

Department of German Studies

**Guidelines on Assessed Essays and
Examinations**

2006-07

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1. ASSESSED ESSAYS

Assessed essays should be presented in accordance with established scholarly conventions. Sources should be precisely acknowledged, and a bibliography of works consulted, plus, where relevant, a filmography must be included. It is important to bear this in mind and note full bibliographical details when you are researching your essay.

You also need to be aware of two important University regulations on 'cheating' and 'supervision of assessed essays':

University Regulations are quite specific on the matter of "cheating", which is defined as:

“An attempt to benefit oneself, or another, by deceit or fraud. This shall include deliberately reproducing the work of another person or persons without acknowledgement. A significant amount of unacknowledged copying shall be deemed to constitute prima facie evidence of deliberation, and in such cases the burden of establishing otherwise shall rest with the candidate against whom the allegation is made.” (University Regulation I2)

This is of relevance to at least two aspects of your assessed essays:

1.1 Collaborative Work

Although you are encouraged by the Department to work together, the notion of collaboration does not extend to copying from or simply re-phrasing other students' essays.

1.2 Acknowledgement of Sources

Where, in your essays, you draw on or use the work of others in any way, you should adopt either of the following two conventions:

- a) Paraphrase or summarise A BRIEF SECTION OF the work you have consulted, and then acknowledge your source in a footnote. An example would be as follows:

One critic has argued that Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* is best understood as a representation of masculine fears of femininity.¹

Your footnote might then read:

1. Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* (London, 1988), p.72

- b) Quote directly from the work consulted. In this case, anything directly 'lifted' from that work MUST be placed in quotation marks, as follows:

Andreas Huyssen suggests that, in *Metropolis*, “femininity...poses a threat to the male world of high technology, efficiency, and instrumental rationality.”²

Your footnote would read similarly to 1) above, i.e.:

2. Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* (London, 1988), p.72

The message here is that you **MUST** acknowledge your source, even in cases where the actual wording may be your own. Specific arguments derived from a particular source should be attributed as such; simply to include your source in a bibliography appended is not enough.

By acknowledging your sources properly you will not only avoid the suspicion of cheating, **you will also gain credit for thoroughness.**

If you do not acknowledge your sources properly, you lay yourself open to a charge of **plagiarism**. Plagiarism involves the unacknowledged copying or summarising of arguments from another source. If you are caught plagiarising, your work may be disqualified. You should remember also that unacknowledged lifting of secondary literature, whether in printed or electronic form, is not difficult to spot: lecturers are familiar with critical literature, and can usually spot shifts of register, syntax and terminology. Spot checks in suspect material are easily carried out.

c) **Conventions for footnotes and references**

The following procedure is recommended:

- (i) The most straightforward way to acknowledge other people's work is to use numbered endnotes or footnotes and the following form of reference:

References to **books**:

- Author
- Title of book (italicised or underlined. Either will do, but be consistent.)
- (Brackets:) Place of publication
- Year of publication (close brackets)
- Page(s) from which information is drawn

Example: Anthony Phelan, *Rilke: Neue Gedichte* (London, 1992), p.8.

References to **articles** in books or journals should be given as follows:

- Author
- Title of article (in quotation marks)
- 'In'
- Author and title etc. of book (as above)
- Pages from which information is drawn

- OR
- Author
- Title of article (in quotation marks)
- Title of journal
- Volume number (and year of publication)
- Page(s) from which information is drawn

Example:

Derek McCulloch, 'A Lesson on the King of Prussia: A New Look at the Compositions of Frederick the Great', *German Life and Letters*, N.S. 48 (1994-95), 1-11.

- (ii) If you make subsequent references to the same work, you should use the author's surname and an unambiguous short title, thus:

Phelan, *Rilke*, p.42.

- (iii) Quotes from films should be given in the original German. You do not need to footnote film quotes, but must include the title quoted in your filmography.
- (iv) You should not allow notes to proliferate unduly. One way of reducing notes (particularly when you refer frequently to a clearly identified primary source), is to insert page numbers (in parentheses) in the main body of your essay, after giving the first reference in full as in the following example:

Theodor Fontane, *Frau Jenny Treibel*, in *Werke, Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Walter Keitel and Helmuth Nürnberger, 20 vols (Munich, 1962-94), Abt. I, Bd. 4 (1974), 360. (Subsequent references follow quotations in parentheses.)

