PL12002: Assignment 3 (Critically evaluative essay)

Version: 2023/24 Semester 2

# Assessment Summary:

## 1.1 Unit summary

Unit Credits: 15 credits

Assignment 1 (Poster): 20%

Assignment 2 (Literature Review): 40%

Assignment 3 (Essay): 40%

## 1.2 Learning Outcomes Assessed:

You will demonstrate:

* an understanding of key concepts used in political argument and in the analysis of political phenomena;
* understanding of key analytical approaches to the study of politics and the role of ideas in politics;
* critical and analytical modes of thinking about politics and political analysis, including a capacity for the interrogation of the key categories via which we think and act, politically.

## 1.3 Course-wide relevance

This unit is designed to enhance your analytical skills and your understanding of key concepts used in political arguments. These skills and knowledge will also be used in Year 2’s PL22025 (‘Thinking the world politically’) and your final year dissertation. Knowledge of the critical and analytical modes of thinking will allow you to reflect on the suitability of different approaches in both postgraduate study and research. The skill in using and communicating different analytical approaches is also highly valued by employers.

# Assignment Details:

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## 2.1 Task: Critically evaluative essay

Select **one** of the questions below.

1. To what extent is [name of thinker]*’s* view that [Gender, feminism and queer theory] *convincing*?
2. To what extent is [name of thinker] *’s* view that [Race/Racism] *convincing*?
3. To what extent is [name of thinker] *’s* view that [Climate, ecology and ecological crisis

convincing?

1. To what extent is [name of thinker] *’s* view that [Technology and trans-humanism *convincing*?
2. To what extent is [name of thinker] ’s view that [Media, information and disinformation]convincing?
3. To what extent is [name of thinker] *’s* view that [Art and Politics] *convincing*?

## 2.2 Word Limit:

2000 words.

For the purpose of calculating the word count, in-text references are included, whereas contents pages, executive summaries, tables, figures, appendices and bibliographies are excluded.

The marker(s) will stop reading the work once the word count has been exceeded.

## 2.3 Submission Instructions:

Upload to the Moodle assignment using the Department’s cover sheet. The cover sheet is here:

Your file should be in a Word or ODT format. Your work will be marked anonymously

## 2.4 Deadline:

dd/mm/yy hh:mm

## 2.5 Use of Generative AI

This assignment is classified as ‘Type B’ for the use of Generative AI. Generative AI is permitted for this assignment as an assistive tool for sequencing your notes and for summarising written material without abstracts.

You must reference any use of Generative AI in your bibliography. The Library’s guide to referencing AI is here: [Artificial intelligence - Web Search - Library at University of Bath](https://library.bath.ac.uk/websearch/artificial-intelligence)

# Instructions

## 3.1 What should a ‘To what extent…?’ essay include?

In Political Studies, an essay is a long-form piece of non-fiction writing that responds to a specific question or prompt. It is different from a literature review because it goes beyond summarising the views of others and surveying the field. Most of the essay will be analysis which means explaining the links, relationships and influences between and within the knowledge. It should address the strengths and weaknesses of specific ideas, beliefs or actions and it is supported by evidence and reasoning.

When a question asks for a judgement or evaluation using a phrase such as ‘To what extent’ it is necessary to explain which aspects of an argument or perspective are most credible or valid, identify any limitations, and express a final view. The limitations may relate to the circumstances when the thinker’s view is or is not true; whether the stated view in the question reflects the thinker’s wider thoughts or beliefs; the ways the thoughts might be received by others; any other relevant aspects. The final view may or may not be decisive and will depend on your findings.

## 3.2 Exemplar Material

There are examples of critically evaluative essays in Week 12 Seminar ‘[Introducing the essay task](https://moodle.bath.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=60545&section=28)’ pages.

They are indicative examples to show you a range of styles and approaches.

## 3.3 Mark scheme:

**The Department’s generic mark scheme will used. The mark scheme is on Moodle and in the course handbook.**

**The three assessment objectives will be applied to your essay as below:**

1. **Knowledge and understanding of relevant ideas and methods (40%)**

* The most relevant ideas or thinking of the writer to the question;
* Specific background or context which influenced that thinking;
* How the writer extended or challenged previous thinking on the topic;
* The responses to the thinking from other political thinkers;
* The impact of the differing views on the world (if any).

