Peter Plotas 10/26/15

Self-Reflection FYS 100-50

Self-Reflection

 Over the course of this semester, I am gaining more and more experience and knowledge on the subject of critical thinking and analytical writing. I have both read and analyzed *Utopia* and *Republic,* and I have subsequently written responses to these works. Such responses involved relating the passages to outside academic pieces, drawing conclusions about the reader’s findings by reading the book, and even relating the work to present day society. I have further deepened my comprehension of these pieces through communication and collaboration with my small group for various projects, such as organizing presentations and compiling analytical questions for blog posts. My classmates and I have gone even further by traversing out into the world and observing the issues and lifestyles of today and relating them back to our readings through discussion.

Although each of these assignments has offered me knowledge in the realms of critical thinking and open discussion, the assignment that relayed the greatest learning experience was my second response paper, “How does Plato teach the reader about justice through Socratic dialogue?” This paper is so monumental because of the sheer inexperience that I possessed when writing the response. I had never really been asked to formulate an argument that was not evident from the text itself, and instead I had to synthesize my response through my own critical thinking. I built logical deductions from direct textual evidence, such as when I wrote, “[Glaucon] says, “People love [justice] … because they are too weak to do injustice with impunity,” essentially stating that people only settle to have justice because they cannot be freely unjust without consequences (Plato 37)” and truly this was a sort of literary epiphany for me when I saw that the answers could not be found, but rather I had them. Although this paper certainly had its fair share of weak points, such as a lack of a “center of gravity” within the opening and an unnecessary summary of part of the book’s plot, I was able to take the constructive criticism and continue to build on my work. I followed up in response papers three and four by immediately diving into the question at hand and answering it, for example, “Socrates’ theoretical city of Kallipolis is framed as a sort of perfect society due to its organization, ruling, and citizens’ contribution toward the society’s advancement” (RP3 line 1).

Ultimately, through this semester I have reached a higher peak of writing prowess than I ever possessed in high school. I have learned to stay concise and effective in my word usage and phrasing, and I have had a wonderful amount of experience in the realms of critical thinking and analysis. However, I have certainly fallen short of my own expectations in terms of classroom participation and keeping ahead of the reading assignments, but these are absolutely factors that I intend to rectify in the final weeks of the semester.

I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work. Peter George Plotas

Works Cited

Response Paper 2

 Response Paper 3

Works Cited

Bradshaw, Brendan. "More on *Utopia*." *The Historical Journal* 24, no. 01 (March 1981): 1-27. Accessed September 30, 2015. doi:10.1017/s0018246x00008001.