

IMESS DISSERTATION



Note: Please email the completed mark sheet to Year 2 coordinator

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

Student:	Miranda Hankey
Dissertation title:	Faith in Politics: Ramzan Kadyrov, Islam, and Hegemony in Chechnya

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Poor
Knowledge <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		
Analysis & Interpretation <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		
Structure & Argument <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		
Presentation & Documentation <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		

ECTS Mark:	B	UCL Mark:		Marker:	Emil Aslan Souleimanov
<i>Deducted for late submission:</i>				Signed:	
<i>Deducted for inadequate referencing:</i>				Date:	29 May 2015

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
**PLEASE PROVIDE SUBSTANTIVE AND
 DETAILED FEEDBACK!**

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

Strengths:

1. Miranda has showed courage to dive into a complicated phenomenon without the knowledge of Russian and Chechen.
2. The author's work is as original as it gets; it draws on an extensive study of Chechnya's history, presence, and the peculiarities of the current pro-Moscow regime.
3. Miranda has produced a study that is consistent, enlightening, and robust.

Weaknesses:

1. There is no specification of the data used in the study, so the readers are left wondering what particular sources (and in what period?) have being analyzed by the author.
2. In some instances, the author's specification of her methods are insufficient, unclear or misleading. For instance, what is the substance of "multi-site exploration" - in the author's understanding (5.2.2.)? What particular method did she use to establish the "historical context" (5.2.1.)? The author seems to be referring to "analysing the findings gathered through the application of the previous two methods" as a distinct method (5.2.3). Here and there, author's ponderous "academic" language has made difficult the task of deciphering the meaning of some sentences and paragraphs.
3. Research question 1 (RQ1) is rather well-known and lacking on novelty, so its contribution to the field is disputable. It is also not entirely clear by which means (and in what parts of the study) the author has come to address this research question.
4. The literature review may have included not only empirical studies related to Chechnya, but also major studies addressing the author's research questions – for instance, the instrumentalization of Islam/the use of Islamic discourses – by other regimes.
5. Author's lack of knowledge of Russian (or Chechen) has prevented her to get familiar with a rich stratum of literature dealing with the Islamic discourses in Chechnya. Some important phenomena have been reported on or analyzed in the Russian (or Chechen) language only. Understandably, this has to an extent distorted the overall picture.

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

- 1. One of the most established narratives used by the Chechen leadership is that of Salafi Muslims as Wahhabi sectarians, whose very Chechenness is denied. In contrast to “non-Chechen Islam”, Sufi Islam is thus being linked to the foundations of Chechen national identity/nationalism. How may this relate to the findings of the thesis?**
- 2. How does the Kadyrov regime reconcile the local Islamic discourse with the memory of Islam-imbued resistance in the 19th Century or with the appeal of the local jihadists to establish an Islamic theocracy in the North Caucasus?**
- 3. How does the author's thesis relate to other work on the use(s) of Islamic discourse by incumbent regimes in the world, particularly in an effort to compromise, silence or annihilate local dissent?**