

Over this semester, I've had the chance to dig into ideas that have been sitting in the back of my head for years. A lot of this goes back to me realizing, way back in high school, how businesses were being set up and presented like people— how brands are essentially “personalities” trying to make you care about them. It reminded me of clubs at school's Get on Board Day, each one pitching you a sense of belonging. This course gave me the space to finally unpack that thought and shape it into something bigger.

I appreciate that, instead of bouncing between shallow topics, I got to stick with one idea and really refine it. Most of my English assignments in the past have been “write it, turn it in, and never think about it again.” This felt different. The process of staying with one topic— researching, writing, revising— let me experiment with how I plan and structure my ideas, which has always been a weak spot for me. It's not like I've suddenly mastered deep independent research or anything, but I feel like I've built a foundation for it. If I ever get the chance to dive into a long-term project like that, I'll feel more prepared now.

Taking Ownership of My Process

One of the biggest things I worked on was figuring out systems to organize my thoughts. I've always struggled with planning— usually, I just start writing and hope it works out. This semester forced me to slow down and actually map things out before diving in. For example, when I started researching how brands manipulate identities, I had a ton of scattered ideas: parasocial relationships, greenwashing, influencer marketing. It was overwhelming. The annotated bibliography made me pause and categorize everything, which helped me see connections I would've missed otherwise.

That planning carried into my drafts, too. In the past, my essays would feel like a collection of thoughts with no clear flow. This time, I spent more time outlining and rewriting transitions, trying to make sure everything connected. One specific moment that stands out is when I was working on the greenwashing section. I realized my argument was vague and lacked examples, so I went back, found stronger sources, and reworked it entirely. It wasn't fun, but it made the final product so much better.

Playing with the Remix

The remix project was where everything clicked. I chose a website because I wanted to use this opportunity to learn a new skill in a field I'm already pretty experienced in (software development). This new skill was working with the libraries Three.js and GSAP, which deal with embedding 3D models into websites and creating tweens/animations, respectively. I always love blending interests because I find the combinations much more fulfilling to work with. Plus, it usually leads to a novel end product or something genuinely unique.

Writing for a website meant stripping down my paragraphs, cutting fluff, and thinking visually. How do you say the same thing with half as many words? How do you make people care about what you're saying? These were new challenges, and I liked figuring them out. It was also satisfying to turn static ideas into something interactive— like using clickable examples to show greenwashing in action or creating a flowchart for how brands manipulate emotions. Combining the technical skills of web development with the storytelling of my essay made this project feel more alive and personal than anything I've written before.

What I'm Taking Away

Looking back, I'm content with the progress I've made. This course wasn't just about producing one "perfect" essay— it was about building skills I'll use again. I've learned to slow down, plan ahead, and experiment with how I organize and present ideas. I've also learned to take feedback seriously— not just as a checklist to fix things, but as a way to rethink how I'm approaching the work.

Most of all, I feel more prepared for bigger projects down the road. This was a step toward writing that doesn't just feel like homework but feels like building something worth revisiting. And even though I still have a long way to go, I'm walking away from this semester with a better understanding of how to get there.