

## Tips og råd når man skriver kvalifiseringsoppgaven (utformet av Charles Ess)

### Tips og ting å tenke på om hvordan du kan besvare oppgave 1:

**NB:** A comparison-contrast paper is something like a report built up out of careful summaries and expositions of important concepts, claims, etc. By itself, such a paper does not “take a stand,” i.e., *argue* for a specific claim or thesis. Rather, it aims to be as neutral or “objective” as possible.

**By all means**, if you wish, you are welcome to use the comparison-contrast approach here to also take a stand. In this case, you might want to argue that one concept is in some specific way better or worse than the other. For example, you may want to argue something like: this comparison between concepts X and Y shows that X is a better or more fruitful approach to understanding the role of media in communication process (**how** better? more comprehensive? more insightful? more interesting? more true? more useful in some way? ...? If so, how? And why?)

Good! - but this is to then have a more specific **thesis** in the paper. You will need to clearly articulate what your thesis is in the **Introduction** (see below).

Your paper should follow this standard structure:

**Introduction.** The introduction should quickly and clearly identify the central topic / focus of discussion / main claims of the paper.

Broadly, identify your primary **purpose** – i.e., to compare and contrast two important concepts in Media Studies.

**If**, in addition, you choose here to *argue* a point – in Tijana’s language, to take a stand, as described above, then be sure to identify your specific thesis as clearly, carefully, and accurately as you can.

**Either way** – then tell your reader the main points of the paper, including the most important / central elements that you will explore in the paper, and the results (if any) of the comparison-contrast.

**Very important:** be sure to provide a “roadmap” – an overview of the structure of the paper. You should also make this structure apparent in the body of the paper – with headings, transition sentences, etc.

### **Body**

For each concept:

**Identify the concept** and **provide a brief summary / paraphrase**, based on the relevant section in Espen’s book. **Be sure to document carefully** – first of all, so as to show clearly to your reader (a) what is Espen’s language, etc. and (b) what is your own paraphrase of Espen’s text.

**Explain** how this concept represents a distinctive approach or perspective on the significance of media for communication.

Then **show how this approach or perspective** thereby leads to unique or distinctive insights in Media Studies.

To do so: *illustrate* / *support* your characterization by way of your own examples or illustrations, i.e., that go beyond whatever support or illustrations are offered in Espen's text.

**NB:** be very careful here as well to **document** properly when needed. That is, if you draw and example or illustration from another text or source (a book, academic article, newspaper, a website, etc.) be sure to document as required.

**Argumentation:** **IF** you are going further and *arguing* that one concept is somehow better than the other, develop this argument carefully.

**One possibility** is to

A) summarize the particular strength(s) / weakness(es) of each concept as you establish it (these) in your account of the position;

B) argue / make clear why you think a given strength / weakness thereby shows that one concept is better (more fruitful, ...) than the other.

## **Conclusion**

Summarize the main points and findings of the body of the paper.

**NB:** It is tempting to add a final bit of evidence or example to help reinforce your primary findings and/or argument. This is effective *rhetorical* style in a speech or opinion piece: it is generally frowned upon in academic writing. If a point, argument, piece of evidence, etc., is important – put it where it belongs in the body of the paper.

## **References**

Ytreberg, E. (2015). *Medie –og kommunikasjonsteori* (2nd ed.). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

## **Tips og ting å tenke på om hvordan du kan besvare oppgave 2:**

To answer this question carefully, please do your best as follows –

1. In an initial paragraph or two, develop a brief *essai* (“essay”) in which you make some effort to describe who you are.

This is simply an *essai* – a test or a first effort – but such exploratory writing about the self, as we have seen, is a long-standing tradition in Western humanities – from the Stoics to Foucault's emphasis on the *virtue* (a practice, a habit, we must acquire over time to become good / excellent at) of the “care of self” (*epimelésthai sautou*). As you do so, it would be helpful if you attend to your sources – easy to do in Norwegian: *synes* eller *føler* du – og/eller – tenker du, mener du ...

**NB:** it would also be natural / helpful to refer to one or more of the figures or examples we reviewed in Jordheim et al., ch. 1, as perhaps a source of inspiration, a view you reject, etc. Great – but be sure to *document* your reference(s) properly.

2. (Whatever you may construct above) – of the many that we have examined (including those in the lecture slides that we did not get to discuss directly, e.g., Marx, Nietzsche, etc.)

identify two contrasting views on the nature of the self that seem especially interesting to you.

This could be because you find one or more of these *persuasive*, or at least plausible – perhaps close to your own view of yourself that you develop in “1.” above.

For each of these views:

A. Relying on Jordheim et al. as your primary source, provide a brief (1-2 paragraph) summary of each view – its most important claims, and most importing supporting *evidence, argument*, and/or other forms of attempting to persuade us that this view is correct.

(NB: again, be very careful to *document* properly.)

B. Then highlight the *contrast(s)*, if not the contradiction(s) that you see between the two views.

C. Finally, offer whatever *argument, evidence*, etc. you can for why you prefer one view over the other (or both, in the cases where two views may be compatible with one another.)

*For example:*

**A.** I find two views on the nature of the self especially interesting. The first is the Enlightenment (especially Kantian) view that the self is fundamentally a *freedom*, one whose best abilities are to be developed in a democratic society marked by basic *values* such as equality, gender equality, freedom of expression, and so on (Jordheim et al., 2011, p. 60; Ess, 2017, slides 25, 28).

[supporting *evidence, argument ...?*]

The second is the positivistic view of human beings as like “atoms,” i.e., *beings who can be entirely understood from a scientific perspective as machines* (*Menneskemaskiner*: Jordheim et al., 2011, pp. 60-61). As machines, that is, all of their inner workings can be understood to follow deterministic, cause-effect mechanisms. On this view, the more we understand about our internal mechanisms, the more we can explain and predict human behavior – the primary goal of (19<sup>th</sup> ct.) sociology as founded by Auguste Comte (Jordheim et al., 2011, pp. 78-79; Ess, 2017, slides 27, 33).

[supporting *evidence, argument ...?*]

**B.** These two views sharply contradict one another. The first insists that human beings are fundamentally *freedoms* and so much should be allowed to choose for themselves their own goods – what they will do in life, etc. to make themselves content. The second insists that human beings have no freedom whatsoever: we are just machines, and thereby as predictable as eclipses and where a satellite will go when launched in a certain way, etc.

**C.** While these two views were opposed to one another in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – most strongly, in the form of positivism on the one hand, and Romanticism on the other – more recent views show that it is possible to conjoin both views as at least *partially*, but not *wholly* true. Specifically, Dr. Ess referred to recent work in philosophy and neuroscience that argues for a compatibilism between these two views. This would support “some (perhaps relatively weak) form of human freedom and agency ... *compatible* with the more (quasi) deterministic view of the natural order as (largely) deterministic” (2017, slide 39).

## References

Ess, C. (2017). *Humanioras Historie: Or: how to be a humanist in a 21<sup>st</sup> ct. post-digital era*  
[Power Point Slides]. Retrieved from Fronter.

Jordheim, H., Rønning, A.B., Sandmo, E., Skoie, M. (2011). *Humaniora: En Innføring* (2. Utgave).  
Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.