

## Assessment 1 – “Controlled Research Argument”

At the centre of this assignment is practicing how to engage with a specific argument from a secondary source. This is a very important skill in academic writing. In this assignment, we go beyond simply *quoting* from a piece of published research. You will apply the ideas/claims of one piece of critical writing to a new situation, and present further arguments of your own in response to it.

1. Re-read carefully the following article.

This article will form the basis of your controlled research assignment paper – this an essay that addresses the claims found in a limited number of critical sources.

- Clay Calvert, Emma Morehart, and Sarah Papdelias. “Rap Music and the True Threats Quagmire: When Does One Man’s Lyric become Another’s Crime.” *Columbia Journal of Law & Arts* 38 (2014): 1-27.
- 2. Write an essay that presents your own argument in direct response to one of the claims made in this article.
- Your controlled research paper should identify a *claim* in the Calvert, Morehart and Papdelias article. This is your starting-point: your task is to challenge or advance this claim, **using examples from real music or relevant examples or cases (either the ones we covered in class or others that you find on your own).**
- This essay will involve identifying a narrow *problem* or *issue* put forward in the article, putting forward an original *claim* of your own in response to this issue, providing *evidence*, and linking this evidence to your claim.

At the centre of this assignment is practicing how to engage with a specific argument from a secondary source by applying its ideas/claims to a new situation, and by presenting further arguments of your own in response to it.

Length: 600-800 words.  
Weighting: 20% of final grade.  
Due: **Sunday, 9 March, 11.59pm (via Moodle)**

## Formatting and Submission of Assignment 1

Please follow these guidelines for formatting and author information – this is a good guide to follow for all submitted essays at university:

- Include title, author name/student number and date on first page
- Double-spaced
- Consistent 3 cm (approx.) margins
- Font: Times New Roman, 12pt (or similarly professional font in readable 12pt size)
- Citation system. You may choose any standard citation system/style (e.g. MLA/Chicago/APA) for your references, provided that you are consistent in its use.

Please follow these guidelines for electronic submission

- Submit assignments via Moodle – there is a link provided
- A good filename convention: <Surname-Assignment#-Date>  
e.g. <Adair-Assignment1-11Mar2025>

Here is an example of how the essay's formatting might look, following these rules:

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Anya Adair, 11 March 2023

### **Free Speech Under Threat: The Problem of Pop Music**

In their 2014 article “Rap Music and the True Threats Quagmire”, Calvert, Morehart and Papdelias offer a number of suggestions for how courts should approach cases where a supposed threat was made via rap lyrics. The authors argue that courts should assume that all listeners understand something about the context of rap music when deciding if it is “reasonable” for a subject to have felt threatened. They write that courts should “attribute some minimal understanding of rap’s conventions—the understanding that a hypothetical reasonable person would have—to the rap-ignorant target.”<sup>1</sup> This essay will...

## Seeking Help outside Class

I encourage you to seek extra help in developing your writing skills over the course of the semester.

HKU offers a number of resources for writers; in composing and revising your papers, do take advantage of these offerings.

I recommend especially the CSS 1:1 writing consultations, which can provide help at all stages of your work. See < <https://www.caescss.hku.hk/how-to-book>>. Showing your work to someone else, and hearing their opinion of how you're going, is absolutely crucial to writing development, and can help you to see things about your approach that you may not have noticed. Just getting another set of eyes on your work can help you to see how it 'reads' to someone else – even if you end up disagreeing with their opinions!

So as a special offer, this course gives out a free, no-questions-asked 24-hour extension to any student who emails their tutor a selfie of with their CSS consultant, undertaking a writing consultation on their assignment!

## Academic Honesty

This course seeks to help you use published research to support your own claims and arguments on a topic. Any instance of plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty (like unauthorized collaboration) may result in a failing grade or a more severe penalty.

Plagiarism is the use of other people's ideas without acknowledging the source. Remember that changing words around does not absolve you from acknowledging the source. Despite what you may have heard elsewhere, you should avoid paraphrasing – this course is all about the proper use of direct quotations! Do your source the credit of using his/her own words. In tutorials, we will practice ways to blend quotations into your own sentences – use these skills in your work!

The university has high expectations for ethical conduct among students. Students must always pursue academic honesty in their studies, as this is a condition for authentic learning and creative intellectual contributions. Committing the following (including but not limited to) dishonest behaviour is *unacceptable* in any circumstances:

- Plagiarism (i.e. use of other people's work without proper acknowledgement);
- Unauthorised use of AI or other writing tools in the completion of assignments;
- Submitting an assignment that is not the student's own work, including the use of prior students' work;
- Forgery of any document or certificate.

Please be reminded that disciplinary actions in connection with the violation of academic honesty may result in serious consequences such failing the assignment or the course, suspension of study, withdrawal of academic awards, and, potentially, discontinuation of

studies at the University. Plagiarism may be handled by the individual teacher or reported to the University Disciplinary Committee.

*Resources with more information:*

The HKU website on Plagiarism: <https://tl.hku.hk/plagiarism/>

The Library's Plagiarism Site: <https://learning.hku.hk/courses/course-v1:HKU+Library+ILT01/about>

Turnitin: <https://lib.hku.hk/turnitin/about.html>.

### **Late Submission**

If you are in need of an extension for medical or other extenuating circumstances, please be sure to contact your tutor *before the deadline* and provide any supporting documentation.

In the absence of an agreed extension, late assignments may be marked down by one grade category (e.g. A → A-) *for each day that it is late*.

## Grading Rubric

For flexibility in the range of responses, percentages are not assigned to the elements below. Note also that there will always be overlap between the criteria: serious defects in expression, for example, are likely to impact the quality of the analysis.

Grading of the assignment takes a 'best fit' approach to the criteria below.

Criteria	A	B	C	D
<b>Correct length, directly addresses essay question</b>	Exceeds requirements	Meets all requirements	Addresses all requirements	Does not address all requirements
<b>Central Claim</b>	Insightful and/or original	Clear and effective	Weak or unclear	Missing or off topic
<b>Introduction</b>	Engaging and effective	Logical and complete	Underdeveloped or unclear	Missing or overly brief
<b>Supporting Paragraphs</b>	Relevant and logical	Generally related and logical	Not always relevant or logical	Off topic or incomplete
<b>Textual Support/ Examples/ Evidence</b>	Well-chosen and persuasive, accompanied by appropriate and insightful analysis	Appropriate and sufficient, with sound analysis	Partial or incomplete, with some analysis	Few or irrelevant, little or no analysis
<b>Critical Thinking/ Analysis</b>	Original and thorough understanding and analysis	Some originality and analysis	Limited understanding and originality	Little originality or understanding
<b>Conclusion</b>	Effective and clear	Acceptable	Partial or weak	Missing or not relevant
<b>Sentence Structure and Clarity</b>	Varied and clear	Some variety; generally clear	Limited; some errors	No variety; many errors
<b>Grammar/ Punctuation/ Spelling</b>	Minimal errors, all minor	Some errors- several minor or few serious	Many serious errors that distract from content	Intrusive errors that impede understanding
<b>Citation of secondary source and any primary sources</b>	Excellent and consistent	Good – may be some minor errors	Adequate – some errors but effort is clear	Poor – no attempt to follow guidelines