

# IMESS DISSERTATION



Note: Please email the completed mark sheet to Year 2 coordinator  
(cc Allan Sikk [a.sikk@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:a.sikk@ucl.ac.uk) and Alexa Stewart [alexa.stewart@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:alexa.stewart@ucl.ac.uk))

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

<b>Student:</b>	Adrien Beauduin
<b>Dissertation title:</b>	Old Master, New Neighbour. Putin's Russia in the Czech Foreign Policy Discourse

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Poor
<b>Knowledge</b> <i>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.</i>	X		
<b>Analysis &amp; Interpretation</b> <i>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.</i>	X		
<b>Structure &amp; Argument</b> <i>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.</i>	X		
<b>Presentation &amp; Documentation</b> <i>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.</i>		X	

<b>ECTS Mark:</b>	A/70	<b>Charles Mark:</b>	1	<b>Marker:</b>	Jiří Vykoukal
<i>Deducted for late submission:</i>				<b>Signed:</b>	
<i>Deducted for inadequate referencing:</i>				<b>Date:</b>	18 June 2013

## 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.

**A = výborně = 1**

**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.

**B/C = velmi dobře = 2**

**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.

**D/E = dobře = 3**

**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.

**F = nespěšl = 4**

CONTINUES OVERLEAF  
PLEASE PROVIDE SUBSTANTIVE AND  
DETAILED FEEDBACK!

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

Adrien has focused on the topic which nature is not very easy with the use of approaches which are not easy as well. His dissertation combines Identity discourse with imagology of the “self” and the “other” and at the same time tries to keep both mentioned approaches close to understanding and respecting of their historical roots and context. Indeed, a lethal combination.

Authors of texts like this face two problems. First problem rests in the question how deeply should we go into the history of stereotypes to understand their nature and at the same time avoid conversion of their study to conventional historical analysis; second problem is how to make history work in present time or how to connect present time stereotype with its supposed historical context.

There are two ways how to do it. First one is a hard and complicated “long durée” analysis (socio-historical-linguistic) of how ideas have been developing in time and space and means years of research. The other one can hit a right point and connect history and present in a working framework, where historical background defines “mantinels” of present problems while analysis of present problem affirms the fact they are somehow historical in terms of their roots and conceptualization.

Adrien has selected this second way. Basically, his outline of the history of the Czech perception of Russia might include lot of other names and concepts (i was reminding him of Karel Havlíček Borovský), on the other hand there has to be a selection of conceptualizations of history fitting with theoretical conceptualization of the present problem to prove that this problem is a part of a “long durée” history. This concept, represented by L. Hansen’s book on Western perception of Bosnia, deals with a dichotomic understanding of social phenomena with the aim to establish “clear” and “ideal” extremes (margins) of a studied situation (continuum) and focus on the zone between.

At that point Adrien’s statement that the Czech perception of Russia (placed in spatial, temporal and ethical context) oscillates between “threat” and “partner” margins not only gives an excellent point for research of the Czech foreign policy in 2001-2009, but it also demonstrates how “realist” or “pragmatical” paradigm of the Czech perception of Russia emerges, i.e. the paradigm created by realist politicians around Masaryk.

It is important to say that Masaryk as a symbol of “reconstructed” or “re-invented” way of Russia’s perception proves the fertility of this theoretical approach. The interesting fact is that realist approach is at the end of the analysis (outcome of this analysis) as it could not be used in its initial phase. Simple reason is that in terms of Hansen’s approach this realist paradigm (sometimes Russia has been a good guy, sometimes a bad guy) is inconsistent and does not create an “ideal” type precisely because it oscillates between the margins of “threat” and “partnership”. I also agree that Adrien puts Masaryk rather to “partnership” section because of the Slavic kinship of both nations and Masaryk’s interpretation of Russia as a “misbehaved” younger Europe. From that point of view I very much appreciate Adrien’s invention and the way of how he has applied theory in empirical context.

To switch from white to black I would express some critique – there is a lack of assessment of sources. Even if we believe that newspaper articles and secondary sources do create a reliable source of information, a reader deserves to know criteria of selection, which is a normal standard of any academic work. The other point is quite “unconventional” usage of “double” (73-74, 83-84) or “triple” (186-188) footnotes. Also quoting is strange – I do not have a Manchester, but Minnesota UP edition of Neuman’s work and it seems to me that he puts most of his arguments already in the first chapters of his book while Adrien’s quoting refers to second part of Neuman’s book.

Nevertheless, this dissertation is really a very good piece of intellectual work and after necessary re-editing parts of it could be published.

**Specific questions you would like addressing at the oral defence (*at least 3 questions*):**

- 1. Is it possible to establish a consistent ideal type of “pragmatical” discourse of Russia with the use of Hansen’s concept?**
- 2. Is the construction of the Czech discourse of Russia unique or can we find comparable and similar examples?**
- 3. Is Russia aware of peculiarities of the Czech discourse of Russia?**