

Lecture 8

8.1 Requirements

Topic selection for the second essay, very important stuff here. So it's a 1,200 to 1,700 word essay, so much longer than the first essay. How many paragraphs it has and how you structure the essay that's totally up to you so you have a lot more freedom here. I still have a few requirements that you must follow.

The first major requirement for the second essay is you must have an **extended example**, not just an example where you say "for example, ...". This must actually be like a next week's essay where you kind of tell a little story sort of like its own paragraph, you should have a paragraph in the essay which is just an example. So don't worry too much about that yet. We'll look at an example of that in today's reading. We'll see it again next week and in next week's class, we'll talk about using examples since they should have a good idea of what this is before you write it. So that's not optional. You have to have an extended example. There is one other thing you must have, but you can choose which one you do.

If you want to, you may use **framing**. Can you remember where just framing go, introduction, body or conclusion? It was in the introduction and I think the most common question I usually get from students is "I don't understand framing, what is framing" and that's because framing can be many different things, so don't worry too much. Framing is anything you do before arguing. And we'll see this in today's essay, he points out some important background information, tells us some important facts that we need to know about the subject. But it doesn't have to be that, it could be other relevant things like, you know, you could explain the policy in more detail, that could be framing. You could say how you're going to argue something. You could exclude certain things from the argument, like "I'm not talking about this". Often you don't need concessions in the second essay because you can deal with that in the framing, right? You can say "this is not something I'm talking about". So framing can be lots of different things you do before arguing.

If you want, you may have **comparison**, that's fine as well. In the second essay, you don't have to be so original, you can take a standard position in an existing debate. However, if you do that, you should still try to be original in the argument itself. For example, you've all heard the argument before that media violence is bad for children, right? You know, your parents probably said this to you don't watch violent shows, don't watch violent movies, don't play violent video games. But have you heard the argument that media violence is like military training? Probably not. So it's a standard argument, but argued in an original way. If you want to in the second essay, you can argue for the death penalty, you can argue for euthanasia or whatever, but try to argue it in an original way. And I think the best way to do that is by using comparisons. But yeah, if you have a standard position and a standard argument that will be equally bad as in the first essay, so make sure you have something original in the second essay.

You can have **further analysis** and that's just anything you do after arguing. In today's essay, he argues that media violence is like military training and that at the end of the essay, he gives his policy ideas. In next week's essay, he argues that machines will take our jobs and then he asks, will this be a good thing or a bad thing, look at both sides.

Last one, **logical progression**. Do you remember the essay, *where are they?* He sets up a logical syllogism in the beginning, and he analyzes different possibilities and reaches a final conclusion at the end. So some kind of logical progression if you want to. Another very good example of logical progression is *In Defense of Torture*, we'll read this essay in a couple of weeks.

You can choose any one of these as long as you have one of them. 😊 You don't have to use them all. If your essay just doesn't need framing, that's fine, don't have it. If you don't think comparison works for your argument, leave it out. If you don't need further analysis, don't have it. As long as you choose one of those things and an extended example, that's enough for the second essay, you've met the requirements.

8.2 Topic Selection

All right, so topic selection.

If you like to do **policy** again, it's totally fine, you can choose policy and you can choose to argue against a policy as well if you want to this time. In the first essay you can't do that, if you want to say "Fudan should kill the English language requirement". But if you do policy, do not go with the same structure as the first essay, don't just have "impact, impact, concession, concession, values", don't have like a long version of the first essay, try to have it a different structure. So you all remember the structure of *Kill the Language Requirement*? You could use that structure if you want to, have a logical syllogism as your argument and then give three different concessions against you, that would be fine. But my recommendation, the main one, is the "problem → cause → solution". That's what we'll look at today, *Teaching Kids to Kill*. The problem—violence; the cause—media; the solution—policy, right? So if you want to do it that way, I would highly recommend doing it like that. Those of you who have taken public speaking will be familiar with this structure.

Value is fine, and when I say value, you can think about it in several different ways. One way of doing value is like personal advice, I think you should do something or not do something we wouldn't normally make policy about, for example, to argue Fudan students should get a part time job, to argue about what major you should choose or what type of job to get. Another way of doing it, do you remember the argument a few weeks ago, *Why Economists Should Like Booze*? You can look at a social trend, you know, something that's happening, and make your judgment on it. Generally speaking, it's much better to argue against what most people would feel or think. If I wrote an essay saying that you should go to college, get a good job, get a house, get married and have kids, nobody probably wants to read that essay, because that's what we normally think of. But if I say "don't go to college, don't get married, don't buy a house, don't have kids", these are things that people wonder "why not" and are more interested to read.

- Here's a good example: *The World Might Be Better Off Without College for Everyone*. More and more people are going to college, everyone thinks that college is the way to success, but we can argue that college is not that good and people shouldn't all go to college.
- Here's another example: *Why I Hope to Die at 75*. Do you hope you die at 75? Maybe, but most people think, you know, you should live as long as you can, a long life is a good life. This essay is very controversial, and in its framing, the author says, "I do not support suicide. I am not saying people should kill themselves. I do not support euthanasia. I'm not saying we should legalize euthanasia. What I'm arguing is when you reach the age of 75, you should stop going to the doctor, stop taking medicine and let nature take its course." That's all he's arguing in this essay. I'll refer back to this essay next week because he has a very good use of example.
- Here's another example: *Why Biden Should not Debate Trump*. You all remember last year what happened when Biden debated Trump? It was a big disaster. Trump won, maybe as a result of this. But before that happened, they were arguing that Biden should not do it, they shouldn't have the debate in the first place.

