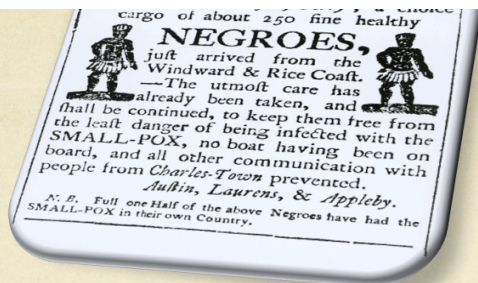


Dear Portfolio Assessment Committee,

My name is Eri Hirashima, and I am a first-year student at Emory University. In my first semester, I have become part of Dr. Cooke's first-year composition course: The Personal is Public – Writing with Archives and the Arts. This class focuses on developing the skills of researching, writing and reading skills through the first-hand experiences with letters, manuscripts, especially from the Camille Billops and James V. Hatch archives of African American arts and culture. In addition, this course aims to hone the students' skills in "independent problem solving" and "reflection/metacognition. I write this letter to you in regards to the successes of meeting all the course requirements and learning outcomes through the analysis of the various assignments we completed in the course.

At the beginning of the English 101 course, I was not familiar with assignments that incorporated texts from researching in various genres and multiple modes, such as archival materials. However, the many writing tasks that involved such composition of texts from diverse sources, ultimately enabled me to locate an array of materials and accurately implement appropriate texts. For example, in the Curated Exhibit Project, I had to put together at least five sources that displayed the connection between the theme of my selected archives: the art, the author of my chosen manuscript, historical events and culture. This project is one of the works in which it is very noticeable that I was able to integrate my analysis of archives chosen within a very broad range, so that I could strongly support my theme of the on-going racial segregation against people of African descent. As shown in the screenshots of my project below, I went into deep research regarding racial prejudice against the African community, as I started off with an analysis of a historical advertisement of first-generation African slaves, to social issues in modern technology such as Uber and Lyft, which I discussed about the drivers' refusals to accept customers with black-sounding names. Then, I moved onto a global scale of how people of African descent are not only heavily discriminated in America, but also in other continents, such as Japan, where Miss Universe Japan 2015, Ariana Miyamoto, a biracial individual of African and Japanese background, was greatly criticized for becoming the national representative. To conclude my exhibit, I created two slides to explore two renowned non-profit organizations run by African American people about their goals to educate people of gun violence, proper weapon usage, and to provide equal opportunities for students around the globe to learn.





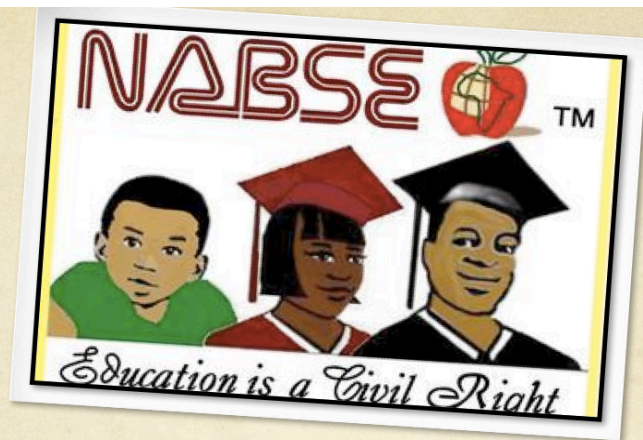
Caryl-Sue, *National Geographic Society, Library of Congress*, "Slave Sale", Jan. 18, 2013, Advertisement.

This poster above is an advertisement of a slave auction "held in 1760 in Charleston, South Carolina [which] would have been displayed weeks before the sale in the windows of local businesses and in newspapers" (The English Historical Review 905). Slaves from Windward and Rice Coast were valuable to the South Carolina farmers, as the African slaves were very knowledgeable about growing and harvesting crops, rice and indigo. During this slavery era, the African slaves were treated as though they were simply resources and objects that could be sold and bought, as they received monetary price tags depending on their health, age, and sex. Although mentioned in the advertisement above that slave traders took the "utmost care" to keep the slaves from smallpox, journey to the American homeland was harsh with deadly diseases on-board and dirty living conditions that resulted in many deaths. According to National Geographic Society, today, there are "as many as 40% of African Americans trace their ancestry to Charleston". These people are some of the early generations of African Americans who have sacrificed their mother-land and culture, and crossed the oceans to help build up America to be what it is now, especially in the South through their great contributions to the crop-based economy, which was second to economic value for the newly developing nation.



