**GUIDANCE ON ESSAY/DISSERTATION WRITING, REFERENCING, AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM**

A good essay or dissertation needs careful thought and planning. The key to success is to ensure that you select a topic (whether from the list of questions provided, or in some cases, independently) that can be adequately and thoroughly researched within the time available and presented within the word limit. Successful essays have a narrow enough focus to allow a good depth of analysis. If you are answering a specific essay question, make sure that you do answer this question. You should develop a clear line of argument that leads to a clear and well thought-out conclusion. Ensuring that you are offering an argument will help you to avoid the mere reiteration of facts, other people’s ideas, or an unstructured narrative. It is important not to confuse description or summary with analysis and argument. Even if a subject is well known and widely written about, every student should be able to bring something new or personal to the material. Many tutors will provide supplementary guidance on writing essays relevant to particular modules.

1. The text must be typed on A4-size paper; hand-written submissions are not acceptable. Use double spacing. Leave adequate margins, especially at the left. Number the pages and provide a word count on the essay cover sheet.

2. You **must provide a bibliography** of works consulted. Whenever you use or quote from a published source, you should give a precise reference to it, preferably in a note and including a specific page reference where relevant. If you quote the exact words of a source you must surround the quoted words with inverted commas. Unacknowledged verbal quotation may constitute plagiarism, which is a serious offence (see below). For short quotations from Latin or ancient Greek authors it is sufficient to distinguish the words by the use of italics or of Greek type. Longer quotations should have a paragraph to themselves and be indented.

3. It is important to **plan your time** and to **note your deadlines** as early as possible, to ensure that you are able to manage your work and, particularly, to ensure that you have adequate time to proof-read and edit your writing. This is very important and too often overlooked.

**Quoting, Referring and Acknowledging**

1. Distinguish between quoting a passage, whether from an ancient or a modern source, and referring to it. You should only *quote* the actual words of passages when these are significant and your discussion depends on the reader having access to them; but you should **always** give the *reference* to a passage whether you quote it or just mention it in support of your argument.

2. If you refer to a passage without quoting it, say enough to make it clear to your reader why you think it is relevant to what you’re saying - you cannot and should not rely on your readers going and looking up all the references for themselves, or on them knowing what they say without looking them up, even if they are experts in the subject. In any case, what they want to know is why *you* think a passage is relevant to your argument, not to be left to work out for themselves why you might think it is.

3. The Department recommends that you adopt the Harvard style of referencing (which allows you to be economical with your references and save words for argument and analysis), which works as follows:

For **references to secondary literature** in **footnotes**:

AUTHOR (DATE), page numbers for specific references

For **listings in the bibliography** (in alphabetical order)

**FOR BOOKS:** Surname, Initials. (PUBLICATION YEAR) *Book Title*, Place of Publication: Publisher

**FOR CHAPTERS IN BOOKS**: Surname, Initials. (PUBLICATION YEAR) ‘Title of Chapter’, in Editor(s), *Book Title*, Place of Publication: Publisher, page numbers of chapter

**FOR ARTICLES IN JOURNALS**: Surname, Initials. (PUBLICATION YEAR) ‘Title of Article’, *Title of Journal* volume number, page numbers of article

**FOR THESES**: Surname, Initials. (PUBLICATION YEAR) *Thesis Title* Ph.D/M.A. thesis, Academic Institution

**FOR E-BOOKS:** Surname, Initials. (PUBLICATION YEAR) *Book title* [Online] Series title and volume if applicable. Edition - if not the first. Place of publication: Publisher. Available from – URL. [Accessed: date]

**FOR WEBSITES:** Author of website Surname, Initials or WEBSITE name if no author is available. (Year) *Title of website.* Any numbers if necessary or available if website is part of a series. [Online] Available from: URL. [Accessed: date]

[Where you need to refer to more than one work by the same author from the same year add a letter to the date, e.g. “Owen (1964a)”.]

Here are a few examples:

Carey, C. (1989a) ‘The performance of the victory ode’, *American Journal of Philology* 110, 545-65.

Carey, C. (1989b) ‘Two transitions in Pindar’, *Classical Quarterly* 39, 287-95.

Carey, C. (2000) *Democracy in classical Athens*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press.

Carey, C. (2007) ‘The rhetoric of diabole.’ [Online] Available from http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/3281/1/3281.pdf [Accessed 7 August 2015]

Carey, C. (2009) ‘Genre, occasion and performance’, in F. Budelmann, ed., *The Cambridge companion to Greek lyric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 21-38.

For **references to ancient authors**, use the standard system of references where there is one (e.g. Stephanus page numbers for Plato) and avoid using the page numbers of translations, as these vary (unless indeed you actually want to comment on the way a particular translator has handled a passage). You can check your lecture handouts or secondary literature for the appropriate way of referencing particular primary texts (or check with your lecturer).

4. It is better to use footnotes at the end of each page rather than endnotes (because the former are easier for the reader and easier for you to double check). Whatever system you adopt, you must ensure that it is consistent.

5. When planning and proof-reading your essay, make sure that you pay attention to the marking criteria for coursework (available in the Departmental Handbook). Examiners are looking for the following (as set out in the marking criteria):independence of thoughtcritical evaluation of primary source materialability to sustain a relevant and focused argumentclarity of presentationclarity and accuracy of expressionunderstanding of the issues

skills of analysis and synthesis – i.e. seeing what points are relevant to an issue, how discussion can be structured, and the ability to see and express how the parts contribute to the whole.

**Plagiarism**

Essays, while based upon what you have read, heard and discussed, must be entirely your own work. It is very important that you avoid plagiarism, that is the presentation of another person’s thoughts or words as though they were your own. Plagiarism is a form of cheating, and is regarded by UCL as a serious offence, which can lead to a student failing a module or modules, or even deregistration.

UCL 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. You need to submit your coursework both electronically via Turnitin as well as in paper form. For further information, visit <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/guidelines/plagiarism>

Any quotation from the published or unpublished works of other persons must be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and students should identify their sources as accurately and fully as possible. All use you make of the words or ideas of others *must* be acknowledged both in specific notes and in the bibliography at the end of your work.

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.

**Why should I cite my references?**

* Referring to your source material gives authority to your work and demonstrates the breadth of your research
* Your list of citations will enable readers of your work to find the information sources for themselves
* Failure to credit sources of information used for an essay, report, project, journal article or book constitutes plagiarism, and for this you may be penalised. UCL policy on **plagiarism** is stated in the Registry guidelines at<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/guidelines/plagiarism>
* Students 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 systems worldwide (websites, journals etc.) as well as work previously submitted to UCL and other universities.

##### Tips for avoiding plagiarism

* Cite all your sources, whether you have read or heard them
* Keep full records of every source of information you use
* Place quotation marks around any words you copy verbatim and credit the source
* Use your own words when summarising or paraphrasing someone else’s words

##### Some Standard Abbreviations

Anon. unknown author

c., ca. circa, for approximate dates

cf. compare with

chap. chapter

ed., eds. editor, editors

et al. and others (et alii or et alia)

ibid. in the same work cited just above (ibidem)

loc. cit. in the place (or work) cited (loco citato)

n.d. no date

n.s. new series

s.l. no place of publication (sine loco)

s.n. name of publisher unknown (sine nomine)

op. cit. from the same source as one cited previously (opere citato)

p., pp. page, pages

proc. proceedings

repr. reprint

rev. revised e.g. rev. ed.

supp. or suppl. supplement

trans. translator