- Okay, final example: *Advice to a Young Man*, wrote by Benjamin Franklin, the founding father and scientist. He argued that in all your loves, you should prefer old women to young ones. If you want to know why, you can find this essay online, it's quite famous. But that obviously will be an example of a values essay. Date older women is what he said.

You can think about these areas. Education — we all think going to college is the best way to achieve success. Parenting — I think in China we have the stereotype of the "tiger mother." You know, being very strict and pushing your kids very hard to achieve. Work — you know, you should get a high-paying job with a good chance of promotion and success. Gender roles — if you see a woman crying, you will say, "What's wrong?" If you see a man crying, you might say, "What's wrong with you?" We just don't expect men to cry, right? These are just expectations that we have. Men should pay on the first date, right? But again, these are values. There's no law that says men must pay on the first date.

For any others you can think of, just talk to your partners for five minutes and see if you can think of any commonly held values in society that you could argue against. I once had a student who said we should treat the elderly well, and I thought, yeah, you can't really argue against that. No one's going to argue, "Be horrible to old people." It seems a bit too undebatable, right? But anything else you can think of — values that we hold as a society?

- I once had a student argue this — or she wanted to argue that lying is morally wrong, right? That kind of thing is maybe too abstract or something. In the end, she argued that the police should not be allowed to lie during interrogation. So fix the thing to an actual concrete example, right? Like the police will often say, "I know you did it, we have evidence you did it, the camera shows you doing it, you might as well confess." so she argued that should be wrong. But to argue that lying is morally wrong or killing is morally wrong or something very abstract — yeah, society should be fair — you know, maybe narrow it down into a specific aspect of society. Other things to avoid would be like food, art, fashion, music. If I argued that British food is the best food, you know, you would probably be curious to know why, right? But it's very hard to argue that logically. How would you actually argue that this music is the best music? It's a matter of taste, right? It's about how you feel about something. Or this fashion is the best fashion — very hard to argue objectively.
- Individualism? Yeah, again, I would say maybe if a student suggested that, it would be quite big, maybe sort of focus on a specific area of individualism in certain ways. But you're thinking in the right direction.
- Marriage? Yeah, I mean marriage is a very common one — what about marriage? That people should marry? To argue against marriage, that would be fine, I think. But don't just give the common arguments, you know, like we've probably heard the arguments against marriage before. So we could do that in an individual essay.
- Digital life? Yeah, I wonder how people feel about digital life. Most people accept it. I mean, an interesting example was when I was your age. If someone found a girlfriend on the internet or a boyfriend on the internet, we would call that person like a loser, you know, kind of pathetic that you couldn't go out and meet a girl in the bar by yourself. Today, values have totally changed from that. Like, meeting a girlfriend or boyfriend online is totally normal now.

Are there any things you can think of that we kind of condemn as a society today or laugh at as a society today? You know, something like that you could argue in favor of, right? Often, we see values essays as being kind of like a judgment on something. Like in history, we often see values argued, right? Who was the greatest leader, or something like that, and that can be fine as well. So values can go in many directions.

The other one you can do is **fact**. I recommend doing "fact" as like a prediction. So what are we likely to see in the future? We'll look at the model for this next week — the essay by John Maynard Keynes, of course — about how to make a prediction. In a nutshell, he uses what we call extrapolation. And if we see something going like this, we might predict that in the future it will go like that, right? Extrapolation. So he says, for the last 200 years, the economy has been growing faster and faster, so in the next hundred years, the economy will probably grow even faster — extrapolation. Can you think of any other trends that we are seeing nowadays? Today's essay also talks about trends. He says that violence is getting worse and worse and worse — he was wrong; it didn't keep getting worse. Can you think of any other trends?

Yeah, jobs are getting scarcer and scarcer. I'm too old to notice this now, but yeah, I see this online a lot — young people complaining about how it's so difficult to pass a job interview nowadays, that companies just don't seem to be hiring much. 内卷 is getting worse and worse. It might be predictions you've heard often — like, you know, machines coming for our jobs, which we'll talk about next week. People getting fatter, right? I think, you know — will China follow the path of the USA? As China gets richer, will China get fatter? That's an interesting question. You know, will China be more like Japan, which got rich but didn't get fat? Britain got rich and got fat; Japan got rich but didn't seem to get so fat. Climate change will ruin the planet — I've been hearing that since I was in primary school, and I'm sure you guys all have as well.

And a new Cold War is coming — China versus America. People have all heard that prediction. No? Really? Okay. It's very, very common in the West anyway — like, a new Cold War has come. Some people argue that it's already here, that we are in a Cold War. And that is another type of essay you could do — a definitional essay. We don't really cover it in this class, but to argue about something being how we should judge it, right? So, is Donald Trump a fascist? I've seen many, many essays arguing "Donald Trump is a fascist." It's about the definition of fascism, right? So "Are we in a Cold War?" could be like a definitional essay. If a student wanted to do that, I would say fine — you know, define something, that's okay, it's just that we don't really cover it in this class.

