



The Department's MSc general grade criteria

General grade criteria

The following scheme for grading of marks applies to summative assessments including: summative course work, research essays, take-home assessments and unseen exams. Attributes listed for each class are assumed to include the best attributes from the class below. Referencing for all work, with the exception of exams taken in an exam hall, must include page numbers.

Class	Marks (%)	Attributes
Brilliant Distinction	80 – 100	Work of exceptional quality, based on comprehensive conceptual knowledge of the topic, and developing a cogent and original argument in response to the question. For a mark of 90 or more, analysis is of such originality or insight as to potentially change some aspect of conventional understanding about the topic discussed. Referencing is precise, accurate and consistent ¹ .
Distinction	70 – 79	Excellent answers, closely linked to the question set, well-presented and argued with sophistication, maturity, and incisiveness, which demonstrate a wide familiarity with the subject matter and anthropological debates ² , especially as revealed through the course readings, lectures and class discussions, and often display independent judgement and originality. Referencing is accurate and consistent ¹ .
Merit	60 – 69	Competent work, well-argued, showing a good grasp of the subject matter. Evidence of familiarity with a wide range of reading and anthropological debates covered in the course ² . Factually correct and comprehensive in coverage, and with precise, accurate referencing ¹ , although there may be minor slips and omissions. Clear presentation and organisation of answers which address the question directly and relevantly. Answers show an understanding of and familiarity with terms and concepts relevant to the question.



Class	Marks (%)	Attributes
Pass	50 – 59	Answers demonstrate some understanding of the subject matter and a grasp of the basic readings, but are marred by poor presentation or by lack of sophisticated argument or knowledge. Answers are frequently narrative in style and only indirectly, or inadequately, address the question, or fail to focus. They often include unsupported generalisations, occasional inaccuracies, irrelevances, omissions, contradictions, are weak in definition and application of concepts, and display a clumsy prose style. Although the main issues are understood, they are often presented in a superficial manner and there is little attempt to go beyond the standard reading. Referencing is incomplete, imprecise and/or inaccurate ¹ . In examinations, an answer worthy of a Merit mark may be graded Pass if it is too short, or unfinished.
Fail	30 – 49	Basic, below-average answers, which nevertheless show evidence that there is some familiarity with the subject. Answers are often weak narrative/descriptive accounts, which move towards the relevant area required by the question but display only a partial grasp of the topic, the different aspects of debates, the requirements of the question, and the manner in which to construct an answer. Argument fleeting, frequently simplistic or flawed, or largely reliant on materials from outside the course. Concepts disordered. Several inaccuracies and omissions. Referencing has numerous mistakes and is incomplete, and there may be unattributed or unreferenced quotes ¹ .
Bad Fail	0 – 29	Very weak answers which lack relevance, direction, accuracy, and substance. Referencing is completely inadequate, has numerous mistakes and is incomplete, and there may be unattributed or unreferenced quotes ¹ . In examinations, this includes answers which have been barely attempted.

¹ Criteria relating to referencing apply to all written summative coursework, including take-home exams, but do not apply to closed-book exams taken in an exam hall.

² In the case of AN447, please read theoretical / social science debates, rather than anthropological.

Please also be aware that other departments will have their own criteria, against which their courses are assessed.