Marking criteria - Essays, Tests and Examinations

Essays and examinations are marked on the following scale:

70 - upwards First class honours (1)

60 - 69 Upper second class honours (2.1)

50 - 59 Lower second class honours (2.2)

40 - 49 Third class honours (3)

0 - 39 Fail

**High First 80% and above**  
OUTSTANDING achievement, including:

* Wide knowledge of relevant literature and insight into what is at stake in debates within the literature in the broadest context;
* Insights into works of art and theories of art AND/OR into philosophical arguments and their implications which are evidently the result of independent, original and highly innovative thinking;
* Subtle, discriminating and sophisticated arguments;
* Flawless or nearly flawless presentation.

**First 69.5% and above**  
EXCELLENT achievement generally, including:

* evidence of wide, critical reading and mastery of the relevant literature;
* sensitive and original visual analysis of works of art AND/OR very detailed and insightful presentation of philosophical ideas;
* well-founded knowledge of the broader historical or critical context of a particular problem or phenomenon AND/OR sophisticated exposition of philosophical positions and arguments;
* sustained imaginative and rational argument based on individual reflection and thought; AND/OR demonstrating a high level of philosophical imagination and insight
* accomplished presentation and fluency and cogency of style and expression.

**Upper Second 59.5 – 69.4%**   
VERY GOOD achievement generally, including:

* evidence of extensive (and comprehended) reading including relevant primary and secondary literature;
* attentive and productive visual analysis of works of art AND/OR the detailed presentation of philosophical ideas;
* awareness of the broader issues raised by the topic and ability to bring them to bear upon its discussion; AND/OR sustained discussion of philosophical positions and arguments and their implications;
* clear and well-structured argument based on detailed analysis and subtle observation AND/OR demonstrating some philosophical imagination and insight;
* generally lucid style of presentation, clear and concise writing demonstrating a grasp of research methods and scholarly conventions throughout.

**Lower Second 49.5 – 59.4%**  
GOOD achievement generally, including:

* evidence of appropriate reading, including relevant primary and secondary literature, and a competent grasp of the problems posed by the topic;
* generally sound and accurate visual analysis of works of art AND/OR generally sound presentation of philosophical ideas;
* competent sense of historical or critical context AND/OR patterns of philosophical argument and their implication;
* coherent argument and sound reasoning AND/OR evidence of some capacity for critical appraisal and independent thought;
* reasonably well presented; attention to grammar and syntax AND/OR satisfactory research methods throughout.

**Third – 39.5-49.4**   
SATISFACTORY achievement generally including:

* evidence of awareness of some of the issues raised, but based on limited reading of relevant literature and/or visual examples;
* adequate visual analysis of works of art AND/OR presentation of philosophical concepts and arguments;
* ability to set the topic in context, albeit in a limited and conventional way;
* some development of arguments relevant to the topic;
* adequately presented with some attention to grammar and syntax AND/OR satisfactory research methods.

**Fail 0-39.4\***  
 UNSATISFACTORY achievement generally, including:

* inadequate conceptual grasp of the topic; little or no evidence that reading has been done around the topic; failure to draw on appropriate sources;
* An overreliance on description; scant evidence of analysis and interpretation
* inaccurate or weak visual analysis AND/OR obscurity and vagueness of argument;
* poor grasp of the historical or critical context AND/OR sweeping generalizations unsupported by textual reference or argument;
* poorly constructed arguments and lack of critical reasoning AND/OR superficial exposition or commentary which fails to explore relevant issues;
* poor presentation (grammar, spelling, paragraphing, footnoting, etc) AND/OR inappropriate/inadequate research methods

\* Marks of 39.5 to 39.9 are treated as pass marks under the rules of assessment.