1. **Ability to apply relevant ideas and methods to specific problems or issues, and take a critical approach (40%)**

* A detailed study of the topic that explores the links, relationships and influences between and within the knowledge.
* **A consistent approach to your analysis such as:**
  + **Explaining which factors are more or less important to your analysis**
  + **the quality of your evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the thinker’s perspective**
* **Critical evaluation throughout your essay as to the** truth, importance, relevance, or significance of each aspect of a writer’s thought on the issue
* A final judgement or conclusion that reaches a position on the extent to which the writer’s view is valid.

1. **Clarity of expression, presentation of material and overall structure (including referencing) (20%)**

* **Structuring the order of your analysis and evaluation:**
  + **Having a clear thesis and conclusion**
  + **Using paragraphs to order your ideas**
* **Accurate referencing**
* **Accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar according**
* **Clarity of expression: every sentence makes sense and you use appropriate vocabulary.**
* **Adhering to the** [word limit](#_2.2_Word_Limit:)

## 3.4 Using your feedback

Re-read the feedback you received about how you selected sources and considered their strengths and weaknesses in the Semester 1 literature review for PL12002 and PL12004’s.

* What will you do differently this time when you are selecting your reading?

If you do not understand the feedback you received, please look at [Section 4 (Additional Help and Support)](#_Additional_help_and).

Your feedback on this essay is important for next year’s coursework. You will get written feedback on your essay. This will help you improve the way you select and analyse material, and how you construct and argument.

## 3.5 Content and Process:

A step-by-step methodology of writing a critically evaluative essay is scheduled for Seminar 12 ‘Introducing the essay’ task.

# Additional help and support

## 4.1 Moodle Pages

Use your notes from teaching sessions and your independent study, alongside the slides, lecture recordings and learning material on the Moodle page. Each question option has a dedicated topic page and reading list.

## 4.2 Referencing

The University’s guide to referencing is on the [Library website](https://library.bath.ac.uk/referencing).

## 4.3 Skills Centre

The University Skills Centre has [self-paced online units](https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/online-academic-skills-resources/) to improve your writing and referencing skills.

They also run:

* Writing drop-in session
* Academic Writing Circles
* 1:1 Writing Tutorials
* Feedback by email
* Skills Enrichment Workshops

You can get more information about their services and [book individual support](https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/academic-writing-support/).

## 4.4 ‘Office Hours’

Office hours are an opportunity to speak in-person or via Teams with a member of teaching staff. You can book an office hour through this link: [[Book time with Ed Mason: Office hours](https://outlook.office.com/bookwithme/user/fa045a2b84c44ed9917c9e79cba1aa8d@bath.ac.uk/meetingtype/SVRwCe7HMUGxuT6WGxi68g2?anonymous&ep=mCardFromTile)

## 4.5 Student Support and Personal Tutor

The Student Support helpdesk is in The Roper Centre (4 West). You can also access their services and advice online.

You can find their contact details, opening hours, and more information about how the University can support your wellbeing and progress on their [website](https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/student-support/).

Your Personal Tutor is also available for support.

## 4.6 Individual Mitigating Circumstances, Deadline Extensions

If you experience a problem which temporarily prevents you from undertaking an assessment or significantly impairs your performance in that assessment, you should apply for an ‘IMC’ or coursework extension.

The University’s guidance states:

IMCs may be related to your own circumstances (such as ill health, a serious accommodation crisis or prolonged technical problems) or circumstances involving others that have a significant impact on your ability to undertake assessments (such as the illness of a close family member or friend). They are normally unexpected and unavoidable circumstances.

Important information about how to request an extension to the assessment deadline or for ‘Individual Mitigating Circumstances’ to be considered is explained in the ‘[Guides to IMC](https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/individual-mitigating-circumstances-imcs/)’.

## 4.7 Unit convenor

If you need additional guidance or clarification, you can contact the unit convenor, Sophia Hatzisavvidou by email ([sh2455@bath.ac.uk](mailto:sh2455@bath.ac.uk)) .