- (v) A full **bibliography** of work **actually consulted** should be placed at the end of the essay. Merely naming the primary text(s) with which your essay is concerned does not constitute a bibliography.

The bibliography should be divided into two sections:

- 1) Primary texts (in most cases the novels/plays/poems) etc. you are writing about.
- 2) Secondary literature.

Within each section works should be listed alphabetically (by author).

- (vi) **Illustrations:** only use illustrations if you are discussing them in the body of the essay. Do NOT simply use them as ornament. They should be labelled Fig. 1, Fig. 2 etc.
- (vii) **Filmography.** You **must** include the following, in the order given:

Video or Film Title (underlined; alternatively, italics)

Director/Filmmaker

Production OR release Date (separated from the director etc. by a comma).

Example:

Die Ehe der Maria Braun. Dir Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1978

If you wish to highlight the special features of the version you have viewed, you **may** include the following details, placed in the order given here, and situated between the name of the director, and the date.

Key Actors or other Key Performers.

Version, release, or other distinguishing information, if appropriate

Format. (e.g. Film, Video, DVD, Videodisc, etc. **Note:** indicate the format you watched, NOT the format of the original work).

Studio Name OR Production Company OR Distributor.

Examples:

Citizen Kane. Dir. Orson Welles. Perfs. Orson Welles, Joseph Cotton. Film. RKO Radio Pictures, 1941.

À Bout de Souffle (Breathless). Dir. Jean-Luc Godard. Perfs. Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jean Seberg, Liliane David. Videocassette. Prod Georges de Beauregard-S.N.C., 1960; Dist. Connoisseur Video Collection, 1989.

Metropolis. Dir. Fritz Lang. Perfs. Gustav Fröhlich, Brigitte Helm, Alfred Abel. Reconstructed DVD release. UFA, 1927; dist. Connoisseur Video, 2000.

2. Internet citations

References must be given for all internet sources consulted. They should read as follows:

Author of page/s. 'name/title of page/s' *name of site*, location, date, type of publication, date accessed.

Example:

Fux, Nani, 'Kleine Fluchten. Die neuen Filme aus China', *artehock: point of view*, http://www.artehock.de/film/text/artikel/2002/12=05_china.htm, 2002, World Wide Web publication, accessed December 2002

3. University guidelines with regard to essay supervision read as follows:

Essay Supervision

“Assessed work contributing credit towards final degree classification is comparable to work completed under examination conditions in that it is necessary to ensure that such work is the candidate's own. Supervisors may offer general advice and critical comment on such work at all stages but shall not at any stage suggest amendments to drafts in such a way as to contravene the principle that work submitted should be the candidate's own work.”

These guidelines were designed not in order to deter students from seeking advice but rather to indicate the limits of supervision. That is to say, you are encouraged to seek advice **at any stage** in the essay writing process where you feel critical comment would be helpful. This might include asking a lecturer to look at a proposed structure, but would exclude asking them to read a section.

You should bear in mind, however, that the comments of a supervisor on an essay relate essentially to the progress of the individual student; it is not his/her job to anticipate the verdict of the examiners: you should not ask your supervisor what mark s/he would give your essay.

4. WRITING YOUR ASSESSED ESSAY

Consider the following when writing assessed essays (NB: these points relate directly to the assessment criteria used by markers: see p. 14 Appendix 1):

1. Have I planned my essay properly?

Ideally you should be able to structure your answer on one page of A4. “Spider diagrams” seem popular, although beware of ones which get out of control. Once you have devised a satisfactory plan, stick to it!

2. Does my essay answer the question?

Essays are invitations to argue a case based on informed judgements. A good essay is one that defines its terms of reference (see 3), analyses the primary material (see 6), considers the secondary literature (see 7) and offers reasoned argument and a balanced conclusion.