Developed societies will get older and older. I've seen predictions recently that South Korea will cease to exist as a country. Have you heard that prediction? You know, because the birth rate is so low that by the end of this century, South Korea just won't have enough people to function as a country. But I've also seen bad predictions about China — like population growth is declining so much in China that some people have predicted China will be like 800 million people by the end of the century, or even lower than that.

Anyway, you can also look to the past, right? Like, whenever there's a new technology, we get a bubble. Has anyone seen the news recently about NVIDIA, the chipmaker? NVIDIA's value is more than the entire economy of Germany or the UK or Japan, right? Only China and the United States have a bigger economy than the value of NVIDIA. So many people are predicting a big burst in the AI bubble. But it happens again and again and again. If you look back at history, every time we have some new technology, everyone invests their money in it because it's the next big thing — and the bubble bursts. Isaac Newton famously said something like, "I can predict the movement of the heavens, but I cannot predict the movement of the markets," because he lost all his money investing in the South Sea Bubble, right — a time of shipping and warships.

You know, pandemics linked to social change — just to say, I'm very proud of myself. In 2020, I said to the students, "I predict in the next five years, there will be a war — a big war somewhere." And the students said, "Why?" And I said, "Because there's a pandemic, and usually in history, when there's a pandemic, we get some kind of conflict." They said, "Where?" I said, "I don't know where, it will be — somewhere." And two years later, Russia invaded Ukraine — and there's the big war. You know, we don't know why exactly, but pandemics often lead to certain things happening.

Rising inequality — right, when the rich get richer faster than everyone else, we often get revolution. Could we see that happening again today? Anyway, see if you can think of any trends that we see around us that you could extrapolate from, or any common predictions — examples of predictions that you've seen as well. So, I'll give you five minutes.

- Yeah, climate change — I put that one out. My advice, if you're thinking like that, is look past the prediction. So if you think about a really, really common prediction — obviously, all the time, climate change — what will that lead to? You could give the framing to say, "We all accept as well established that climate change is going to change everything. Once it does, here's my prediction for what will happen next." So what if we've all heard the argument that climate change is going to change the world — what if I argue that in 50 years' time, Canada will be the world's greatest superpower? Have you heard that prediction before? I don't think anyone's heard that prediction. Why would Canada be the world's greatest superpower? Because when the world heats up, the USA and China become too hot. People move north, and countries like Canada or Russia will become much better to live in than China or the USA. And so, you know, yeah — Chinese people might all go to live in northern Russia, American people might go to live in Canada, and these two countries will become the next great superpowers, right? So that's my advice — go past the common prediction. Any others here?
- Yeah, right — so in 50 years, liberal arts will be dead. I think you could make predictions about subjects that we study in college. One of my first students here at Fudan, I remember when I first came here, an English major — she argued to her classmates that they should all change their major because it would be useless in the future, because machine translation was going to become so good. And that was before ChatGPT — I think she was right. We just won't need human translators. But well, now even we don't need human translators — AI is so good.

Yeah, people think AI is better than it really is all the time. It's not that good. I can attest to that. I see so many essays written by AI, and they're terrible — not very good essays. But who knows — maybe in five or ten years. Have you guys seen the AI videos on Douyin or Kuaishou — you know, made by Sora? You know Sora? I used to be very good at spotting AI — like, if I saw an AI video, I could usually tell immediately. And I have to admit, a couple of times I've seen AI videos and only afterwards realized, "Oh shit, that's AI!" It's not obvious anymore. It makes me wonder what's going to happen in five years — might be impossible to tell.

- Yeah social conflict, like civil war. A lot of people have predicted that in America there will be a civil war. When I was younger, a very popular book was called *Water Wars*. Have you guys heard of it? It predicted that in the future, countries would fight not about oil, but about water. But it seems to have been wrong. Yeah, the joke is that if you're going to make predictions, make a lot of predictions — because then maybe at least one of them will come true. If you look at history, predictions usually fail — they usually don't come true. Don't worry, I'm not judging whether you're right or wrong. It's only whether you're persuasive or not.

We must make policy for the future. If we wait until technology arrives, it might be too late. So we have to predict the future and make policy today. If I said English will be replaced by French as the global language by the end of the century — have you heard that prediction before? English will be replaced by French? In the 1980s, everybody wanted to learn Japanese because the Japanese economy was booming. In the 2010s, everybody wanted to learn Chinese because the Chinese economy was booming. Unfortunately, I saw a statistic last year which said more Americans today are learning Korean than are learning Chinese, which is quite surprising. My generation — we all wanted to learn Chinese because we thought China was going to be the next big language. But no one ever argues French, right? Why would French be the next global language? Which part of the

world speaks French the most? Africa. Which part of the world has the fastest population growth? Africa. There's your syllogism, right?

Most people haven't heard that prediction before. Or, yeah — Russia will be the world's greatest superpower. And so, you know, family size will rise significantly in developed countries. We often hear the opposite — that birth rates will keep declining, population will keep declining — so to predict that it will rise is much more interesting.

