

Dear Portfolio Assessment Committee,

My name is Ruifeng Xu, and I am a freshman enrolled in the Emory University class of 2020. Through the course of this semester, I have significantly improved in my writing skills in various ways. First of all, I am now able to compose text in multiple genres. Before the start of this semester, I have found it especially hard to compose anything other than persuasive essays. During middle and high school, I have been especially trained to write persuasive essays and rarely anything other than persuasive essays. Therefore, as I began to approach other types of writings, such as curated exhibits, proposals for assignments and narrative essays, I experienced numerous failures. I found it hard to change my writing style from persuasive to narrative or informative. I found examples of well-written narrative essays online and from the course documents. I read carefully through them, and took careful note of how the writer successfully narrates an event or curates an exhibit. I found the common characteristics of these well-written essays, and tried to implement these techniques into my writing. I experienced numerous setbacks at first, of course, as my writing seemed weird to me and the sentences did not make much sense. However, as I tried again and again, revised numerous drafts, I finally began to see improvements in my writing. However, these improvements were not enough for me. To take my writing skills of these genres to the next level, I need some professional guidance to help improve my writing. I turned in drafts of my proposal and narrative essay to my instructor, and revised my writings carefully according to his comments and advices. Furthermore, I also scheduled appointments at the Emory Writing Center regularly

and asked them for advices to improve my writing skills. Through these professional guidance, I have finally been able to successfully compose text of these genres without much trouble.

Secondly, I can now summarize, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the ideas of others as I undertake scholarly inquiry in order produce my own arguments. Through the multiple peer reviews of individual works and turning in drafts for instructor's feedback, I can now better summarize and evaluate the idea of others and use those valuable ideas to improve my own writing as well as writing skills. This was not easy for me at first, of course, because at first, I did think that my method of writing was better than the methods given by others as advices. However, through the course of this semester, I have learned the importance of the ideas given by others, and be able to use those ideas to revise and improve my own writings.

Third, I can now successfully practice writing as a process, recursively implementing strategies of research, drafting, revision, editing, and reflection. At first, I was not good at recursively editing and revising my works. I did not know how to revise my writing to make it better. However, through online research, as well as instructor and peer guidance, I have finally learned to look through my writings again and again, and revise my writings and forming new improved drafts after the revisions. I think these methods are extremely crucial for a ordinary writer to become a successful writer. Without the skills to recursively revise and improve his or her own work, a writer cannot become successful and his or her work cannot be easily accepted by others.

Finally, locating and integrating archival material into writing and multimodal projects is also a part where I turned my failures into successes. At first, I found it hard to locate the appropriate archival material to implement into my writing and projects. Through the guidance

of my English instructor, I learned to go to the Emory Rose library of rare books and collections to look for archival materials to integrate into my writing and projects. However, integrating these materials into my writings were hard for me as well, as I did not know how to adequately fit these materials into my own projects. Through online research and peer and instructor guidance, I finally learned the correct and most adequate way to integrate these materials into my writings to improve my writings. This can be demonstrated in my Curated Exhibit project. In this project, I collected numerous artifacts from the Rose Library as well as photographic collections to serve as primary sources of my Curated Exhibit, and used them to bring out my overall theme, the pursue of the American Dream.

Thus, from above examples, it is clear that the learning outcomes for this course was hard for me to achieve at first. However, through persistent effort as well as instructor and peer guidance, I managed to gradually turn my failures into successes and achieve these outcomes.

Sincerely,

Ruifeng Xu