3. Am I defining key concepts adequately?

Essay questions usually have key terms in the title. These are not one-dimensional self-evident concepts. They are chosen precisely because they allow for a variety of different readings. Your essay should make clear what particular interpretation of those terms you are using as a basis for your analysis.

4. If the question asks me to, am I providing a genuine comparison and contrast?

Such questions are usually best answered on a “point-by-point basis”, i.e. by devising an analytical structure based on the key issues implied in the question. This enables you to construct an argument, and makes repetition less likely.

5. If the question asks me to, am I interpreting “representation” and “portrayal” correctly?

Remember these words require you to analyse how an issue is addressed in a text, i.e. to show how, for instance, form, genre, narrative perspective, language, imagery, stage directions, camera work, editing, mise-en-scene etc. affect the way we as reader bzw. viewer perceive the issues raised by the text.

6. Am I really analysing, as opposed to telling the plot?

Assume the reader knows the texts as well as you do. Don’t tell them what happens, but why, and what it means in relation to the question you’re answering.

7. Am I making correct use of secondary literature?

Use critics constructively, i.e. as a stimulus, rather than a substitute, for your own argument. Absence of a wide range of secondary literature should not deter you from writing on a topic. Have faith in your own judgement!

8. Have I proofread my essay properly?

Make sure you re-read your final version to eliminate typos and ambiguities. If you're fed up with re-reading for the umpteenth time, offer a friend a glass of wine, a pint or *Kaffee und Kuchen* to do it for you. They will often pick up on things you're too tired to notice. If you can get your friend to tell you whether the case you're arguing is cogently and lucidly expressed, as well as persuasive, *um so besser!*

9. Do I acknowledge all my sources correctly?

(See p. 4)

PRESENTATION

At all times you should pay particular attention to clarity and correctness of expression, and accuracy of spelling and punctuation in English. (If you use a word processor you may use a spell-checker, but must bear in mind its limitations. It may not give the appropriate spelling of principal/ple, their/there/they're, who's/whose etc.) A grammar checker is also useful.

1. You should submit your essays in typed or word-processed form with 1.5 spacing in pitch 12. Remember that computer discs involve risks to the data stored on them. If you write with a Word Processor, work on the hard-drive (normally the C or D drive), and be sure to **back up your work** regularly. USB sticks offer a good method of back-up. Also allow sufficient time for printing.
2. **Every** essay should be submitted with the appropriate cover sheet, which can be collected from the Departmental Secretary. You should sign the statement at the bottom, which declares that you are familiar with the University Regulations on assessed work and that the accompanying essay is your own work.
3. In order that departmental procedures for **anonymous marking** shall function smoothly you must be sure to enter your name and university number clearly where indicated on the cover sheet. You should provide no more information than that which is expressly required. **Please don't print your name at the top of each page.**

6. ESSAY DEADLINES

The **dates** for submission of all assessed essays are in your handbook; the **time** for submission is always **12 noon**. Deadlines are to be regarded as absolute, e.g. "by 12.00 on the first Wednesday of the summer term", means precisely that, and to submit your essay **at any point** after the time specified will mean you have failed to meet the deadline and should expect to be penalised.

Where no extension has been granted, the penalty will be 5% per day.

When submitting an essay you must countersign the list in the Departmental Secretary's office.

You should state word length at the end of your essay. Footnotes should not be included in the word count.

6.1 CRITERIA FOR EXTENSION OF ESSAY DEADLINES

1. Where a student seeks an extension on medical grounds, a medical certificate must be submitted to the Director of Undergraduate Studies, who will decide on the length of the extension.
2. Where a student seeks an extension on personal (i.e. non-medical) grounds, the initial approach should be to his/her personal tutor, who, where appropriate, will refer the student to the Senior Tutor; the Director of Undergraduate Studies will decide whether an extension should be granted.
3. You should note that technical problems arising from word processing - such as problems of **file conversion** or **printing** - would not normally be accepted as grounds for an extension. Save your work frequently and always have a back-up copy of files. Do not leave printing until the last minute. If you work via the University network, use the H-drive. Provided it is saved, work on that drive cannot be 'lost'. USB sticks are also a good 'back-up'.

