

Interviewer: Okay. I'm interviewing ***. I'm ***; I'm the interviewer. November 12. Okay, we're going to start off by generally talking about your self-image as a writer. How you perceive yourself. The first question is how do you describe yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I would say as a writer I'm much—I enjoy doing research and writing more factual pieces as opposed to narratives or fiction or any of that. I really enjoy research and argumentative writing; that comes from a background of debate in high school. So coming here, I really have enjoyed any opportunity I've gotten to write a research paper or anything of that nature.

Interviewer: Okay, and in terms of the overall how you view writing in your life, not just academically necessarily, but in your life. Is there any more you can say about that?

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean well, [...] I had an internship where we had to do a lot of research and stuff of that nature, which required a high level of writing. I've definitely seen the impact, even in terms of applying for internships and having to write cover letters or writing samples or anything of that nature. I definitely think it's very important, especially for somebody like myself, who plans on going into a field which will need writing or something of that nature.

Interviewer: I want you to think back a little bit—are you a sophomore?

Interviewee: I'm a junior.

Interviewer: Junior, okay. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you began at the University of Michigan?

Interviewee: I think that I probably was—I would have been considered like a pretty good writer when I started here. Like I said, I did debate in high school, and we participated in a paper writing kind of contest, so I really developed those sort of skills early on, but I was nowhere near as polished as I am now. Definitely college-level writing has helped my writing a lot in terms of paring it down, but writing was never a problem for me, coming into college. In high school, I'd have my parents edit my papers and stuff like that, but I really stopped that once I got to college.

Interviewer: I'm curious when you say "polish"; I think I know what you mean. Could you say a little bit about like how you see that polish. What is that?

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean the class that—the experience that I'd probably point to most would have been the upper-level writing course I took, which was [Political Science course], [Title of course], I think it's called. Where we had to write a thesis proposal and that really taught me a lot about cutting out the fat and varying up sentence structure and really paying attention to the writing that I do. Like now for example, I've started—which I've found really helpful—just to break down every paragraph I write sentence by

sentence, evaluating the purpose of each sentence and what it's doing. Does it look like all the other ones, because prior, I kind of, I would just kind of ramble.

I've learned to sort of write in a more—the words I think, have become much more carefully selected. I also have been—since high school, my dad taught me to outline everything that I wrote. In terms of like the organization of my writing, I think that that hasn't really changed that much, but just in terms of my style, I think it's really improved.

Interviewer: Okay, great. One last question about your self-image as a writer. When you're thinking about your goals for yourself as a writer, and kind of what you want to do with writing or what else you want to improve, what are those goals?

Interviewee: Well, I'm looking to probably go into government or politics or something of that nature, so, I would say that my goals are probably two-fold. I really want to be able to really polish my writing to the point where I can write it, and it will sound very succinct, and I can learn to write a lot in not a lot of words. That's something that I'm trying to improve on now, but also to be able to write for speech. I haven't really done a lot of that here, but to be able to write in a way that communicates to people. So yeah, those would probably be the two.

Interviewer: Okay, great. We're going to think a little bit about transfer. How writing in one place kind of transfers over to a different location, be it subject or kind of—you talked about your political goals, about kind of going forward. Thinking about your writing experiences at U of M [University of Michigan], what do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: That's an interesting question. I think to be able to write well is—well, I think it depends on the audience. If you're writing something—for example I wrote a viewpoint for the [local Ann Arbor newspaper] and to be able to write well in that sort of scenario would be to write something that really reached out to people. Something that people were able to identify with and to understand, but something also that was powerful and that didn't skimp out on anything. If you're writing for academic reasons, to be able to write well, to write a good thesis proposal, would mean to be able to write very factually.

I mean, to me, it evens seem dry, to be able to just write out what needs to be written, and only that. But I think in general just being able to communicate a message, no matter what the audience is, I would say, and whether that audience is one thing or another and being able to tailor your work to its purpose.

Interviewer: Okay, great. I want you to—we're going to ask a few questions about your first year writing requirement course. Which course did you take?

