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Dr. Rex

e-Portfolio

Reflective Essay

HON1000: The City at Wayne State has not only introduced me to Detroit's history, but it has taught how we, as Detroiters, can draw from the past to create a better future. With *Detroit: A Biography*, *City Life*, and *Ragtime*, as well as profound statements from Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, the class was well equipped to analyze the role a city's history has on its present condition and future aspirations. Understanding Detroit was fundamental to this class, and the texts showed us snapshots in Detroit's history. Detroit was shown as an unsettled land, a potential for success after the Erie Canal was built, an industrialized boomtown, the auto capital of the world, a city of American Dreamers, a racially-charged city with fleeing residents, and as a city in collapse. These pictures of Detroit capture its history and taught us the background of the city - our city. The class taught how to draw from the past to positively influence the future.

The readings, lectures, assignments, and passport events influenced my growth as a learner because they caused me to actually think about history and its role in the present and future. By learning about the history of Detroit and the current events in the city, I have become more acquainted with its problems and has forced me to think about the implications for the city if nothing is changed. This class has called its students to proactively contemplate the decisions of the past and what we can do to change the course of the city's history. I found the most influential part of this class to be the passport events. Through these, I visited sites in Detroit that are historically important and essential parts of the city's character and culture. Visiting the Redford Theatre and Eastern Market were fantastic ways to better

acquaint ourselves with the city and finally get a sense of what Detroit is about. Always having liked theatre, I really enjoyed visiting the Redford Theatre. The architecture and interior design of the theatre were beautiful and, although I do not usually like movies in black and white, I liked *Modern Times*.

Before taking HON1000, I neither had much background on the city's history nor did I feel a particularly strong connection to Detroit. The elements of this course taught me to not judge something before truly knowing about it both on paper and from personal experience. Now, after finishing this class, I feel tied to the city, and I want to help transform it into a great city once again. Currently, I'm majoring in English/Pre-Law and I'm thinking of attending Wayne State Law School. I look forward to helping Detroit both through in my future career and out of concern for the city that I love. Feeling pride for one's city is something that changes people's perceptions in terms of living in relation to the city, working to help its citizens, and wanting to contribute to its success, and I feel pride for Detroit.