Anyway, don't forget the same kind of criteria that we used in the first essay. Try to be as clear as you can. Remember, however, you have framing if you want it for the second essay — so you can explain your main idea. Like in the first essay, the main idea has to be clear right away. The second essay — the main idea could be a little vague, and then you could explain, "Here's what I mean." If you're doing policy, you could have several policies — you know, "We should do A, B, and C." You have enough space to explain what that means. If you look at today's essay, he says education, legislation, litigation — gives three ideas for policy.

Try and be significant, even if the essay is original. You know, "I think that KFC is better than McDonald's," or "I think Luckin is better than Starbucks," or something — I mean fine, interesting idea, but not very significant, right? So you still need to have some meaningful conclusion.

Like I said earlier, you don't necessarily have to be super original, okay, in the main idea itself. But if you give me a standard position in an existing debate, I will ask you: how are you going to make that original in the body of the essay? And of course, try and be debatable, try and be attractive as much as possible in the second essay.

8.3 Class Reading

(CALLBACK)

We'll look at this very good example of a longer essay next week, *Teaching Kids to Kill*.

- One of the things to pay attention to when you read this essay is his longer hook. So I've shown you this example before, he has a little story as his hook in this essay.
- Pay attention to his framing, the first two sections, virus of violence and killing unnaturally, that's framing. If you're still not sure what framings for, this is a great example of using framing.
- Pay attention to his concepts, also how he uses comparison.
- He makes a very emotional example in at the end of the essay, pay attention to that. This is a great example of how to use examples.
- And finally, pay attention to the further analysis. So the end of the essay he suggests policies. He could have done that at the beginning. He doesn't. He does it at the end instead a totally different structure for this essay.

Lots and lots to learn from this, this is probably the most important essay you will read for the class so that we'll go over detail next week.

Like I said, this essay is a great example because it does everything. All right, so we see framing, we see comparison, we see further analysis, we see an extended example — so he's got everything together in this essay. It's a really good example of this second essay.

The author, Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman — does anyone know what that means, "Lieutenant Colonel"? What is a Lieutenant Colonel, "L.T."? Nobody knows? Lieutenant Colonel — it's a rank in the military. This guy is a serving officer in the U.S. Army, I believe, and he's also a psychology professor at West Point. So, like with Alex Tabarrok, we can believe what this guy says about psychology because he himself is a psychology professor. Do you know West Point? I don't think Chinese students can go to West Point. What is West Point? It's a U.S. military academy. It's where you study if you're in the military. I guess China has a military academy — what is China's military academy? 黄埔军校. I doubt they hire foreign teachers; I shouldn't look for a job there. Maybe they do. I would guess their foreign teachers might be Russian or something else.

Anyway, I had an American friend who was an officer in the Air Force, and he spent some time at West Point. He said it was very interesting because you would get officers from countries all around the world who would go there to study. And he said, you know, sometimes the countries they came from were not friends — like you would get Israeli officers and Saudi officers. But he said when they met together at West Point, they would always talk to each other and get along and become friends. So it's a good place where people from around the world interact. He always told me there were two countries that would never talk to each other in the dining hall at West Point. He said there were two countries who hated each other so much that the officers refused to talk to each other. Anyone guess which two countries? Students always guess South Korea and Japan, but it wasn't. It was Greece and Turkey. He said the Turkish officers and the Greek officers, even at West Point, wouldn't talk to each other. They hate each other so much.

Something else you can do in the second essay if you want to — and I encourage it — is you can have a hook, which is like a little story. So he tells this little story at the start. Just to be clear, you must have an extended example in the second essay. If you have an example as your hook, you must also have another example in the body, okay? So don't only have the example as the hook — have another example in the body too.

But he tells this story: a 14-year-old boy — he had never fired a pistol. He stole one, fired a few practice shots, took it to school, and fired eight shots at a high school prayer group. He hit eight kids — five of them in the head and three in the upper torso. So it's a shocking story. When you read that, I think most people want to know why. And he says, where does a 14-year-old boy who never fired a gun get the skill and the will to kill? Video games and media violence — so that's his main idea.

Starting with his framing, he gives us some important background information about virus of violence and killing unnaturally. So what does he point out? What's the trend? Violence is getting more common. There's more and more violence, not just in America but around the world. And he says there's only one new variable in every country — which is violent media being presented as entertainment for children.

This essay, I think, was written around the year 2000 — about 25 years ago — and at that time, it was true that violence was getting worse and worse and worse. Does anyone know what happened since then? Has violence kept getting worse? Has it plateaued, or has it declined? In the last 25 years, what's the trend nowadays, if you had to guess? Do you think society is more violent or less violent? You said "more", why?

Student: On the news, there was that guy who held a knife and stabbed a bunch of people.

I mean, I think it's a good example of how examples work, because when we see an example of something like this, our brains tend to think, "Oh my God, it's very dangerous!" But we don't really think about data in the same way. Actually, the data shows that countries nowadays — most countries — are much safer than they were 20–25 years ago. But that's not how the human brain

works. That's why examples can be so powerful — because we see one example of violence and think, "Oh my God, that country is so dangerous! Don't go to that country!" But in reality, the chance of you being a victim of violence is actually pretty low.

Yeah, people often think London is a really dangerous place — you know, that you get stabbed there a lot. Did you know that Berlin is three times more dangerous? Three times more murders, almost, compared to London. But no one ever says, "Don't go to Germany." Berlin is very dangerous — it's actually more than twice as dangerous for violence. And I think it's because of examples — these high-profile examples. Anyway, but at the time he wrote the essay, it's true: violence was really going up, and it was becoming a big, serious problem.

