

Kudzu Review Reflection Essay

Working as an Editorial Assistant for the Kudzu Review has been an enriching experience. Going into this semester I was hoping for ways to gain more skills and confidence regarding my editing and writing. Working for the Kudzu Review allowed me to not only strengthen my editing skills, but also improve my own writing. I noticed that by having an opportunity to critique other's work, I was able to pick on some things that I could do to improve my writing. It was a rewarding way to contribute to FSU's literary community while also putting into practice what I have learned in my classes through a means that I am passionate about. I am incredibly proud of the work I have done with the Kudzu Review and the production of this issue of the undergraduate literary magazine.

Additionally, I got to apply my skills from "Editing Manuscripts, Documents, and Reports," a class taught by Dr. Perry Howell that I have been taking this semester. In this class we've focused heavily on the technicalities of copyediting. We have had in-depth discussions about the nuances of a variety of grammar rules, copyeditor responsibilities, and many more things. Though these discussions and our assignments helped me to develop, I didn't start to feel as comfortable with the subject matter until I began to apply the concepts outside of our class. I was able to apply these skills when I was given the opportunity to volunteer to edit four blogposts for the Kudzu Review's website. Each of these blogposts were written by other students, which also challenged me as I worked to maintain authorial voice while helping the subject matter and the writers' viewpoints come across easily to the reader. These copyediting skills also came in

handy as I was reading through the nonfiction submissions and determining the number of potential revisions would need to be made if we were to accept the piece for the magazine.

One way that I was challenged that I haven't had as much experience in was in critiquing the quality of the pieces that were submitted. Though I have spent time in workshop-style classes where peer editing was essential, that was much different than what I was doing when critiquing the submissions. With the submissions, we had to consider that we wouldn't be able to add anything to the pieces that were submitted. Instead of being able to provide potential suggestions to improve the piece, I needed to evaluate them as they were and designed if they were complete, quality pieces. A lot of this involved considering the quality of the plotlines, character development, and agency of the piece. Though this was challenging, it pushed me to define what I considered to be a "good" literary work. At this point in my journey, it is difficult to clearly write the words to describe this, but I have begun to develop an understanding of what I should be focusing on when assessing a literary piece.

I always understood writing to be a means of expressing oneself and editing to be a means of clarifying that expression. Working with the Kudzu review allowed me to see how this expression (and quality versions of it) can be done in a variety of creative ways. For example, the piece "The Smell of Rain" had a significant impact on me. Though it was short, I felt as though the piece was a beautiful, impactful expression. Before this scenario I had somehow developed a subconscious bias that longer pieces would be better. Obviously, this is not always true. This piece showed me how a clear delivery and distinct intention could create a work that may be brief, but also incredibly impactful.

This internship also helped me to improve my confidence significantly. Being able to apply the skills I have learned in my classes to a real-world experience allowed me to see how all the pieces came together and how my built-up knowledge has given me valuable and useful abilities that could help me in a variety of future avenues. It also helped me realize just how much I really do love writing and editing. Contributing to the development of a literary magazine allowed me to serve my student community by creating opportunities for their work to be shared. It was a very rewarding process that reinforced my love for the artform. I hope that in the future I can continue to facilitate this effort through similar endeavors.

This experience has also exposed me to a variety of different writing styles that will allow me to approach others' writings with a more open mind and catalogue of rhetorics. I also was given the opportunity to do a presentation about the Kudzu Review in two English department classes. Though the experience was a bit nerve-wracking, it helped me to develop my public speaking skills and do things that may be uncomfortable. Overall, this experience has been essential to my journey in this major by helping me to develop my editing writing skills outside of the classroom. Though it may have been challenging at times, this opportunity has helped to grow my overall confidence in my major.