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Corona Letter 2 (Undated)

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Dear 199 Students,

It is a sunny day and, while it is cold, I really needed the joyful blue sky and the crisp, sweet air. Here I am, walking around an athletic field in our town. Kids are prohibited from congregating here now because of the virus, and it is so, so quiet, but I'm remembering happier times of watching my kids play lacrosse and field hockey here. I'm with my partner, David, and my trusty dog, Little Bear. When I asked my kids if they wanted to come walk with us, they replied with a too familiar answer: "Nah, I'm good." At least I have the dog.



It has been hard to work, to teach, to string good and coherent thoughts together. Are you feeling that way too? Much of my brain fog is about the virus, and my fear that someone I love will get sick. And some of it is a concern for my brother, who is an infectious disease doctor in Buffalo, where they now have 500 cases and 8 deaths from the virus. I'm also worried about my mother; last week we learned that her cancer has returned and spread throughout her body, and she will have to have treatments and healthcare during the pandemic, a kind of double whammy of risk. My days are filled with planning for her, and tomorrow I will be at Roswell Park Cancer Institute as she has her bone biopsy. Wish us luck, a sense of humor, and an openness to grace.

I won't be having Zoom meetings this week because of this trip to Buffalo, but I will resume Zoom office hours next week. I will send out a meeting invitation for Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9-11am. Email me if you would like to reserve a time. We can start with 15 minutes per person. These office hours are of course completely optional, not required.

I am almost done reading and scoring your annotated bibliographies. I will have the remaining annotations graded by this afternoon. I am moving through them fast because I want you to move on to our next step: the long essay.

It has been a privilege to read your annotations. The quality of the work is the highest in my ten years of teaching this course at Fisher. You started these during ideal circumstances—library support, class time to do research and writing, my help in class and in conferences, peer help—but that dwindled fast. You were left to complete the most important document in the research pipeline largely on your own, with some feedback from peers in a digitally-mediated space. Students reached out in email, and I helped,

but you went to the finish line strong because of your own effort, and because of your peer response groups. In general, the comments you gave your peers on the annotations were generous and smart, and they made a difference.

You have a soft deadline tomorrow, April 2nd. I'm asking you to take an hour or two tomorrow and "deconstruct" your annotated bibliography and proposal and turn them into the start of your long essay. Please see the revised schedule for a slightly longer description of what I mean. Simply put, start by taking those citations and moving them into a Works Cited page. Most of your citations were not perfect, so do that with the Purdue OWL MLA citation tab open, editing as you go. Then consider starting to draft the heart of your essay--the rhetorical analysis of the speech you selected--using your annotation, your notes, and maybe even your proposal as raw material. Remember your architecture for the essay: introduction, rhetorical situation, rhetor and speech, and impact. Build within those mini sections. Share with me your work tomorrow if you like vis Google Docs; if you don't want to, that is fine too. That is what I mean by a "soft" deadline: I'm trying to keep you on track for **the hard deadline of April 7th, when your first full draft is due.**

So, the deadline cascade looks like this:

4/2: deconstruct your annotated bibliography and start turning it into your long essay. Show me or Don't.

4/7: Full draft due

4/14: revision plans due to your peers

4/21: full revision due based on peer feedback

4/23: revision plans due to your peers for the last time

4/27: final essay due, email due.

Please email me if you have questions, and I hope this entry in the Corona Chronicles finds you safe, healthy, and well. Don't hesitate to write me and let me know how you are. I miss you each and all.

Onward,

Dr. Swiencicki