And he says don't just think about murder. He says it's not really just murder we should look at — it's what's called aggravated assault, and that's when you try to kill someone even if you fail. Think about it. Today, if you get stabbed with a knife, like in that attack in London — nobody died, I think. Yeah, no one died, because if you get to the hospital quickly enough, even if there's blood pouring out of your body, the doctors can probably save you, right? But like a hundred years ago, if you got stabbed with a knife, you were probably going to die for sure — maybe not right away, but a few hours later, or a few days later, you'd get an infection and die. So he says, nowadays, the amount of violence isn't necessarily reflected in the amount of death — it's reflected in the amount of attempted killing. And that's what's going on.

The other one here — "killing unnaturally" — this one, I think, is quite interesting, and it's a fact about psychology. What is true for most people about killing? Most people are not morally against it, but most people cannot actually kill, right? If you ask people, "What would you do if your country was invaded by an enemy army?" most people would say, "I would take up arms and I would fight — kill the enemy." Right? Would you? If your country was invaded, you would think, or you would want, to fight and kill the enemy. But in reality, when you're faced with a situation of violence, most people cannot kill. He says something like only 15 to 20 percent of soldiers in World War I could actually directly shoot at the enemy. So what did the other 80 or 85 percent of soldiers do? Close their eyes, shoot in the air, pretend to shoot but not shoot. Most people, without training, cannot kill — even in war.

Does that surprise you? Could you kill? I don't think I could kill, yeah. I mean, we think we could because it looks easy in a movie, but in reality, I think in a violent situation it must be very, very, very difficult to actually make yourself kill. Most people can't. Why is that important for framing here? Because if most people can't do it, then something must be making kids do it. And so that leads to his argument that media violence is the culprit.

You guys — if you're not first years, if you're second or third or fourth years — you've had military training, right? Is it extensive or intensive? Like, is it proper military training? Or is it just kind of like a big P.E. class? It's more like a big P.E. class — you wouldn't call it real military training. In Malaysia, do you serve in the military? Is it compulsory? It is optional? When you say optional, you mean if you decide to join the military, right? In some countries — yeah, usually when I have Korean students, I don't think there are any Korean students here — they usually have to serve in the military for, I think, 18 months.

When I was at university, one of my roommates in the dorms was a Greek student, and we asked him, "Why did you come to Scotland to study?" He said, "Because I don't want to serve in the military. One of the ways in Greece to get out of military service was to study abroad." I think Germany has it too, but in Germany you can choose whether to be in the military or to do public service — so you can, like, bring food to old people instead of serving in the military.

Anyway, so he talks about some concepts from military training. One is **brutalization**. Can anyone explain that concept? When you guys do military training, is it very hard now? Like, do they push and push and push you really far with exercise? No? But in real military training, they will push you until you almost break. I think this is very common in movies. I don't know — has anyone ever seen a movie called *Full Metal Jacket*? It's about this. I recommend it — very interesting movie. If you're bored this weekend, that's my recommendation. You know, in the movie, it's so bad that one of the soldiers goes crazy — I won't ruin the movie for you — but it's about how difficult it is in military training. The instructor, the sergeant, he pushes and pushes and pushes. You know, they have to run in the rain. Any little thing they do wrong, they're in serious trouble — you know, if their shoes aren't perfectly shined, if their bed isn't perfectly made. It's really brutal military training.

And why do the militaries do that? The idea is you break them down, right? You're so exhausted, you're so broken down that now they can build you up again in a new way — to follow orders, to obey, to be disciplined. So I'd like you guys to think about this one: brutalization. Specifically, he's comparing it to TV shows. How is brutalization like violent TV shows? And do you agree?

The second one — **classical conditioning**. So we've all heard of Pavlov's dog, right? Pavlov's dog — you know, the dogs knew that when the bell rang, the food would come out. So their brains automatically associated the bell with food. I mean, can you think of any other examples like this that you have in your life, where you associate something? Like, is there a sound that when you hear it, or a smell, it triggers something? I think if you've ever done anything very difficult, you know — PTSD. You know, soldiers — they will feel something or hear something that reminds them of the war, and then their brain just makes them do that thing again, right? I saw a video — it was really terrible — it's in America, and there's this guy walking down the street, and suddenly something reminds him, and he just starts — he doesn't have a gun or anything — he just starts going like this, like running through the cars on the street. And obviously, you know, PTSD — it's reminding him of Afghanistan, and it triggers his reaction. In this one, he's talking about movies, right? Specifically, he's comparing them to movies. So for you guys down the middle — if you can — say how are movies like military training, and do you agree?

And this third one is **operant conditioning**. That's when you train yourself to see and do, see and do, see and do — and you do it so many times that it becomes like a reflex, right? Here he's talking about video games. So, how are video games like operant conditioning? And do you agree?

So: brutalization, classical conditioning, operant conditioning — how is it like TV shows, how is it like movies, how is it like video games? Do you agree? So please discuss it with your group.

