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1. AN INTRODUCTION TO STUDY SKILLS

Studying at university level means that much of your learning will take place independently, using the various resources available to you. This means you will need to take much of the responsibility for your own study.

Some of the academic skills you are expected to use at university may be new to you. You are expected to research your subject, write clear and concise essays with correctly presented referencing, produce reports, give presentations, take exams, and manage your time effectively.

Investing in your skills development will ease the transition to university life, as you face new, diverse demands on your time and energy. It will also improve your academic work and employment prospects – both for part-time work while here and for full-time work when you graduate.

Key Skills for University Study
Visit the Key Skills pages (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ppd/) to find out how to develop your skills and to access the resources UCL provides to support your skills development. This page explains the Key Skills System, Key Skills Grid as well as access to Key Skills courses on Moodle and resources to help you develop specific skills.

The Key Skills Grid (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/keyskills/resources/Grid) provides support, hints and information to help you develop skills in the following areas:

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### Communication Skills
- Written Materials
- Foreign Languages
- Oral / Visual Presentations
- Information Skills
- Active Listening
- IT Skills

### Interpersonal Skills
- Group work / Teamwork
- Understanding Others
- Negotiation
- Peer assessment
- Leadership
- Adaptability

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**Skills4studycampus**

UCL also particularly recommends Palgrave’s online skills4studycampus ([http://www.skills4studycampus.com/orglogin.aspx](http://www.skills4studycampus.com/orglogin.aspx)) for first-year students. This provides interactive online courses focusing on getting ready for academic study, reading and note-making, writing skills, referencing and understanding plagiarism, critical thinking, exam skills, group work and presentations. To login select the Institution login, UCL and then enter your UCL userid and password.

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**Developing Skills**

The following transferable skills can make you a more effective learner and will help to improve your prospects in the future, after you complete your studies. You will have many opportunities to develop such transferable skills during your time at SSEES:

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:** Communicates easily on paper with speed and clarity. Presents ideas concisely and in a structured way. Uses appropriate language and style. Grammar and spelling are accurate.
**ORAL COMMUNICATION:** Speaks to others with ease and clarity. Expresses ideas well and presents arguments in a logical fashion. Gives information and explanations which are clear and easily understood. Listens actively to others.

**LEADERSHIP:** Shows skill in directing group activities. Has natural authority and gains respect of others. Capable of building an effective team. Involves all team members, gives advice and help when required.

**TEAM MEMBERSHIP:** Fits in well as a peer and as a subordinate. Understands own role and the role of others within the team. Shares information and seeks help and advice when necessary. Offers suggestions and listens to the ideas of others.

**PLANNING AND ORGANISING SKILLS:** Can make forward plans and forecasts. Can define objectives and allocate resources to meet them. Sets realistic targets and decides priorities. Devises systems and monitors progress. Makes good use of time available.

**DECISION MAKING:** Evaluates alternative lines of action and makes appropriate decisions. Identifies degrees of urgency for decisions. Responds to situations quickly and demonstrates flexibility.

**MOTIVATION:** Shows energy and enthusiasm. Works hard and is ambitious. Able to work on own initiative with little detailed supervision. Sets own targets and is determined to achieve them.

**PERSONAL STRENGTH:** Is self-confident and understands own strengths and weaknesses. Is realistic and willing to learn from past failures and successes. Is reliable, honest and conscientious. Can cope with pressure and control emotions.

**ANALYTICAL REASONING SKILLS:** Can quickly and accurately comprehend verbal and numerical information. Able to analyse arguments objectively and to reach logical conclusions. Can present well-reasoned and persuasive arguments.
University: Terms and Terminology

The following list will help to clarify some of the more common terminology used by staff at SSEES and around UCL:

- **CLASSES, TUTORIALS AND SEMINARS:** These are small group sessions, and may be referred to by any of the above names. Typically, the role of the student in these sessions is much more proactive, requiring a range of contributions, such as presentations, participation in discussions, group work, or role-play. NOTE: the term 'classes' in the UK always refers to this small-scale interactive learning style and not to 'lectures', as for example in the U.S. Some modules are taught exclusively through small classes; others are taught through a combination of lectures and tutorials/seminars. In the latter case, the teacher of the small class may be a different member of staff from the lecturer, e.g. a postgraduate teaching assistant with expertise in a particular area.

- **MODULE:** This is the term we use to describe a particular module, regardless of its length or value in course-units (see below) e.g. the option ‘SESS2005 Topics in Financial Management’ is a 'module', worth 0.5 course-units.

- **COURSE-UNITS:** Course-units are the unit by which UCL measures its credits. Students at UCL are required to complete and be examined in 4 course-units (cu) each academic year. A module running for one term usually has a value of 0.5 cu (although some departments, including SSEES, have year-long modules worth 0.5 cu) and one running throughout the year usually has a value of 1.0 cu.

- **LECTURES:** Lectures refer to that part of the module attended by all students in the full group; the lecturer plays the predominant role. Not all modules at SSEES are lecture-based.

