IMESS DISSERTATION

Note: Please email the completed mark sheet to Year 2 coordinator
(cc Allan Sikk a.sikk@ucl.ac.uk and Louise Wassell l.wassell@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:	Cosimo Stahl
Dissertation title:	Cleavage politics and Europeanisation-induced transformation of the national political space – The case of the Czech Republic

	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:	A	**UCL Mark:**	78	**Marker:**	Petra Cibulkova
Deducted for late submission:				**Signed:**	
Deducted for inadequate referencing:				**Date:**	13.6.2014

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):
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*):

This dissertation which examines changes in the national political space in the Czech Republic with respect to its cleavage structure and possible influence of processes like Europeanisation on the transformation of the structure is a high quality piece of work.

The thesis presents a very comprehensive review of literature to the topic and is based on rich theoretical background. The methodological concept and its choice with respect to the selected case study – the Czech Republic, are appropriate and well argued. The empirical part stands on research of primary sources. The author follows the previously well-defined concept (Kriesi's model using a quantitative content analysis) and applies it to analyse development in the national cleavage structure in the Czech Republic by focusing on two parliamentary elections (1996, 2010). His conclusions and answers to the research questions proceed from a quality analysis (complemented by a summarization in clearly arranged tables and figures in the Appendix). The thesis is well written in terms of style too.

The author does not forget to present some possibilities of further research and shows he is aware of potential limitations and disadvantages of the methodology used. On the other side, these should have been briefly discussed in the text as well. Although I understand author's explanation, that he leaves the discussion for the oral defence due to the limited space, I think a few more pages would not be a problem. After all such a part is an important element of a research study.

In general, the thesis shows author's thorough knowledge of literature to the topic and represents a quality contribution to the discussion on the development of Czech political space in the context of the EU membership of the Czech Republic. In my opinion, the piece is worth publishing in an academic journal in a shortened form.

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

1. Please, discuss limitations of the methodology applied.

2. To which extent is your methodology applicable to the other post-communist countries?

3. Please, shortly comment the 2014 elections into the European parliament (regarding the stabilization/transformation of the cleavage structure of the Czech political space).