

Crises in the Contemporary World

NUFYP Humanities and Social Sciences Course Handbook, 2017-2018

Table of Contents

Description of the Humanities and Social Sciences	2
Course Description	3
Teaching of the course	3
Expectations of students	4
Assessments	5
Marking	5
Marking criteria	6
What is an essay in the Humanities and Social Sciences?	6
Deadlines	7
Using Moodle	7
Referencing	8
Plagiarism.....	9
Reading and other learning materials.....	9
Communication with Teaching Staff.....	10
Weekly Topics.....	10

Description of the Humanities and Social Sciences

The Humanities and Social Sciences examine the human experience. As much as the experience of being human is incredibly diverse, so therefore are the subjects that study it. As much as the experience of being human is contested and contradictory, subject to the vagaries of time and place, so also are the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Universally agreed knowledge about the human experience is rare, if it exists at all. Not only is the actual reality of the world (assuming there is one) the subject of constant disagreement amongst and within the Humanities and Social Sciences, even the way we go about knowing is hugely contested, as is the extent of what we can know from each method. Ways of knowing about the human experience range from Literature, which values texts and their interpretation as a source of knowledge, to Economics, which likes to construct mathematical models of reality based on apparently objective data. Between these, History, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology and Geography have all fought internal wars about methodology, not to mention even more widespread battles about ideas like ‘human nature’ and the meaning of good or the empirical veracity of our reconstructions of the past and representations of other cultures.

However, despite all of these difficulties, the study of Humanities and Social Sciences is still absolutely essential. People – whether governments, non-governmental organisations, businesses, terrorist organisations, community activists or individuals – continue to act every day. They act on the basis of their understanding of the world; what they believe to be true. At its most optimistic, the Humanities and Social Sciences can shape and change these truths, make them more accurate and more helpful in the ultimate aim of achieving the best for all people. Even at its most pessimistic, the Humanities and Social Sciences can challenge truths, help people understand that knowledge about the world is difficult to come by and that all actions, especially those that affect the lives of others, should be taken only with great care and consideration.

The student of the Humanities and Social Sciences is, therefore, someone driven to question; someone fascinated by the enormity of what they do not know. They are interested in patterns of human behaviour and how these may have changed, or been repeated, over time. They are interested in how the human experience has been represented and what these representations might actually mean. They are interested in suffering, the how, why, what, where and when of it, and whether it might be alleviated. The student of the Humanities and Social Sciences is

interested in all of this or only some of it; for one reason or for many reasons. Above all, the student of the Humanities and Social Sciences is interested in knowing what lies beneath and beyond their own human experience.

Course Description

On the HSS 2017-18 course staff and students will encounter the contemporary global crisis. They will explore the four overlapping dimensions of this crisis: a crisis in political authority; a crisis in economic production and distribution; a crisis in identity and self-expression; and a crisis in political and personal security.

The course meets the subject matter of crisis analytically, from two competing perspectives: a Liberal, reformist perspective and a Critical, revolutionary perspective. Students are not told truths and given answers, rather they are encouraged to analyse and debate two very different ways of understanding and judging the crucial issues they encounter.

The course's three units take the students on a journey through the philosophical, historical and systemic elements of the contemporary crisis, with constituent week introducing four 'contested concepts'. These concepts are designed to capture the key features of the week's topic from the two competing perspectives. They also form the basis of both delivery and assessment, placing the objective of critical thinking right at the heart of the course. Additionally, each unit contains a Methods week, designed to impart the unit's key learning skills.

The HSS 2017-18 course measures success by students' critical and creative engagement with the subject matter. Our assessments are open-ended tasks, with questions that challenge students to explore the subject matter and develop their own analytic faculties. By completion of the course, students will look at the world crisis not as a series of truths to be gathered, but as a phenomenon to be examined and debated using the tools of the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Teaching of the course

Teaching will take the form of one one-hour lecture and two two-hour seminars per week. The lecture will introduce the week's topic and contested concepts. The seminars will explore these concepts and the nature of their contestation on the basis set-up by the lecture and the weekly reading.