- **LECTURER:** The lecturer is normally a full-time member of the academic staff involved in teaching and research and will have been involved in designing and monitoring the module.
• **READING WEEK**: This is the middle week during the autumn and spring term in which no teaching is scheduled in SSEES and most other departments in the college. Students are expected to use this week to complete assignments, review and consolidate their studies, and read around and research their current subjects in order to broaden their knowledge of the material covered in each module.

• **TERM**: The UCL academic year is divided into 3 terms: an autumn term of 12 weeks (1 week for Induction + 10 weeks of teaching + 1 Reading Week), a spring term (10 teaching weeks + 1 Reading Week) and a summer examination term (7 weeks). The equivalent terminology for these at overseas universities is ‘semester’.

• **MOODLE**: This is a web-based teaching resource used for most UCL modules. If this applies to your module, you will receive instructions from the teacher on how to access the web facility.

2. ASSESSMENT

**Types of Assessment**

Assessment is both *formative* (to help you develop your skills) and *summative* (counting towards your final examination mark for the module).

During your studies, you will find significant variation in the types and style of assessment you are required to undertake. Alongside traditional written essays and examinations, you will find multiple choice questionnaires, online tests, oral presentations, book reviews, group projects and many other forms of assessment. In the following section you will find helpful hints on how to approach these tasks, which will help you maximise your performance.
Assessment Criteria

All SSEES undergraduate assessed work is marked against the approved marking criteria. The detailed SSEES Undergraduate Assessment Criteria can be found at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/current-students/undergraduate/undergraduate-documents/assessment-criteria.pdf Please study these closely in order to understand the criteria against which your work will be assessed. This will help you to learn how to be self-critical and to improve the standard of your work.

The minimum pass mark for examinations and assessed coursework essays for undergraduate students is 40%.

Please note that the marks for assessed coursework and examinations you are issued with during the year are all provisional until they are ratified by the relevant SSEES and UCL Examination Boards at the end of the academic year. You will be notified once this has happened.

3. WRITING AN ESSAY

Essay writing is a valuable exercise which supports the development of your writing technique and helps you to develop your powers of argument and analysis. The general principles underlying all essay writing are:

• collecting and collating relevant information
• organising your ideas and presenting your argument in an appropriate structure, form or style
• presenting your work with correctly formatted referencing

Features of a Good Essay

Below is a list of criteria relating to essay writing. A good essay should demonstrate and include all of the following:

• knowledge of the subject
• evidence of wide reading
• critical thinking
• expression of your own opinion
• evidence of analysis
• clear organisation of ideas
• logical thinking
• evaluation of information and ideas
• persuasive writing
• avoidance of unsubstantiated assertions
• arguments supported by examples from the material, including quotations from the secondary authors you have read
• clear and correct English
• professional format (see Standard formatting and Style guidelines below)

Understanding Instructions
Assignment titles contain instructions about how you are expected to deal with the topic. Sometimes key instructions will appear explicitly, but at times they may well be implicit. Whatever the case you need to identify the approach required. Below is a list of some ‘key instructions’ which typically appear in essay questions:

ACCOUNT FOR Give reasons for, explain.
ANALYSE Examine and explain why
ASSESS Decide the importance and give reasons.
COMPARE Write about (usually) two things which have certain similarities but with some crucial differences. There may be an element of evaluation here too.
EXAMINE Look at carefully; and analyse
IN WHAT WAY Explain how and say why
TO WHAT EXTENT How far do you agree with..., How true is ...
JUSTIFY Give good reasons for; explain satisfactorily
STATE Express carefully, fully and clearly
OUTLINE Give a short description of the main points
DISCUSS

Express your own view on an issue supporting it with evidence from other sources. This is a very general term used in essay assignments and you need to be careful.

Standard Formatting

- The essay should be word-processed.
- It should be presented on A4 paper.
- It should be double-spaced with margins (at least 1" / 2.5 cm).
- Use a reader-friendly font such as Times New Roman or Arial (12 pt).
- Cited works and quotations should all be referenced in footnotes or endnotes, or using the Harvard system (see below)
- A bibliography of primary and secondary sources consulted and cited must be included ('references' list in the Harvard system)
- For assessed coursework only: the essay should be stapled with a coursework submission coversheet attached

Essay checklist

- Have you answered the question?
- Have you done what you said you would do in your introductory paragraph?
- As the essay develops have you made sure that each main point is related to the main issues of the question?
- Is there any irrelevant material or repetition in your essay?
- Is there enough analytical discussion?
- Is there a balance between facts and discussion, with the analysis being supported by empirical evidence?
- Is the argument fully developed and sustained throughout the essay? Do your conclusions summarise the argument?
- Have you eliminated all grammatical and spelling errors and made sure that the English is clear?
- Is your essay clearly presented?

