IMESS DISSERTATION

Note: Please email the completed mark sheet to Year 2 coordinator
(cc Chiara Amini chiara.amini@ucl.ac.uk and Lisa Cagnacci l.cagnacci@ucl.ac.uk)

Please note that IMESS students are <u>not</u> required to use a particular set of methods (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, or comparative) in their dissertation.

Student:	David Perry
Dissertation title:	STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND: AMERICAN LIVES UNDER THE SOVIET GAZE

	Excellent		Satisfactory		Poor
Knowledge *Knowledge of problems involved, e.g. historical and social context, specialist literature on the topic. Evidence of capacity to gather information through a wide and appropriate range of reading, and to digest and process knowledge.*			X		
Analysis & Interpretation *Demonstrates a clear grasp of concepts. Application of appropriate methodology and understanding; willingness to apply an independent approach or interpretation recognition of alternative interpretations; Use of precise terminology and avoidance of ambiguity; avoidance of excessive generalisations or gross oversimplifications.*			X		
Structure & Argument *Demonstrates ability to structure work with clarity, relevance and coherence. Ability to argue a case; clear evidence of analysis and logical thought; recognition of an arguments limitation or alternative views; Ability to use other evidence to support arguments and structure appropriately.*			X		
Presentation & Documentation *Accurate and consistently presented footnotes and bibliographic references; accuracy of grammar and spelling; correct and clear presentation of charts/graphs/tables or other data. Appropriate and correct referencing throughout. Correct and contextually correct handling of quotations.*		X			

ECTS Mark:	C	**UCL Mark:**		**Marker:**	
Deducted for late submission:				**Signed:**	
Deducted for inadequate referencing:				**Date:**	

MARKING GUIDELINES

A (UCL mark 70+): *Note: marks of over 80 are given rarely and only for truly exceptional pieces of work.*
Distinctively sophisticated and focused analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.

B/C (UCL mark 60-69):
A high level of analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Good understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research. 65 or over equates to a B grade.

D/E (UCL mark 50-59):
D/E (UCL mark 50-59):
Demonstration of a critical use of sources and ability to engage in systematic inquiry. An ability to engage in sustained research work, demonstrating methodological awareness. 55 or over equates to a D grade.

F (UCL mark less than 50):
Demonstrates failure to use sources and an inadequate ability to engage in systematic inquiry. Inadequate evidence of ability to engage in sustained research work and poor understanding of appropriate research techniques.

CONTINUES OVERLEAF

Comments, explaining strengths and weaknesses (*at least 300 words*):

The dissertation concentrates on American immigrants to the Soviet Union during the Great Depression. By analysing the content of the English-language tabloid The Moscow News, the work successfully depicts several aspects in which the Soviets sought to re-educate foreign workers in the Soviet Union and pro-Soviet sympathizers abroad after 1929. In his work, the author comments on the debate on individualism, progress of the Soviet economy and the necessity to protect the Bolshevik revolution.

In the second part, the author focuses on the paper's efforts to establish a normative framework for the immigrant community by highlighting the contribution of American immigrants to the great Soviet ambition – i.e. the construction of the new society. In this part, the dissertation is the most convincing.

Nevertheless, the author does not recognize and understand the difference between various types of articles and their purposes. He gives no information on quantity of articles analysed when compared to quantity and nature of other materials published by The Moscow News. Thus, the conclusion that The Moscow News used traditional rhetorical appeals to deliver effectively its messages seems not to be supported by an appropriate number of articles.

Moreover, the author fails to fully understand the historical and social context involved and demonstrates only average knowledge of necessary facts. Contrary to the author's opinion, secondary sources on the American community in the Soviet Union during the 1930s are not few (p. 8), but many (S. Margulies, P. Hollander, A. Graziosi, N. E. Saul, M. David-Fox, M. Roman, O. Ivanova, V. Pavlova etc.). By not taking the previous scholarship into account and relying mainly on works of only two authors, the dissertation is not successful in interpreting overall findings. Thus, it does not add much original ideas to the field of study.

Specific questions you would like addressing at the oral defence (*at least 2 questions*):

1. How would you evaluate the role of Moscow News in the context of other cultural institutions that helped immigrants to integrate into the Soviet society during the interwar period?

2. Where and how was the Moscow News distributed? What readership it reached exactly?

3. How stratified were foreign specialist in the Soviet economy? How did the present American industrial giants in the Soviet Union influence the position of American workers within the Soviet economy?

4. Why the quantitative methods of media analysis were not used to structure the dissertation?