Title

This course has been the first (and last) I have taken at Northeastern that centers around writing. Through each unit covered in the class, I’ve encountered several types of writing, some of which I was already somewhat familiar with, others which I had never experienced. I will describe how I experienced each unit and what I learned from them.

In the first unit, I was tasked with choosing and analyzing a piece in depth. Out of all the assignments, this was the one I was most comfortable with. When I read pieces forming arguments or opinions, I strive to always pay attention to specific wording or literary devices used in an effort to better understand the viewpoint of the reader. I wrote my first piece on a project I had been exposed to during my first co-op. Given that I had some understanding beforehand of the aim of the product, coupled with the analysis tools I learned from in class, I felt that I was easily able to pick out and present information. I discovered my central argument for the piece and described it succinctly: “the primary goal of this page is to demonstrate the efficacy of buildpacks, rather than explain how they work, and to market them to developers.” I then focus upon “specific wording chosen” in order to strengthen my argument. I believe this an effective tactic and that I succeeded in my implementation of it. Out of all three of the units, I find this one to me the most useful for my life going forward; work, personal communication, and pleasure all require a thorough understanding of what others are trying to communicate with their words, and I believe this unit was an exercise in discovering ways to do that.

The second unit I found to be the most difficult. I have little to no experience writing persuasive pieces. The process of even determining what I would write about was a difficult one. Even when I had finally arrived upon proposing a Stack Overflow improvement, I ran into several issues. Firstly, I approached the letter, originally, as a very argumentative piece. I included sentences such as, “This idea might seem problematic to some; after all, if any information at all is encouraged to be contributed, would this not degrade the conciseness and quality of the community’s answers? This is not the case.” While I did keep argumentative aspects to my paper, and I believe they are vital to it, my first draft read as very similar to an ideological argument about the merits of Stack Overflow, rather than proposing concrete change. Additionally, I struggled with the design aspects of the assignment. Design is not my strong suit; I envisioned in my mind what I wanted to communicate in my reference document, but what I ended up with for my rough draft did not align with my vision. The peer review process helped immensely with both of these issues. My peers identified which parts of my letter were confusing or too abstract, allowing me to easily revise my paper into one more concise and incisive. Additionally, the feedback I received on my reference document itself allowed me to make very effective changes. While I still am no designer, I incorporated feedback, leading to the inclusion of “zoomed out” pre- and post-proposal changes of the overall site, which greatly increased the clarity of my proposition’s effectiveness. Though this assignment was the most challenging for me, I also learned the most from it, as I had little previous experience with creating reference documents and writing this style of cover letter. I will use cover letter writing in applying for jobs. Though I expect as a programmer new to the workforce, I will seldom write letters proposing large-scale changes at a company, as my letter did, this assignment gave me a great deal of how to write proposals in a diplomatic manner. Such diplomacy is undoubtably a lifetime skill I will utilize greatly in the future.

For the third assignment, I requested writing a literature review, as I had experience with this in high school. Despite this experience, I found parts of this assignment challenging. I was discussing machine learning, but, as I had never taken a course on machine learning, I felt that my knowledge was lacking on specific implementation details. Though I could compare and contrast