4. WRITING A REVIEW
The purpose of reviewing is to see through the surface text of a book or article to its inner workings. As with any document, a text must be read critically. The notes below give some hints on how this task might be approached. It offers suggestions for thinking about a text, not a step-by-step guideline that can be applied mechanically.

Authors may have had several hundred pages to make their points, while you are restricted to a few pages. A simple summary of the work is usually not enough to analyse the author’s main points, the way they are set out, and the assumptions that underlie them. You must reorganise the author’s argument and exposition for your own purposes. This requires you to think carefully about some of the following questions or topics.

Comparing the Author’s Goals and Achievements
What are the chief goals of the work (usually announced in the introduction, preface or first few paragraphs)? What do you think are the actual major themes? Are the arguments proven, and by what means? Are there conspicuous omissions that you think should have been covered? Why were they left out?

Morals, Uses, Politics
What are the author’s moral and political judgments, and how do they affect the text? For what purpose has the author shaped the material? Are the author’s interests implicit or explicit?

Models of Society, Economy and Polity
What does the author presume or state about the nature of social, economic or political organisation in the society being examined? What does the author assume about the structures of power and the means of social control or domination? Does the author presume that consensus or conflict is natural in the workings of a society or see a small group dominating the society? Does the author present evidence or only theory in support of these views?

Plots and Stories
From whose viewpoint does the author present the story or argument? Why do you think that particular viewpoint was chosen? Is this text presented as part of a larger story or history? Why does it begin and end when it does? Does the choice of end and beginning build in any bias in the argument? How does the author divide time? Why?

Models of Human Nature and Causation
Does the author presume that humans change easily or are hostile to change? Does change come from individual or collective human choice and action? Or is it the result of unanticipated consequences of actions? Or the result of the workings or larger forces or structures? Does society create human beings and their actions or vice-versa in the author’s opinion? To what extent are humans constrained by their culture,
society or times, and how far are they free to create what they will? Is human nature universal, or a cultural and temporal creation, according to the author?

Uses of Evidence and Proof
How does the author use evidence, and is the right kind of evidence used to prove the argument? Are the basic facts presented determined more by the evidence used or by the author’s premises or presuppositions?

5. WRITING A COMMENTARY ON A PASSAGE OF PROSE, POEM, OR HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

A commentary is an exercise in close and detailed textual analysis. This may be of a short poem in its entirety or of a passage from a longer text. In this way a commentary repeats the kind of class work that does exactly this – going through a poem or looking at a particular passage in detail. While an essay requires you to draw on the work as a whole to show knowledge, analysis and argument that relates to and illuminates the question set, a commentary illuminates the meaning of a particular poem or passage and the way it works. From this you may be able to move on and say something more general, about the work as a whole or the writer/poet.

As with an essay, you should prepare and plan your commentary. This means getting to grips with the passage or poem by underlining key words, making notes, highlighting connections, marking how it divides into sections. In other words, a well-prepared commentary will not leave the text on the paper untouched but instead will make a meaningful mess of it. Then, on the basis of this preparation, you should plan your approach to the commentary so that it presents a coherent interpretation, not just a series of unconnected points.

Introduction
The introduction should provide a framework for the main body of your commentary.

i) Prose
You should situate the passage within the work as a whole, e.g. beginning, end, after or before a particular key moment. This should be concise but sufficient: it may be very relevant to explain how the passage relates to what comes before or after, but do not retell the plot at length.

In situating the passage, and on the basis of your preparation and plan, you should also formulate in a brief but open way what you think it is about, what its theme or role is, as a key or framework to your commentary. For example, it may be a turning point in the narrative or key
exposition of a character. In this it can be helpful to say something about the mode of the passage. For example, is it narrative or descriptive? Is it humorous or satirical?

ii) Poetry
Situating a poem in the chronology of the poet’s work if you can. In some cases it may also be useful to identify the broader literary context, e.g. the poem’s relation to a movement such as Romanticism. If you know about the biographical context and think it has some significance, then you may add something about that. As with a commentary on a prose passage, this situation of the poem should be concise but sufficient.

In situating the poem, and on the basis of your preparation and plan, you should also formulate in a brief but open way what you think it is about, what its theme is, as a key or framework to your commentary. For example, it may be an archetypal Romantic exploration of man and nature. In this it can be helpful to say something about the mode of the poem and identify its genre or form if you can. For example, is it rhetorical, contemplative or close to a song? Is it narrative or descriptive? Is it an elegy? Is it a sonnet?

The Main Body of the Commentary
A commentary should be concerned with the passage or poem as a whole, but it should also show the development through the passage or poem. This means that an appropriate structure for writing a commentary may be to follow this development. To do so in an illuminating way will very likely involve paying attention to the compositional structure of the passage or poem: does it divide into sections and, if so, how? What is the compositional movement through the passage or poem?

As you write your commentary you should be looking to illuminate the theme or themes (or mood or emotion) that the passage or poem illustrates and explores. This is not just a matter of identifying the theme but also of looking at how it is presented. How does the theme develop? How do contrasting themes relate? Is the theme typical of the story as a whole?

