12pm-7pm on Friday and Saturday and doing the rest of my homework on Sundays. I was stressing out because based on the assignment this paper was going to be difficult because we had to explore the issue we chose to work based on three different criteria. You said that you’d be paying extra attention to the “follow the money” section of our papers and we had to come up with a creative solution to our problem. Truthfully, I was extremely frustrated with this essay and I believe this changed me the most as a writer because it challenged me and I was overwhelmed by it in my first attempt. The first time I wrote my issue paper I received a low grade because I was so focused on certain criteria of the paper I didn’t write to the best of my ability. By the time I rewrote the paper I think I received a better grade because I was able to take my mind off it for so long that I was able to see the problems that I couldn’t see before I submitting it the first time. The culture detournement was a challenge as well, I felt like throughout my project I kept second guessing myself and my ideas and so getting frustrated I ended up starting over multiple times. This project stretched my ability to think outside the box, and although the process was stressful and at times obsessive it was an opportunity to grow and I’m glad you assigned it.

One of the best experiences in the class was watching the Black Panther Film; it was the only thing that sparked my interest in politics. What interested me the most about the film was the persistence of the Black Panther Party even until the end. They found the most creative ways to get around every road block the government came up with to try and destroy them. Although they were underestimated from the beginning, I found it amazing that the government felt so threatened them that they sacrificed time and resources forming a task force to dismantle the Black Panther Party. What was most inspiring about the film was the fact that the Panthers used an element of culture that attracted people to them but didn’t let the attention cloud their original ideals (at least not until end). It wasn’t just about carrying guns, wearing an afro and putting on all black, they used the resources they had to unify people and better their surroundings and how they were treated in America over all. As an American citizen, I can say I was proud to see something like this documented in history and wondered if some of the same attitudes of that time could be transferred to our reality today. Could we stop letting technology, the media and government use us and start using it to change the circumstances around us? I’d like to think so and I hope to get to see it happen in my lifetime and maybe even be a part of it in the future.

Finally, I’d like to say that I completely enjoyed your class but that wouldn’t be entirely true. This class and semester was one of the hardest challenges I’ve ever faced in my life so far and sometimes I wasn’t completely certain I’d make it to the end or get everything in on time, but I’m here and I’m glad I made it. I guess the most important thing I learned is in the middle of the storm we call a semester there are going to be times where I’m not going to be certain of myself, and even though I find that feeling scary all I can do is endure it. But there are a few things I have no doubts about, I know I’m not a quitter and that I may get uncertain but I won't let any class or college in general beat me. I don’t have time for that and have too many people depending on me and cheering me on, especially as an African American in a system that’s designed to make people like me fail. My education is all I have and I’m running with it until the day I receive my diploma. I wish you luck in teaching the next class of students.

 Sincerely,

 Simone Haylett