Interviewee: Great Books.

Interviewer: You took Great Books, okay, and what were your experiences in that course?

Interviewee: Well, it was in the honors program as a freshman, so I was required to take either Great Books or Classics and I chose Great Books, because my father had actually gone here and had taken it as well.

Interviewer: Really?

Interviewee: Yeah, as a freshman.

Interviewer: He took Great Books?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm. I would say that class was probably the only class I've had here at [University of Michigan] that was similar to my high school English classes, in that we were analyzing texts and looking at characters and things like that. It's not something I've had to do since then, really. I would say that that class, I don't know how much it really helped my writing, to be honest, but it was a nice intro to being a college student.

You know, there was a lot of reading, a lot of writing and it was pretty intimidating. I think that was probably good. But, I don't know, I think as a freshman, I might have benefitted more from something that was more along the lines of the upper-level class that I took, which involved a lot of research writing and stuff like that. Because that's, in all my other classes, everything I took since has been, you know, explain this argument, flesh this out, pick a topic and write fifteen pages about it. I don't know that Great Books necessarily prepared me for those sorts of...

Interviewer: Sure.

Interviewee: Works.

Interviewer: You referred a couple of times to kind of the research-based writing that kind of defines writing for you at [University of Michigan]. I know you're doing Poli Sci [Political Science]; are there other disciplines or other subjects in which you found that style of writing to be prominent?

Interviewee: Yeah, I took—well, let's see. I've taken a wide range of classes. I found it very helpful in—I took [German course] as my literature and ideas class, which is about Faust, and the end paper was a research paper about anything you wanted and I wrote it about—well, that related to the class. [...]. It was fifteen pages; it was a research paper. I found that very useful there. In my psychology class I took, not as much creative liberty, but still similar and I actually got to write a three page paper now in my econ [economy] class, which is about a current issue in Europe.

Interviewer: That's really interesting. To compare that back to the first year writing requirement course that you took, would you say that you're still making use of what you learned in that class for your writing now?

Interviewee: Probably not, because like I said, I haven't had to analyze characters or anything like that. Maybe it would be useful to an English major. but for me—and that's not to say that there's not value in that sort of writing, but it just, it doesn't have any practical purpose for me now.

Interviewer: You didn't take—did you take [Writing course]? You did not, okay. This next question I think we've touched on a little bit, but it's a fairly important one so I just want to see if you have anything else to say on the matter. It's asking what is your concentration? Have you had the opportunity to do writing in your concentration and just to describe what kinds of writing. You've talked a little bit about that, but maybe you can expand a little bit about that.

Interviewee: Yeah, so I'm a political science/econ major, econ major now, probably will be a minor. I've had a lot of opportunities to write in political science and it's my favorite. I love—I could—I really find it enjoyable. Like when I hear that I have to write a research paper, I get excited because I know that it's an opportunity to learn a lot about something that I find interesting. My freshman year I took a political science class, they haven't offered it the past two years, and it was like a seminar-style class. It was three hours once a week and the conclusion—every class was about something different. [...]. It was really interesting and I wrote—that was actually at the same time I was taking that German class—the final project, fifteen page paper on something that relates to any of the topics.

I wrote a paper about behavioral economics, which I think was the most fascinating thing I ever researched and I really enjoyed the paper. It's nice when you write about something that you enjoy because the professor loved it, thought it was great, and it really was not a pain at all to write. That's really, other than my upper-level writing class where I wrote a thesis proposal, that's probably the longest body of work I've had to do in terms of writing.

I took [Political Science course] and there we had to write five ten-page papers maybe—no, five five-page papers—I don't know. Shorter papers that had more of a guide in terms of the prompts. So that's like a little bit less creative freedom, but still it's about crafting an argument and fleshing it out, knowing that people can understand it.