When you refer to the passage or poem, this should be done clearly and succinctly by reference, for example, to first, second etc. paragraphs or sentences (for prose), to first, second etc. stanzas and lines (for poetry). You do not therefore need to quote large sections from the text.

i) Prose
In a story or novel, the theme of the passage may be linked to characterisation. In this case you should consider not only what is revealed about a character but also how this is done, and maybe relate this to other aspects of the passage too. In general, in prose you need to pay particular attention to questions of narration: what is the narrative viewpoint and does it shift? What is the role of the narrator? Is there direct or indirect interior monologue? Whose words are these – the characters or narrator’s or author’s? How does irony function in the passage? What is the role of dialogue or description?
You should look for any key and repeated words/motifs, and for any tropes. What is the significance of the key words or motifs? Is there any use of imagery? Are there any metaphors or similes? What is their significance? Are they standard or original? Are there any other tropes – exaggeration, paradox etc.?

When looking at style in terms of lexis and syntax, you should consider what kinds of word are being used and their register. Does one particular part of speech play a particularly significant role? Are there a lot of adjectives or verbs? Is the lexis conversational? How does the choice of words relate to characterisation? In terms of syntax, pay attention to sentence type and structure. Are there questions or exclamations? Is the syntax simple or complex or convoluted? Is it ornate? This may relate to the meaning of the passage or the writer’s general style.

If you are studying the texts in translation, it may be difficult to comment on aspects of style. If the translation is a good one, however, it may be possible to draw attention to the tone and register of the language, as well as the rhythm of the passage as a whole.

ii) Poetry
You should look for any imagery, for key and recurrent motifs, for key and repeated words, and for any tropes. What is the significance of the images or motifs? How are they arranged or developed through the poem? How do images or repeated words relate to each other? Can you gather them into thematic clusters? Are there any metaphors or similes? What is their significance? Are they standard or original? Are there any other tropes – exaggeration, paradox etc. As with a prose passage, when looking at style in terms of lexis and syntax you should consider what kinds of word are being used and their register (e.g. archaic, Romantic, conversational). Does one particular part of speech play a particularly significant role? Are there a lot of adjectives or verbs? In terms of syntax, pay attention to sentence type and structure. Are there questions or exclamations? Is the syntax simple or complex or convoluted? Is it ornate? This may relate to the meaning of the poem or the poet’s general style.

When dealing with poetry, you should also look at other formal aspects, such as rhyme or sound play, stanza organisation, rhythm and metre, enjambment and internal rhyme (see the separate handout for information on this). We encourage you to develop familiarity with these aspects of poetic form and to enjoy the ‘music’ of poetry, but take care in this area. Effective interpretation usually needs to rest on thorough technical knowledge (‘slow’ and ‘fast’, for example, are not phonemic features in Russian). But you may fruitfully look for repeated sound clusters – especially around the stressed vowel, rather than at the beginning of words – and try and see how these highlight and link key words (this is much more common than onomatopoeia). Stanza organisation and rhyme scheme can help you to identify the compositional structure of the poem, and any change in these will be significant and is likely to accompany and highlight changes on other levels.
Conclusion
A brief conclusion to round off your commentary enables you to summarise the way that you have illuminated what the poem or passage is about and how it works.

Studying Texts in the Original Language
For students reading texts in the original, points about content can be made without always giving the words in the original language, e.g. ‘the emphasis on night and darkness in this passage…’, although you may need to support this by quoting the original words. Points about style should be made by quoting words or phrases in the original, but with an English translation (in brackets) if there is some ambiguity of meaning.

Commentary on a Historical Document
Writing a commentary about a historical document is an exercise in many ways similar to working on a commentary on a passage from prose and poem. However, in your commentary on a historical document you will need to determine

- the type of the document (legal act, administrative document, diplomatic act, polemical work, foreign account, etc.);
- the author of the document; or a group of people or an institution that have generated the document (the government, an oppositional party, the church, etc.);
- the date of the document (or how we can date the document if it has no date);
- the historical context of the documents or events that caused the creation of the document;
- the purpose(s) of the document;
- the impact of the document on historical events;
- the relevance of the document to major historical topics and problems;
- the significance of the document as a historical source.

6. GIVING A TALK OR MAKING A PRESENTATION
Seminar presentations are intended to develop your communication skills. Giving presentations is one of the skills that employers expect graduates to have, so you should make the most of any experiences you get at university. You may need to give presentations:

- in tutorials
- as part of the assessment of projects
- in Union activities or staff-student committees.

The following notes are intended to help you prepare for giving a talk.

Preliminary Considerations and Arranging the Material

Decide what your presentation is meant to achieve:

- is it intended to convey a body of information?
- is it to persuade the audience to share a point of view?
- is it to stimulate subsequent discussion?

