“[Williams’s] confidence with language is frankly unnerving.”
—Chicago Tribune

TIMOTHY McSWEENEY

sublets his intellectual property.

Back to the front page

I Would Rather Do Anything Else Than Grade Your Final Papers.
Dear Students Who Have Just Completed My Class,

I would rather do anything else than grade your Final Papers.

I would rather base jump off of the parking garage next to the student activity center or eat that entire sketchy tray of taco meat leftover from last week’s student achievement luncheon that’s sitting in the department refrigerator or walk all the way from my house to the airport on my hands than grade your Final Papers.

I would rather have a sustained conversation with my grandfather about politics and government supported healthcare and what’s wrong with the system today and why he doesn’t believe in homeowner’s insurance because it’s all a scam than grade your Final Papers. Rather than grade your Final Papers, I would stand in the aisle at Lowe’s and listen patiently to All the Men mansplain the process of buying lumber and how essential it is to sight down the board before you buy it to ensure that it’s not bowed or cupped or crook because if you buy lumber with defects like that you’re just wasting your money even as I am standing there, sighting down a 2x4 the way my father taught me 15 years ago.

I would rather go to Costco on the Friday afternoon before a three day weekend. With my preschooler. After preschool.

I would rather go through natural childbirth with twins. With triplets. I would rather eat beef stroganoff. I would rather go back to the beginning of the semester like Sisyphus and recreate my syllabus from scratch while simultaneously building an elaborate class website via our university’s shitty web-based course content manager and then teach the entire semester over again than grade your goddamn Final Papers.

I would rather stay up past midnight pecking out an essay about not wanting to grade your Final Papers with one finger on my tiny outdated smart phone touchpad than grade your Final Papers because I do not want to read them.

I do not want to read your 3AM-energy-drink-fueled excuse for a thesis statement. I do not want to sift through your mixed metaphors, your abundantly employed logical fallacies, your incessant editorializing of your writing process wherein you tell me As I was reading through articles for this paper I noticed that — or In the article that I have chosen to analyze, I believe the author is trying to or worse yet, I sat down to write this paper and ideas kept flowing into my mind as I considered what I should write about because honestly, we both know that the only thing flowing into your mind were thoughts of late night pizza or late night sex or late night pizza
and sex, or maybe thoughts of that chemistry final you’re probably going to fail later this week and anyway, you should know by now that any sentence about anything flowing into or out of or around your blessed mind won’t stand in this college writing classroom or Honors seminar or lit survey because we are Professors and dear god, we have Standards.

I do not want to read the one good point you make using the one source that isn’t Wikipedia. I do not want to take the time to notice that it is cited properly. I do not want to read around your 1.25-inch margins or your gauche use of size 13 sans serif fonts when everyone knows that 12-point Times New Roman is just. Fucking. Standard. I do not want to note your missing page numbers. Again. For the sixth time this semester. I do not want to attempt to read your essay printed in lighter ink to save toner, as you say, with the river of faded text from a failing printer cartridge splitting your paper like Charlton Heston in The Ten Commandments, only there, it was a sea and an entire people and here it is your vague stand-in for an argument.

I do not want to be disappointed.

I do not want to think less of you as a human being because I know that you have other classes and that you really should study for that chemistry final because it is organic chemistry and everyone who has ever had a pre-med major for a roommate knows that organic chemistry is the weed out course and even though you do not know this yet because you have never even had any sort of roommate until now, you are going to be weeded out. You are going to be weeded out and then you will be disappointed and I do not want that for you. I do not want that for you because you will have enough disappointments in your life, like when you don’t become a doctor and instead become a philosophy major and realize that you will never make as much money as your brother who went into some soul-sucking STEM field and landed some cushy government contract and made Mom and Dad so proud and who now gives you expensive home appliances like espresso machines and Dyson vacuums for birthday gifts and all you ever send him are socks and that subscription to that shave club for the $6 middle-grade blades.

I do not want you to be disappointed. I would rather do anything else than disappoint you and crush all your hopes and dreams —

Except grade your Final Papers.

The offer to take your chemistry final instead still stands.

**SUGGESTED READS**

[How to Be a Better Teacher-Person Through Apathy: What Your Professor’s Remarks on Your College English Paper Really Mean](http://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/i-would-rather-do-anything...)

3 of 6

2016-05-02, 2:24 PM
by John Minichillo (3/3/2016)

How to Be a Better Teacher-Person Through Apathy: A Professor’s Guide: When to Drop the F-Bomb in Class
by John Minichillo (4/11/2016)

Rubric for the Rubric Concerning Students’ Core Educational Competency In Reading Things In Books and Writing About Them
by Susan Harlan (6/19/2015)

RECENTLY

I Would Rather Do Anything Else Than Grade Your Final Papers
by Robin Lee Mozer (5/2/2016)

List: Member Benefits of My Woman Card
by Darcy McMurtery (5/2/2016)

My Own Private Shock Corridor: My Ontological Argument: Part 1 — Shadow of a Doubt
by Bob Schneider (5/2/2016)

POPULAR

List: Titles of Bach Chorales, as Translated By My Niece After One Semester of German
by Nolan Bonvouloir (4/15/2016)

How to Negotiate a Raise (If You’re a Woman)
by Maura Quint (4/15/2016)

Here Are the Times I Am Typically Free to Meet
by Joe Saunders (4/18/2016)

Search

ARCHIVE | BROWSE BY AUTHOR | ALL COLUMNS | LISTS
“Eggers’s featherlight humor provides laughs throughout.”
—Publishers Weekly

McSweeney’s is a publishing company based in San Francisco.
As well as operating a daily humor website, we also publish *Timothy McSweeney’s Quarterly Concern*, *the Believer*, and an ever-growing selection of books under various imprints. You can buy all of these things from our online store. We’re also transitioning to a nonprofit and would greatly appreciate your help. You can support us today by making a donation.

Donate