You will normally have the same teaching fellow for all of your seminars. Each member of the teaching staff will be responsible for weekly lectures on a rotating basis.

The teaching staff and their contact details are as follows:

Name	Position	Room	Email
Dr. Michael Keary	Head of Discipline	2.202	michael.keary@nu.edu.kz
Mr. Simon Land	Senior Tutor	2.202	simon.land@nu.edu.kz
Dr. Liam McMurtrie	Teaching Fellow	2.422b	billy.mcmurtrie@nu.edu.kz
Dr. Ian Reynolds	Teaching Fellow	2.422b	ian.reynolds@nu.edu.kz
Mr. Andrew Zwick	Teaching Fellow	2.422b	andrew.zwick@nu.edu.kz
Dr. William Rowe	Teaching Fellow	2.422b	william.rowe@nu.edu.kz
Mr. Ryan McCarrel	Teaching Fellow	2.422b	ryan.mccarrel@nu.edu.kz

Expectations of students

Students will be expected to attend all assigned classes and complete all assigned material on time, except in exceptional circumstances, such as illness, when documentary evidence must be produced to certify a student's inability to complete the task. Students must not be late to class and may be excluded from class if they fail to turn up on time. Repeated lateness or absenteeism will result in disciplinary procedures.

Reading is an absolutely essential part of the course. All undergraduate programs require students to complete substantial amounts of English-language academic reading. Hence, improving students' ability to read complicated academic material is a key learning objective of this course. Required readings must be carefully completed before class and additional reading from the supplementary list is strongly encouraged. Failure to complete required reading will significantly diminish assessment performance and may result in exclusion from class.

Assessments

This course will be assessed in the following manner: three unit-based essays; one group-work student-led seminar; and one end-of-year examination. The weighting is as follows:

55% Essays (15% + 20% + 20%) – Submitted through turnitin via moodle.

5% Student-led Seminar – classroom based.

40% Two-hour final exam – normal exam conditions.

Students will write their essays in response to open-ended questions that challenge them to explore and analyse the given topic. They are the major form of assessment in the Humanities and Social Science because they require the detailed critical engagement that no other form of assessment examines. Students should see essays as an opportunity to research a specific topic and think deeply about their opinions regarding it. A good essay consists of a clear answer to the question, cogent reasoning in support of this answer and sophisticated research in support of both. A poor essay is one that fails to clearly answer the question, is littered with assertions and displays no evidence of serious research. See *What is an essay...?* section below for more information.

In the student-led seminars, student leaders will organize and deliver a lesson based on a portion of the week's material. Student leaders are free to utilize whatever teaching methods they prefer, ask their own questions and choose their own focus within the broad strictures of the contested concepts. The seminars will be assessed on the basis of the student leaders' mastery of the subject matter and ability to provoke discussion amongst their classmates.

The final exam assesses the extent of student learning on the course as a whole. It is divided into two sections. The first is a short-answer section, where student recall and explanation of the contested concepts will be assessed. The second is essay-based, where a more nuanced recall of a topic and capacity for analytic engagement with its contestations is assessed.

Marking

All assessments in HSS are marked by a member of the HSS teaching team, normally your own teaching fellow (except the final exam, which is randomly distributed).

A random sample of student essays will be second marked for standardization and moderation purposes. In practice, this means that the Head of Discipline may mark again an essay for which you have already received a mark. It is possible that your mark will subsequently be either increased or decreased. If a change is made, this will be noted and additional feedback provided. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all students are marked to the same standard, regardless of the question they answer or who marks their essay. As a result, **all marks are provisional until the exam board meets at the end of the year to approve them.**

Marking criteria

We use different rubrics (criteria) to mark different forms of assessments. All of the rubrics are available on moodle. We strongly advise you to consult them regularly when preparing your assessed work. If any element of the rubrics is unclear to you, please ask your teaching fellow for clarification.