The answer will influence the way you structure the presentation. In any case, be sure that you have prepared your key points or arguments in a clear and logical sequence. Try breaking the main body of the talk into sections, or into a set of questions to be answered.

Decide how you are going to deliver your presentation:

- do you know how you will get the main points across to the audience?
- will you use a visual aid or write important points on a board?
- will you read your talk from a full text? (This ensures comprehensiveness, but often encourages a hasty and stiff delivery and should be avoided.)
- will you speak from brief notes (headings and sub-headings) or from detailed notes? Spontaneity helps keep the audience’s attention, but can lead to stumbling if you are not well prepared.
- will you memorise the whole thing? (This can fail spectacularly, but can also be very impressive.)
- how will you conclude your presentation? a summary of the main points? a call for action? a provocative statement or question?

Performance

By your final year you should be:

- presenting arguments confidently
• clearly articulating your ideas to an audience
• engaging the attention of people during seminars
• tackling nerves and answering questions calmly

Practical Points
• rehearse your presentation out loud, with attention to timing and delivery; this often helps with nervousness, memory and fluency
• using handouts, PowerPoint presentations, etc. can often help get your point across and make the talk more interesting. Showing your own enthusiasm for the subject can also contribute to the success of a talk.
• speak distinctly; varying your pitch and speed and try not to talk too quickly
• look at the audience as much as possible - not at your notes
• try to smile!

7. FREE-STANDING DISSERTATION (SEZZ4901, 1.0cu)

The free-standing dissertation is a final-year research dissertation module, available on certain SSEES degree programmes (consult your syllabus or programme administrator for further information).

Aims
• Provides an opportunity to pursue independent research on a subject related to your programme of study.
• Enables you to test your skills in producing a substantial piece of written work.
• Illustrates your achievements over the three or four years of study.

Objectives
• Choose a topic for your research.
• Search for existing literature on the subject (including classic works, up-to-date publications, periodical and internet sources)
• Demonstrate your ability to assess critically other authors’ views and to structure your own argument.
• Develop your organisational, analytical and stylistic skills.
• Make a contribution to knowledge on a particular topic.
Recommended Timetable

- It is never too early to start thinking about potential topics for your dissertation.
- You should start to think about topics that you would like to cover in your dissertation during the first term of your second year.
- The second-year Term 2 module Researching Politics and Society will cover many aspects of writing a dissertation.
- A meeting on dissertation topics will be held with the Programme Coordinator by the second term of the second year. You should select a provisional title for your dissertation by the end of the second term of the second year.
- You will be allocated a supervisor for your dissertation. You should meet your supervisor to discuss the dissertation before the end of the second term of your second year.
- You should prepare a plan of the dissertation, essential bibliography and a one page statement of the purpose/focus of your dissertation and submit it to your supervisor before the end of the third term of your second year.
- A first draft of the dissertation should be completed by the end of the second term of the final year.
- Late submission will be penalised severely (see box below). You must leave sufficient time for printing out, preparing bibliography, tables/illustrations and appendix etc. You should allow at least one week for this.

Supervisors
Since the dissertation has to be the result of your independent effort, supervision is available for guidance only. Your supervisor cannot be asked to comment on drafts of chapters, only on the detailed outline and the preliminary bibliography.

All dissertations are double-marked and are referred to an external examiner from outside UCL for independent appraisal.

Checklist before Submission
Before you submit your dissertation you should check carefully that:

- You have declared the length of the dissertation.
- You have written your candidate number (found on your exam timetable) on the coversheet, not your name or student number.
- You have signed the plagiarism section of the coversheet.
- Your table of contents has page numbers for all headings and sub-headings.
- The text is printed out double-spaced in 12pt format.
- You have included a bibliography formatted according to the requirements.
- The referencing apparatus (quotations; Harvard references, footnotes or endnotes) and the dissertation as a whole must conform to academic standards.
- Your dissertation is suitably bound, ready for submission. See http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/exams_and_awards/GI/binders for information on binding services.
8. STYLE GUIDELINES FOR REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

If you are writing in English you need to use stylistic and referencing conventions as found in English-language scholarly publications.

Every essay must include at the end a bibliography of works cited, arranged in alphabetical order by the writer’s surname, stating the full publication details of books, articles, and other materials consulted. Titles of books and journals should be italicised or underlined and titles of articles or book chapters should be indicated with inverted commas.

Every essay must also include references to works cited, quotations in the body of your essay etc. **Each time you refer to something (ideas, facts, arguments) ‘belonging’ to someone else, you must attribute to him/her in one of two ways:**

a) short citations in the text - *e.g.* ... ‘there are a substantial number of communities where English is used “intranationally” (Stevens 1980:112) even though it is not the mother tongue’. The full publication details of Stevens’s work will be given in the ‘References’ list at the end of the essay

or

b) numbered footnotes or endnotes (standard Humanities system), with bibliography at end of essay. The foot- or endnotes should include full bibliographical details the first time a work is mentioned; subsequent references to the same source can be abbreviated. *E.g.*


• You should give specific page numbers in your citations/foot-/endnotes, unless you are referring to the whole book or article.

