

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 29, Spring 2013**  
**April 18, 2013**

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of plagiarism on a course essay for an upper level English course.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Follow- up to Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Essay Prompt
- Student A's Essay with investigator comments
- Source of Alleged Plagiarism with accuser highlighting
- Professor depositions

**Plea:**

Student A pled "In Violation"

**Testimony:**

He did not intend to borrow ideas from another source. He did not realize how much of the source paper he had used until the professor pointed it out at a meeting. He did not realize how many of the ideas from the online article he incorporated into the paper. He used this specific article because the scenes discussed were similar to the scenes in which he was interested. It did not strike him to cite sources as he was writing. He thought he tried to paraphrase, but realizes he did not do a good job of this. He was continually referencing the online article as he wrote his own paper. He thought he did not need to cite because the paper was not a research paper. If the assignment had been a research paper, he would have cited his sources.

**Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because a side-by-side comparison of the text delineates that the papers are nearly identical. There is clear plagiarism in both structure and ideas, as about 130 lines that are taken verbatim from the original source.

Vote: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?

Yes: 9

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed the violation.

Vote: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is "In Violation?"

Yes: 9

No: 0  
 Abstentions: 0

**Penalty Deliberations:**

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances.

One council member mitigated for cooperation because he felt the student was helpful in describing his writing process. Council members stated that even though the course did not have a specific honor code policy, the student violated the University's Honor Code policy against plagiarism.

Vote: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension:	0
F in the course and 1 semester of suspension:	9
F in the course:	0
3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Because so much of the paper is plagiarized and the assignment constitutes a large part of the grade, honor council members agree that an F in the class is warranted. Honor council members also believe that suspension is warranted because the paper accounts for at least one third of the student's grade in the class as well as the clear derivation of the source into the student's paper, including content and structure.

**Decision:**

The Honor Council thus finds Student A "In Violation" of the Honor Code and recommends that he receive an F in the course and a one semester suspension. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to his record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 30 mins

Respectfully submitted,  
 Jessica Mintz  
 Clerk