

sample CPN 101 essay: argumentative research essay

Writing Assignment
CPN 101, section 084

Argumentative Research Essay

Write a five- to seven-page research paper that addresses an argumentative topic that would be of interest to other students in your composition class. Structure this paper as an argumentative essay and use at least six sources of information.

To document your source, include MLA-style parenthetical citations and a "Works Cited" page.

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*essay heading: does not include
instructor's name
(according to portfolio guidelines)*

*essay title: uses key terms to clarify
the focus of essay
(see Troyka 53-54)*

*opening strategy: writer engages
readers by providing background
information and using analogy
(see Troyka 104-06)*

brief indication of writer's thesis

*opening strategy: asking
provocative questions
(see Troyka 104-06)*

elaboration of writer's thesis

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CPN 101, section 084
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Holocaust Denial: Does Refusal to Publish Abridge Free Speech?

Being from a family who experienced the deeds of an insane dictator, I have strong feelings and views regarding those denying the Holocaust. Six million Jews were slaughtered at the hands of the Nazis, but some people are trying to deny and forget that event. Today, we are encountering a "virus" that is spreading throughout the world; Holocaust deniers (who are also called "revisionists") are trying to sway us, by manipulative and sophisticated ways, to believe that the Holocaust is a lie. Especially disturbing is their systematic utilization of the First Amendment, ostensibly designed to guarantee freedom of speech.

Should newspapers and journals refuse to publish Holocaust deniers' opinions and advertisements? Does refusal to do so abridge freedom of speech? These are the questions that our media have to face when dealing with hateful and anti-Semitic advertisements from the revisionist movements. Some would say that refusing to publicize the ads would violate First Amendment rights. But I wonder: does the First Amendment sanction the publication of lies?

As soon as we classify the Holocaust as a refutable subject, we are satisfying the revisionists' goals. The Holocaust is a fact, and facts are irrefutable. A problem arises when we question the truthfulness of the

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Holocaust. If we do so, then we can say that night is day and day is night. Once we perceive the Holocaust as a given fact, however, we will eliminate and preclude all the dilemmas which are created when dealing with the revisionists.

Three years ago at Brandeis, a predominantly Jewish university, the campus weekly newspaper *The Justice* created an uproar by accepting an advertisement questioning whether the Holocaust occurred. The ad was placed by the Committee ¶4 for Open Debate on the Holocaust, a group which is trying to prove that the Holocaust was a "gigantic politico-financial swindle" (Kakutani c1). The publication produced substantial commotion among college students and Jewish leaders around the nation.

The Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust, a group that identifies itself with the California-based Institute for Historical Review (the principal promoter of "Holocaust Revisionism"), sent the same ads to leading ¶5 universities around the nation. Not every campus newspaper accepted the ad; for instance, Harvard, Yale, Brown, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Southern California refused to publish it. Yet Brandeis did comply with the anti-Holocaust groups' objectives. Clearly the agenda of such groups is to prey on students' ignorance about the Holocaust. These groups insist, without any evidence, that there were no persecutions of Jews and no gas chambers in any Nazi camps. According to these groups, Jews were simply the victims of disease and casualties of war--as were other ethnic groups (Oshinsky and Curtis 27). Furthermore, they proclaim that no one witnessed the mass killing in the gas chambers. But isn't expecting direct testimony from

writer provides background information, using direct quotation with MLA-style parenthetical citation (see Troyka 522-28, 580-87)

writer continues to provide background information, using summary and paraphrase with MLA-style parenthetical citation (see Troyka 528-36, 580-87)

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*writer responds to key idea
in source*

*writer comments on the
significance of the situation
described previously*

*writer uses paraphrase to support
own viewpoint—with MLA-style
parenthetical citation
(see Troyka 528-32, 580-87)*

*writer acknowledges and responds
to opposing viewpoint*

*writer continues to develop point
by means of specific examples
(see Troyka 79-81)*

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witnesses like asking a murder victim to come to his trial and identify his killer? Their arguments are absurd and invalid.

The consequences of publishing the ad at Brandeis University are far reaching. Because of this institution's decision to allow publication of anti-Holocaust propaganda, the revisionists can argue that their ads do not foster anti-Semitism. (Otherwise, they claim, ¶16 their ad would not have appeared at a predominantly Jewish university.) This publication of the ad in fact encourages this irrational group to continue historical deception--spreading the belief that the Holocaust did not happen.

We should neither debate nor respond to utterances by "revisionists," because any response will elevate anti-Semitic nonsense to the level of responsible historiography (Lipstadt 11). By responding, we are supplying them with "fuel" to continue their fight for ¶17 attention. Unfortunately, not everybody analyzes the situation the same way. Some people, like the editors of *The Justice*, believe that it is the school's obligation to publicize all views under the freedom of speech provided by the Constitution. Nevertheless, the First Amendment does not oblige anyone to publish racist gibberish that violates the elementary canons of truthfulness (Rosen 19).