• The difference between a 'references' list (Harvard system) and a 'bibliography' (Humanities system) is that in the Harvard system the publication date must come immediately after the author’s name.

• If your source is a book chapter in an edited collection, make sure to list the author and title of the chapter (not just the editor and book title) in your references list/bibliography. The Harvard citation should put the author’s name inside the brackets, not the editor’s.

• Please check with your Module teacher which system is preferred. Different UCL departments and SSEES programmes may have a preference for one system of referencing over another. In general, economics, politics and sociology tend to use the Harvard system, while history, languages and cultures use the Humanities system.

• Please do not use the ‘Numeric’ or ‘Vancouver’ system (one of the systems recommended by UCL Library, but not suitable for humanities and social sciences).

• Academic publishers have different house styles with regard to details of punctuation and word order. It is worth looking at some different books and journal articles to acquire an impression of the range of different but equally acceptable styles.

• Whichever system and style you use, you must stick to it and ensure consistency throughout the essay.

• Web sources should be acknowledged with as much detail as possible (not just the web address) and you should also state the date on which you accessed the source.

General Points

Non-English titles
Titles of non-English periodicals should be underlined and transliterated. There is no need to give a translation of the title, for example, *Pravda*, *Nash sovremennik*, *Russkaia mysl*.

Titles of literary and other works discussed should be given in the original, underlined and transliterated, and a translation of the title and the date of original publication should appear in parentheses, for example, ‘In Dostoevskii’s *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* (Crime and Punishment, 1866), we find that...’. Thereafter you may use either the original or translated title but be consistent (and adopt the same style for all works thus cited: don’t discuss *Crime and Punishment* in one paragraph and then go on to talk of *Brat’ia Karamazov*).

**Spelling**

Use British, not American, spelling.

**Quotation**

Verse quotations should be given in the original language. Prose quotations (unless illustrating a literary, linguistic or stylistic point) should be given in English translation. All quotations in a language other than English or the language of your essay or dissertation topic should be accompanied by a translation: it is usually preferable to provide a translation in the body of the text rather than in a footnote. For example, if you are writing a dissertation on a Russian writer, quote from the writer’s works in the original; there is no need to provide translations.

**Non-English Words**

Underline or italicise non-English words unless they are in common English usage (for example, elite, genre). The abbreviations ibid. and et al. (note full stop) are *not* underlined.

Words in Cyrillic, Greek, and so on should be underlined and transliterated (unless you are quoting a passage, in which case it is best not to transliterate).
In linguistics articles, specimen words are underlined and followed by their translations in single quotation marks, for example, *izba* ‘hut’. See also ‘Transliteration’ below.

**Place-names and personal names**

Use standard English forms for place names if they exist in current usage (Warsaw, Belgrade, Moscow and so on). Usage can change rapidly. The time-hallowed Cracow (for Kraków) is now yielding to Krakow. Where standard English forms do not exist, above all be consistent as regards place names that have changed along with the regime or frontiers. *Either* use the form current in whatever country the place is now located (for example Vilnius rather than Wilno or Vilna, even for the period between the sixteenth century and 1939) *or* else use the form which, in your judgement, most fairly reflects the period of which you write (for example Pozsony or Pressburg rather than Bratislava before periods before the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic).

For personal names, give full name on first mention, together with rank or title if appropriate. Use standard English forms, if such exist, of foreign names of historical monarchs as well as saints, for example, Ivan the Terrible, Catherine the Great, Ferdinand and Isabella, St Francis of Assisi. Otherwise transliterate, but do not mix systems within the same name (for example, not Alexis Mikhailovich or Frederick Wilhelm).

Names transliterated from Cyrillic must be in the house style transliteration (based on the Library of Congress system, see transliteration table below), for example, EI’tsin not Yeltsin, Lev Tolstoi not Leo Tolstoy, Trotskii not Trotsky, Chaikovskii not Tchaikovsky, Iosif (or I. V.) Stalin not Joseph Stalin.
Transliteration tables from Cyrillic

When transliterating from Cyrillic, SEER uses the modified Library of Congress system of transliteration without diacritics for general use (see table below).

