

# Assignment: Tattoos and Culture

**STEP 1:** Search online for a short documentary video that discusses tattooing as a part of culture. To focus your search, try including key terms like “culture” or “society” or “appropriation.” Look for a video that seems to making an argument about what tattoos mean in a present-day cultural context. Take notes and listen carefully for the main questions and issues that are being explored. For example, you could watch “Can Tattoos be Taboo?” found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQC13yBJ9dA>

**STEP 2:** Review the sections from this module about social norms, ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, pop culture, and subculture. Choose at least three concepts from these sections and apply them to the issues and questions raised by the video about tattoos.

For example, how do tattoos violate (or confirm) certain formal or informal norms? What are some possible consequences for these transgressions? How can concepts like cultural relativism and ethnocentrism be applied to certain styles of tattoos? Do you think that tattoos are more subcultural or countercultural? Have cultural views of tattooing changed over time? How so? Why do you think this? These are just some suggestions, and there are of course other useful concepts from the readings that can help you think about tattooing from a sociological perspective.

In addition to addressing the questions and concepts from the video and the reading, be sure to offer your own view on the cultural context of tattooing. What do you think is at stake in this discussion? Who is affected? How?

**STEP 3:** On a more nuts-and-bolts level, write an essay answering the questions above. Your paper should be 500-750 words and should be carefully edited for clarity and readability. It should include correct APA citations.

# Rubric

Criteria			Po int s
Key questions and issues from video are briefly summarized and explicitly addressed.	Key questions and issues are not explained or are only vaguely addressed.	Key questions and issues are not present; paper is mostly unfocused, unsubstantiated opinion.	— — /7
Relevant concepts from reading are accurately and thoughtfully applied to issues raised in video.	Relative concepts are applied in an unclear or too general sense. Student understanding not adequately demonstrated.	Relevant concepts are only vaguely addressed or are completely absent.	— — /7
Student's own views are clearly and substantively articulated.	Student's views are unclearly or too briefly stated.	Student's views largely or completely absent.	— — /3
Paper has been carefully edited for clarity and readability. Paper meets minimum length requirements. Paper includes correct citations.	Some editing issues remain, affecting clarity and readability. Paper is below the minimum length.	Paper has substantial editing issues that make the student's thinking hard to follow. Paper is far too short.	— — /3
Total:			— _/ 20