"Lyft," *Ridester.com*, Image of a logo, No date; UBER, Anne Freier, *BusinessofApps*, Image of a logo, No date.

The two images above may seem quite familiar. Lyft and Uber are now the leading modes of affordable transportation that bring great convenience and accessibility for many, but not all. According to an article from "BloombergTechnology", "Drivers for Uber Technologies Inc. in Boston canceled rides for men with black-sounding names more than twice as often as for other men". Through an actual experiment, in which four black and four white research assistants, split evenly among both genders, requested for rides over six weeks, there was a disappointing result that Uber drivers did "disproportionately cancel on riders with black-sounding names, even though the company penalizes drivers who cancel frequently" (BloombergTechnology). As for Lyft, there is also a racial issue, as drivers can simply screen out customers of African American descent without every having to accept their ride request. To this day, although modern technology and changing social stereotypes are trying to minimize racial discrimination, it is evident that there is still profound racial inequality that lies in our community, and are affecting the daily lives of people from minority groups, such as the African Americans.



Anonymous, NABSE News Twitter, Image of organization's logo, No date, Untitled.

National Alliance of Black School Educators is one of America's non-profit organizations with a focus on educating children, especially of African descent. Established in 1970, NABSE has over 10,000 educators throughout the US, Canada, Europe and the Caribbean. It has been dedicating to improve "the educational experiences and accomplishments of African American youth" through activities such as, tutoring sessions, workshops, training programs and student trips (NABSE). It also serves to advocate for "African American children who have been poorly served in the past" and to ensure that they receive appropriate and effective education, so that they can be part of our future world leaders. NABSE even holds an annual four-day NABSE conference, which attracts about 6,000 people to further bring insight on the importance of education to African Americans, through school tours, workshops and exhibitions of educational services and products.



Anonymous, [www.naaga.co](http://www.naaga.co), Images of association's logo, No date, Untitled.

Accidental and intentional shootings that have led to the deaths of African Americans are frequently on news headlines. Perhaps it is the stereotypes that society has developed from social media and history through the exaggeration of their drug and alcohol use, and crime. Because of such preconceptions, African Americans are segregated and are even being hurt mentally and physically. However, one should realize that these stereotypes do not represent the whole race as being violent and lowly-educated, as there are many organizations like the "National African American Gun Association", as shown on the right, that aim to educate African Americans on the proper use of guns. This organization focuses on "self preservation community" through in-depth learning on gun safety and also teaching the history of guns, especially in the African American community.



Another learning objective that I think I was able to achieve in this English course was summarizing, evaluating, and synthesizing other people's opinions and conducting research in order to produce my stance and support it. An exemplary work that showed this was through the several annotated bibliographies that I wrote for my Proposal assignment. In order to support my proposal's objective of focusing on the segregation in the past and current communities, I wrote up five secondary source citations, in which several were derived from journals. To point out some sources, I would have to say that the citations of the journals in my proposal such as the "Television and Societal Effects: an Analysis of Media Images of African-Americans in Historical Contest", "Racial Discrimination in Health Care Among African Americans in America" and "Jobless Discrimination Against African Americans", greatly showed how I was able to analyze and synthesize the given information and then summarize them to support my argument. To cover a diverse field of where racism exists, I started off with a



citation of one of the biggest factors that have made society think in a certain way towards the African American community, which is the ubiquitous media. An example sentence would be the following: “It states about how the media and television are misleading the public into believing that African Americans are “as uneducated or as silly as Amos ‘n’ Andy, or crooks and drug dealers as depicted in Hill Street Blues and Law and Order”. As show in the screenshot, in the next citation, I discussed about the unfair treatment African Americans receive in the health care field with justifiable evidence and concrete summaries of the journal. I paid attention to a few events and numerical data in the medical field to support my stance of the difference in service and treatment that African American patients get.