Interviewer: In terms of your confidence level about writing in poli sci or in these—maybe econ, if that's kind of a sub-concentration that you have, can you describe your confidence level of writing in that discipline?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think that I probably am almost too confident. Like I really, really trust in my ability to communicate. I think it's probably like one of my strongest academic skills. I really enjoy editing other people's work and I really enjoy writing in

that sort of medium. I'm not—and that's not to say all writing is my strong suit. If you ask me to write a piece of fiction or a creative paper, I [inaudible 00:12:20] by myself, I probably couldn't, but in terms of factual, research-based writing, especially like I said, I did debate in high school, so it's what I enjoy.

Interviewer: Great. We're going to, I don't want to say move on, but the next kind of little category is about writing experiences that you've had. The question is what experiences in and out of the classroom have had an effect on your writing and thinking about how your writing processes changed as a result.

Interviewee: Well, like I mentioned earlier, this research class I took that really changed my writing process. I went from sort of writing in an outline but a little bit more loosely, carelessly, to paying extreme attention to every word that I used, which I think has really benefitted my writing in some respects. On the other hand it's really kind of taught me to cut out a lot of the fleshy, potatoes kind of parts of what I write. That's really helped me to become more succinct, which is something that, like you said, out of the classroom I really noticed this summer, when I had to write business reports and things like that and was able to do it pretty easily.

Interviewer: If I use the term reflective writing, what does that mean to you?

Interviewee: I don't really—I guess if I had to guess, it would be to write about something reflecting on something that I've done or something of that nature. I have no idea.

Interviewer: Thinking about reflective writing as you've just defined it, have you used reflective writing in your own writing processes, whether assigning your courses or volunteer writing, do you think you've used reflective writing?

Interviewee: Reflective writing being writing where I've looked back on something I've written or like parts of my life?

Interviewer: I mean however you want to define it. I think both those are fair things to explore in terms of reflective writing, so I mean you can describe either one of those.

Interviewee: Well, right now I'm in a course where we have to write reflections every other week about speakers that we hear, and that, I think has been probably the most reflective writing other than like application essays, which I've also had to use reflective writing in. What was the question?

Interviewer: That's good. I'm going to ask you to go into a little bit more detail on like what the reflective assignments in response to the speakers are like, and then what applications [cross talk 00:15:04].

Interviewee: [Cross talk 00:15:04] to come to my class. We have two professors come in every other week. It's a science professor from any field and an art professor from any field and they talk about their creative process and how they're creative. It's really

interesting, and then afterwards, for the first five or so speakers, we have to write reflections based on anything the speakers have mentioned.

For one of them, it was [Instructor], was one of the people, [...]. I wrote a reflection about yoga and its role in my life, because that is what I took for that. We had other professors come in and speak about their work with maps [...] and you're supposed to find however it resonates with you and create some sort of argument around it.

Now, the class has become a little bit more alternative, and we can—we don't have to just write, we could reflect in any way. I've been using graphic design as my way so far, but I'm probably going to switch that up for the next class, which is on Wednesday. That's, I think, been the extent of my reflecting that I've done at college.

Interviewer: Okay, in those assignments. I'm sorry, I thought there was one other thing you were talking about. You said the reflective assignments to the speakers and then—

Interviewee: Like applications.

Interviewer: Applications. Could you talk a little bit about that process? I'm kind of curious about that.

Interviewee: Yeah, well I am—up until last Tuesday, [...]. It was a lot about reflecting on past experiences in terms of leadership, and working in teams and stuff like that. That kind of forced me to think about all the experience I'd had up until those points, and then to flesh them out into a way that made me seem desirable as a candidate. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Sure, okay, so kind of moving a little bit on, what have been your experiences working with other writers in your courses?

Interviewee: I haven't—I've had group projects but I don't think I've really had many where—I have friends who have to write like group papers, but I haven't really had to do that since freshman year. Freshman year I had to do it for a semester, and it was somewhat painful, because one of the girls was supposed to write like a page, who wrote like six pages and then we had to edit all what she had written, and people didn't write as much as they were supposed to, and it really just was not good.

Interviewer: What class was that for?

Interviewee: An environment class.

