



# THIS IS AN OUTRAGE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY—BENTLEY UNIVERSITY

Gary David—[gdavid@bentley.edu](mailto:g david@bentley.edu)

One of the main emotions that people can experience when taking a class on criminal and social justice is a sense of outrage. It can be hard to understand why and how there can be such uneven, or unjust, treatment of people for the acts they have committed.

For this assignment, you need to identify one particular act or incident in which you feel a strong sense of outrage. Find something in which you feel a major harm of some kind was committed, but you do not feel there was adequate punishment for it. Your task is to creating a convincing a case as possible for why other people should be outraged as well. To accomplish this, you need to explain the following:

- 1) **Why what the person did *should be* considered a crime** (beyond whether it was ‘against the law’ or not)
- 2) **Why the harm that resulted was significant.** You can’t just say “because a lot of people died” or “they lost money.” There are many instances whether a lot of people die or money is lost that is not considered criminal or problematic. Tell me why this situation should resulted in harms, especially harms against society since you are asking society to provide punishment.
- 3) **Provide reasons as to why the person(s) avoided any punishment.** Why do you think the punishment was so weak?
- 4) **Give a sense of what the punishment should be.** If there is some harm, how should the person(s) be punished for it? Furthermore, what are we trying to accomplish with the punishment: deterrence, incapacitation, retribution, rehabilitation, restoration (see your text book for more on this).
- 5) **What should be done to limit the possibility that this harm and lack of punishment happen in the future?**



You need to use course materials, like our books and class discussions. You should try to integrate materials from other courses as much as possible as they are relevant. The more you can integrate other materials, the more convincing you may be. Look for stories and analysis on the case. Also, you should consider using visuals in making a compelling case of outrage. How can you make people feel emotional about the case? And be creative. Again, you are trying to make an argument based in fact and emotion, creating a call to action.

In thinking about your case and why it is an outrage, you should also think about the following points in a larger sense:

- What makes something a crime?
- What is a harm or damage of a crime?
- How are judgments made about guilt and punishment? Are those approaches effective?
- What is the purpose of 'punishment'? What are we trying to accomplish?
- How does policy factor into impacting criminal behavior? What other factors contribute to criminal behavior?
- And others. Use the course materials to define other important aspects.

These assignments are going to be graded individually. However, the materials group that you belong to also will be evaluated as a whole in terms of what group did the best job creating the most compelling cases of outrage. The most effective group will be deemed "the winners" of the exercise. We will figure out what you 'win'. So, make sure you include your material group on your assignment.

Use the space provided below to sketch out some ideas and concepts about how to most effectively make your case of outrage

