

Name:

Student number:

These questions pertain to the film *Bowling for Columbine*, viewed in class Week 4 & Week 5. Please answer the questions below for submission. Answers must be accurate and directly relevant to the question asked.

Due date: Thursday, 28 March (Week 9), day end. Via Léa.

Grade value: 10% (part of the 20% “Occasional Exercises and Assignments” evaluation item)

Length: As required. Just answer the questions correctly and completely.

Submission details: Answers may be written on this document. You may delete the questions you are NOT answering. Make sure to keep a copy of your submission. Submit the answers in “Assignments and Dropbox” in Léa.

Advice and Guidance:

- Answers should take the form of complete, proper sentences expressing complete thoughts.
- All cited, verbatim content from the film must be presented in quotation marks.
- **Authorized** documentary sources for this assignment are, where relevant: dictionaries, College-subscribed encyclopedias, specialized educational web sites, other websites relevant to the assignment, academic books and articles.
- Documentary sources, used in answers must be suitably and correctly referenced. **A reference in the form of a Url alone is not a suitable reference.** Referencing flaws, faults and omissions will give rise to point deductions.
- The Vanier College library webpage gives you access to reference material like dictionaries and encyclopedias.
- Answers will be graded for language proficiency. Spelling, grammar, punctuation and other language formalities will be assessed and will enter into grade outcomes.
- If you are uncertain whether a particular documentary source is valid for the purposes of this assignment, please consult the teacher.

****Submissions MUST be each student’s own, independent and individual work.****

Read the questions carefully and follow the requirements for each of the five Parts.

Part	Grade weighting	Answer-Question Ratio (A/Q)
1	3 points	3/3 (1.1-1.3)
2	3 points	1/6 (2.1-2.6)
3	4 points	1/3 (3.1-3.3)

Please delete, from your submission, the questions you are NOT answering.

Access to the film *Bowling for Columbine*: Via the Vanier Library from “Criterion on Demand”. One way to get to “Criterion” is to select “Vanier College Databases” on the Vanier Library homepage. Then, scroll down to “Criterion on Demand”, select it and then proceed from there.

Note: in the questions, the time references to the film indicate hour:minute:second (00:00:00)

1. Questions on staging and setting. 3 points

Answer ALL THREE of the questions: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 (all parts)

1.1 What awards and accolades has the film *Bowling for Columbine* received? It is sufficient to mention the number of awards the film won and the most prestigious or high-profile wins and whatever else may be indicative of the film’s favourable reception. Provide a reference for the source of the information.

See, for example:

“Michael Moore, Biography”. *IMDb*.

https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0601619/bio?ref=nm_ov_bio_sm

1.1 Answer
Reference

1.2. How many films has Michael Moore made (i.e. produced)? As a documentary filmmaker, what is the focal concern or element of common interest that his movies are said to share? A biographical sketch of Moore will turn up the information.

Some places to look for the information are:

“Welcome to my Substack”. *Michael Moore*. <https://www.michaelmoore.com/about>;
<https://www.michaelmoore.com/>

“Michael Moore”. *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

“Michael Moore”. *MUBI*. <https://mubi.com/en/cast/michael-moore>

“Michael Moore”. *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Moore

Provide the reference for the source(s) used.

1.2 Answer
Reference

1.3. What is the most common (average) characterization of Michael Moore's views and opinions in terms of their political orientation? How are these views and opinions reflected in *Bowling for Columbine*?

Provide a brief description of Moore's views and opinions, as they are commonly characterized. In this description, state whether his views and opinions on affairs in the USA and internationally are oriented to the left, the right, the centre, liberal, conservative, socialist and so on. The requirement is that you use such labels (e.g. left, right, liberal) to identify his views and opinions within the scope of discussion and debate about political and social matters in the USA. Provide a reference for the source(s) you use to identify Moore's location on the spectrum of political views and opinions.

Provide TWO examples from the *Bowling for Columbine* that support your characterization of Moore's views and opinion.

Some sources that may be helpful:

Michael Moore's personal website: <https://www.michaelmoore.com/>

"Michael Moore", *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

"Fahrenheit 9/11", *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Via Gale EBooks, Vanier Library.

