Angie Gamarra

Professor J. Beatty

English 2010-029

August 9, 2016

The Summer of “2010”

I had the opportunity of taking English 2010 this summer semester. The lectures, class discussions and assignments challenged me in different capacities. I gained skills and insight relevant to research emphasizing literature, secondary and primary sources as well as tools to assist me in my writing drafts. In class, I wrote a total of three essays in line with the class objectives; a memoir, a report and a proposal discussing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) on a local and global scale.

I chose the topic of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) because of the current social and political climate. As a writer, I am always inclined to challenge ideas that are very western focused. However, when we discuss FGM in context of reproductive rights these lines start to blur. Is it okay for us to consider a cultural and traditional practice “morally wrong”? FGM is heavily prevalent in refugee communities especially in young girls. According to the UNCHR (UN Refugee Agency), there are approximately 19.5 million refugees globally and nearly 50 percent are children (2016). Furthermore, current literature does not speak to FGM in the light of a social justice or feminist lens which is the approach I tried to take. I also chose to write about legislation behind FGM because policy is such a significant element for the advancement of such practice. Understanding policy in context of economics, and culture is instrumental for organizing and lobbying.

The topic workshops were the highlight of my experience, it exposed me to the different forms and focuses a paper can have as well as the tools available on campus to assist me in putting my thoughts on paper. The topic workshops covered information on expectations, logistics, examples, brainstorming, and angles to approach a set of topics. The workshop relevant to brainstorming made me reflect on how interconnected a lot of issues and topics are. In fact, it motivated me to utilize timelines and outlines for my drafts. In addition, I was also very motivated to seek external resources for ways to find and locate articles, and general literature. The paper I wrote titled, “The Legalities of FGM/C,” shed light on the importance of seeking and striving for balance. In fact, I realized counter arguments are key to delivering a message offering a voice to both sides of an argument. Balance also overlaps with transitions and content which gave me insight into striving for fluidity.

Citation and sources are key to acknowledge scholars already involved with my topic and area of interests. I have learned that citing studies and background information build the layer of analysis – really identifies the gaps in the literature that I am able to speak to and addresses in the pieces I wrote. I struggled with the rules behind citation and in text citation due to how similar and different it was to APA. However, I made it a goal to go beyond my comfort zone and become familiar with more citation formalities. Sources provide greater credibility and validation to the work I am discussing. Understanding tone has given me insight to critically analyzing my audience. Examples have also been helpful in critically considering my audience. Examples are key elements to explaining a concept and appealing to the emotions of my audience. I tend to discuss the point, illustrate the point with an example and then explain it by breaking it down.

The changes I made to my revised documents mainly consisted of recognizing redundancy and intent. I also revised my transitions and visibility of thesis. The thesis is the skeleton and body of my arguments and research therefore, I wanted the reader to clearly understand the direction and purpose of the paper. Peer review suggestions were very helpful in this process. They were the second highlight of my whole experience in class. I was able to reflect and engage in conversations that shed light on sentence structures, usage of terms and lenses. Having an actual interdisciplinary team of students/peers to provide me feedback enhanced my understanding and motivation to polish my work. I exchanged papers with my peers, gave them an overall brief summary of my topic and then pointed out areas of my paper that I wanted them to pay extra attention to. I emphasized the importance of critical versus passive feedback. Though I felt validated by their efforts to point out strong pieces of my writing, I was always seeking suggestions that challenged my thoughts and sentence structures. This was initially uncomfortable yet rewarding.

Putting together my final portfolio was an enriching yet challenging process. I uploaded my essays to my portfolio under the English 2010 coursework tab. This reflection provides context to the objectives and ongoing theme. It is essentially a professional way to display my work and reference back when I will expand on my ideas and writing.

Works Cited

“Female Genital Mutilation.” *UNHCR News.* 2001-2016. http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/female

genital-mutilation.html