Dear Sean and fellow students of English 109H,

This semester has brought out many different qualities in my writing and work ethic as well as perfected the qualities that were already there. It started off as a real struggle...the workload in college english classes was something I was warned about, but I wasn't aware of how much work, time, and thought it actually required. And as an engineering student, an honors english course was kind of the grade that should save my GPA and avoid totally failing my first semester in college. We were all given three projects and countless blog posts and that was our grade. If I messed up on a project, I felt like that would have just screwed me and my GPA over. For example, the very first project's deadlines consisted of 9-17 items and the one with 9 included finalizing and turning in the project. That wasn't something I was prepared for at all and I put it off until the Friday before it was due each time and even then I wouldn't be super productive...so basically I just did all of it on Saturday.

With college work in general, procrastination is a terrible idea and although I did struggle a lot with project 1 with procrastination, the weekly deadlines eventually completely ended this awful habit. It ended up being way too stressful doing everything on Saturday, and having a huge deadline hang over my head for 6 days wasn't fun. I remember reading/replying/reflecting to blog posts 1.10 ("My Writing Process") and 1.12 ("Calendar Reflection") when we analyzed what our writing processes were like. A big number of us wrote that we were procrastinators. I went from never being "the one to immediately start something right after it's given to me" to starting the deadlines on Monday or even Sunday sometimes. I'm really proud of myself for being able to break the habit that went on throughout all 4 years of high school.

Towards the beginning of the semester, it was also hard simply getting the motivation to do all of the blog posts which is where most of the procrastinating stemmed from; at times they felt tedious and unnecessary. For example, Deadline 2 was focused on learning how to research, and because I've written more than a few research papers before, it was confusing as to why we had to spend so much time with the "Evaluation of General Sources" and doing tutorials on how to research with academic databases. Making the first draft of the projects was also hard because I actually had to put all of my brainstorming in the blog posts to use. Blog posts 3.4 ("Cluster of My Controversy") and 3.10 ("Practicing Quoting") were especially helpful out of all the brainstorming we did. They just forced us to get down ideas so we wouldn't be staring at a blank page when starting the draft. Actually the two quotes I integrated were used directly in my final draft, so those didn't feel like busy work to me at all.

In past english courses, the deadlines weren't flexible and it didn't seem like anyone cared or was in the same boat as me. I remember my sophomore year of high school, there was a massive research paper due and I really wanted it to be awesome. But when I tried emailing my teacher asking questions, I wouldn't get any responses and it just genuinely felt like she didn't care at all when I worked with her during class. In addition to that, none of my classmates really cared that much about the paper (I may have been a bit of a try-hard with this). So this course was definitely a change because I felt a sense of comfort during our class discussions

(i.e. deadline extensions, useful/not useful blog posts, state of mind we were in with regards to the current project, etc.) and that honestly never happened in high school.

Like I said before I'm an engineering major, so writing isn't going to be a huge part of my major. However, the writing skills I developed will help when writing up reports as well as researching topics. A few of you who are majoring in something related to science are in the same situation as I am and a lot of what we did felt pointless and that's probably why I lacked so much motivation. Nevertheless, it's always better to have more skills rather than less so even though I'm not entirely sure how much I will use them in the future, I'm still happy to have them.

My time in this english course was a lot better than I thought it was going to be. It was really useful and Sean, I felt like you actually cared about our well being and whether or not we understood what was going on. I appreciate that so much and all of you guys as well because it was always easy to talk about what was troubling to us. So thank you all for making this class useful and even fun. Good luck with the rest of your time in college!

Sincerely,
Joki Potkonjak