THE TASK

Drawing on a range of academic/scholarly sources and understanding of key concepts and issues relevant to the unit content, required to provide a 1600-word research essay to ONE of the four questions provided in this Instruction Guide.

Each question relates to a key issue covered in one or more of the weekly topics and requires you to write a research essay that provides a critical/argumentative response to the topic.

A key requirement for AT4 is to demonstrate your ability to conduct research. In your response, students must draw on a minimum of eight (8) academic sources to support their discussion.

These can include academic, scholarly, and reputable sources such as books, journal articles, government reports, legislation, and sentencing judgments (see guide in folder). Please note that media articles are not considered academic source.

Word limit: 1,600 words (±10%, or 160 words, so maximum word count is 1,760)

1-Question #1: There is no such thing as an ‘ideal victim’! Critically discuss this statement with reference to victims’ experiences in the CJS and what this means for how the CJS responds to victims/victimisation.

In your response, you should:

•Refer to at least one specific case or example of victimisation from Australia.

•Consider the consequences for victims in relation to how they are treated/responded to by members of the CJS, the media, and/or the broader community. Are further reforms needed?

•Discuss key concepts and themes from the unit, such as the impact of discretion, issues with ensuring accountability, and the challenges for achieving ‘justice’ (including ambiguity about what this means/looks like) .

2- Question #2: Experts are an essential feature of the modern court room and should be afforded greater influence in criminal trials. Critically discuss this statement, highlighting what it means for the reliability and credibility of trials in contemporary criminal justice processes.

In your response, you should:

•Refer to at least one specific Australian case or example where experts/expert evidence has played a central role in the outcome of a court trial.

•Consider the consequences for how we ‘do justice’, offenders/defendants, and/or the wider community – can expert evidence be reliable in the age of social media, crime shows/podcasts, and media influence?

•Discuss key concepts and themes from the unit, such as the influence of discretion, effects on due process (particularly offenders’ rights), and issues with ensuring accountability.

3- Question #3: Failures or miscarriages of justice are avoidable and can therefore be eliminated from the CJS. Critically discuss the validity of this statement and whether widespread criminal justice reform is needed.

In your response, you should:

•Refer to at least one specific case or example of a miscarriage of justice in Australia.

•Examine how failures of justice can undermine the legitimacy of the criminal justice system and the consequences for offenders, victims, and/or the wider community, perhaps noting where and how reform might be needed.

•Discuss key concepts and themes from the unit, such as the role and significance of discretion, issues with ensuring accountability, and the challenges for ‘doing justice’.

4- Question #4: The minimum age of criminal responsibility in Australia should be raised to 14 years to put the ‘just’ in CJS. Critically discuss this statement with reference to human rights approaches to youth offending.

In your response, you should:

•Refer to at least one case or example in which a young offender (or group, e.g., Indigenous youth) has been affected by their criminalisation and/or placement in detention in Australia, to provide evidence to support your argument(s).

•Consider the consequences for young people/offenders in relation to how they are treated/responded to by members of the CJS, the media, and/or the broader community.

•Discuss key concepts and themes from the unit, such as the value of discretion, implications for accountability, and what this means more broadly for how we ‘do punishment’ in Australia.

WHAT TO DO

Once you have chosen your topic, start looking for, downloading, and reading relevant books, articles, and reports.

Next, brainstorm the issues that arise from the essay topic and try to get a sense of your own views on them. What do you see as the most crucial elements of the debate? What evidence do we need to understand about the issues raised to respond to the question(s) posed

Referencing is required, using the Harvard style, so next look up some of the references used by the authors of the relevant textbook chapter(s) to provide evidence and support for the points they raise. Use the Library and other databases to find these and other relevant academic sources. Your essay requires a minimum of 8 academic sources, so you’ll need to read widely before you decide what is most useful to you.

Remember, this task is asking you to identify and discuss scholarly debate about the topic you have chosen from those listed above (remember only choosing one!). So, the argument in your essay should be constructed around the weight of evidence from your reading of these academic sources. For example: if in your research you find that most academic opinions agree that a human rights approach for youth offending is what is needed, then this would form the basis of your argument in whether (or not) to raise the age. Be sure to also discuss alternative arguments as well –try to provide a balanced, critical discussion, but still argue a particular perspective (i.e., don’t ‘sit on the fence’).

Without conducting enough reading/research, it is very difficult to know how you are going to respond to the essay question. Ideally, you would spend at least several days researching and reading. Allow yourself time to process information and to take efficient notes.

Make thorough notes of the sources you read, as you go – you’ll need them for your reference list later. And remember that all direct quotes and paraphrasing need page numbers in your in-text reference, though you should limit the number of direct quotes used. It is better to try to present information in your own words, as part of a coherent argument/narrative, so do not simply string various quotes together.

Essays should use a sensible font (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, etc.), ideally in size 12pt.

•For ease of review, students should justify the text and use 1.5 line spacing.

•Insert page numbers (insert tab > header & footer > page number> bottom of page).

•Start essay on the first page, with the question number and full text of the question clearly stated (note: these will not count towards the word limit).

•Include a Reference List at the end, on a separate page, containing all references cited in the essay.

•Overall, students’ writing may be 10% (160 words) under OR over the word limit without penalty.

•Turn spelling AND grammar checks on and set proofing language to English (Australian). Make sure full prose is used when writing essays – do not abbreviate (i.e., do not use ‘don’t’, ‘won’t’, ‘isn’t’, etc.)

Essay Outline to do :

Diagram, text

Description automatically generated