



# THIS IS AN OUTRAGE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY—BENTLEY UNIVERSITY

Gary David—gdavid@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 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 result 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?**



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# What are we trying to learn from this?

Thinking about how to create compelling arguments based on facts as well as emotions



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# What are we trying to learn from this?

## Evaluating across different examples and cases to make determinations of ranking and outrage



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# What are we trying to learn from this?

Understanding the complexities of making these determinations, especially in terms of how to discuss and compare 'harms'



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# What are we trying to learn from this?

Being able to explore these topics from multiple perspectives, in that each case has multiple outrages



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# What are we trying to learn from this?

Identifying our own individual and social biases in making these determinations.

(Why was it that Purdue Pharma was not seen as the most outrageous given their role in the opioid crises and the sheer volume of people that were harmed? How does that relate it to how society views white-collar crime?)



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# What are we trying to learn from this?

## Connecting course content to real life situations



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## Other learnings?