Interviewer: An environment class, okay. Can you just—that's interesting. Can you describe that group assignment a little more? You seem to have kind of had a negative experience.

Interviewee: Yeah, it was only for a semester freshman year, so I don't have a great memory of it. It was a group paper about—I don't even remember the topic. I guess with

any group projects, you have some people who are great and some people who are not so great. I think we divided it up so that, I think actually I was just responsible for writing the introduction, the conclusion, and then putting the whole thing together. Then the rest of the group members were responsible for writing their section, which were supposed to be X amount of pages long.

Some people held their weight and some people did more than they were supposed to, but that's pretty—I've found that it's pretty challenging to write in that sort of way. Just because as a writer, I feel like we all have our own sort of way of writing and want to do things the way that we want them done, and it's really hard to tell somebody that what they've done isn't good, especially when your grade is on the line.

I tend to be of the philosophy that it's my grade, and I don't really care whose feelings get hurt. I have no problem being nice, but at the same time, it's hard when your grade could be in jeopardy because you didn't have the heart to tell somebody that they wrote something that was a little too long or wordy or whatever.

Interviewer: Sure. In terms of work shopping or peer review, is that something you've done in your classes, and if so, can you describe it?

Interviewee: I think we did that in Great Books. We, I think, just traded papers, maybe. We've been work shopping in the science class I'm taking. Every week we hear the speakers and then every other week, or like every other week we hear the speakers, and then the off weeks we workshop our reflections. So for two hours we all sit around and talk about what we liked out of peoples, what we didn't like out of peoples. We all have to write, prior to the class, we have to write critiques of everybody else's pieces, which has been interesting.

I think the people have done a really good job so far and it's really hard to tell people maybe—just because there isn't that much that they can improve on at this point, but that's been interesting, definitely.

Interviewer: Is that something you feel like has improved your writing or something that you feel like you've been able to improve other people's writing? I'm also kind of curious to know about the structure of it. Do you all read all of each other's essays?

Interviewee: Yeah, we have to before the class and then we have to write a little paragraph about each one and what we liked, what we didn't. In terms of my writing, I don't know how much it's really been improved upon. Usually everything that the commentary that's given is a little bit more substantive; not really about the writing style. Something that I noticed for example, is I think like three of the four that I edited, they all sort of fell into the same trap that I used to fall into, which would be like to put some sort of preposition, comma, statement. Which is really an easy trap to get into. Often, comma, dit, dit, da, sometimes—you know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Which, when I turned that on and was able to look for it, I found it in like everything and I mentioned it to them and I hope that that helped them to see that. Because I always used to—my [inaudible 00:21:34] structure always used to be, statement, comment, statement. Phrase, comment, statement, so changing that up, I think, and that helps a reader stay interested, I think, so.

Interviewer: Great, thank you. A new question. If you were going to give someone advice about writing, what are some of the things that you can think of, or that they should think about as they begin writing a paper.

Interviewee: A hundred percent to outline. That is how I always start my papers. I can't do it any other way, because it kind of helps you to see sort of where the logical flow of thoughts are going. I often will write my papers in full sentences in outline form so that I can move things around and see where things make sense and then I just usually delete all the ones and the As and the Roman numerals and it becomes a paper. I think that that's really helpful, just because you can see sort of where what points are being made. Am I elaborating on things? When you look at something you've written A, and you have a one underneath it, but you should probably have a two. It kind of helps you to start thinking in that way.

Then the other thing I started doing recently—which I found really helpful, I did it last night, actually, because I have a presentation on Wednesday—is to take big paragraphs or all the paragraphs, and split them up sentence by sentence, where you can read every single one; look at it by itself. Is this good? Is it contributing? Do I need this? Could I put it with something else? Often I think that we just sort of write mindlessly and end up with these massive paragraphs where you know, maybe some of the information's redundant; maybe some of it could be merged together, so, yeah.

Interviewer: So that's—any other—so outlining. Any other kind of piece of advice you'd give to somebody starting on a paper, or just kind of through the writing process.

