Course Reflective Introduction

1. What, specifically, have you learned this semester? About writing? About reading? About being successful in college? About who you are or who you wish to become as a reader, writer, thinker?

In this course, I’ve learned a multitude of systematic approaches to writing, reading which can extrapolate to how successful I am in my other courses:

**For writing** I’ve learned methods to find accurate and peer reviewed sources that are absent of baseless claims and incomplete arguments. These methods include, using the library website, searching for academic websites, google scholar, etc. I’ve also learned to be aware of date and to read thoroughly to make sure I’m both getting accurate information and not cherry picking for my writing. Other methods to improve writing have been to go through the MLA format process where we would neatly and cleanly structure our papers, indicate in text citations to avoid plagiarism, and indicate the exact sources used so readers can double check. We have also learned how to brainstorm/prepare by using, outlines, preliminary thesis ideas, proposals, peer reviews, drafts, and the ability to seek help through the writing center, in order to not rush our writing process and make sure everything is correct before submitting (publishing).

**For reading** I’ve learned as mentioned above to thoroughly read my sources as to not jump to incomplete conclusions and be able to note and make judgments on counterarguments. I’ve learned methods such as reading with rhetorical awareness to allow me to see the authors purpose, the audience they wish to target, and *how* they can achieve audience agreement to make a proper inference about the validity of the rhetor. I’ve learned to identify these rhetorical strategies to assess which strategies are effective to improve both my writing but also my reading for other materials. (I can use good rhetoric as a basis for comparison of other rhetorical pieces, possibly ones on social media which may not be as safe as ones in a scientific peer reviewed journal.) Reading strategies like these help us avoid one sided stories which in turn help us see the full picture of our world and not make the same claims that miss the full picture. I’ve also learned that reading is an extremely relevant medium of knowledge transfer which is utilized throughout our daily lives, giving reason to the reading strategies mentioned before.

**For college success** This semester has provided me some useful tips for being successful in college. Several such strategies include time management, thorough reading, systematic writing, utility of external assistance, as well as organization. All these skills are applicable to other classes that may be much more difficult than our ENGE 1216 course. Such skills can help make harder classes easier to manage as they give several options when reaching roadblocks, or even avoid these roadblocks altogether.

From everything mentioned before, I wish to be a more well-rounded person and these qualities gained from this class have succeeded in mending me that way. The class has given me a safe space to grow, with guidance, to allow me to assimilate what I’ve learned into my character. This makes me more trustworthy, more reliable, more approachable, etc. It improves my writing and reading output as well which can help me with jobs which require a stricter reading/writing environment, unlike the safe place of a classroom.

1. What have been some setbacks along the way? These don’t have to be failures, necessarily, but they are opportunities to account for not quite everything going exactly as planned. If you could do something differently, what would it be? If you could do something over, what would it be?

I often write too much. As a journal writer for my daily life every day, I’ve been conditioned to large scale writing which can drive me away from writing short concise pieces. When I was still a novice at writing, my main strategy to get more word count was unfortunately to write cyclically. This unfortunate bad habit was removed once I started writing journals about my daily life, and started taking more care into preparing for writing by using outlines, drafting, and detail note taking for sources. In this way I was completely able to mitigate word count through cyclical writing and made my writing much richer, but unfortunately tuned me for large scale writing. Due to the amount of information I would like to convey as a message, this would limit the amount of people I can reach due to my writing being extremely long. (Some people don’t want to read 20 pages of stuff thoroughly.) This was evident in all my projects, except 3 where I tried to control it, by their size being extremely large compared to the recommended word count. The same thing happened for my replies on the discussions page in canvas, and for some other invention portfolio projects. You can also see it evident here as I like to share as much information possible to avoid ambiguity. In such a way, this style of writing has been both a blessing and a curse. If I had to do something differently, it would be to not overwork myself when writing these projects by writing a lot. For instance an abundance of information is not necessary to prove a point or give a basis for an argument. A lot of my audience isn’t going to have the patience to absorb all the content. To fix this, I would have spent the time picking out the most important topics and trying to go over them only. This way I could retain my paper’s strength, while also being able to rhetorically approach my audience who may not be able to absorb 20 pages of work. But at the same time, an abundance of information can be a good thing. For instance in documentation, having more information is extremely good for avoiding failures, misunderstandings, or errors. For a large scale mechanical project with significant complexity, an adequate documentation is required to fully define and describe the project for others to handle. When researching or creating step plans to recreate a chemical process, thorough reports are necessary to capture all the information possible to avoid bias or catastrophe. When creating computer programs, the necessary amount of information is needed to be able to forward the project to someone new on the team. As such there is a place for large scale and detailed writing, however at the same time, it can be a disadvantage in the world of rhetoric. I’m extremely glad that this class has allowed me to identify this as an issue and how I can grow from it, and possibly use it for something beneficial.

