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Expectations of Queer Studies 114B

Two of my Most Successful Pieces

- **Project Space Essay:**
This essay was meant to find a space and analyze it by observing how the LGBTQ community shaped it. I also had to observe the challenges they might have in that particular space.
 - **Project Web Essay:**
This essay was based off of a blog that I had to create with my group members. My group chose the Stonewall Riots which is considered to be related to the LGBTQ history. We had to persuade readers why the Stonewall Riots should be added to the curriculum.
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Hello, I am Amber Barraza, a freshman college student attending CSUN. I am currently finishing my first year of college and let me tell you, it has been a ride. I am enrolled in Queer Studies 114B and had the pleasure of taking the course with Professor Solis. I want to give the readers and incoming 114B student's insight on this course before they take it with the hope that they know what to expect and what is required.

What do you get out of taking QS 114B?

Before I thought about taking QS114B I asked myself this question hoping I would find the answer. I am about to share with you what I took out of this course and maybe you will feel the same once you take it.

Q: What did you learn in QS 114B that you didn't learn in 114A?

A: This course not only helped me improve my writing skills, but it also gave me a better understanding of the problems in the LGBTQ community that never even came to mind. Last semester in 114A I learned the basics of the term queer, however this semester I learned that society doesn't have a LGBTQ-inclusive mindset. The LGBTQ community has achieved so much and they aren't recognized for it, like the Stonewall Riots, which lead to LGBTQ civil rights. Another thing this class helped me learn is how to improve presentations because we had many presentations that required speaking in front of the class, which helped me come out of my shell. This class was the next step from 114A: in 114A I learned the basics, but in 114B I learned more about the problems that the LGBTQ community had to go through. I also learned about problems that are still going on today.

Q: What can you apply to the real world from QS 114B?

A: This class requires critical thinking which requires one to think about what one can do to help the problem. In 114B, I went to West Hollywood (WeHo) and actually observed problems that caused the city to seem unwelcoming to the lower class LGBTQ community. During this particular project, I had to think about what I could do to improve, which caused me to think of things that can actually help the lower class LGBTQ community today. I also read the book *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel, which talked about Alison coming out as a lesbian and explained how her father was never able to come out as a gay man. This book made me realize problems today, such as having the fear of coming out. Overall, this course gave me so much information on problems that happen every day, and it helped me develop a better understanding of solutions and what I can do to help the LGBTQ community.

Q: How have your writing skills grown over the course of the term?

A: I would like to start off by saying I accomplished one specific problem I had when it came to my writing: generalization and being vague. In 114A, I generalized a lot, although I do have marks on my papers now saying vague and/or generalization, they were not as many as last semester in QS114A. Throughout the course, it has become easier for me to start my essays and easier for me to come up with a thesis. This course has helped me with structuring an essay and helped me learn how to start my essays, which is very important, because

without the start I wouldn't be able to finish. I can definitely leave this class saying my writing improved drastically from senior year in high school to my freshman year in college.

“Although some people don’t realize, the LGBTQ community has contributed to American History” (Barraza).

Achievements

I feel like I've had many achievements during this course, but getting a decent grade in this particular class is a HUGE achievement to me. I came to this class not knowing much, and I'm not the best writer. I have written about two out of three of my essays that I feel good about.

Project Space Essay

The reason why I chose this essay is because I really enjoyed writing it and I obtained a decent grade on it. For the project space essay, I chose WeHo as the space and it was actually interesting going and realizing its lifestyle isn't very inclusive to the lower class LGBTQ community. This essay helped me realize that although this particular space seems like a spot for the LGBTQ community, it isn't and there are many things the community can do to fix this issue. In particular, “the apartments are so expensive and majority of people who reside in WeHo make at least 75k” (Barraza 4). I was thinking WeHo could create more buildings that are affordable so that those in the lower class could afford to live in this city.

Project Web Essay

I chose this essay because it was an essay that we wrote throughout the whole semester. I had to do a blog post every week, and the topic my group and I chose was the Stonewall Riots. I had to explain why the Stonewall Riots should be included in the curriculum. This essay actually taught me about history because for one I did not have a clue what the Stonewall Riots were. The Stonewall Riots were a series of demonstrations that resulted in the Pride Parade that happens annually around the world and LGBTQ civil rights. In particular, “this event (Stonewall Riots) is so important that it needs to be understood which is why high school is the perfect time for students to learn about an event that caused such a tremendous impact and lead to the LGBTQ civil rights” (Barraza 5). I think we can help this issue by taking it to the school board of education and bringing up all the educational documentaries on the Stonewall Riots like the *Stonewall Uprising* documentary.

Expectations

Taking QS114A and QS114B is similar in expectations because both classes take dedication and motivation. In QS114B, expect something due every day when you have Professor Solis. If you don't have work to turn in when entering class just know you probably didn't do it. I'm not going to lie, this class wasn't as demanding as QS114A, only because there is a lot of group work. Expect a 2-3 paragraph blog post due at least once a week. I know that no one wants to have to put an effort into a class and wants to get an easy “A,” right? Well if you don't need to put in effort into a class, then you don't learn. This class does consist of a lot of group work, but at the same time you learn so much from it. Expect that if you miss a day, you lose points from attendance and points from activities you do that day. This class is a very important class because you not only need to do the work, but show up as well in order to get a good grade. Expect that if you don't have a rough draft paper on the due date, then you will not be as successful with your essay because we do a peer review activity with the papers. Expect this class not to be an easy A.