Interviewee: Well, I think this is probably a pretty common piece of advice, but to write something and then walk away from it and then come back to it, I think is really helpful. I like to write a paper—and obviously also to get ahead of the game so that you can go do some other homework and come back to it and look at it and say, "Is this good? Do I like this?"

Another thing I guess, if you have the opportunity to choose a topic, choose something that you're very interested in. Not necessarily what's the easiest, just because, like I mentioned earlier, I wrote that paper about behavioral economics and it was so interesting. I was talking to everyone about it and it was like all I wanted to do. What was I just about to say; I just forgot. But yeah, picking something that you're interested in is definitely a key.

Interviewer: I know you were talking about kind of getting a bit ahead of the game so you can come back to it and do some other work. Is that something you found to be useful?

Interviewee: Yeah, I try to do my work, especially when it comes to writing assignments on the earlier, because I don't think that papers that are written the night before—sometimes it works for people, but just for me, I need to be able to let it kind of sit and resonate for a little while.

Interviewer: Great. The next question asks if you've had any experiences with new media writing. For example, things like writing for blogs or web sites, using sound or video, like a PowerPoint. If you've had those experiences and then I'd love a few specific examples if you have them.

Interviewee: Is this just in a class setting?

Interviewer: Either, so a class setting or outside.

Interviewee: For a year, so from like about last August to this August, I, with a friend, maintained a fashion blog. It would usually have like a paragraph of sort of writing about something, and then pictures, and we write almost every day. We did that for a year, which I thought was interesting. It was kind of fun, just to have my friends see my writing because I do, that's something that I really enjoy and I also—it was like fashion and lifestyle and stuff like that. I later became too busy for it, but it was fun and it's interesting.

There's a whole world out there of blogs and stuff like that, that a lot of people don't know about, but it's a really great way if you have an interest in something to let it manifest where it doesn't take that much time to keep it up or anything like that. Which I also found that it really helped me to stay creative because I would be so wrapped up in like econ and like schoolwork and stuff like that to be able to do something that was slightly out of the box was nice.

In terms of like presentations, I just made a Prezi yesterday for a class that I'm doing. I love Prezi. I think it's great, so that's definitely a fun way of doing a presentation.

Interviewer: Can you talk a little bit more in what appeals to you about Prezi in terms of making presentations and even a little bit more specific about the presentation you're making soon?

Interviewee: Yeah, so actually this class is fascinating. It's [Political Science course], it's [Title of course]. For the first half of the class we spent discussing how to persuade people of things. How to—what words to say, how to form your arguments, things like that, so people will listen. The majority of your grade is comprised of this project where you have to pick a topic with a group and try to persuade the class.

They survey the class on all the topics before the presentations are given and then they survey the class immediately after your presentation to see if you've changed anyone's mind. [...].

I think it's really fun, but it looks so visually appealing and for a class where you're trying to persuade people of something, that's half the battle is just getting them to look at what you're trying to say. So, yeah, there hasn't really been that much writing necessarily, that's gone into that class, it's more just been—well actually, we're one of the first groups to go. The presentations span over like the course of a month, and we're the first day, so we haven't had that much time to prepare, but it's been really interesting and I think that the Prezi definitely is going to add something.

Interviewer: I've used Prezi before so I kind of know what you're talking about but for the purposes of the interview, you said it looks professional, and that's part of the battle in persuading people. I'm curious to know, as specific as you possibly can be, about what elements of Prezi you see as really lending it that weight.

Interviewee: Yeah, so I'm also a Mac user, not really a PC, and PowerPoint, I think, is very, kind of in a PC sort of way, very cut and dry. It's a heading, and some points and that's it. Whereas Prezi sort of allows you to almost communicate your thought process through the presentation, because you can zoom.

We had this one map that we're showing and then we want to show another map next to it and, rather than clicking on the next slide, we just zoom out, and you can see both maps next to each other. Which, when you're watching something, it's just much more visually appealing. Not to say that PowerPoint doesn't get the job done, because it does if you just want words on a screen, it's more than okay.

