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Team B Assignment
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Interdisciplinary Reflection

These past two semesters of my freshman year at the College of General Studies have been a rewarding experience where I was able to learn and master several critical skills. Each class: Humanities, Rhetoric, and Social Sciences, has taught me specific abilities relevant to that class; however, I found it necessary and useful to overlap the skills in other classes in order to complete tasks successfully. Each course and professor had taught me to think, write, and do research in different ways I did not in the past, and it helped with my success in the courses.

Humanities is a complex course that forces a student to analyze and think deeply about literature, art, and film. This semester, Professor Coffman had each student sign up to lead class discussions for a day. At first it seemed as a simply task, but it was more difficult than it seemed. Never before had I realized the amount of planning and research that has to go into the literary work before explaining it to the class in order to foster discussion. For one class, I had to explain the poetry of Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. Reading it and trying to analyze the poems is something many students have been doing for a while, so it was not the difficult part. However, it became more difficult trying to create a layout for how the class discussion should flow that day. Like a paper, there needed to be an introduction, body, and conclusion to the presentation with enough background information and examples to not only to present, but also to make the class think and promote conversation. And it is also important that the student has the confidence and manners to present the information to the class in order to keep the class interested and excited to learn more about the work. On a daily basis, though, Humanities forces a student to think critically and analyze everything. For many, watching movies is a hobby. This class, on the

other hand, takes watching movies to another level with the amount of investigating that needs to be done with each scene, with the characters, and with the prevalent themes.

Rhetoric fostered our thinking and research skills. Professor Porten's course was different from other classes because our essays were about issues facing the world today such as genetic engineering, education, technology, and more. We would have to read several articles pertaining to the topic and class discussions would provide different ideas and viewpoints of the issue. It also forced us how to think critically and to develop opinions of subjects we may have not put much thought into in the past. During class discussions, students in the classroom were allowed to express their viewpoints on the issues. Often, students would have opposing views, which allowed for debates to develop. This is how the class helped sharpen our communication skills. The class taught us in dept of how to do research using Boston University's library. Every paper we wrote required that we had reliable information from creditable sources; this way we had more confidence in our opinions on each topic. Rhetoric also challenged our writing skills and techniques as we were encouraged to write in different styles. One assignment we had was to read about a ten-page article and summarize it in one sentence. Assignments like this taught us how to find the main idea of articles and to stay focused on key ideas.

This course can become very challenging and demanding because of the complex topics that we have to discuss. The topics presented to the class by Professor Porten are ones that have been debated for years and do not seem to have a clear solution or answer. These are issues that make a person constantly go in circles because of all the different variables one has to take into account. This makes writing about the topic all the more difficult. One major difficulty I faced in the class was with an essay on technology. I was trying to prove that social websites, such as Facebook, force people to actually become less social and makes them lose personable skills as

they hide behind a computer screen. There were so many sources I had to prove my argument and so many directions I was able to turn the paper. It was an extremely difficult paper to write because although I knew what I wanted to express, it was tough doing that articulately in a paper while consciously trying to disprove countless numbers of counterarguments. In the end, however, it did teach me how to keep a paper focused and organized.

Social Sciences is a very interesting class that allows students to explore many different subject areas. This semester, the class predominantly focused on history and the impacts on modernization; however, last semester students were able to explore many subjects such as economics, psychology, sociology and more. This course has always been a reading intensive one more than anything else, so students were able to engage in different subject areas through primary and secondary sources. This course has taken us through history, not only with important dates and key figures, but also with important philosophies and complex ideas that keep people engaged in this world. First semester, when studying sociology or psychology, we were required to do a lot of case studies and watch videos about certain people of cultures. This made history more engaging, as we were able to see first hand accounts of it.

The College of General Studies offers courses that are designed to teach valuable skills that can help us as we transfer to other colleges in Boston University and even life after college. Humanities, Rhetoric, and Social Sciences together complete a package of teaching a student good communication skills, organizational skills in thought and writing, research skills, historical facts and philosophical understanding to make us broadly-educated individuals who have a deep understanding of many subjects. Through the course material and through projects, CGS students are able to gain many skills in just one year.