1. How do you think you have done in ENG1105?

I believe I was able to handle myself quite well in my First Year Writing course. As a transfer student from GMU, I had already taken several rhetorical writing classes, some communications classes, and had to write many reports for my previous courses at GMU. Coming in with a lot of writing experience has allowed me to express my ideas in a well formatted and express them with proper rhetorical strategies. Though I had already came in with a lot of experience from my previous college as a Junior, this doesn’t omit the benefits I had gained from taking this course. I will definitely show them in the course outcomes section in statement 4. For this class I was able to demonstrate my systematic writing methods through the use of outlines, peer review feedback application, and proper drafting/editing/reviewing cycle process. For each project I was able to fully satisfy all the requirements for the papers and I was able to do them (I think exceptionally) and still be able to grow from them. In this class I was able to fulfill all pre-requirements necessary to succeed in producing a strong rhetorical paper which has showed through their structure, flow, etc.

1. Finally, discuss each of the five course outcomes by explaining what it means and then by telling about an artifact (assignment, file) in your portfolio or in Canvas (e.g., peer review or discussion) that tangibly represents the outcome.

This course contains course outcomes that are gained through the application of writing/reading knowledge to each of the three projects and their pre-requirement documents. The 5 course outcomes for ENGL 1105 are Rhetorical Knowledge, Writing Processes, Genre Conventions, Multimodal Transformation, and Reflective Practice. All the documents created during this course duration has in some form matched one or several of the learning outcomes listed below. Project 2, Project 3, several rhetorical practice sets done in class, Invention Portfolio P2 : Drawing Conclusions, Invention Portfolio P3 : Source Explanation, and even the Reflective Cover Letters represent the course outcome of Rhetorical Knowledge in class. Both final drafts of project 3 and project 2 contain rhetorical analysis of each quality of the source used. Also the structure of the entire project paper is done with a rhetorical eye, same with the cover letters addressed to a certain audience and written in a way to accommodate their audience constraints. The two invention portfolios demonstrate rhetorical identification in sources where we were tasked to identify and explain what form of rhetoric was used and why for each source. All the Half Drafts, the peer reviews, outlines contained in some of the half drafts, and revision documents represent the Writing Processes learning outcome of the course. These documents showcase the use of pre-planning our papers and getting the structure ironed out first before diving in. This allows me to write our paper with the knowledge of how it should flow and what it should address. The writing process for peer reviews involve me getting external feedback on our unfinished writing to guide me to a more comprehensive paper. The revisions done is also another form of peer review, but this time by a more credible reviewer (The professor) who can more greatly show me the right path to take, what is missing in the paper, and what to improve (Clarity, Thesis Statement Fulfillment, Adequate explanations, OISE format, MLA, etc.) This also leads into the Genre Conventions learning outcome of the course where all our projects required a strict MLA formatting scheme, and proper in-text citations as well as image citations (Figure Labels). I was able to demonstrate these conventions through our paper to specifically be target for an audience of academic persona. Specifically for project 3, we shifted genre conventions because we specifically needed an analysis section and argument section. This requires a different tone of writing for the type of information relayed. For each project, we included an image, and for our final 4th project, we require a presentation. These fulfil the Multimodal Transformation learning outcome of the course. By using images I was able to convey some extra information that may have not been possible with writing alone. As images are a source of rhetoric as well, these were excellent in adding some justification to some of the writing. For the presentation, which has not been completed yet, I will be able to share information verbally which is another form of transferring knowledge just like writing, and like in project 2, I realize carries a lot of rhetoric with it as well (due to my rhetorical superhero being an oral teacher). Lastly the reflective cover letters including the reviews allow me to go back and re-evaluate all the work I’ve done and identify aspects I’ve learned in order to grow as a writer/reader. Through these 5 learning outcomes, ENGL 1105 is shaping me into a more trustworthy and more well-rounded writer.

1. If you wish, you can express any further concerns, questions, or requests for particular kinds of feedback.

This is a unique position I’m in for this course. I’m technically a Junior coming from my initial college at GMU, however loosing 17 credits due to class in-transferability has caused me to go back to retake some courses I’ve already done in GMU. Despite this fact, I still believe I was still able to improve my writing skills for this course. I’m constantly writing for all my activities, Journals for my life, Documentation for my work, Classes in college, all require an adept form of systematic writing. Thank you for providing a wonderful environment for me to express and grow my writing skills. I believe I’ve been able to adequately integrate a rhetorical eye into my writing due to the environment provided by the course.