(FIVE MINUTES LATER)

All right, so can anyone explain — how is **brutalization** like TV shows? When you're 18 and you join the military, you already have your values and things like that, so they break you down and build you up again. But yeah, if you're six years old, you don't yet have those values. So exposing children to violent shows makes them accept violence the way a soldier does. That may seem fairly logical. I guess my question, though, is — why would most parents really let their kids watch really violent TV shows, right? That has to be a pretty irresponsible parent — letting their kids watch murder or rape or something like that on television. Those shows aren't meant for children; they're meant for adults.

But I guess, you know, in China, you don't have this — but in the UK, we have something called the watershed, right? Before 9 PM, you cannot show drugs, sex, or violence on television. But after 9 PM, you can show stronger stuff. And, of course, lots of kids would stay up late secretly and, you know, watch. Sure, not nowadays because of the Internet, but before, kids would stay up late so

they could watch that kind of stuff on TV. It was quite easy to get around. The policy didn't really prevent it. I mean, nowadays, I suppose it's more like short videos rather than TV, right? Do you see much violence? I think in China, things are much more sensitive, aren't they? You don't see too much violence on social media or television. Yeah, it's like blurred out or something. I mean, when I first came to China, I remember looking at the TV channels and flicking through them, and there were so many Japanese war dramas. And they seemed pretty violent, you know — like some soldiers shooting Japanese soldiers dead or whatever, right? Like, they seemed pretty violent. I always used to think it's like a revenge fantasy, you know? But I suppose, you know, is that okay to show — even in a good way — doing violence to bad people? Of course, in Europe, it's Nazis, right? Like, you can kill people on TV as long as they're Nazis. You can kill people in video games as long as they're Nazis, right? You can't kill normal people, but if they're Nazis, then of course you can kill them — because Nazis are always bad.

Anyway, he does give a lot of evidence here. We've talked about that before, so I won't look at it again. But don't forget — you know, in the second essay, I'm not looking for evidence in every point, but do make sure you have some evidence. 🙄 I think a common problem in the second essay is that students stop putting in evidence. You don't have to have it for every claim, but try to have some at least. Here, he has loads and loads and loads of evidence. So that's his main point.

Classical conditioning — how is it like movies?

He gives this very interesting example I'd never heard of before I read the essay. In World War II, the Japanese would get a young soldier to kill a prisoner, and then they would give him wine, women, and food — so that the soldier associated killing with happiness. It made them into killers. And he says, of course, you know, nowadays modern militaries cannot do that — it was only the Japanese who ever did that. But in a similar way, when you go to the cinema — the smell of your girlfriend's perfume, the popcorn, the food, and the violence — we learn to associate violence with pleasure. Do you find that persuasive?

He gives this other example as well. He said, in this shooting, the teacher told the students about the other students who'd been killed, and the reaction of those students was to laugh about it. And he says, we have raised a generation of barbarians who have learned to associate human death and suffering with pleasure, so they think killing is funny.

All right, final one — **operant conditioning**.

In military training, the target pops up, and you're supposed to shoot the target. And then in a video game, you know, a bad guy appears, and you're supposed to shoot the bad guy. So it's this reinforcement. Here he's arguing that it gives you a skill — it teaches you how to be good at shooting. The game has provided a kind of virtual training. Exactly.

Do you find that persuasive? It seems logical. Would anyone disagree? Because I often think, right, clicking a mouse is very different from firing a gun. You guys do fire a gun in your military training, right? And it's different from video games. What kind of gun do they let you fire? Yeah, a heavy one — like a small caliber or big caliber? Is it like a real military weapon, or is it more like a weapon you'd use to shoot birds? Yeah, a training gun. I wonder how real that gun is, or how powerful that gun is. When I was 14 years old, my father's friend had a shotgun — do you guys know what a shotgun is, 猎枪, right? It sprays out bullets like that. And I remember firing it — and the kick was so heavy! The cartridges were like that big. And when I fired the gun, it was like it blew me back, and my shoulder had a big bruise on it for like three weeks. My ears were ringing, and there was smoke everywhere. And it was totally, totally different from shooting a gun in a video game. Quite scary by comparison. So I just wonder, like, how good could you really be at shooting from clicking

a mouse — shooting people in a video game? Although, I did see a video game — if you go down to 五角场, there's a place down there where you put on a VR headset, and there's like a toy gun that you use. Did you see this? If you go to the end at 大学路, you go down the steps just there — it's like a video game you can play with a headset and a real toy gun. Anyway, but yeah, that's the idea, right — the video game, you see, you do, and so it teaches kids to target and shoot each other in the same way.

The last one is role models. And here he's talking about the media, right, like the news. And he says this is actually not a comparison, strictly speaking — this is a contrast. So it's like a difference. The first three are similarities, but this one's a difference.

He says that in the military, the guy who trains you is like a good role model. You know, he is violent, but he's violent in a good way. He's ethical about violence. But if you watch the news, it's the opposite. They will show you role models who are bad people — like murderers and killers — and they make those people famous. 🙄 And some kids will see those people and want to be like them. They'll think of them as heroes. What do you think?

He gives an interesting comparison. He talks about suicides. In most places, when someone kills themselves, we don't report it in the media because if you do that, psychologists know that other people will copy it. But he says the same thing is true for killing. If you make someone famous for killing people, there will be some number of people who think, "Cool, I want to be like him." And it's almost always a man.