What is an essay in the Humanities and Social Sciences?

The following is a brief summation of the excellent *Essay Writing Guide* that the University of Canberra has created on the subject. The guide is available on the HSS moodle page under ‘Student Information’ and is required reading for all HSS students. It is unlikely that a student will achieve high marks in HSS without carefully consulting this guide.

An essay is a piece of writing that carefully and logically analyses and evaluates a topic or issue. Fundamentally, an essay is designed to get your *academic opinion* on a particular matter.

Many students get confused about the word ‘opinion’ in academic writing, and think that academic writing should just stick to reporting the facts and forget about opinion altogether. However, there are important differences between an academic opinion and a *personal opinion*, and it is important to grasp these when you are putting together an essay.

A personal opinion comes from one’s gut feelings and personal experiences. It is *subjective*, meaning it is guided by emotions and personality. This also means that there is no particular reason why anyone would have to agree with someone else’s personal opinion. It speaks to no commonly agreed basis for truth.

In contrast, an *academic opinion* is one where, if it is done well, a person is logically required to agree with you, unless they can provide an alternative academic opinion that is at least as well done. This is because an academic opinion is based on research that a person has conducted, evidence they have examined and a fair consideration of all of the issues involved. It is thus objective, guided by logic and rational thinking, something commonly agreed to be a sound basis for truth. Good logic, combined with good evidence, is something that everyone must agree with if they want to say they are being rational.

An essay must have a thesis statement and follow a structure that begins with an introduction, where the thesis statement is first declared, furthers the argument through several paragraphs, each of which should discuss only a single point, and finishes with a conclusion that restates the thesis statement and how it was proven. Your EAP teacher will help you improve at writing each of these parts. You should also consult the *Essay Writing Guide* on moodle for further advice.

Deadlines

The deadlines for each assignment are stated in the ‘assessments’ section of this document and in each assessment instruction document (available on moodle). Students are expected to submit all of their assignments before the deadline. Deadlines for assessments are firm and failure to meet them will normally result in a deduction of 5% per late day, beginning immediately after the deadline time has passed. After five days, the mark will automatically be 0.

Your teachers expect you to manage your time wisely and so heavy workload or computer failure will not be accepted as reasons for late submission. Turning in work early will never be penalized and students should never be in the habit of waiting until the last minute. Extensions may be granted in cases of medical or family emergency, but only if evidence is brought to administration for approval. For further information on extensions, please consult the NUFYP Student Handbook.

Using Moodle

Using Moodle is vital to your learning and success in this course. Moodle should be checked daily and preferably multiple times each day. Required and supplementary readings, lecture powerpoints, course information, assessment information, and additional materials will all be found on Moodle. The website’s importance cannot be overstated. Also, be aware that teachers are able to see who

is online and for how long. While nothing can replace coming to class, neglecting to use Moodle would be just as detrimental to your education as poor attendance.

Referencing

The Chicago system of referencing is generally accepted as the standard method of referencing for most journals and academic texts and thus it is probably the best one for students to use also. It uses the name of the author and the date of publication as a key to the full bibliographic details that are set out in the reference list. There are lots of versions of the Chicago system but I will briefly describe one as a guide.

When any author name is mentioned in the text, the date is inserted in brackets immediately after the name, as in Hamlin (2001). When reference is made to one or more authors without using their name, both name and date are bracketed, with the references separated by a semi-colon, as in several authors have noted this issue (Hamlin, 2001; Burnes, 2000; Senior, 2002). When the reference is to a work of dual or multiple authorship, use Bridge, O'Neill and Cromie (2003) or Bridge et al. (2003). If an author has two references published in the same year, add lower case letters after the date to distinguish them, as in Drucker (1980a, 1980b). In most cases page numbers should also be provided (Hamlin, 2001: 56). The only exception is when you are discussing the book or article's broadest, overall contribution. When in doubt, always use page numbers. You will never be punished for doing so. The system is the same when using quotations, though direct quotations of 40 words or more should start on a separate line and be indented. Any assignment you submit must include a reference list, *in alphabetical order*, at the end of the paper. The content and format should conform to the following examples:

Book: Murphy, S. (1989), *International Human Resource Management*, London: Macmillan.

