

A Bryn Mawr senior in a 300 level Economics course, Xena, handed in her literature review as the final paper for her class. In the process of grading the paper, Professor Z noticed that sections of the literature review seemed beyond the expected level for an undergraduate student and that several of the sources that Xena cited were sources to which an undergraduate student would not likely have access. Because of her suspicions, Professor Z did a Google search on Xena's topic and found an article. As Xena's paper and said article appeared to be very similar, Professor Z asked that Xena contact the Honor Board.

In her presentation to the Honor Board, Xena stated that she had never before written a literature review and that she had misunderstood the assignment. Xena stated that she believed that the assignment was to find and summarize a literature review written by an expert in the field, which she did. She also stated that her previous grades in the class, which were very good, showed that she took the class seriously, that the entire situation was simply a misunderstanding, and that she wished to re-write the literature review and prove that she could earn the grade.

However, Xena's paper did not appear to display a simple case of misinterpreting the assignment and summarizing the article in question. Rather, Xena's paper showed extensive word-for-word plagiarism and, on top of that, the article in question is not cited at all. The Honor Board believed it to be a case of deliberate plagiarism and resolved that Xena would receive a failing grade on the course, be limited to four courses her next semester, and that she would have to take an independent study with a supervisor in which she would produce a literature review, the quality of which should merit no less than a 3.0.