1.3 Answer
(a) Moore's views and opinions: their general political orientation or alignment (left, right, centre-right and so on)
(b) Two examples from <i>Bowling for Columbine</i> of Moore's general political orientation or alignment and why the examples reflect that orientation or alignment
Reference

2. Questions of content interpretation. (3 points)

Answer any ONE (1) of the following six (6) questions (2.1-2.6). Answers should be between 75 and 100 words in length. Answer all parts of the question.

2.1. Fear and fearing in the USA

What is the film's basic or fundamental message about the role of fear in the decisions that Americans make and the actions they take in their daily lives (e.g. where to shop, on what to spend money, where to live)?

The film addresses the matter of fear and fears in the USA. Does the film say that Americans are overly fearful or insufficiently fearful or fearful to the right degree? According to the film, are Americans fearful about the right things? Provide one or two examples from the film to support your answer. Some points of reference in the film: 01:04:00-01:06:00; 01:39:00

2.1 Answer

2.2 Causes of Columbine

Does Michael Moore settle on a single, over-riding explanation in his attempt to account for the causes of the massacre at Columbine High School in 1999? If so, on which explanation does he settle or appear to settle? If not, what does he present as the most likely causes?

In an attempt to explain the school shooting at Columbine, Moore investigates a number of possible causes. Identify some of the main causes he explores and investigates. State whether he settles on a single. Over-riding cause. If so, state which it is and state what leads you to your conclusion. Or, alternatively, state whether he suggests several possible causes and follow this with an explanation of why you draw this conclusion. The answer can be drawn from the entirety of the film, but some reference points that may be helpful are: 00:49:23-00:50:40; 01:19:00-01:21:00

2.2 Answer

2.3 Racism, fear and violence in US history. The American history cartoon segment seeks to make a connection between **racism, fear and gun violence** in the USA. (00:52:38)

2.3.1 What does this account of American history tell us about the *sources* or the *bases* of Americans' identification of risk and feelings of threat? That is, what explanation does it give for why many Americans, especially "white", middle-class Americans, identify risk in the way they do and feel threat in the way they do?

2.3.1 Answer

2.3.2 What does the account tell us about how Americans', in large part, respond to the things they identify as risks and to the things they fear most?

2.3.2 Answer

2.4. Argument about violence in the USA

Michael Moore makes an argument about the levels of violence in the USA. He contends that Americans are more violent towards each other than people in other societies (notably Canadian society). **What is Moore's argument about why American society is more violent than other societies?** Identify the argument by answering both of the following:

2.4.1 On what evidence does Moore base his proposition that violence is more prevalent in the USA than in other places? Some of the evidence may be found here: 00:49:40-00:51:43; 01:11:00-01:18:00; 01:22:00-

2.4.1 Answer

2.4.2 What appears to be the conclusion of his argument? What would the "Therefore" statement be with concludes his argument as to why American society is more violent? Answer by completing this sentence: "Therefore, American society is more violent than other societies because...".
Note, there is are likely to be more than one reasons why in Moore's view American society is more violent than other societies. Make sure to justify your answer. That is, make sure to say **why** you think Moore is drawing that particular conclusion. Some indicators of his conclusion may be found here: 00:52:42-00:55:54; 01:51:00-01:54:00

2.4.2 Answer

2.5. Popular culture, fear and risk

According to the film, what are the popular-culture sources of fear (popular-culture sources are sources that are part of everyday life and mass culture, like the mass-circulation media)? That is, how does mass culture or popular culture influence peoples' susceptibility to be fearful of certain things? 00:56:02-01:05:19.

2.5 Answer

2.6 From Michigan to Columbine High School

The film begins in Michigan, Michael Moore's home state (the state where he was born and grew up). It shifts to Colorado and the Columbine school shooting. In the end, it moves back to Michigan with the story of a shooting in an elementary school in Flint, Michigan.