Do you agree? It seems reasonable. And I think, yeah, here in China, if someone commits serious crimes, they're usually not famous, are they? Do you remember that guy last year in November? He got in a car and killed 50 people. Do you remember that? You guys didn't hear about that? It was quite big news at the time, about a year ago. You know, he ran them over. But I don't know that guy's name, do you? You know, I don't know what he looks like. He just wasn't very famous. Everything was kept very, very quiet about that. So, in many countries, another example is from New Zealand. In 2017, there was a guy in New Zealand who went to a mosque — you know, a mosque, 清真寺, a kind of Muslim temple — and he had a gun. I think he was Australian, not a New Zealander, but he did this in New Zealand. And he actually took his phone and put it on top of the gun, and he streamed it on Facebook Live. So people were watching him in the mosque shooting Muslims. He killed 50 people — the same amount as the guy in the car. And when he went on trial in court, the media actually blurred his face. You couldn't see his face, and they kept his name secret until after the trial, because again, they were afraid of him becoming a hero to certain people.

But in America, when someone does something terrible, everybody knows about it. Everyone sees their face. They become very famous, very quickly. 🙄 And in the UK too, to be honest, yeah, when someone commits a serious violent crime, the media reports on it. It'll be on the front page of the newspaper, their picture will be on TV for many days, and we all know their name. Do you think that is a bad idea? I suppose. Americans would say it's freedom — we deserve to know. I guess the most famous example of this is Timothy McVeigh. I don't know if you've heard of Timothy McVeigh. He killed about 180 people. I think it was in 1993. He got a truck, filled it up with explosives, drove it to a federal building in Oklahoma City, lit the fuse, and then ran away. The truck exploded, and it blew up the whole building. He killed about 180 people in that explosion. And he became super, super famous for doing that. Everybody knows Timothy McVeigh. Everyone knows his face. Is that right? He would argue that we shouldn't make them so famous, because some people will try to copy that behavior.

Anyway, here's the example I really want to focus on. So previously, he's given us these four logical arguments. But down at the very end of the essay, he gives us this emotional example that is very sad.

So, this counselor went up to one of the women in the hospital. 😞 She was the mother of one of the little girls who had been killed in the school shooting. And she had no friends, no husband, no family. She sat in the hospital alone. Those of you who have taken Public Speaking will remember the repetition, right? "No family. No friends. No husband." So, it was very sad.

She said, "I just came to find out how to get my little girl's body back." But the body had been taken to the state capital for an autopsy. She said, "I don't know how we're going to pay for the funeral. I don't know how we can afford it." That little girl was all she had in all the world, and all she wanted to do was wrap her little girl's body and take her home. Some people's solution to the problem of media violence is: if you don't like it, just turn it off. But if that is your only solution to this problem, come to Jonesborough and tell this mother how that would have kept her little girl safe.

So it's a very sad example. You know, in English, we have an expression — we say *pulling your heartstrings*. Have you heard that expression, *pulling your heartstrings*? You know, it's like deliberately trying to make people feel sad about something. Movies do this all the time to make you feel sad. So it's very sad to think of a mother whose child was killed, who doesn't have any friends or family, who is desperate, hopeless. You know, of course, it's not a logical argument. Like I always say, you could find the mother of any child who died for any reason, and it would be very, very sad, just like this, right? So it's not really a logical one.

My metaphor is this: you know, the logic is the dish, and the emotion is the spice. This guy, the author, he's a psychologist — he knows what he's doing. If you want to change people's minds and you want to win an argument, make them feel something. That's the best way to do it, and that's what he's doing here. So if you want to, you can have an emotional example in your second essay. We'll look at other types of examples next week, but I think this is the best example of using emotion in an argument.

If I were a politician and I wanted you to vote for me, I would use emotion more than I would use logic. I think that's really how people think and operate. Examples work very well. I think that's exactly how propaganda works — show people examples and they will have a strong feeling. Look at this immigrant who broke the law in our country — oh, aren't immigrants such bad people, right? But the data shows that immigrants are actually less likely to commit crimes. Yet, show an example and their monkey brain starts working, and we just react emotionally.

Finally, his further analysis: education, legislation, litigation. So he gives us his policy solutions: educate people, ban it, and punish people for doing it. And if you're thinking about doing a policy or values essay for the second essay, I highly recommend the **problem-cause-solution** structure. When you bring your outlines to class in two weeks, I find usually the most common advice I give to students is: change your structure to this one. Any final thoughts or questions on this topic? Do you agree with the author?

I think, generally speaking, in China, things already are like this, right? Like in video games — Chinese video games — the blood is green, right? The dead bodies disappear, you know, it's not that bloody or violent. If you go to the cinema, every movie will be suitable for children. In the UK, you have to check first — maybe it's a 12 or a 15 or an 18. And if it's an 18, you can't take a 15-year-old to that movie. Do you guys remember the Cobra Effect? I think that policy is a little bit of a Cobra Effect, because when I was a teenager and I wanted to buy a video game, I would always

look for the one that said "18." If it said "12," I didn't want that one because it wouldn't be very violent. If it said "15," probably okay. But if it said "18," definitely okay — definitely good.