Requests for extension of deadlines **cannot** be considered **after** the deadline has passed.

6.2 LATE SUBMISSION OF ESSAYS

1. The University policy on penalties, to which the Department adheres, calls for a reduction in marks of 5% per day, or per part thereof, for the late submission of work where no formal extension has been granted. Where an essay is submitted late, **a penalty will normally be imposed** unless there are strong mitigating circumstances. Saturday and Sunday are counted as full days in this context, and penalties imposed accordingly.
2. A student who wishes that penalty to be waived or reduced should make the case to his/her personal tutor, who will report to the examination board with whom the final decision rests.

7. ORAL EXAMINATIONS

- 7.1 First-year oral examinations** last fifteen minutes, during which time you will be required to give a presentation lasting approx. 8 mins. on a topic of your choice and approved by your spoken German tutor and then to answer questions on that topic.
- 7.2 Second-year oral examinations** also last fifteen minutes. Here however you will be expected to be able to discuss two topics from a list of five topics, all of which will have been discussed in class during the year. The examiner will choose which two topics at the beginning of the examination.
- 7.3 Final-year oral examinations** last 25 minutes and are conducted by two examiners. Here students will give a presentation for ten minutes maximum on a topic of their own choice and approved by their spoken German tutor, followed by a maximum ten minutes' discussion of that topic.

During the second part of the examination students will be asked to discuss a second topic chosen by the examiners from a list of five topics discussed in class during the year.

7.4 PREPARATION FOR ORAL EXAMINATIONS

You are advised to prepare your topics thoroughly and in depth. Whilst preparation is important, you should not simply recite material verbatim from memory. The best-prepared candidates have sufficient command of their topic to be able to talk freely using a few *Stichworte* on a small card as an *aide-memoire* or even a PowerPoint presentation on a laptop. You should also be able to discuss topics at an intellectual level appropriate to the year of the course..

7.5 CRITERIA EMPLOYED IN ORAL EXAMINATIONS

You should aim to conduct the conversation at an appropriate level. Category 6 (below) means deploying the specialist language appropriate to the topic. Register means "Er hat die Maßnahmen scharf verurteilt" is preferable to "er fand es sehr schlecht und hat etwas dagegen gesagt".

The following criteria are considered when assessing and marking performance in German language oral examinations:

- 1. Topic content**
Thoroughness of preparation, extent of research, coverage of topic, intellectual level.
- 2. Presentation**
Organisation of material, clarity of structure, retention of examiner's interest.
- 3. Pronunciation, accent, intonation, diction**
To what extent does the German sound authentic?
- 4. Sprachgefühl**
Ability to think in target language; freedom from first language interference,

use of idioms.

5. Comprehension and response

Immediacy, spontaneity and fluency thereof.

6. Complexity and range of vocabulary and structures; Register

Use of specialist terminology where appropriate, accurate use of verb/noun combinations (e.g. avoidance of *kriegen* and *machen*).

7. Grammar

Accurate use of adjectival endings, verb/noun agreement, cases and prepositions, word order, verb conjugation.

8. WRITTEN EXAMINATION PREPARATION AND TECHNIQUE

Revision

- The best preparation for examinations starts right at the beginning of the module with good note-taking practice.
- Noting module aims and objectives and checking past exam papers gives you an idea of what the examiners expect you to achieve by the end of the module. Past examination papers are available online via Warwick Insite.
- Reread your lecture and seminar notes. Arrange to swap your assessed essay with those of friends. A process of gradual reduction is often useful when trying to memorise information and ideas. This involves condensing your notes into ever-smaller units, until you can fit all your key points on to one small card. Quotations can be recalled by memorising key words.
- In the summer term time-management is vital: devise a schedule for each module, and stick to it.