Brandeis University is not the only victim of the "revisionists." Duke's president, H. Keith Brodie, faced protest from a student who opposed the decision of that school's newspaper to publish an ad denying the Holocaust. In ¶18 response, Brodie stated that it would violate Duke's commitment to free speech if publication were denied. However, he failed to note that

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just previously the newspaper had rejected an ad that it deemed offensive to women (Lipstadt b1).

The Holocaust is a fact (not a theory) of what happened during World War II to six million Jews in Europe. A fact is not arguable, as the presiding judge observed in a case that dealt with testimony from a Holocaust survivor: "[the Holocaust] is not reasonably subject to dispute, it is simply a fact"

¶9 (Oshinsky and Curtis 27). If one is going to refute historical facts, one can buy advertisement space and proclaim that American Blacks were not enslaved or that the Indians are not Native Americans. This is not what our forefathers intended to create when giving us the freedom to speak.

In part, the ad that was sent to Brandeis University reads: "...The truth appears to be, with regard to the alleged extermination of the European Jews, that there was no order, no ¶10 plan, no budget, no weapon..." (Oshinsky and Curtis 27). I question the people who wrote this ad. What should I tell my grandparents about the karma of their family?

Some people may ask why Holocaust deniers have become more conspicuous in recent years. "Revisionists" are finding the ideal atmosphere to manifest their ideas and beliefs because of several factors: the tendency to forget the past, the desire to put a final punctuation point on the painful events of World War II and ¶11 start again with a blank slate, the analytic method that scholars use in interpreting the past (deconstruction), and publicity. As the number of survivors decreases, the impact of the Holocaust is decreasing too. Amazingly, 22% of the adult population in the United States

writer emphasizes point by means of direct quotation—with MLA-style parenthetical citation (see Troyka 522-28, 580-87)

writer develops response to important passage in source by means of direct quotation—with MLA-style parenthetical citation (see Troyka 522-28, 580-87)

writer develops points by means of summary and paraphrase—with MLA-style parenthetical citation (see Troyka 528-36, 580-87)

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thinks that it is possible that the Holocaust did not occur. In addition, one of every five high-school students believes this. How can we let this disease spread among us without finding a vaccine?

*writer draws on personal
experience to develop argument*

The easiest thing to do is to evade the truth and put it aside. It wasn't very easy for my grandparents to do so, however, when they were faced with Hitler's "Final Solution." I strongly believe that we should not allow the
¶12 publication of lies in our newspapers and journals. We should not give any attention to revisionists who are waiting eagerly for it. We, as a civilized society, should inform and educate the future generations with facts--not lies. By forgetting the Holocaust, we are committing a crime against humanity--a crime no less atrocious than Hitler's. We should remember the Holocaust so that it will not happen again.

*concluding strategy: summarizing
key points and using analogies
(see Troyka 107-09)*

This plague denying history and memory in our society will continue to manifest itself as long as we condone the abusive utilization of freedom of speech. We cannot ignore the fact that the "revisionists" are trying to
¶13 deconstruct our world history by "purveying a stylishly nihilistic view of the world, which insists that all meaning is relative, that all truth is elusive, and therefore futile" (Kakutani c32). These revisionists are preying on our ignorance and using the First Amendment as their argument. We cannot let this be like an avalanche. It is dangerous for our morals and values as human beings. The denial of the Holocaust has created many waves of rage, protest, and anger--primarily among people who experienced the cruelty of the Nazis. We must eliminate this "revisionist" movement from our

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society. It has gone far enough and created damage that will leave its fingerprints on the future generation. As George Orwell observed, "Whoever controls the past controls the future. Whoever controls the present controls the past." I would say in response: let's get a grip on our future by controlling the present.

*concluding strategy: using
interesting quotation and
calling for action
(see Troyka 107-09)*

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MLA-style "Works Cited"
(see Troyka 588-607)

Works Cited

- "Brandeis Roiled by Holocaust Ad." *New York Times* 12 December 1993: 23.
- Kakutani, Michiko. "When History Is a Casualty." *New York Times* 30 April 1993: C1+.
- Kiefer, Francise S. "Germans Surveyed on Views of Jews and Holocaust." *The Christian Science Monitor* 23 January 1992: 1.
- Lipstadt, Deborah E. "Academe Must Not Legitimize Denials of the Holocaust." *The Chronical of Higher Education* 28 July 1993: B1.
- Oshinski, David M, and Michael Curtis. "The Ads Should Be Rejected." *New York Times* 11 December 1991: 27.
- Rosen, Ruth. "Hate Ads and Free Speech." *The Christian Science Monitor* 16 January 1992: 19.

