

## Project 1: Joining the Conversation

### *“Arrested Development” Paper*

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#### THE ASSIGNMENT

North Carolina lawmakers are currently debating how adolescent offenders, who by nature have underdeveloped brains, should be treated in court. Throughout this debate, lawmakers have seen a rapid rise in the use of neuroscientific evidence in law and public policy decisions. And thus, a new question has emerged: *What role should neuroscience play in the juvenile justice system?* You will write a ~3-page response to this question, using peer-reviewed research to support your claims. First, you will need to “come to terms” with other scholars’ ideas so that you can then borrow or re-present their arguments in a way that is fair and useful to your own aims. This is your chance to say something new, responding to or forwarding others’ ideas as you join the conversation that is academic writing.

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#### THE PROCESS

**WRITING GOALS:** In this project, you will practice synthesizing texts, presenting new ideas based on your interpretation of other evidence or arguments. You must [develop a clear central claim](#) and support your main points with [evidence that you analyze](#). [Organize your ideas conceptually](#), illustrating their relationship to your overall claim and to each other. To help your reader follow and anticipate your argument, you may need to provide a “[roadmap](#).” At the paragraph level, consider what main idea you want to present, and express that idea in a [topic sentence](#). Finally, remember to “glue” your ideas together, logically connecting paragraphs and sentences with effective [transitions](#). There should be a clear, logical flow of ideas across paragraphs and sentences.

**AUDIENCE:** You are writing for a professional audience, including both lawmakers and neuroscientists. They want to know the state of current research on the topic and your expert opinion as a neuroscientist (in training). Remember, however, that your reader does not have in-depth knowledge about the field of neurolaw. Therefore, you may need to define discipline-specific terms or concepts.

**SOURCES:** I will provide you with a list of possible academic sources from our course readings. You should use at least 4 of these, along with any other sources that you find. Cite the sources using [APA-style](#), and remember to use your own words! Examples of plagiarism include:

- Copying statements and writings of another without correctly acknowledging their contribution.
- Using the views and statements of others in your papers in a manner that makes them seem as if they were your own original views and statements.
- Constant paraphrasing and copying of statements throughout your paper (this can be considered plagiarism even if you cite your sources if you are doing this too frequently).
- Submitting a past paper that you have used, or submitting someone else’s paper.

**WRITING PROCESS:** Before drafting your response, you will organize your ideas in a concept map. Your concept map and draft will undergo multiple rounds of peer review both in and out of class.

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## KEY DETAILS

### IMPORTANT DATES:

Concept Map	Feb 6
Draft 1	Feb 8 (note the quick turn-around)
Peer Review Conferences	Feb 5 – Feb 16
Final Draft	Feb 20

All drafts are due at the beginning of class (if not otherwise specified). To submit the assignments, please upload each document on Sakai (as a Microsoft Word doc) and bring a hard copy to class as well. Save your documents by your last name, first initial, and assignment title (e.g., ParksE\_Paper1\_D1; ParksE\_Paper1\_Final).

**FORMATTING:** Your paper should be ~3 double-spaced pages with 1-inch margins using a 12- point font comparable to Times New Roman. Please staple the hard copy of your paper.

**EVALUATION:** This project is worth 20% of your course grade. A successful paper will synthesize new ideas that are organized around a central claim. The author will have chosen the best possible evidence to support her/his claims and will make strong interpretive use of that evidence. The paper will demonstrate a high degree of organizational control, such that the form contributes to the author's purpose and the reader is able to freely enjoy the clear, logical unfolding of the author's claim. A successful paper will exhibit very few sentence-level language errors and often demonstrates an academic writing style that is particularly engaging. Last, but not least, the paper will fairly attribute all sources in proper APA format. For further details on grading criteria, see the General Grading Rubric handout on Sakai (under the Resources folder).

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