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 *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:	**Charles Mark:**	B	**Marker:**	Emil Souleimanov
Deducted for late submission:			**Signed:**	
Deducted for inadequate referencing:			**Date:**	11 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):
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 first thing that strikes the eye is the title of the dissertation that seems to be not fully in line with its goals and objectives. Is "Constructing Nagorno-Karabakh" in the official Armenian discourse exactly the same thing as the image of Azerbaijan? If the former is the case, then one would expect a slightly different focus based on, inter alia, the way Nagorno-Karabakh is being constructed in the Armenian discourse as a integral part of Armenian homeland, that is, through a prism of historical and cultural considerations. Yet the focus of the dissertation seems to be lying in what constitutes the image of Azerbaijan in the Armenian discourse and to that matter, the resultant debates on the "future of Nagorno-Karabakh", which, notwithstanding contextual closeness, are somewhat distinct things.

Another – rather methodological – concern of mine relates to the too brief time span chosen by the author to digest the state of mainstream discourse. Albeit I find the author's identification of the four particular periods completely adequate, I doubt that just a month is sufficient a period to track – and draw conclusions. After all, given the accute lack of information that often accompanies the initial stages of peace negotiations, as well as the manipulative ways in which the "enemy image" is utilized by government-owned media in the periods of internal turmoil to distract public attention, four weeks seems to be rather insufficient to give a complete picture of how Nagorno-Karabakh (or the image of Azerbaijan) is constructed under "standard circumstances". Otherwise, distortion is likely to occur given the pecularities of "image-making" in critical periods that occurred in Armenia, for instance, during the widely contested presidentual elections in March 2008. In my opinion, stretching the time span from a month to at least to (or three) months would do a better job, since before writing valuable analytical pieces, journalists usually need time to reconsider current events putting them into the historical context.

To a certain extent, the choice of the source made by the author also influenced her findings. Importantly, even the language of the media could have impact on the way discourse is constructed – the depictions of Azerbaijan in a Russian-language media might differ from that in an Armenian-language media, given the sensitivity of the topic and the targeted audience. The same holds for a government and non-government media. Confining selection to a single (governmental) media outlet – and a Russian-language one at that – would inevitably bring about somewhat distinct results as far as a case-sensitive methodological approach like (C)DA is concerned. Perhaps it would make more sense – and allow for broader generalizations – to select a number of media outlets including Armenian-language and non-governmental ones. This would also help the author employ her knowledge of Armenian, which would yield the study more of an insider's perspective.

Apart from these objections, I consider the dissertation original, well-structured and well-researched, as well as empirically rich and give it a strong "B".

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

1. **Have you identified any shifts in the way (the future of) Nagorno-Karabakh is constructed in the mainstream Armenian discourse?**
2. **What factors, in your opinion, most ifluenced the way Nagorno-Karabakh – and the image of Azerbaijan – is depicted in the Armenian discourse?**
3. **Do you know of any (considerable) difference in the ways the image of Azerbaijan is depicted in mainstream and non-mainstream Armenian media?**