If you're looking to make a sort of sleek presentation, I think that's Prezi's ability to sort of let you customize how exactly you want your presentation to go, it provides an advantage. Although, if you do have—some presentations can get really like headache-y, because there's a lot of zooming, but as long as you tailor that neatly and logically.

example, we're talking about how high-speed rail would revitalize America and, in the dot of the 'i' in revitalize, it zooms in and it talks about the economy. Then it moves to the next 'i' and it talks about the environment, and it's just something where you are sort of entertained by what you're watching, not only by just the words that are on the screen.

Interviewer: Any other—you mentioned the blog that you guys did for a year, that's really cool, and then your experiences with Prezi. Are there any other sort of things that you'd classify as new media that you've done either in classes or outside of classes?

Interviewee: For my [Political Science course] Freshman year, we had to do a creative project of anything about the political theorists. We made campaign commercials [...] which was really fun and that was sort of a fun way to communicate information that we wouldn't know otherwise. I know that there was some groups who made like fake

Facebook pages for them and things like that. Also for this creativity class that I'm in, we are required to have a journal, so I have a Tumblr instead where I can put pictures and stuff like that.

Interviewer: To think just slightly more, can you describe the effect that these experiences with new media have had on you as a writer? How do you see those playing in?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think that anything that can kind of help you to formulate thoughts and facilitate that sort of process in your mind is good and I think a lot of the new media sort of things that are out there are really useful for that. Like I know, I in particular, happen to love the computer; my friends say that they don't really even know how I'm so into it, but for me, it really helps. Like I often will—even for my econ classes, I'll draw my graphs on Paint because it just helps me more to think things through. I think that they kind of provide a new sort of way to facilitate creativity and to help people flesh out their thoughts.

Interviewer: All right. Okay, so you've been uploading pieces of writing to a study archive on C Tools [learning management system]?

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: Is that, that's right?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: How has that process been going for you?

Interviewee: I think I've only uploaded one thing. I always do it when I'm prompted, I just don't know when—

Interviewer: Sure.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, so—

Interviewee: It's easy. It's real easy.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I just usually use something that I've written from a class and I put it up there, which is what I think I'm supposed to do.

Interviewer: Yeah, from my understanding of it, you're doing the right thing. I'm going to ask you to describe—so you said you'd uploaded one— to describe the piece that you chose and then why you chose it.

Interviewee: I can't remember what it was.

Interviewer: Even if you don't, if you would like pretend that you got another prompt tomorrow, what would you upload? Describe that, and what makes you choose—why would you choose the ones that you chose?

Interviewee: I think that the one I uploaded—well, I probably uploaded my behavioral economics paper, because I think that's the one I've been submitting for writing samples and things like that, too, for like job searches. I think that that really kind of just illustrates the most fun I've had with writing here, yet, like I mentioned earlier.

It was a fun paper to write, there were lots of—I primarily used Dan Ariely, who is a behavioral economist. [...].

[...]

I ran around telling my friends about it the whole time I was writing the paper and I really—yeah, it's perplexing. It really causes you to sort of re-think everything that you do. Yeah, I think that is probably the one that I uploaded. If it wasn't that, it was the one that I wrote for my German class about [Title of course], which is also really interesting. [...].

If I had to upload one now, I would probably put up my thesis proposal, even though I don't think I'm going to use my thesis proposal because I think I've changed my topic. Which was all about aid to Sub-Saharan Africa [...].

[...]

Interviewer: Really? I think my next question, just to kind of probe you to talk a little bit more, we can think about the one that you wrote, the one you just described about the Game Theory and the economic reforms and then the one you referred to, so was that your thesis? Was that your thesis proposal?

Interviewee: My thesis proposal.

Interviewer: You've spoken a few times about the one that you described initially, where you were going into the examples and you talked about kind of why those things were interesting to you. I'm curious to know if you can think of other reasons why you might have chosen those papers. I think one reason now is that like, oh it's really interesting stuff and we [cross talk 00:37:09] people, like what else about those papers or about that writing made you feel like this is the kind of thing I want to upload?

