

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 49, Spring 2016**  
**May 2, 2016**

**Members Present:**

Katie Jensen (presiding), Reece Rosenthal (clerk), Angel Garces, Haihao Liu, Hector Chaires, Sara Meadow

**Ombuds:** Colin Losey

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of plagiarizing an essay for an upper level philosophy course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course syllabus
- Final paper assignment page
- Student final paper
- Professor clarification
- Website 1
- Website 2
- Short story (focus of paper)

**Plea:**

Student A pled "not in violation."

**Testimony:**

The student explained that his paper shared similarities with other literature, but these similarities did not cross the line of plagiarizing because they were simply restatements of common knowledge. The student indicated that the paper was similar because he had used the literature to come to his own opinions; the assignment required that the paper incorporate outside sources. The student went on to explain the background of the paper.

The student indicated that only four phrases were similar. The student stated that all of these were factual statements.

The student stated that the arguments of each of the papers were completely different, thus plagiarism was not possible.

In terms of the first sentence, the student pointed out that the two sentences were not exactly the same.

**Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the council believed that citation was required, due to the fact that these papers influenced the accused student's paper.

Vote #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed the violation. The council saw no reason otherwise.

Vote #2: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is "In Violation?"

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

**Penalty Deliberations:**

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. The council deemed that mitigating for amount of assignment in violation was appropriate.

Vote #3: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension: 0

F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension: 0

F in the course and 1 semester of suspension: 0

F in the course: 1

3 letter grade reduction: 5

2 letter grade reduction: 0

1 letter grade reduction: 0

2/3 letter grade reduction: 0

1/3 letter grade reduction: 0

Letter of Reprimand: 0

Abstentions: 0

The councilmembers deemed that, considering prior violation, the appropriate penalty was a three letter grade reduction.

**Decision:**

The Honor Council thus finds Student A "In Violation" of the Honor Code and recommends that he receive a three letter grade reduction in the class. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to his record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hr.

Respectfully submitted,

Reece Rosenthal  
Clerk