Marking Criteria – Presentations and Group Work

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| **First Class Honours** | | |
| 80-100 | Outstanding | Thorough understanding of key concepts/theory/topic. Relevant and effective use of material and media. Rhetorically compelling presentation. Evidence of a wide reading, critical understanding, and independence of thought. Well-structured, fluent argument. Excellent synthesis of material, including integration of the different contributions made by individual group members. Evidence of exceptional planning, organization, and coordination. Exceptional performance in the Q&A. |
| 70-80 | Excellent |
| **Upper Second Class Honours (2.1)** | | |
| 60-69 | Very Good | A very good, if imperfect, grasp of the material and its implications. Identifies the focus of the question and displays clear understanding of contrasting viewpoints. Convincing presentation style with effective use of media and good synthesis of material, including integration of the different contributions made by individual group members. Evidence of good planning, organization, and co-ordination. Very good performance in the Q&A: some slight stumbles but able to answer all questions fairly accurately and thoroughly |
| **Lower Second Class Honours (2.2)** | | |
| 50-59 | Good | A good grasp of the material. A general ability to present relevant argument but might contain some irrelevant material. Some coherent argument but there may be weaknesses in overall structure and clarity. Presentation style may lack polish or rhetorical sophistication. Fair synthesis of material, including integration of the different contributions made by individual group members. Would have benefitted from better planning and organization. Able to answer some questions accurately. |
| **Third Class Honours (3rd)** | | |
| 40-49 | Satisfactory | A basic grasp of the material. It may be marred by either poor discriminative ability, an element of conceptual naïveté, or both. There may be a tendency to unsubstantiated assertions, shallow interpretation, and errors of fact or theory. Little evidence of further reading or independent thought. Poorly structured and presented; lacking in rhetorical appeal. There may be poor synthesis of material, including integration of the different contributions made by individual group members. There may be little evidence of planning, organization, and coordination. Inability to answer questions accurately or completely. |
| **Fail** | | |
| 30-39 | Marginal Fail | Does not satisfy the minimum requirements for the exercise in question. Typically, there will be little understanding, even of class material. There may be no structure. It may not address the topic. Total inability to answer relevant questions. |
| 20-29 | Clear Fail |
| 0-19 | Little or nothing of merit |

Marking Criteria - Participation

69.5+ (First Class Honours) – Excellent OR Outstanding Participation

* Has no more than 2 unauthorised absences\*
* Consistently arrives on time and fully prepared for class
* Actively supports, engages, and listens to peers on a consistent basis
* Plays an active role in discussions on a consistent basis
* Comments consistently advance the level and depth of the dialogue
* Comments consistently demonstrate strong engagement with assigned readings

59.5-69.4 (Upper Second Class Honours) – Very Good Participation

* Has no more than 3 unauthorised absences
* Arrives fully prepared and on time at almost every session
* Actively supports, engages, and listens to peers on a regular basis
* Regularly plays an active role in discussions
* Comments often advance the level and depth of the dialogue
* Comments often demonstrate strong engagement with assigned readings

49.5-59.4 (Lower Second Class Honours) – Good Participation

* Has no more than 4 unauthorised absences
* Arrives fully prepared and on time most of the time
* Makes a sincere effort to interact with peers when given the opportunity
* Occasionally participates constructively in discussions, but often needs prompting
* Sometimes makes relevant comments based on the assigned readings

39.5-49.4 (Third Class Honours) – Satisfactory Participation

* Has no more than 5 unauthorised absences
* Limited interaction with peers
* Preparation, and therefore level of participation, is inconsistent; may arrive late to class regularly
* Rarely participates unless called upon
* Comments are generally vague or drawn from outside of the assigned readings

0-39.5 (Fail)

* Has 5 or more unauthorised absences
* Limited interaction with peers
* Preparation, and therefore level of participation, is inconsistent; may arrive late to class regularly
* Rarely participates unless called upon
* Comments are generally vague or drawn from outside of the assigned readings

\* absence numbers based on a 15-credit module; numbers should be doubled for 30-credit modules

Marking Criteria – Weekly Summaries

Note: Weekly summaries should be 150-200 words in length. The lowest mark received will be dropped from the overall Weekly Summary mark.

First Class Honours:

80+ (Outstanding) - Provides an outstanding summary of the main argument of the text and particularly astute critical reflections on its implications and/or contributions.

69.5 – 79.5 (Excellent) - Provides an excellent summary of the text, including some critical assessment.

Upper Second Class Honours:

59.5-69 (Very Good) - Offers a very good summary of the overall argument and a coherent account of major points. May not engage critically with the text.

Lower Second Class Honours:

49.5-59 (Good) - Demonstrates a good understanding of the main points of the article, but not an strong sense of the overall argument of the author.

Third Class Honours:

39.5-49 (Satisfactory) – Demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the main points of the article, but is missing some elements of the text and/or has a confused understanding of the author's overall argument.

Fail:

29.5-39 (Marginal Fail) – Some evidence of having read portions of the text but minimal rapport between the summary and the reading.

0-29 (Clear Fail) – No rapport between the summary and the reading.