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</table>
Vowel combinations and other transliterations that can cause difficulties

| ae | ae | Марина Цветаева | Marina Tsvetaeva |
| ay | au | Константин Паустовский | Konstantin Paustovskii |
| aя | aia | Маяковский | Maiakovskii |
| е | e | Ельцин, «Вишнёвый сад» | El’tsin, ‘Vishnevyi sad’ |
| ий | ii | Достоевский, Нижний Новгород | Dostoevskii, Nizhnii Novgorod |
| ия | iia | интеллигенция | intelligentsiia |
| ый | yi | Новый мир | Novyi mir |
| ю | iu | «Первая любовь» | ‘Pervaia liubov’ |
| юю | iiuu | малюю | maliuiu |
| я | ia | Замятин | Zamiatin |
| яя | iiaia | последняя | posledniaia |
9. PLAGIARISM

The UCL Policy on Plagiarism

You are warned that cases of plagiarism will be severely penalised in respect of all assessed coursework and take-home exam papers. SSEES’s practice is determined by UCL’s statement on plagiarism. You are required to read this carefully:

Plagiarism constitutes an examination offence under the University Regulations (NB regulations concerning plagiarism apply to all work, i.e. to 'formally assessed' coursework and coursework that is not formally assessed as well as normal examinations). Please refer to the UCL website for information on plagiarism (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/guidelines/plagiarism)

For further information, see:
What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of another person's thoughts or words or artefacts or software as though they were a student's own. Any quotation from the published or unpublished works of other persons must, therefore, be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and students should identify their sources as accurately and fully as possible. A series of short quotations from several different sources, if not clearly identified as such, constitutes plagiarism just as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source. Equally, if a student summarises another person's ideas, judgements, figures, software or diagrams, a reference to that person in the text must be made and the work referred to must be included in the bibliography.

Recourse to the services of 'ghost-writing' agencies (for example in the preparation of essays or reports) or of outside word-processing agencies which offer correction/improvement of English is strictly forbidden, and students who make use of the services of such agencies render themselves liable for an academic penalty.
Use of unacknowledged information downloaded from the internet also constitutes plagiarism.

Where part of an examination consists of 'take away' papers, essays or other work written in a student's own time, or a coursework assessment, the work submitted must be the candidate's own.

It is also illicit to reproduce material which a student has used in other work/assessment for the module or programmes concerned. Students should be aware of this 'self-plagiarism'. If in doubt, students should consult their Personal Tutor or another appropriate teacher.

Failure to observe any of the provisions of this policy or of approved departmental guidelines constitutes an examination offence under UCL and University Regulations. Examination offences will normally be treated as cheating or irregularities under the Regulations in respect of Examination Irregularities. Under these Regulations students found to have committed an offence may be excluded from all further examinations of UCL or the University or of both.

The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

What is considered plagiarism?

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

Believe it or not…

Changing the words of an original source is not sufficient to prevent plagiarism. If you have retained the essential idea of an original source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, you have still plagiarized.
Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. See the section on citation (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/guidelines/plagiarism_citation) for more information on how to cite sources properly.

The penalties for plagiarism can be surprisingly severe, ranging from failure of classes to expulsion from academic institutions!

- It doesn't matter if you intend to plagiarise or not! In the eyes of the law, and most publishers and academic institutions, any form of plagiarism is an offence that demands punitive action. Ignorance is never an excuse.
- It is even possible to plagiarise from yourself, if you are citing a work you submitted elsewhere. In most Universities this will result in a failing grade for the work, and possibly for the module!
- Plagiarism is almost always a symptom of other educational problems.

Why do students plagiarise?

There are two main types of plagiarism – intentional and unintentional. The list below is not exhaustive but contains the most commonly encountered reasons:

**On the whole unintentional:**

- Misunderstanding about citation
- Over-reliance on the original source material
- Following practices encouraged or accepted in previous educational experience or culture
- Not fully understanding when group work ceases and individual work begins
- Compensating for poor English language skills
- Poor note-taking practice

**On the whole intentional**

- Leaving the work to the last minute and taking the easy option
- Needing to succeed
- Sheer panic
- Thinking that it is easy to get away with it
- Having problems with the workload
• Copying others is easier than original work
• Sensing that the teacher will not mind

What does this mean in practice for you, as a student at UCL?

It means you CAN’T do the following:

• Cut and paste from electronic journals, websites or other sources to create a piece of work.
• Use someone else's work as your own.
• Recycle essays or practical work of other people or your own (this is self plagiarism).
• Employ a professional ghostwriting firm or anyone else to produce work for you.
• Produce a piece of work based on someone else's ideas without citing them.

So what CAN you do?

• You can quote from sources providing you use quotation marks and cite the source (this includes websites). See www.ucl.ac.uk/Library/CitationPlagiarism.doc for how to cite references.
• You can paraphrase (take information from a piece of work and rewrite it in a new form) but you must still mention the source.
• In the case of joint practical or project work (or some group projects) individuals may use the same data, but the interpretation and conclusions derived from that data i.e. the ‘write-up’ must be their own.

Key points:

• Put inverted commas around the quotation(s)
• Acknowledge the source(s) in a reference
• Acknowledge the source and give the reference
• Record sources/references when taking notes
• List all your sources in the bibliography
• Copying another student’s work is plagiarism.
• Avoid ‘self-plagiarism’
Detecting Plagiarism and Turnitin®
It is a common misconception that plagiarism is hard to detect. Academics are experienced and skilled readers and can readily detect a change in style which is the tell-tale sign that you are using someone else’s words; internet sources are easily traced using a search engine.