8.1 WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

- a) Read the rubric carefully. Do as it says.
- b) Read the entire question paper. Decide which questions you are best able to answer. At this stage strategies vary. Some prefer to boost confidence by getting one answer on paper right away. Others prefer to make brief notes on all 2/3 questions as soon as seeing the question triggers the thoughts, lest they forget in one/two hours' time. You have to decide which method suits you best. But either way, make sure you have plans for each essay and stick to them.
- c) Make sure you answer the right number of questions and divide the time appropriately (note that in certain exams not all questions carry equal weight). Simple arithmetic shows that two answers have to be extremely good indeed to compensate for a non-existent third. Even if you mismanage the time and have only 5 to 10 minutes left for the final answer, get some notes down, however brief. They might make the vital difference.
- d) Read the question carefully. Decide what it is the question is asking you to do. If you are asked to what extent you agree or disagree with an assertion or a

quotation, or to compare and contrast two works, make sure you do that. Often candidates treat exam questions as an excuse to write as much as they know about a topic or text. A good answer will always adapt revised material to the needs of the question. Consider the key words in the question. Often their meaning is not self-evident. Remember that examination questions are devised to enable candidates not just to show what they know, but also to engage critically with the material, by arguing a case.

- e) Examination answers are not the same as assessed essays. It is not possible to be as thorough or as detailed. Quotations are a useful addition to exam answers, but you are not expected quote to the same extent as in an assessed essay. It's important to get to the point quickly in an examination answer.

The first 30-40% of marks for each question are relatively easy to clock up. Thereafter it's a matter of:

- a) Does the candidate know the text/topic well?
- b) Is s/he answering the question?
- c) Is the essay well structured?
- d) Is the answer well written, is it easy to read?
- e) Is the answer interesting?

8.2 LANGUAGE EXAMINATIONS

- **Read the rubric** Some language examinations ask students from different German and German-related degree programmes to do different things, so make sure you don't, for instance, translate the wrong passage, or translate a passage provided for a comprehension exercise.
- **Read the entire paper** Highlight words you don't know, phrases you can't follow. That way they can be logged in your unconscious, which will work on them whilst you're doing other things.
- **Reading comprehension** Read the questions before you read the passage. That way you know what you're looking for in the text.
- **Translation into German** (First year) This is more a grammar than a vocabulary test. If you are unsure of adjectival endings, write them down. It will give you confidence. Read the passage carefully with a view to spotting grammar points.
- **Translation into English** Remember the guidance in material handed out in the course of the year, and try to put it into practice.
- **Leave enough time at the end for proof reading** Ideally you should read your answer several times, restricting each read-through to one particular grammar point e.g. position of verb, genders, adj. endings, cases, etc.
- If the marks vary for each question spend the appropriate amount of time on each.

APPENDIX 1

Essay-marking Criteria for Options and Core modules

Class	%	QUALITIES
I	70%+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent perceptive and accurate analysis of primary material coupled with some evidence of original thought/research • Ability to engage critically with – and go beyond – secondary material • Very clear grasp of historical and critical contexts • Essay is clearly structured and reads very fluently • Sustained address to the issues the question raised • Quotations properly referenced • Bibliography/filmography complete and properly presented
II, I	60-69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good or very good perceptive and accurate analysis of primary material • Critical terms are properly defined • Good grasp of historical and critical contexts • Secondary sources are properly evaluated • Essay is clearly structured; argument develops logically • Sustained address to the issues the question raised • Quotations properly referenced and evidence that works/films cited in bibliography/filmography have been used
II, ii	50-59%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory analysis of primary material • Limited explanation of historical and critical contexts • Some confusion over the use of critical terms • Address to the question not consistently sustained. Inclusion of some material not relevant to the question • Some over-reliance on secondary sources used and/or some key secondary sources not properly evaluated • Inadequate use of quotations • Some errors in referencing and/or presentation of bibliography • Structure unclear in places; some errors in syntax, punctuation and spelling
III	40-49%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited analysis of primary material • Very limited understanding of critical terms • Historical and critical contexts inadequately explained • Little or no evaluation of secondary sources • Little or no use of quotations • Quotations not properly referenced and little evidence that works/films cited in bibliography/filmography have in fact been consulted • Multiple errors in presentation of bibliography • More a general essay on the text than a sustained address to the question • Essay is poorly structured; errors in English syntax, punctuation and register
Fail	0-39%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no evidence of an adequate engagement with the primary material • General essay about the text/s that does not address the question at all • Little or no evidence of an ability to tackle other issues relating to the topic • Little or no evidence of any sustained attempt to engage with historical and critical contexts

