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Dr. Cannon

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**Reflection paper**

How and why did you choose this topic to work on?

Originally, I was going to write my paper on the topic of “open borders vs. closed borders” since it could easily be related to this year’s theme of citizenship and there would be plenty of information on the topic. However, due to my lack of research and knowledge on the topic, several issues arose such as indecision on what I would talk about and the fact that my prime example for an open border was actually a closed border. Therefore, rather than spending time solving these issues, I decided to scrap the idea and just restart. What proved to be my main problem was my lack of knowledge on social issues. Hence, I got together with a friend and we just shot ideas back and forth until we realized that I really should know more about the AIDS pandemic. That same night I wrote my prospectus on the topic.

What changed about your topic throughout the semester? Why?

Originally, the paper was only going to talk about the effect that AIDS had on the LGBTQ+ community back in the 1980s. However, as I looked further into the project, I realized that this topic had been talked about to death, and there wouldn’t be much of a point in regurgitating this information. Afterwards, I talked to Dr. Cannon about it, and she made me realize that rather than talking about the reaction to AIDS, I could talk about the impact that these reactions had on the U.S. I could even watch *Philadelphia* and talk about it. Therefore, I wrote my abstract on this. However, after this happened, the coronavirus crisis really settled in and quarantine was starting, so Dr. Cannon suggested that I could maybe relate the paper more to the current issue of the coronavirus. Hence, I arrived at my final topic that could best be described as “The relevance of *Philadelphia* and the AIDS pandemic in our modern society, and what we can still learn from them.”

What parts of this assignment were most difficult for you?

I believe coming up with a concrete topic was definitely the hardest part. I went through several topics and variations of these topics, and I truly did not know what I was going to write about until I started writing my first draft. Afterwards, I’d say editing was the second hardest part since I was never really sure of when or if I was done. Something else could always be added or removed, and the ramifications this would have on the paper would always force me to read the surrounding sentences and at times entire paragraphs. \ Surprisingly, writing the first draft was not that hard.

How did this semester change the way you think about the research AND writing process?

I learned about the under-representation of minorities in scholarly information, even in places like Wikipedia where I would not have expected it to happen since it is available for anyone to edit. In addition, I’m also glad I can openly call Wikipedia a reputable source of information again unlike in high school. After all, I have gotten a lot of useful information from it over the years from the lives of famous people to mathematical concepts like the Mean Value Theorem. Finally, I also learned about different methods I could use to acquire “scholarly” sources such as Google Scholar and the resources we have over at Mugar many of which I was not aware about.