2.6.1 How does the film's narrative connect Michigan, on one hand, and, on the other, Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado? In other words, what are the threads in the narrative that link Michigan and the school massacre at Columbine? To answer, you should explain how some of the following are connected to the Columbine school shooting: gun ownership in Michigan; the Michigan Militia; bowling pins; Charlton Heston and the NRA; poverty in Flint, Michigan; K-Mart bullets and K-Mart headquarters, Oscoda Michigan; the shooters bowling on the morning of the shooting. Some relevant references are: 00:05:00-00:06:00; 00:08:00; 00:14:40-00:16:00; 01:26:50-01:28:20; 01:40:00-01:46:44

2.6.1 Answer

2.6.2 What do you think is Moore's argumentative purpose in making this connection between Michigan and the events at Columbine High School? That is, how do the various connections between Michigan and Columbine work as supports to his argument about why there is so much gun violence in the USA?

2.6.2 Answer
s

3. *Bowling for Columbine*, risk selection, fear and uncertainty.(4 points)

Answer ONE of the following questions: either 3.1, 3.2 or 3.3. Answers should be around 100 words in length.

3.1. In Reading 1, the author, states: "...the identification of 'risks' takes place in the specific sociocultural, political and historical contexts in which we are located ... In some societies at some times, certain phenomena are selected as the focus for anxieties. In other societies and eras, other phenomena become prominent as 'risky'" (p. 21, top para.)

In *Bowling for Columbine*, what does Michael Moore tell us are the risks that *were* "selected as the focus of anxieties" and attention in the USA in the late 1990s and early 2000s (the period covered in

the film) and what does he tell us *should have been* the risks that were the focus of anxieties and attention?

To answer, state which risks were the focus of attention in the USA in the late 1990s and early 2000s and which should have been the focus of attention, according to Michael Moore as reflected in *Bowling*.

To help with the drafting of the answer, the following is a list of some circumstances that Moore treats in the film either as risks that were selected for attention in the USA at the time or as risks that should have been selected for attention at the time. The circumstances are organized into three categories: sociocultural, economic and political.

Categories of context	Circumstances that were and should have been identified as risks and as risky in the USA in the late 1990s and early 2000s according to <i>Bowling</i> .
Sociocultural	e.g. media portrayals of Blacks and other racialized people; media depictions of violence (e.g. films, video games); popular culture performances (like Marilyn Manson rock videos); racism; the criminal behavior of minority Americans (especially Black men); gun ownership and possession; killer bees and “man-eating” escalators;
Economic	e.g. poverty in the USA; neighbourhood neglect and degradation (loss of homes and withdrawal of public services); irregular employment; underemployment; poor wages; economic vulnerability
Political	e.g. governmental welfare policies (“welfare to work”); US government conduct and interventions in the world; governmental protection of the 2 nd Amendment; policing focus on poor rather than rich people (e.g. ignoring pollution in LA); US government military spending.

3.1 Answer
Circumstances that were the focus of attention as risks or as risky
Circumstances that should have been the focus of attention as risks or as risky

3.2. How might gun ownership be an example of how the desire to “tame uncertainty” may have the paradoxical effect of increasing anxiety? Answer with reference to the film *Bowling for Columbine*.

In Reading 1, Lupton, the author, states the following: “Risk meanings and strategies are attempts to tame uncertainty, but often have the paradoxical effect of increasing anxiety about risk through the intensity of their focus and concern”. (pp. 19-20)

The answer must address the paradoxical (or contradictory) situation that Lupton describes - creating more uncertainty by trying to control it – as it apply to gun ownership in the USA and as described by Moore in *Bowling for Columbine*?

3.2 Answer

3.3 What is Michael Moore’s argument about the connection between fear, violence and vulnerability in the USA and the US system of welfare support or social security support (i.e. social insurance)?

In Reading 2, Arnoldi states that in the present time of late modernity (or post modernity), there is a “crisis of risk” (p. 36). He says the “crisis of risk” refers to the fact that potential dangers are seen to be incalculable and unmanageable and that uncertainty has overtaken the sense that dangers can be calculated and managed. He says that part of the reason why dangers appear unmanageable and incalculable is that the benefits of social welfare or social insurance have been put into question in late modern times. In *Bowling for Columbine*, Michael Moore contends that part of the explanation for violence, fear and vulnerability in the USA is lack of social welfare support. What is Moore’s argument here? The answer can be drawn from the segments on violence (lack of) in Canada and on the “Welfare-to-Work” program in Michigan (01:31:41-01:37:20).

3.3 Answer

++END++