

ENG1303 Assessment guidelines 2020

Course information

For the course content and learning outcomes, please see the course description here:

<https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/ilos/ENG1303/>

The current syllabus can be found here:

<https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/ilos/ENG1303/v20/pensumliste/index.html>

- This course features 12 double lectures (2 hours each) and 8 double seminar group sessions (2 hours each).
- To be allowed to take the final exam, students must have attended at least 6 out of 8 group sessions [this requirement has been somewhat affected by the switch to digital teaching approximately halfway through the course] and have had a 5-page essay approved on a topic chosen from a list provided by the course instructor. Students may write their exam essay on *any* text on the syllabus, *including* those set for the qualifying essay.
- The final exam can draw on the entire syllabus, which means that students should be prepared to answer questions on any of the texts covered during the lectures and seminars.
- At the exam, which this year takes the form of a 4-hour home exam, students are given access to an online English-English dictionary, and to syllabus primary texts. They are not permitted to access supplementary material either online or in print. An extract from a syllabus text or the entire text of a poem may be given as part of the exam.
- The exam requires students to write ONE essay in response to a choice of questions.

General assessment criteria

- *Length*: We are looking for essays of at least 1,500 words in length. There is no upper limit on the length of the essay. Exam essays of less than 1,500 words are unlikely to pass.
- *Structure*: Students are expected to respond to their chosen exam question in the form of an academic essay with a clear “introduction—body of argument—and conclusion” structure.
- *Language*: Students are expected to write clearly, concisely, and in an appropriately academic style, i.e. avoiding slang and informal/unconventional English. Common language errors relate to subject-verb concord, verb tense, prepositions, comma usage, genitives, idioms, spelling, and incomplete sentences with no finite verb. You need to ask if these errors are so numerous and serious that they impair the student’s ability to communicate. Language counts as part of a total assessment and is not given any specific percentage of the final grade.

Criteria relating to content (suggested questions to ask in the assessment process):

- Does the essay adequately respond to the chosen topic? *Does the student answer the question?*
- Does the student have a clearly formulated thesis/argument? Is there a central point the student wants to prove in the essay in response to the question/topic he or she has chosen?
- Does the essay contain interesting or original ideas supported by relevant examples from the primary text(s)?
- Does the student demonstrate a good knowledge of the primary text(s)? This is particularly important in 2020, when students will have access to the primary texts and so are expected to refer accurately to e.g. characters, place names, events.
- In relation to “open” topics, where the primary texts are selected by the student: Are the primary texts selected relevant to the question being asked? Do they allow the student to discuss the topic fully and adequately?
- Is the student able to analyze poetic or narrative techniques and, beyond that, can the student describe the function and effect of these techniques?

Criteria for various levels of achievement

Exams will be marked holistically, with no specific percentage of marks for any one aspect. Instead, the marker will be making an overall judgement of the quality of the work as a whole. Weaknesses in one area of the criteria may be compensated for by particular skill in another, and vice versa.

Strong. A very good performance. The candidate demonstrates sound judgment and a large degree of independent thinking.

1. The student is able to conduct a sophisticated and interesting discussion of the chosen question by using relevant analytical terms and supporting his/her argument with pertinent examples that demonstrate a very good understanding both of the question and the primary text(s).
2. The essay has a clear argument, ideally expressed in the introduction using the phrase ‘This essay will argue that...’, or similar. Each point being made is clearly linked to that argument, which is sustained throughout the body of the essay.
3. There are only a few language errors and the student demonstrates a very good command of written English.

Satisfactory. A satisfactory performance, but with some clear shortcomings. The candidate demonstrates an average degree of judgment and independent thinking.

1. The student is able to conduct a satisfactory discussion of the chosen question, which may involve using relevant analytical terms and/or supporting his/her argument with some examples that demonstrate a satisfactory understanding both of the question and the primary text(s).
2. The essay demonstrates an argument, although it may not be expressed completely clearly in the introduction, and the focus may waver a little at times.
3. There are several language errors, but they don’t impede communication. Overall the

student demonstrates a fair command of written English.

Weak. A performance that meets the minimum criteria, but no more. The candidate demonstrates only a limited degree of judgment and independent thinking.

1. The student only responds minimally to the question *and/or* partially misunderstands the question *and/or* demonstrates only a basic understanding of the primary text(s).
2. The essay has no clear argument, and consequently feels muddled and unclear.
3. There are many language errors relating to syntax, punctuation, subject-verb concord, verb tense, vocabulary, idioms, and/or spelling, but these errors do not fundamentally impair the student's ability to communicate in English.

Unacceptable/failure. A performance that does not meet the minimum academic criteria. The candidate demonstrates an absence of both judgment and independent thinking.

1. The student fails to respond adequately to the question *and/or* fundamentally misunderstands the question *and/or* demonstrates little or no understanding of the primary text(s) *and/or* the essay is too short (less than 1,000 words).
2. The essay has no argument to speak of and there is no obvious 'red thread' holding all the ideas together.
3. There are numerous and serious language errors relating to syntax, punctuation, subject-verb concord, verb tense, vocabulary, idioms, and/or spelling, which fundamentally affect the student's ability to communicate in English.
4. An exam may fail on the basis of poor content or poor language or a combination of the two.