Department of Anthropology

MSc dissertation grade criteria

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. For a mark of 90 or more, analysis is of such originality that it potentially changes some aspect of conventional understanding about the topic and anthropological debates discussed[1,2,3,4], and is of publishable quality. Referencing accurate and precise.
Distinction	**70 – 79**	Excellent work, well-presented and argued with sophistication, maturity, and incisiveness, which draws on a wide range of sources, demonstrates a wide familiarity with the subject matter and anthropological debates[1,2,3,4], and often displays independent judgement and originality. May be of publishable quality. Referencing is accurate and precise.
Merit	**60 – 69**	Competent work showing a good grasp of the subject matter. Evidence of familiarity with an appropriate range of reading and anthropological debates.[1,2,3,4] Clear presentation and organisation of material to pursue a clearly enunciated line of argument. Shows an understanding of and familiarity with terms and concepts. Factually correct and comprehensive in coverage, and with accurate referencing, although there may be minor slips and omissions.
Pass	**50 – 59**	Demonstrates some understanding of the subject matter and a grasp of a basic set of readings, but is marred by poor presentation or by lack of sophisticated argument or knowledge. Frequently narrative in style and lacking in clear argument or focus. May include unsupported generalisations, occasional inaccuracies, omissions, contradictions, weak definitions, poor application of concepts. Presents issues in a superficial manner. Referencing is incomplete and inaccurate.

Fail	**30 – 49**	Basic, below-average dissertation which nevertheless shows evidence of some familiarity with the subject. Weak, narrative/descriptive account, which displays only a partial grasp of the topic addressed, the different aspects of debates. Argument is fleeting, frequently simplistic, or flawed. Concepts are disordered. Several inaccuracies and omissions. Referencing has numerous mistakes and is incomplete, and there may be unattributed or unreferenced quotes.
Bad Fail	**0 - 29**	Very weak dissertation which lacks 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 the case of China in Comparative Perspective, please read theoretical/social science debates, rather than anthropological.

[2] In the case of Religion in the Contemporary World, please read relevant ethnographic and/or theoretical literature normally regarded as anthropological but also including concepts in the study of religion in the social sciences drawn from approved courses on the programme, particularly from the compulsory courses.

[3] In the case of Anthropology and Development please read debates in both anthropology and development studies.

[4] In the case of Culture, Justice, and Environment, please read anthropological and broader academic debates.