**POLI1008 Governance and Citizenship**

**Slide 1: Essay plan, essay writing /and critical thinking**

This is a presentation about producing the essay plan, writing the essay and demonstrating critical thinking in your writing. As you will be awarded grades for all these components, it is advisable to invest time and effort to ensure you meet all the requirements specified. The following sections of the presentation will elaborate on these in detail.

**Slide 2: Copyright notice**

**Slide 3: The essay writing process**

The essay writing process comprises many parts. It begins with the essay plan or an outline of how you intend to address the topic and structure your essay. \*You should draw up an essay plan once you have completed your reading and are familiar with the issues and discussions about the topic. \*The essay is a logical story told by the writer about the topic. This logical argument is supported by evidence. Remember it is the writer who controls the discussion.

\*You should demonstrate to your tutor that you understand the debates about the topic by paraphrasing and summarising the evidence. By restating what you have read in your own words, you show your tutor that you have understood the discussion and are able to integrate it to support your own arguments. Do not overly quote in your essay. Quotes should only be used if an idea someone has said is very pertinent to your own discussion and you don’t want to paraphrase as you would change the impact of what is being said.

\*Do not just repeat the evidence. Show that you are critically thinking about the issues by interpreting, evaluating and assessing what the debates mean to you, your practice, your discipline, the context, etc. You may need to do some extra reading about the issues as you write the essay and find that you do not have enough evidence to support your arguments. \*Use the UniSA Harvard referencing guide to cite your sources. You will not be able to produce a good essay in your first draft. \*You would have to revise your draft a few times in order to produce a high quality essay.

**Slide 4: The essay plan: the process**

The essay plan is a graded assessment. As with other assessments, it is important that you invest the time and effort to produce a good plan. The first step in coming up with an essay plan is to draw up a rough plan. \*Begin by writing the whole question in the middle of a large sheet of paper. \*Then circle key words or phrases in the question and draw a line from each of these words. \*Write key points from your reading against the key words or phrases in the question. \*Next number the different sections of your rough plan in the order in which you think you will mention them in your essay.

**Slide 5: The essay plan**

The total word count for the essay plan is approximately 750 words. There are three sections to this plan. \*The introduction is about 250 words. This is not the traditional introduction that you would write in an essay. All you have to do in this section is interpret the topic and identify the issues that will be addressed in the essay.

\*In the body section of your plan, you would have to briefly elaborate on the key issues and arguments of the paper. You are required to focus on four or five issues. You would have to paraphrase the evidence that you use and provide in-text citations. You are not supposed to quote. The word count for this section is 500 words. You do not need a conclusion section for the essay plan.

\*You do need to include a reference list for the essay plan. This is not included in the word count. You are required to use the UniSA Harvard referencing conventions for both the in-text citation and the reference list.

\*In order to obtain good marks for the essay plan, you have to demonstrate that you have critically engaged in the debate and identified key issues related to the topic. Describing and defining the issues alone will not get you good marks. Click on the link to refer to a sample essay plan. You do not need to include a conclusion section.

**Slide 6: The essay structure**

Once you have obtained the feedback for your essay plan, incorporate this into the writing of the actual essay. The essay comprises an introduction, body and conclusion. \*The introduction is approximately 10% of the total word count. In the introduction section of the essay, the writer introduces the topic, highlights key issues relating to the topic, states the aim of the essay (i.e. what the essay will discuss) and identifies the scope (i.e. how the essay will be organised)

\*The body of the essay totals about 80% of the word count. The discussion will be structured into different paragraphs. Each key point will be organised into one or two paragraphs (or sometimes more). Each paragraph should have a topic sentence which is a mini introduction of the main point that will be discussed in that paragraph. This will then be expanded with supporting statements which comprise evidence from your research and readings. Each key point should have a minimum of two to three references. In order to obtain high marks you have to demonstrate that you are employing critical thinking. Interpret what is being said about the topic and what this means to your context. Wherever possible provide examples to make the arguments clearer.

\*As with the introduction, the conclusion is about 10% of the word count. In the conclusion section of the essay, the writer restates the thesis statement. The thesis statement is the main message of the essay. The key ideas discussed in the body section of the essay are also recapped in this section. Remember not to include any new points in the conclusion. Finally, a concluding statement is written to bring together the whole essay. This concluding statement could be suggestions for more work in this area, implications of your discussion for practice or even a thought-provoking statement. You will find examples of each of these sections in the next few slides.

**Slide 7: The introduction: example**

Here is an example of the introduction section of your essay. \*\*\*\*

**Slide 8: The body: example**

This is an example of a body paragraph. \*\*\*

**Slide 9: The conclusion: example**

This is an example of the conclusion section of the essay. \*\*\*Click on the two links below for more resources on ‘Using voices to write critical essays’ and ‘Essay writing’. Remember to be logged on to [www.unisa.edu.au/L3](http://www.unisa.edu.au/L3) or you may not be able to access the resources.

**Slide 10: Demonstrate critical thinking in your writing**

It is important that you demonstrate critical thinking in your writing. Simply regurgitating what others are saying does not demonstrate that you are doing this. Your tutors want to see that you are interpreting, evaluating, assessing and examining the debates or discussions in your field. Don’t just accept what others are saying about the topic. \* Interpret the findings with regard to what it means to you, your practice, your discipline, society, the current context, etc.

You should also be critical about the information that you read and use in the essay. Identify if there is bias in the discussion or how current the information is. Something that was published ten years ago may no longer be applicable. Do also examine the relevance of the information to your arguments. Try to be selective and only integrate evidence that supports your argument. Click on the specified link to access a resource on critical thinking.

**Slide 11: Integrating evidence**

Your tutors want to see that you have understood the topic and have engaged in the discussions. The best way to show that is to paraphrase and summarise the information from your source and use it to support your arguments. Replacing one or two words from the original source can result in a high similarity index when you submit your essay through Turnitin. Similarly, overly quoting from the original text can result in descriptive writing and does not demonstrate that you have thought about the idea or that you can restate it in your own words. Likewise, using the thesaurus to change word for word from the original text can also result in miscommunication. \*In order to paraphrase and summarise the evidence, the first thing you should do is read and understand the text. \*Highlight the key points while you are reading and \*take notes. \*Then put the text away and write the ideas in your own words. \*Check this against the original source and \*record the bibliographic details of the source. \*Click on the link provided to listen to a presentation on how to integrate evidence in your writing.