I think it has the opposite effect. Young people will know that if it's not rated 18, then it isn't very violent, and they won't want that video game. A little bit of an example of the Cobra Effect. Do you support that kind of censorship? I think there's some conflict between art and social harmony. Like, you know, China's not very famous for cool things, right? If you watch American movies, yeah, like, you know, American society is very violent compared to Chinese society. You know, American drug problems are so much worse than in China. But American movies are seen as much more cool than Chinese movies for that reason.

But America benefits from soft power in that way, right? Like, around the world, people all want to see American movies because of cool, violent, action stuff, right? But China maybe doesn't get that kind of soft power the way America does. Back to an earlier question about violence. I often think — well, I'll be honest — when I first came to China, in 吉林, I used to see people fighting quite often. I think it's maybe more common in 东北. That was many years ago. I was in 长春, but I always remember one of my first times in China — I was going down 重庆路 one day, and I saw this guy wearing a suit and tie, quite professional, and he was having a fight with a cleaner. You know, the person — they were having a punch-up in the street. And I was on the bus, and I thought, wow, Chinese people really love having fights, you know what I mean? But later, when I went to 青岛, I didn't see that so much. And here in Shanghai, I don't think I ever see it in Shanghai. I can't remember the last time I saw someone having a fight here on the street. And I often think, compared to my hometown, Shanghai feels very safe.

Do you think Shanghai is a very safe city? My hometown is much, much smaller than Shanghai, and there are parts of town where I just wouldn't go, because if I did, people might say, you know, "Who are you? What do you want?" You know, like they're looking for trouble or something like that. I never experienced that here in Shanghai, which is much, much bigger. Am I right, or is it just because, in China, people wouldn't bother a foreigner? I think Shanghai, I do think it's pretty safe. Why do you think that is? Such a big city — like, compared to New York or London or big European cities — I think Shanghai is much safer. I wonder why. To be honest, Scotland is pretty bad, and one of the main reasons for it in Scotland is football. Like, if you wear the wrong color shirt, or really any football shirt, it's very easy to get in trouble. People seem to care quite a lot about football, yeah.

And also, even just where you come from. I don't know — do you think in China people don't care so much where you come from? Like, if you speak with a slightly different accent, people might start abusing you or insulting you or something. I have some Malaysian students in the Wednesday class, and they said — I asked them — is it safe to walk down the street in Kuala Lumpur at midnight? And they said no, definitely not, it's very, very dangerous.

The reason I disagree with this guy so much is because, like, in the 1990s, crime was getting really bad, and it kind of plateaued around the time he wrote this essay. But since then, all around the world, crime has really dropped considerably. It's the lowest it's been. I think there was like a bump around COVID — things got a bit worse during COVID — but since then, it's continued on the downward trend. And, you know, it's another cause-and-effect question. Why is that? You know, if this guy was right — if media violence really caused real violence — we would see the opposite, I think. Because nowadays, we have more and more media violence. It's more and more common, right?

Like, obviously, in China, you can't do this. But in Western countries, if you want to see someone getting killed in real life, you can easily find that now on the Internet, right? Like, it's not just media violence anymore. It's real violence. Like, most young people — two months ago, a guy in America, Charlie Kirk, got murdered. Did you hear about that? Charlie Kirk. Don't watch it. But I did. He's sitting in a chair, he's talking on the microphone, he's debating someone, and suddenly his neck just explodes. Blood goes shooting out, and he falls down dead. Don't look it up, because it's really awful, right?

But, you know, when I was your age — or when I was a young teenager — I had never seen someone die in real life. You know, I'd only ever seen someone die in a movie or a video game, but now every teenager has seen Charlie Kirk die. My nephew — he was 15 — and he said everyone at school had their phone out watching Charlie Kirk getting killed. It's just totally normal. But despite that, real violence has gone way down. I think if this guy was right, it should have gone way up. So that's why I think — you see — so why do you think violence has gone down?

Is the data showing a rise, or are these just single examples? Because I think we often get misled by the single examples. Like, they're there — they exist. You know, another good example, I think, is that nowadays you are much, much, much less likely to get abducted. You know what I mean — abducted, 绑架. But parents are much more likely to worry about child abduction. So they keep their kids at home, because when it does happen, again, it's front-page media stories, right? And people think, "Oh my God, that little girl, she was taken by some terrible guy." So we focus on these single examples. Parents worry more about abduction today than they did 30 years ago, but the statistics show you are much less likely to be abducted than you were 30 years ago. So parents don't let their kids outside to play.

Why do you think violence has gone down? One interesting answer is that it is this very thing he's talking about in this essay — that media violence and video games actually give us an outlet. Like, if I'm a young man who's full of anger and rage, right? And I feel violent tendencies and violent urges — 50 years ago, I would have to go out to look for violence to satisfy my urge. But today, if I'm a young man full of anger, I can go online and kill people in a video game instead. It's actually an outlet for violence. I'm not saying that's the real reason, but it is one argument — that video games actually reduce violence instead.

So, don't forget — the only homework you have for next week is the essay by John M. Archkenes. Think about the question: *Would it be a good thing if machines took our jobs?* Right? Obviously, most people's first reaction would be, "Yes," because now I've got all the free time I want. But try and think about it more deeply than that, right? Would it really be a good thing? Could there be some downsides? And if anyone would like to send me the main idea for the second essay, just feel free to do that anytime. I'll be happy to give you advice. Bring the outline in two weeks.

Okay, see you next week. 🤖

The End