Multiple author: Maurty, P. and Harty, F. (1999), *Global Business*, New York: Basic.

Article in edited book: Dawn, S. (1989), "Best Practice in Human Resource Management", in Enson, P., Scot, A. and Dursey, A. (eds) *Human Resource Management in International Firms*, London: Macmillan.

Article in journal: Garnish, B. (1986), “International and Comparative Human Resource Management”, *Comparative Human Resource Management*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 10-36.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is academic theft. It is the attempt to take ideas or expressions from others and pass them off as your own. It is thus cheating, because the plagiarist is attempting to get credit for someone else’s work. An example would be copying a sentence from a website and pasting it directly into an essay without citing the source and/or without making it clear that it is a quotation.

However, there are many less obvious forms of plagiarism, all of which are easy to avoid. For example, cutting and pasting a sentence and then changing even the majority of words is still plagiarism as you merely altered the work instead of writing it yourself. As long as you cite all your sources, write all the material yourself, and make it clear whenever you are quoting a phrase or sentence that someone else has constructed, you need not worry.

Plagiarism is taken very seriously at Nazarbayev University and can result in exclusion from the University. A document outlining NUFYP’s plagiarism policy has been posted on Moodle under ‘student information’ and all students should be familiar with it. If you are unsure about how to reference, please consult the above guide, your seminar tutor or your EAP teacher.

You should also take a few minutes to go through Cornell University’s excellent online plagiarism exercise: <https://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/exercises.cfm>

Reading and other learning materials

The required readings are the materials that will be the basis for lectures, seminars and assessments. They provide, however, only the very basics and mastery of them may not be sufficient for high marks. The supplementary materials are designed to help students develop a more sophisticated understanding of the topic and should also be consulted whenever possible.

You will be given weekly assigned readings of these texts which will be posted on Moodle. It is important to remember that you should read this material thoroughly **BEFORE** the lecture and seminars. Coming to class without prior reading and understanding of that week’s text puts you at a severe disadvantage.

Communication with Teaching Staff

Communicating effectively is extremely important for both you and your teacher. Your teacher will inform you of their weekly office hours. Office hours serve to allow you to communicate issues you may be facing with the class or the weekly topics. They DO NOT exist for you to ask about seminars you did not attend. It is not the teacher's responsibility to personally update you on what you missed.

Students should whenever possible email their teacher first with any questions or issues they may be having (see *teaching* section above for contact details). If the student requires a face to face meeting, inform your teacher why you need to meet and what you will be discussing. The teacher will get back to you about their availability and how to move forward. Remember that your teacher wants to help you in any way possible, but hanging around to answer 15 different questions after class is a poor use of the teacher's time.

Students with questions about their grades should never disrupt class to dispute their score. Grade disputes are personal issues and not for classroom discussion. If you have a question or feel there is a problem with your grade, the following steps should be followed.

1. Look at the assignment's instructions and rubric. See if you can identify the issue.
2. Write down what your specific issue is with the grade on a hard copy of the assignment.
3. Email your teacher and politely inquire about the specific issue with the grade.

Remember, it is important that you be specific about the issue so your teacher can address it directly. Comments like "Why did you give me this grade?" "Why didn't I get a higher score?" "Can you please change my grade?" are not specific issues. In extremely rare cases, if you can show a legitimate problem with your grade, your teacher may be inclined to raise it (though they may also lower it). However, you should not argue repeatedly after your issue has been explained. Your energy is much better spent moving forward and getting a better grade on the next assignment than fighting over a few points on an old assignment.

Weekly Topics

Please see Moodle for the topic for each week and the weekly reading.