

After 2008, academic humanities advocates rallied against a “crisis” largely *absent* from public discourse.

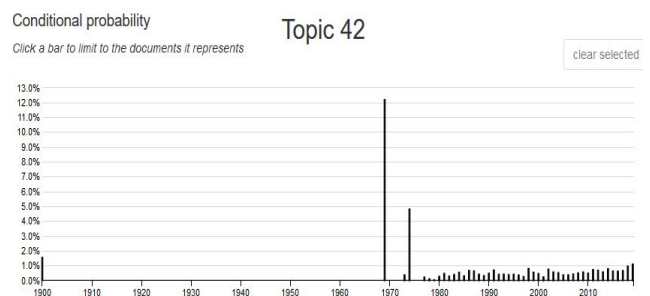
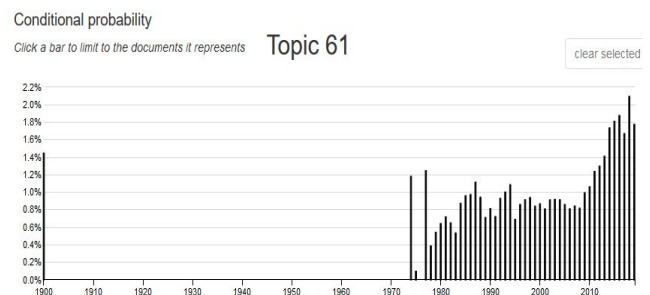
The 2008 economic recession saw heavy slashes to education budgets in the U.S., and humanities programs worried that they would be overly targeted. It is thus a common perception that the humanities were under attack or “in crisis”. After studying WE1S’s [Collection 1](#), we indeed find that humanities advocacy increased significantly post-recession. More and more academics within the humanities began advocating for their fields as a way to promote a broad understanding of the human condition (see [example](#)). Academics highlighted specific values of social engagement (see [KF-4-5](#), [KF-4-6](#)). Unsurprisingly, this discourse is especially well-represented in university newspapers. The main contributing articles of [Topic 61](#) and [Topic 2](#) come from campus newspapers. Their total number of publications is constant until 2010, after which it increases steadily.

However, the reach of campus newspapers is limited and does not indicate a broader *public* discussion of the value of humanities (see [KF-1-1](#)). A review of other topics related to values in Collection 21 indicates that there was no strong, overwhelming attack against the academic humanities in public discourse. It shows instead *a rise in affirmative discourse from humanities defenders*.

For example, [Topic 42](#) is associated with articles from both public and academic sources. While there are a few articles arguing explicitly against the humanities (such as this [example](#) claiming that the humanities don’t have defined methodology, and therefore are not important to society) the number of articles staunchly defending

the humanities far outweigh the attacks. Furthermore, the overall proportion of articles in [Collection 1](#) on either side of the debate is quite small, and the presence of this topic in the public discourse is steady over time.

We therefore wonder if 1) the crisis in the humanities is limited to the perception of such a crisis in academia (see [KF-1-2](#)) and is therefore too small in our overall corpus to appear in topic modeling; or 2) *if it is due to a subjective mis/perception of the humanities being “under attack” without an actual, corresponding massive devaluation of the humanities within larger public discourse.*



Proportion in the corpus of Topics [#61](#) and [#42](#)

Document collection studied: [Collection 1](#)
 Topic model: [250 topics](#)
 Interesting sample topics: [#2](#), [#61](#), [#42](#)
 Representative articles: [a](#), [b](#)
 Evidentiary documentation: [Team 4- Interpretation Report](#)