

Muhammad Saleem  
705 Foster Ave Apt #2  
Brooklyn, NY 11230

February 7, 2018

Writing for the Social Sciences  
Dr. von Uhl  
City College of New York (CCNY)

Dear Dr. von Uhl,

As a transfer student, this will be my first semester at the City College of New York. Before the first day of the Spring semester, I declared my major as sociology. I came to this decision due to my interest in shaping policies to create positive change in New York and beyond. This semester I would like to develop my skills as a social scientist, writer, and reader.

I have never taken a sociology course prior to this semester. Nevertheless, I am excited to learn more about this field. One of the benefits of this major is that it has the potential to lead to diverse careers. Options include research, education, counseling, community relations, non-profit management, etc. As a student of sociology and in my role as a social scientist, I will investigate issues regarding changes in human behavior in response to ideas overtime by focusing on the insider and outsider perspectives (Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater 7,8). In doing so, I hope to use that data to create policies to prevent crime and protect people's rights.

From a young age to the present, I learned from my history courses that people of African descent have suffered a long history of abuses in America. In the article, *Who First Showed Us That Black Lives Matter*, Chris Lebron, Assistant Professor of African American studies and philosophy at John Hopkins University, writes that even after the American Civil War had ended and African Americans were given freedom, they still suffered at the hands of others, particularly white people (1). One such example was the lynching of black men based on false rape accusations. For the past few years, through various media outlets, I learned of a number of examples in which police officers use excessive force. The questions come to mine regarding the reasons police officers abuse their power and the laws in place that prevent the abuse of power from being repeated. It is because of the injustice that I have observed that I wish to take on a role to create positive change.

I am concerned about the limitations of my writing skills. It often takes me a great deal of time to prepare a satisfying paper that meets all of the standards set by my instructors. More importantly, I feel that my knowledge of grammar and syntax is somewhat deficient. My instructors and I



2  
have observed these issues in my past papers. Despite these difficulties, my skills as a writer <sup>have</sup> improved in terms of my use of language and punctuation. My goal for this course will be to further develop my skills in regard to the usage of proper grammar, syntax, punctuation, and language. So that I may be able to apply them to my other courses. ) - frag.

In conjunction with my goal for writing development, I would also like to address my goal to improve myself as a reader. For many years now, I have performed close readings of assigned works that take me much longer to complete than my classmates. In my close readings, I would summarize and paraphrase every one to three sentences in a text. By doing so, I would be able to develop a much better understanding of the text compared to my classmates, but this method is too time-consuming. Just this week, I fell behind in my reading assignments for three courses just by performing close readings for two other courses. It seems to me that my close reading style needs to be refined. As a result, I have set a goal for myself to develop my reading skills.

In order to achieve this goal, I have decided to minimize writing to analyze the assigned texts. My new reading practice will follow a stepwise process. First, I will read texts just to get the gist of them. During the reading, I will make short notes about important elements. After finishing my first reading, I will write a summary of my understanding of the text. Then, I will perform a second reading, focusing on the details. It is a lengthy process, but I hope I will be able to improve the balance between comprehending the texts and completing the work in a timely manner.

I hope that you will assist me in my endeavor to become a better reader and writer. These improvements will help me facilitate the difficulties of my coursework and may assist myself to become a better social scientist.

From,

Muhammad Saleem

Bst

great  
self-  
awareness

are  
you  
asking  
questions  
of  
the  
text?

free  
writing  
as  
a  
response  
too?