

C: Sample Movie Essay Assignment

For this assignment, the student is to watch the movie such as *The Accused*. The movie may be shown in class or a movie approved by the instructor may be viewed individually by the student at home or put on reserve at the library.

Writing Style:

The paper should be no longer than three pages in length and written in a five paragraph format. It must have 5 distinct paragraphs, with an introduction, discussion of each of the three issues, and a conclusion paragraph. You may write more on one particular issue than another, but you should address each sufficiently, and the issues must be clearly delineated from one another. In other words, each of the substantive paragraphs should address only one issue. The questions provided by the instructor serve as a guide to issues and are not the only questions you may determine are appropriate to address the themes in each section. (The questions listed below serve as exemplars for the movie *The Accused*.) Provide examples from the movies throughout.

Introduction:

The initial paragraph must provide the name of the movie, a brief rendition of the relevant facts, and a reference to the issues to be discussed along with a reference to the concluding paragraph. Assume the instructor is familiar with the movie, but write enough to provide the “essence” of the plot.

Issue One:

Describe the concepts of *right to confront one’s accusers* (right to cross-examination) and *victim’s privacy rights* (rape shield laws). Discuss how these two concepts stand in contrast to one another in the legal process.

Issue Two:

Describe the concept of *criminal culpability* (*mens rea* and *actus reus*) in the legal process. Discuss the culpability of the alleged rapists and solicitors in *The Accused*.

Issue Three:

Discuss the personal responsibility, if any, of the victim in the film, *The Accused*. Discuss how the characteristics of the victim influence the legal process.

Conclusion:

After writing the introduction and substantive content of the paper, you must write a conclusion paragraph that integrates the findings in the 3 issue paragraphs. Describe any accuracies, inaccuracies, and omissions in the law that you observed in the movies. Explain how the concepts of *rape shield*, *right to confront one’s accusers*, and *criminal culpability* play out in the courtroom. What would you propose to improve the criminal trial system based on the movies and your understanding of the law?