

American Public University System

The Importance of My Work and Set Goals

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A young woman stands in front of her colleagues about to present her life's work; she takes a deep breath as she prepares to defend her arguments and findings. A man gives a presentation to his managers and hopes that it is good enough for them to decide his project is worthy of the company's time and money. In everyone's life there comes a time when you find yourself arguing the importance and value of both yourself and your work; while what that work may be, and the reasons behind your arguments can vary greatly, in the end it all amounts to the same – trying to prove that you and what you have done are worth consideration.

The purpose of this essay is just that, to show to others how my work has met the various goals set forth by the courses, degree program, and university; of course, it helps to understand what those goals are. While each course has its own goals that students are expected to master, there is a good deal of overlap between both the program and the individual courses. Many require that you learn to “critically analyze...” and “articulate written positions...” (APUS, Degree) and ideas on the different works studied; it is also important that students are able to “examine the human experience from multidimensional perspectives...” (APUS, Degree) since it is a key component of both the Humanities program and the required courses. This is necessary to know in order to analyze if they have been met by the artifacts discussed later in the paper. Individual course requirements are discussed with the artifact information correlating to that course; the five artifacts chosen here are those I feel best display my ability to meet course and degree goals.

HIST 588: History of Religion included goals like learning to “examine historical development of various world religions” and to be able to “compare and contrast the beliefs and practices of world religions” (APUS, HIST 588); it is also served as a critical reminder that the field of Humanities encompasses several disciplines. *A Look at Druidry* was the midterm for the

course, and a multimedia project that looks at the history of the Druidic religion and how modern and ancient practices differ. I had to learn how to use different forms of supporting evidence since the ancient religion was oral in nature and had very few valid primary sources. This project offered the chance to learn to better “assess significant scholarly approaches to the study of religion” (APUS, HIST 588), and how to research a subject that had relied heavily upon the historical written accounts of non-practitioners. Knowing how to properly research and assess information is a skill that transcends the scholarly world; this is a set of skills that can be used in day to day life or in a work environment. Although worded differently, these are goals that can be found in many courses since they are critical skills needed for writing in general.

Popular Culture in Art: A Look at World War II Art Propaganda was written as the final project for HIST 557: History and Popular Culture, and looks at history of artistic propaganda of World War II how it was both influenced by, and a representation of the pop culture of the time. Primary goals for this course included learning how to “asses the meanings, methods, and objectives of the history of popular culture”, and “appraise the difference between primary and secondary sources” (APUS HIST577); these were met by looking at how the propaganda of World War II “...affected the way people looked at a major historical event...” (Perry, Week 3), and learning how to search beyond the library for appropriate sources. Being able to discern between primary and secondary sources, as well as knowing which are viable for your project can be helpful in many aspects of life outside the university; with how influential social media often is, it is important to know how to understand how popular culture can affect how we see the rest of the world, and to be able to tell good information from bad.

My next artifact from HUMN 451: Enlightenment and the Modern World; *Enlightenment and Education*, looks at the impact and importance that the Western Enlightenment movement

and decent access to education have on each other and society. This was done by analyzing writers like Kant and Wollstonecroft and their opinions on the importance of education for the Enlightenment; along with other “...various genres of Enlightenment writing...”, applying “...classical logic to Enlightenment Era issues...”, and then ensuring that I could “articulate written and oral positions on ideas...” (APUS HUMN541) in order to write my paper. Although the skills here focus on the Enlightenment Era, they can be applied to any time period or discipline, and being able to articulate one’s ideas in a way that others can easily understand is important in social, scholarly, and work environments.

Aspects of the Odyssey from HUMN 510: The Ancient World looks at the part family plays in Homer’s *Odyssey* and how interactions among different families impacted Odysseus’ journey. Like many of the courses taken, HUMN 510 wanted students to be able to use “...appropriate graduate-level analytical skills...” (APUS HUMN510) which helped to make sure that any research sources were not only appropriate and useful, but how to more easily tell which results only appeared to be helpful. Family is among the ancient “...topics discussed...” that most definitely applies to “...contemporary life” and knowing “...how people thought about various issues in the ancient world...” (APUS HUMN510) is beneficial in knowing how family would have been viewed in works like the *Odyssey* and why some characters reacted the way they did. While the analytical skills are meant to apply to cultures in history and literature, they can also be applied to more modern cultures and learning how relate to them.

My final submission is from HUMN 520: Antiquity and the Medieval World which went over great written works, such as Dante’s *Divine Comedy* or Homer’s *Iliad*. *A Journey of Epic Heroes: Dante and the Inquisitor* looks at how the classic hero’s story is continued in the more modern vessel of video games by comparing Dante’s journey in the *Divine Comedy* to that of the

main character in the video game *Dragon Age: Inquisition*. Many of the objectives in this course were not easily applied to a paper, or even verifiable; the ones that I could confirm that I have met, were improving my "...skills in literary analysis and interdisciplinary research" and "...using the latest technology" (APUS HUMN520). My research had to not only include the more classic written tales, but also looking into video games that had a similar story style, along with the standard research material such as articles. As stated before, having strong analytical and research skills is beneficial across many aspects of life; keeping up with the latest technology can also be beneficial given how dependent the modern world has become on technology.

The Humanities degree program, and the courses within, focuses on learning how to properly research, analyze, and articulate your findings and ideas; many of the skills meant to be mastered are also important in real life, although not all may be obvious. Each of the artifacts being submitted met at least one primary goal of not only the course, but the degree program, and help to showcase how my writing has improved with each course. Throughout the course of this degree program I can honestly say that my research and writing skills have improved because of the many objectives that focused on aspects of those key abilities.

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