

Sydney Davis

Reflective Statement

Writing has always been one of my favorite activities. Ever since I was a little girl, I would spend my free time stapling together pieces of printer paper, turning them into books and illustrating them with crayons. Even then, writing felt like a way to express ideas, explore questions and create something I was proud of. Because of that, I came into this class hoping to grow even more as a writer. I have to admit, however, this course was a bit disappointing. As you know, the teacher was often absent and unengaged, which made it hard to get feedback. Still, through the class assignments. Working independently forced me to rely on my own skills and curiosity, and I became more aware of the different approaches one can take when writing about a single topic. My topic was exploring the impact religion has on crime.

The most important lesson I learned this semester is the important role research plays in strong writing. Before this class, I understood that research, or sources, were something you added to a paper to meet the requirement. Now I see that quality sources serve as a foundation that determines the entire direction and credibility of a piece. When exploring the relationship between religion and crime, for example, I relied on research that looked into the impact religion had on prisoners to the fact that crime went down in small towns following rent revivals. Had I not read these studies, I would not have even considered those as a possible example of how religion can impact crime. The research broadened my thinking process, and enabled me to write with more authority and insight into my topic.

Another major skill I improved was understanding and adjusting my writing based on the target audience. Assignment 3 helped me learn this important lesson. Through the rhetorical analysis and multi-genre project, I learned how drastically tone, structure and purpose shift depending on who the paper is writing for. For example, an academic audience expects structure, sources, explanations and objectivity. The general public, meanwhile, wants more storytelling, character building and visual imagery. What I learned from this, is that good writing is not just about saying something clearly, but rather saying it in a way that it will reach the people you want to reach. For example, even when we look at the difference between how we write a text to how we write an email. There is a different expectation. The writing must meet the expectation by appealing to the audience it hopes to reach. This new found awareness of the target audience will be something I carry with me in my future writings.

Overall, even with the challenges of this class, I learned a lot about research, audience and rhetorical strategy. I grew more independent and adaptable as a writer. This class also brought back memories of the girl who used to write and illustrate her own books and, hopefully, will rekindle my love of writing.