

Dear Professor Belli and readers,

During the creating and editing process of my research project, I learned quite a bit on my topic and had fun throughout it. Before I chose the influence of Taoism in Star Wars as my focus, I knew I wanted to do something related to Star Wars because I'm a fan of the series and have been interested in the philosophical and ethical nature of the Force thanks to several ethics based courses I've taken in the past. In addition, the Force seems to be mostly unexplored and taken at face value by many, so I wanted to introduce people to something potentially new. The inclusion of Taoism came about as I began my research on the Force. Although I'm not big on religion, I still found Taoism very interesting and fun to learn about because it was new to me.

However, Taoism was somewhat of a difficult topic to research on because information from reputable sources was slightly scarce; I was forced to take extra time to find information that fit my topic. Also, facts about it were not explained very well and seemed to vary from website to website for some reason. The Force was also difficult to research because it is such a vague and mysterious topic. Unfortunately, I had to use a fan Wikipedia site for one of my sources because of this. Although the research phase of my project was a struggle, I was still able to piece together the necessary information for the final and complete my project.

The peer-reviews for my first and second drafts were very beneficial because, most importantly, I was able to see how people reacted to an unknown connection. I was not sure if they would be interested and cared about the idea. Thankfully, the reception to my drafts were mostly positive as students were actually intrigued by Taoism, a religion that they were not familiar with. This unfamiliarity, however, sparked some confusion to my draft. I was told that I was vague and did not properly introduce Taoism; I jumped straight into the comparison without regard to the uninformed. Therefore, I realized I needed to do more research and include specific information on what Taoism really is. I also needed to explain key terms and their significance.

The reviewers were also uncertain about the purpose of my research topic: why is the connection between the Force and Taoism important? I was not sure myself and struggled to find the answer. This was the main issue with my research project and the main discussion during my conference with Professor Belli. We tried to find the answer to this question, but couldn't in the short amount of time we had. In the end, I had to think critically about why others would want to learn about the topic myself. It was troublesome, but I believe I was successful in the end.

Peer-reviewing other students helped me out as well. I started to get ideas on how I should be writing my draft and presenting my research. For example, from reading Tyler's draft, I realized that I should include more examples to help the audience process the topic better. I also saw how I should have written my introduction: by being straight to the point. I thought it was fun to peer-review because I've edited several papers for fun and work. Throughout our sessions, I gave my thoughts on what student's topic should be changed to, how they should be more specific and what they are missing among others.

The presentations were a big help as well because they gave me the necessary experience and made me realize my mistakes. One of the main mistakes during my own presentation was assuming everyone watched and knew what Star Wars was. Some students had not actually watched it and were confused about what the Force is. Another mistake I made was not introducing myself in the beginning of the presentation. In the end, I picked up on these mistakes and corrected them for the final. I think the most important thing everyone should know is that you should never assume what the audience knows and explain everything in detail, regardless of how famous it is.

Sincerely,

Christopher Navarrete