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ENGW 1111

Professor McCarthy

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### Mirror Mirror

Before I started college at Northeastern this year, I didn't really know what to expect from my first-year writing class. I had read online that it's mostly up to the individual professor in terms of what they cover in class and what topics they choose to focus on, so from what I could tell, it was no man's land. On our first day of class (or before class, I don't really remember), we were given a list of "Student Learning Goals" that helped me understand what this class was going to be about. Throughout our three units, I believe I have accomplished some, but definitely not all, of these goals.

I have always found my strength in writing to be in focused papers on very specific topics. If the scope is too broad, I often find myself going off on tangents for too long and losing the focus of the paper. This class, namely unit 3, helped me expand my comfort area in writing by having me choose and write about whatever I wanted, as long as it conformed to a certain style of writing. I had also never really peer-reviewed other papers like in this class. Whenever I "peer-reviewed" in high school, I mostly just did minor grammar and punctuation corrections. Conversely, in this class, I made and received broad and more thematic suggestions in every unit as well as put my unit three first draft up for the entire class to critique.

Units one and two were a little more inside my comfort zone, however. Unit one focused on an academic argument aimed towards an academic audience. This meant the paper had to be

focused, researched, and well presented. My unit one paper had 25 sources and I referenced all of them in-text, so my source collection abilities I learned throughout high school definitely served me well in that regard. That was the paper I enjoyed writing the most as I am very passionate about the topic I was discussing, so writing about it was fun to me (this also accomplishes goal #3). The unit two paper was similar in style, but I didn't enjoy writing about it as much as I wasn't very passionate or invested in the topic being discussed, but it forced me to read articles to the letter, accomplishing goal #9.

This class didn't work all of the writing muscles, however. I could definitely improve on my creative writing skills, even though I'm not really going to use it in my field of study, as well as my conversational skills about my papers. I didn't really talk about my papers with anybody in conversation, I only talked about other people's papers. I think it would be useful (especially in my major) to be able to talk about and encapsulate my ideas in conversation.

As the semester and this class come to an end, the wave of self-reflectiveness is hitting me. Comparing the beginning of this class to now, I can clearly see my improvement. Most of it actually in my attitude towards writing. I no longer see it as something I have to do, but rather as a tool that can be utilized in professional and academic life. This class helped me come to that realization, and I know it will help me in my future academic and professional endeavors.