Interviewee: I think that both of those sort of gave me a lens, a new way to view a subject or the world. The one I wrote about the behavioral economics stuff really, when you read it, I think that it causes you to sort of re-think a lot of what you would do normally. Also, my professor told me that he plans when he teaches the class again, to use parts of what I wrote, so that was really exciting, yeah.

I think that in that situation, I just think that, I think it's worthwhile for people to read. I think either of those. [...].

Interviewer: Do you think that those are—that's really interesting—do you think that those are really good examples of your writing and your writing style?

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: Can you talk a little bit about like what did you nail down? Like what made them something you really feel proud of?

Interviewee: Well, with the behavioral economics paper I just think it was a topic where it wasn't totally lifeless, but was also something where you learned something new. I enjoy writing things like that where people can come away with, having read it, and being like, wow, I just gained some really cool new understanding of something.

The thesis proposal, on the other hand, was, I'd say it was less so an example of my writing, even though it was more just an example and a product of really hard work. Between the literature review and the research design and all of that, that took a lot of time, and it was really well-thought through. That was the pivotal class, I would say, in terms of me learning to write more succinctly. That being said, I don't know that that one was something that I really put my heart into as much.

Interviewer: This is kind of an extra question and they can just delete this, but I'm kind of curious to know, so there's some things that you were like, yeah, I'm putting that up there, that's interesting. I'm proud of this. Is there anything that you've written that you can think of that you would definitely not put up there and why not?

Interviewee: Oh I'm sure. I also am the type of person where I have a really hard time turning in something in where I'm not proud of it. I mean there are probably some things I've written in a Spanish class or two that I'm not so proud of, and maybe one or two of those papers I wrote for that class where I had to write five papers over the course of the semester, because some of them just were boring and I just lost interest. Actually, probably my Great Books stuff, too.

Interviewer: That was your first year writing requirement.

Interviewee: Yeah. When I—and I found this as a general theme throughout life, but when I care about something a lot, and I'm very interested and I do very well and I focus all my time and energy on it and I make sure it's perfect. When it's not the case, I do have

a harder time engaging and like really trying to make myself care. Which is, I think, an important lesson in terms of writing just because it's really easy to spend—like you know you can talk about your favorite thing for hours.

In the same way you could write about your favorite thing for hours, I'm sure. The more you learn, the more exciting it is and everything like that and then as I try to find a new thesis proposal, I'm trying to keep that in mind. But at the same time, when you don't really care about something, it's really hard to sort of make yourself care. Actually, I know. I know what I would not put. It's my [Psychology course] , [Title of course] papers.

Interviewer: How come?

Interviewee: Primarily, I mean, they were not about writing style at all. That was not a quality of the grade. There was nothing factored in for quality of writing. It was simply can you regurgitate all of these points. Which, for the purposes of that class—it's like a 500 person freshman lecture—that's how they have to do it. I don't think anyone submits their papers like, wow, this is the greatest thing I've ever written, because it doesn't have to be.

Interviewer: Okay. Great, so there's one last space at the end for any other comments that you can think of that maybe we didn't touch on or just about your experience being a writer at [University of Michigan] or outside of academics. Is there anything else that you think might be useful to think about for a bit about writing?

Interviewee: I think that going forward, I don't know what impact this interview has, but just I think people would be very interested to have these sort of writing courses tailored to whatever they're pursuing. I know that I found—I don't know how it goes in any of the other concentrations, because I've only really had experience with political science and econ. The poli sci [political science] classes I think that I've taken and the assignments that I've had really prepared me well for the work that I did this past summer where I had to do research and writing and all of that.

I think that, I guess, those sort of courses are really useful to people just because writing is so useful no matter what you're doing and I think that people are starting to understand that now as we are getting older and applying for jobs. No, I think that my experience here has been great.

Interviewer: Great. Thanks ***, I really appreciate it.

Interviewee: Thank you so much.