You should be aware that UCL now uses a sophisticated detection system (Turnitin®) to scan work for evidence of plagiarism. This system has access to billions of sources worldwide (websites, journals etc.) as well as work previously submitted to UCL and other universities. Most departments will need work to be submitted electronically as well as in paper form.

Penalties for Plagiarism
Plagiarism is a serious matter and is subject to penalties that can range from reducing the mark or giving a mark of zero to barring from examinations. Even a reduced mark can affect the overall classification of your degree by reducing the number of marks that you have in a particular class (First, 2.1 etc.).

A first case of plagiarism, unless its seriousness merits otherwise, will normally be handled in the Department; second or repeated offences, and other cases as required by the regulations, are referred to the Registrar.

10. REVISION FOR EXAMINATIONS

Organising Your Revision
• Make a list of topics to be covered and deal with them systematically.
• Reorganise your module materials (collate lecture notes, reading texts and notes and essays into coherent topic bundles).
• Add to and comment on your old essays and notes - you know more than you did then.

Forming a Study Group
• Practise past exam papers and give feedback to each other.
• Discuss different topics and the relevant issues.
• Take turns to give a presentation on an issue and open the floor for discussion.
• Read each other’s essays on shared topics to get different perspectives but do not borrow each other’s notes.

Planning your time
• Timetable your revision programme (e.g. daily study slots).
• Allow time for breaks.
• Review what you have revised regularly.
• Allow time for relaxation and exercise.
• Think of revision as a process of consolidation. This is an opportunity for you to make sense of the whole year's work.

Tackling Exam Papers
An examination should be seen as an opportunity, not a threat. The people setting your questions do not want you to fail, they want you to pass. The questions are not designed to catch you out but to give you the chance to show what you have learned over the year.

Remember - you are unlikely to be asked to give an account of something, rather you will be asked to account for something. In other words, what is usually required is an argument, not a description.

Reviewing the Exam Paper
• Do not attempt to write anything until you have read the whole paper.
• Check how many questions need to be answered.
• Is it a free choice or do you have to choose one from each section?
• Read each question to make sure you understand what is being asked of you.
• Select the question you feel happiest with and put number 1 beside it.
• Choose the next best question and number it 2 and so on.
• Once you have made your choice stick to it.

Interpreting the Question
• Look at your questions carefully.
• What type of question is it (compare, assess, how far do you agree with... etc.)?
• What are the content assumptions underlying the question?
• What are the discourse assumptions?
• What is the issue to be discussed?
• What do you think about the issue?

Be very careful to focus on the question asked and do not try to turn it into one you wish had been asked.

For example, consider the following Politics exam question:

‘To what extent are war and diplomacy alternative or complementary approaches to the resolution of international conflict?’
• The question is asking for your opinion - how far do you agree with the proposition?
• The content assumptions are that war and diplomacy are both involved in international conflict (and all the relevant aspects of your module which have considered this).
• The discourse assumption is that there are different views on the subject.
• The issue is connected with whether they are alternative or complementary approaches (this will have been discussed during the module).
• Your opinion is whether and how far you agree with the statement (and the arguments you will use to support your opinion).

Opening Statement
A good opening statement must be fairly brief and to the point. You must reiterate the question in some way, thereby taking possession of it, but avoid repeating the question in your answer. This will entail stating the issue. You must also suggest what you think about the issue so that the reader is ready for your ideas and the argument you develop. It is important to remember that every sentence you write should enlighten the reader as to how you are interpreting the question and how you will be managing the content. This approach serves three important functions:

• It gets you started.
• It provides the reader with a general idea of where you intend to go with the essay.
• If you run out of time and cannot write a conclusion, at least you will have Indicated your overall view thereby giving the essay some kind of resolution.

Planning/Mapping out the Essay
Once you know where you want to go, you have to decide how you are going to get there. This is when you should note down:

• Topics you need to cover
• Terms/concepts you may need to define
• Examples you might use to illustrate your arguments (sometimes more economical than explanations + definitions)
• Authorities you might wish to draw on as support (models, theories, ideas, etc.)
• Evidence to support any arguments
• Theoretical models you may need to apply

Organisation of Ideas/Information
You need to work out how to organise your notes above in a way that will take the reader to your intended end point — as reflected in your introduction:

• Positioning of ideas/points/topics
• **Argument strategies** — e.g. argument/counter-argument
• **Sections to develop points**
• **Paragraphs to deal with aspects of points**
• **Use a flow chart or numbering system to help you demonstrate the structure**

**Writing the Rest of the Essay**

The next bit to write might be an explicit in-text map for the reader.

e.g. This essay will look at the issue from three perspectives (limiting the scope). The first will be concerned with the nature of war and diplomacy, the second will consider the role of each in international conflict, and the third will discuss how they interrelate in such a situation (indicating essay structure/direction/organisation of argument)

Having done this you are now on course to complete the task without wandering off the track. Make sure that you have a concluding paragraph or section which sums up concisely how you have answered the question.