

## ENG 4542 – Assessment guidelines for Term Papers

Fall 2021

### Exam form

The exam form is a term paper of 15 pages +/- 10% (a standard page consists of 2,300 characters). With rare exceptions, this paper should be based in primary sources, supplemented by secondary sources.

You are to submit your question and list of primary sources via canvas for approval. If you skip this, you risk failure.

### Essential Ethics

Note: **Any** breach of ethics will be sent forward for prosecution as cheating. Check this yourself, as it is not the job of the teacher to check this at the draft stage. It is yours.

#### 1. NO PLAGIARISM

- a. If words come from someone else, they **MUST BE SURROUNDED BY QUOTATION MARKS AND FOOTNOTED.**
  - b. No matter how few or how many words
  - c. Even if you remove a few words
  - d. Even if you change the order of words.
  - e. If the words or ideas did not come from you, that **MUST** be properly acknowledged.
  - f. If you do not do that, it is cheating (fusk) and will be sent forward for prosecution.
  - g. Punishment for cheating is loss of all grades for the semester/year and blocked out of all teaching for a year.
2. Note that it is acceptable to give each other peer reviews and to discuss your drafts.
  3. Chicago Style is the standard citation style in our fields. You can use Endnote or google for a good manual. The library has an old version in hard cover. Use the footnote/endnote version --- NOT in-text notes. Footnotes are generally better for portfolios as it keeps the notes with the texts. Do NOT use other formats – especially those that use in-text notes.

### Language

Language (grammar, spelling, syntax...) matters.

A common expectation among students is that we should grade on content, not form. There are three problems with that notion.

- a. This is an English program.
- b. Without form, there is no content.
- c. For the rest of your professional lives, you will be judged on both what you say and how you say it.

Therefore, we consider both form and content in grades.

There are two types of language mistakes. One is purely technical. We can understand what the student means, but it is badly stated or includes misspellings and grammar mistakes. This is annoying and marks the candidate as not caring that they make a poor impression. While perfection 100% of the time is not required, multiple mistakes throughout the text will be penalized. If these mistakes are not random, but highlight that the student does not know some basic aspect of grammar (subject-verb agreement, plurals, pronouns, tenses, word order...), the penalty will be greater. The other type of language mistake affects the communication of an idea. The words do not mean what the student thinks and therefore, the statement is either wrong or unintelligible. That carries an even greater penalty.

Both types of mistakes count. As you have the semester to work on these tasks and get peer review and feedback from the teacher, there is no excuse for not using the spell/grammar check in Word. Therefore, the penalties are higher than if something was a proctored school exam. Additionally, as masters students, we expect you to have developed a good level of language competency.

### **General Writing Advice – based on drafts**

- Answer the question that is asked. If we ask the question, you do not have the right to change the question. If you ask the question (term paper), you must do what you say you will do. Either way, you must answer all parts of the question. Ignoring this rule destroys grades. Even perfect writing cannot get past this problem.
- Accuracy is essential. What you say must be true.
- All writing includes an introduction, body, and conclusion. Your introduction needs to lead to the research question or problem. It does not give the answer. The body explains, documents, and proves your answer. The conclusion draws everything together.
- Indent all paragraphs. Do not add an extra blank line between paragraphs. Ignoring this makes it difficult for the reader.
  - Multiple blank lines makes a text look like a young writer who is trying to hide how little there is in the text.
- Punctuation, with quotes and footnotes
  - She said, “Blah, blah, blah.”<sup>1</sup>
  - After the paraphrase without quote marks.<sup>2</sup>
  - That is American style. British Eng uses single quote marks, with the final punctuation outside of the final quote mark.
- **NO PLAGIARISM**
  - If words come from someone else, they **MUST BE SURROUNDED BY QUOTATION MARKS AND FOOTNOTED.**
  - No matter how few or how many words
  - Even if you remove a few words
  - Even if you change the order of words.

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<sup>1</sup> Full citation , .....pp.

<sup>2</sup> Short citation if same source, pp

- If they did not come from you, they **MUST** be properly acknowledged.
- If you do not do that, it is cheating (fusk) and will be sent forward as cheating.
- Punishment for cheating is loss of all grades for the semester/year and blocked out of all teaching for a year.
- Paraphrasing
  - A Paraphrase is rewording something as your own.
  - It is more than changing, re-ordering, or dropping words. You also must change structure.
  - It is not translation
  - Most often, it is taking a large amount of text and compressing the ideas drastically into your own words.
  - It must be significantly different from the original.
  - A paraphrase **MUST** be footnoted fully.
- Basic Rules for footnotes
  - Use Chicago style footnotes – not in-text.
  - If it is someone else’s idea, but your words – Footnote it.
  - If it is someone else’s word or words – Quote it and footnote it.
  - All quotes must be fully integrated into your text. Do not use quotes to replace your own words. If you ignore this rule, your writing becomes choppy and your thoughts jump all over illogically.
  - Use a proper quotation mark. The bracket is not a legitimate quotation mark.
- Subject Verb Agreement (SVA) AKA Concord
  - Subject and verb must agree
  - Double check all sentences – especially those with compound subjects or verbs.
- Pronouns – Be careful. We can lose sight of what noun it is modifying if we use too many pronouns.
- Conjunctions –
  - However, Therefore, Since... and similar words have very specific meanings. They are not just vague joining words.
- Be specific. – Do not beat around the bush.
- Words to avoid ---
  - Naturally, obviously, of course – If it is obvious, there would be no point in saying it.
  - Before I (answer the question), I must first (talk about everything but the kitchen sink)...
  - Mention. If it is worth mentioning, it is worth discussing. Mentioning is like dropping names. It says nothing.
  - He discussed... (What did the author conclude or argue?)
  - Firstly, secondly, etc. Correct form is first, second....
  - Meaning – It does not mean the same thing in Norwegian and English.
- Proper sources –
  - The following are good sources for young children and pre-university courses. They are not legitimate sources for university level work. We use them as basic info (spellings, names, dates, links to original sources....)

- Encyclopedia Britannica and Wikipedia are not legitimate scholarly sources.
  - Most online how to... or power points are also not legitimate scholarly sources.
  - Your dictionary is not quotable. Nor does it belong in your bibliography.
    - Use America: History and Life (for N.America) and Historical Abstracts (for Britain) to find good scholarly secondary sources. Filter for peer reviewed.
- Chicago Style is the standard citation style in our fields. You can use endnote or google for a good manual. The library has an old version in hard cover. Use the footnote/endnote version --- NOT in-text notes.
- Do not use contractions in academic writing.
- Do not be afraid of the simple present and simple past.
- Avoid using directional phrasing, such as later or earlier in the paper, as already mentioned, before I do this....
- Know when to use amount and number.
- General Advice
  - Read your text aloud. Or have someone read it to you while you listen.
  - As Norwegians, your ears are better trained than your eyes. You will hear grammar mistakes that your eyes will slide over. That is one of the advantages with the policy of not translating movies and TV (except for things intended for pre-school children). Take advantage of that.
- Microsoft Word has a glitch that affects all of us who use more than one language or sign on to the internet from both home and university. It gets confused about default language. You need to use the mouse to cover the entire text and redeclare the default language before you run the spell-grammar check. This is necessary to get an accurate check. If you simply assume the language, the checker will miss even basic problems. This is essential for a professional presentation.