Davis A. Rachel, “Racial Discrimination in Health Care Among African Americans in America”, 05-2013, pp. 02-18, *University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Project*, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, [http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2595&context=utk\\_chanhonoproj](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2595&context=utk_chanhonoproj), 20 Oct. 2016

This source focuses on the notion that there is great racial bias in the health field, yet its underpinnings are overlooked, so it provides justifiable evidence and statements that back up the writer’s goal to prove the existence of racial discrimination and ways to resolve and build bridges between the divisions. One of the most important event that Davis used as an example was the “Tuskegee Study”, in which “the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) conducted an experiment on 399 black men in the late stages of syphilis from 1932 to 1972” (Brandt 1978). Because these men came from a background of very little education and low incomes, they were “used human beings as laboratory animals in a long and inefficient study of how long it takes syphilis to kill someone” (Jones 10), and victims of this experiment that resulted in 128 deaths and 59 other health complications. This outcome made the African-American community to start questioning the government and developing mistrust of the public health care. This source also gives numbers to show the discrimination and difference in the medical care and procedure that African-Americans receive, compared to those of White people. For example, according to a research study conducted by Williams and Jackson at the Institute of Medicine, socioeconomic status plays a major role in the health care an individual receives, as seen when comparing the data in satisfaction with the service they got; while only 65.6% of African American patients felt like the doctor did a good or excellent job treating them with dignity and respect, there were 78% of White patients that felt the same way. These data and historical events are what brings the writer to conclude with solutions such as more access to health care coverage, education support and lower costs.

The final objective of the course that I believe I was able to accomplish was to “practice writing as a process” through drafting, revision, editing and reflection. The narrative essay was quite a challenge for me, as I have never had the opportunity to practice writing it, and also because it was a testament of my ability to offer a story and to connect it to the arts, history, culture of my main theme. Although a seemingly difficult task at first, I wrote multiple drafts of the essay, and submitted them to Dr. Cooke during the writing process, in which he gave me many useful tips that I took into great consideration, as I was writing my final draft. For example, his advice that I could “Try for a stronger opening hook and break up your first paragraph. Also, give more of your psychological reactions and motivations”, were very helpful in guiding me to develop my final narrative essay that consisted of in-depth observation, emotion, imagination, along with “style, variety and grace”. Below, I have displayed a screenshot of my introduction and paragraphs of my essay for your reference.

"Where Do I Belong?"

"So, what is your true ethnicity?" "Do you even consider yourself Japanese?" "Which culture are you more assimilated into?" "Which culture do you like more?" "Why do you have a Japanese name even though you look Chinese?" I have been bombarded with such questions since I was a young child.

The exhibit starts off with a dramatic cover of a big ink-splatter and two black and white photos. Although displayed on the left margin of the slide, the solid black ink-splatter catches the attention first. It seems prophetic and foreshadows the possibly dark and depressing events that will be showcased in this exhibit. The ink-blot also triggers a sense of inhumaneness and anguish, as deprived from the way it is splattered in an aggressive way that there is one big splatter and then small blots covering almost half way of the left side of the slide.

Once I sat down in front of my desk, I felt safe. My desk and chair that took up less than 2m square of the entire school was my only place of respite. Although a very small area, I felt as though I was protected by an invisible castle that was a barrier shielding me from reality: the scary world of prejudice and wrongful judgments. But the feeling of security and assurance quickly faded away when I reached into my desk for my notebook. It was not in my desk. At that moment, I thought that it was no coincidence that both my shoes and notebook went missing on the same day. It was definitely an act of intention that involved someone who had some kind of resentment and dissatisfaction with my presence in the school. Someone had rummaged through my belongings and placed them somewhere, so I did not even bother searching for my notebook.

Looking back at my past works, and reflecting on them, I have noticed great improvement as a writer, reader and learner. Dr. Cooke's writing composition class has definitely given me many opportunities to better analyze others' works, as I evaluate them and paraphrase them in support of my own arguments. Additionally, I have become a much better researcher and have developed the necessary skills to find appropriate sources from various genres and to actually implement them in my works. In conclusion of this letter, I hope that you have been able to observe such improvements, as the class has fully fulfilled the first year composition course requirements and I have satisfied the course objectives to become a better writer and more prepared for future endeavors.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Eri Hirashima