

Written Assignment #1

Your first assignment in this course is to write a short paper, **approximately 4 pages** in length (not including references, title page, etc.). I would like you to reflect on what we have studied in the first half of the course—namely, the approaches and influence of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault—and write the short piece on the following topic or theme:

Compare the utility of Bourdieu’s and Foucault’s approaches for theorizing and analyzing a criminal justice issue of your choice.

Some Tips & Guidance

When you write a traditional academic essay, it is typically *argumentative*, and this assignment is no exception. In other words, there should be one central argument, assertion, or claim that forms the heart of your paper. This central argument is also called the *thesis*. So, while I have given you the *topic* of the paper above (i.e. comparing Bourdieu and Foucault), I haven’t prescribed your actual thesis statement for you. You have to come up with that. When it comes to your central argument, or thesis, take note of two points:

- The thesis is the main argument, or assertion, of your paper, based on the research you have conducted. In this sense, it is also *the conclusion* of your essay.
- The thesis can be adapted in an almost infinite number of ways according to the needs of your research findings: it can be broad or specific, forceful or nuanced, etc.

When I say the thesis can be adapted and nuanced in an almost infinite number of ways, take note of the following two examples:

- “Bourdieu’s approach to theorizing social fields offers a more useful framework than the work of Foucault for analyzing a policing controversy such as Black Lives Matter.”
- “While Bourdieu’s approach *can* be adapted to theorizing the correctional system, Foucault’s work already offers more direct engagements with modern corrections and its discourses of risk through his concepts of disciplinary power and governmentality.”

In the above examples, the first thesis statement is a simple, unqualified claim that one theorist offers a superior approach to the other for analyzing a specific criminal justice issue. The second, however, is less absolutist and more specific: i.e. “Bourdieu can be used to analyze this, but there are more immediate merits to using Foucault...” I am not saying that one of these theses is better than the other. Rather, the point is that there are a million ways to word your main argument/thesis, and you simply need to reflect on your research and data and think of the best way of summing up what you have found!

Make sure your paper has an introduction (which includes your specific thesis statement) and a conclusion. Please prioritize citing the academic readings from this course (i.e. journal articles, book chapters) rather than just citing the course lecture PowerPoints over and over. But, yes, make use of all pertinent knowledge that you can find in the course readings, lecture materials,

and even real-life controversies discussed in the media, etc. Due to the short length of this assignment, I will not *require* you to make use of scholarly sources outside of the course readings. (You may use external scholarly sources if you so choose, but make sure that you *do* make use of the course readings.)

Formatting and References

Even though this paper is short, make use of an official style guide. Choose from the **APA**, **ASA**, or **Chicago** format. You should include a list of references at the end of your paper that includes all of the references you cite. It is important to cite references consistently and correctly throughout your paper. You will upload the paper to the assignment folder that I create on UM Learn. Please submit it as either a **Word file** or **PDF**. **Mac users will therefore need to convert their Pages files to one of these formats.**

Due Date

Write this short piece and upload it to the designated assignment folder on UM Learn **on or before October 25th.**

Happy writing!