Jacob Alspaw

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Course Reflection

Through this semester of first-year SAGES I have greatly approached and corrected flaws existent in much of my writing. Dr. Michelle Hanks and my peers of *FSNA 148 Science vs. Pseudoscience* have guided me onward a path for the improvement of my analysis and argumentative skills. Everyday class discussions and nightly readings have promoted critical thinking in my day to day college life. Our biweekly writings have prompted me to further my in-class analysis to an extent I feel comfortable with. Moreover, this class provoked friendships I would have not otherwise made and in turn encouraged me to be a more outgoing student in the early stages of my early college career.

Now all this being said, *FSNA 148 Science vs. Pseudoscience*,and all of SAGES in general, had an intended purpose for the improvement of analysis and critical thinking skills, perhaps in the form of writing. Even with this focus, I saw more of a change in an area less engrossed in SAGES’ purpose. I felt the biggest change occurred in my ability to write captivating introductions. Some could argue improvement of the introductory paragraph is the most worthwhile place for advancement. One first needs to capture an audience before he can begin to argue in favor of some idea. So as the year went on, I found myself more able to write a strong introduction. Ideas started to flow. The above may not be a fitting example of my works, but this piece doesn’t call for the same formatting as our scholarly essays. Its purpose is different. Here I am informing an audience of my personal experience within the class, whereas, our scholarly essays need to instill interest in the reader to ensure they finish reading the argument. Anyways, my intros increased in all sections. The grab proved much more effective, and, most of all, the transition was smooth. Throughout the course, my thesis improved little if at all. I’ve always thought I’ve had a rather good stance in thesis-creation.

In response to what I would like to improve in my next SAGES class, I would like to be more direct. I’ve known my argument hasn’t always been the strongest in my essays. My evidence and explanation dances around my argument. Many times I don’t directly answer the questions my thesis pose. Additional metacommentary would not hurt my argument, either. Making my point clear is a way to make sure my audience is focused. Such changes will strengthen my body paragraphs and will make my argument much more effective.

The essay I plan to enter in my SAGES writing folder is the third essay our class wrote this year. There was a process to choosing this essay over others. First off, the essay must have received a grade of 85% or higher, narrowing the selection to one of three essays. From there I picked the two essays I felt strongest about, referring to which two topics interested me the most and which two I remembered most in detail. The final selection process came down to peer review. I had a general idea which of the essays were best, but it was time for my peers to guide me in my selection. And I agreed with their choice. After reading and reviewing my essays, it was clear the third essay was stronger. I had the most interest in this essay and I’m certain this factored into the quality of the paper. It’s not a coincidence this paper was the longest I wrote this semester. I had trouble stopping. The paper dealt with astrology and the implications it has on society. Astrology is a harm to society or a variety of reasons. My introduction was strong and my argument was fair. And my conclusion left the audience with a sense of closure. In all, the essay was concise and direct after a number of revisions.