Essay marking Criteria for Second and Final Year German Language Essays

	70+	60-69	50-59	40-49	39-
Content	All aspects of the topic are covered with excellent use of illustrative examples. A wide range of good and appropriate ideas show a very good understanding of the topic and originality. All facts are correct.	Many aspects of the topic are covered using good, illustrative examples. A range of good and appropriate ideas show a good understanding of the topic and some originality. Most facts are correct.	Some aspects of the topic are covered using some illustrative examples. An understanding of the topic is shown using some good and appropriate ideas. The facts are mainly correct.	A few illustrative examples and a limited number of appropriate ideas reveal only a basic understanding of the topic. Some important/ relevant facts are incorrect.	A lack of ideas and the use of mainly incorrect facts point to a very limited understanding of the topic.
Structure/ Argumentation/ Coherence	The essay is well organised throughout and all ideas are well linked showing a coherent argumentation at an intellectually complex level. An original viewpoint is developed.	The essay is mostly well organised and most ideas are well linked showing a reasonably intellectually demanding level of argument. A good attempt at developing an original viewpoint is made.	Certain ideas are linked providing evidence of some intellectually organised argument though this may not always be effective or apparent throughout. Little attempt is made to develop an original viewpoint.	Although there is some attempt to structure the argument it is mainly weak or inappropriate. Very few ideas are effectively linked.	The ideas are either not linked or are poorly linked showing an incoherent or random structure.
Grammar/ Syntax	A wide range of complex grammatical structures used with consistent accuracy show a very good command of German grammar and syntax.	A range of grammatical structures are attempted, many of which are complex. Although these may not always be accurate, a good command of German grammar and syntax is apparent.	The grammatical structures used are predominantly simple. The level of accuracy shows a reasonably sound understanding of German grammar and syntax.	Hardly any complex grammar is attempted and there are some intrusive errors in the simple structures used. Numerous significant errors in basic German grammar, syntax and spelling occur.	Repeated, serious errors in the use of German grammar, syntax and spelling severely restrict effective communication.
Style/ Vocabulary	A broad range of vocabulary is used to very good effect. Topic-related terminology is accurately and effectively used. The choice of register is always appropriate.	A broad range of vocabulary is used to good effect. There is some use of accurate topic-related terminology. The choice of register is mostly correct.	The range of vocabulary used is limited. There are few examples of correctly used topic-related terms. There is some awareness of the appropriate use of register.	The vocabulary is insufficient, too simple and impedes presentation of the topic. There is little awareness of an appropriate use of register.	The essay shows an inadequate use of vocabulary, multiple errors and a lack of any awareness of register.

Content/ Structure/ Argumentation/ Coherence = 50%

Grammar/ Syntax/ Style/ Vocabulary = 50%

GE401 Final Year German Language Essay Guidelines

Content/ structure and language are weighted 50%/ 50%

The following criteria should be taken into account when writing an essay:

Content/ Structure:

- Quantity and quality of arguments; coverage of all/ most important aspects; context/ background knowledge
- Has the question in the title been read carefully and answered adequately?
- Do the arguments develop convincingly, does the text (argumentation) flow?
- Has the answer been thought through? Has the student developed his/ her own viewpoint? Is the answer original? (True originality being a hallmark of a first class essay!)

Language:

- Accuracy: Mistakes in order of severity:
 1. incomprehensible sentences/ structures
 2. interference (direct translation from English into German etc.)
 3. word order
 4. verbs (endings, irregular verbs, perfect with “haben” and “sein”, passive with “werden” and “sein”)
 5. gender, cases, prepositions
 6. adjective endings
 7. the use of the article
 8. spelling
- Register/ Style
- Vocabulary (use of appropriate vocabulary, technical terms)
- Readability: Does the text (language) flow? How convincing is the text as a piece of German?

Guidelines on length of essay:

You should bear in mind that quality is of greater importance than quantity, but as a rule of thumb, your essay should be no less than 600 words and no more than 1200 words in length.

