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October 31st 2014

## Becoming a Better Writer

### **THE WAY I THINK ABOUT A PROMPT?**

- First re-read the prompt at least 5 times. It is crucial to fully understand the instructions your professor is asking you to follow.
- The prompt is your set guidance, your set number of rules. Think of it as an unchangeable but approachable dictate, mandate, or rule. You must follow it and attempt to follow the exact instructions.
- Do not deviate from the prompt! You might end up writing a paper on the British role in WWII when the prompt asked you to describe the views and role of Winston Churchill (British Prime minister) about the war.

### **OUTLINING: THE WRITING SALVATION**

- Before writing your thesis or intro paragraph, structure your essay in an outline.
- Outline the main ideas you wish to analyze and explore through the body of your essay.
- After doing an outline of the main ideas put those concepts together to develop your thesis and intro paragraph.

### **HAVING A STRONG THESIS**

- A strong thesis is crucial to your essay.
- You can have a great attention grabber, a great intro, but if you do not pose an interesting question, debate, argument, or statement in your thesis statement, your Professor, from that point on, might judge your essay much more harshly.
- Think of your thesis as the CV of your essay, as the element of your essay that would make your employer (in this case your professor) interested in reading your work.

### **TOPIC SENTENCES**

- Through time I came to understand that topic sentences are the skeletal structure of the body of your essay.
- YOU CANNOT start a paragraph without stating the main intention of that paragraph!!
- Always be clear, concise and to the point in the topic sentence. It will be the sentences following your topic sentence where you will develop your ideas and add detail to your analysis.

### **HABITS DEVELOPED THROUGH TIME**

- If possible log out of any social media website you are subscribed to. The last thing you want is have a constant reminder of your cousin's wedding making an annoying noise while you try to write that essay or capstone research paper.
- If it works for you, try to play some soothing music. Ideally music that relaxes and stimulates your senses and helps you to focus in the moment. For my fellow history majors, when I write a paper dedicated to a specific culture, nation, period of time, etc. I try to play soothing music belonging to that specific culture, nation, or period of time.

Not only will it soothe your senses, but at the same time it will help you place yourself in the historical period about which you are attempting to write.

- Whatever works for you, taking notes or doing an outline, always keep a set of notes that will help you to obtain examples and the general ideas that will form the structure of your essay.