

IMESS DISSERTATION



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

Student:	Imogen Davidson White
Dissertation title:	Constructing Nagorno-Karabakh: a diachronic discourse analysis

	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>	65		
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>	75		
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>	75		
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>	70		

ECTS Mark:	71	Charles Mark:	1	Marker:	Slavomír Horák
<i>Deducted for late submission:</i>				Signed:	
<i>Deducted for inadequate referencing:</i>				Date:	17.06.2013

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 = neprospěl = 4

CONTINUES OVERLEAF
PLEASE PROVIDE SUBSTANTIVE AND
DETAILED FEEDBACK!

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

The author attempted to portray the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the discourse of Armenian official newspaper. In general I have to admit high level of processing out the material, clear structure and excellent research plan. I have to appreciate that he keeps strictly inside the contextual framework set up in the introduction. The author has outstanding research skills and uses adequate tool for expression. The clear structure enables (at least theoretically) some kind of comparative approach, which was summarized by the author in the conclusion (although it could be probably applied more times in the text).

However, we have to also admit several problems of the work, particularly the following ones:

1. The introduction need not to be so theoretic in the context of the fact that demarcated theoretical framework is not reflected further in the text. Especially, it is the case of the essay on Discourse Analysis (pp. 8-12).
2. The selective use of newspapers limits the Armenian mass media coverage on Azerbaijan to just one single view. Researching the discourse in other Armenian media would give the author more plastic picture. Of course, due to the restricted space for the thesis, the approach is understandable and is not consider by the reviewer as serious problem. However, the further research (if any) should contain more newspaper samples.
3. The lack of Azerbaijani counterpart mass media results in a little biased view of the author toward more pro-Armenian position. Looking (at least) on relevant Azerbaijani media on the snapshots researched in the thesis would probably give the author the shifted notion about Armenian newspapers as less objective (the journalists sometimes fabricate some quotation from Azerbaijani press assuming that their overall character is highly anti-Armenian).
4. Main findings are sometimes quite banal (the Armenian press not surprisingly says that Nagorno-Karabakh should be independent or not-subordinated to Azerbaijan pp. 31-32). Consequently, it raises the question of the sense of the text (apart of gaining degree).

Minor problematic details include (among others) the following:

- Armenia is not so isolated (p. 2) due to its vast international trade with Russia and Turkey (via Georgia) and Iran (maybe the problem of the misinterpretation)
- Armenian nationalism is much older than 1905 (p. 5), it is linked to the movements in the Ottoman Empire. Azerbaijani
- Minor stylistic problems ("Discourse in important an important focus...", pp.. 9)

Despite above mentioned shortcomings, the submitted thesis should be evaluated with the highest degree possible.

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

Did the author consider the sample snapshot from “calmer” period (the thesis deal mostly with “hot” or “crisis” time)?

How would the author comment specifics of the media in Karabakh? Do they differ anyhow from the Yerevan official discourse?

Is the theoretical framework confirmed with the results of the research? What are (according to an author) main weakness of discourse analysis in the context of the topic?