Department of Anthropology

Postgraduate position piece grade criteria

The following scheme for grading of marks applies only to position pieces. Attributes listed for each class are assumed to include the best attributes from the class below.

Class	Marks (%)	Attributes
Brilliant Distinction	**80 – 100**	Work of exceptional quality, based on deep and extensive conceptual knowledge of the topic, and using course materials to develop a cogent and original argument. 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 accurate and precise.
Distinction	**70 – 79**	Excellent position pieces, well-presented and argued with maturity and incisiveness, and which demonstrate a thorough and sophisticated understanding of relevant anthropological debates, making incisive and judicious use of the course materials. Distinction-level position pieces often display independent judgement and originality, a subtle and thoughtful analysis of ethnographic and/or theoretical nuances, and dexterity in relating theoretical ideas to ethnographic materials. Referencing is accurate and precise.
Merit	**60 – 69**	Competent position pieces, showing understanding and/or awareness of the main ideas and concepts relevant to the topic in hand, structured around a clearly stated argument, and providing evidence and analysis to support the position adopted. Critical evaluation and discussion of relevant ideas and evidence, demonstrating engagement with the course materials. Content is presented in a clear, generally well-reasoned and consistent manner. Where appropriate, the position piece demonstrates awareness of and engagement with potential objections to the argument it advances. Factually correct, although there may be some slips, omissions, and a lack of nuance at times. Referencing is accurate and precise.

Pass	**50 – 59**	Position pieces demonstrating some understanding of the subject matter and showing evidence of some reading, but marred by poor presentation, lack of sophisticated argument, and/or lack of knowledge of the topic in hand. They often include unsupported claims, generalisations, occasional inaccuracies, irrelevance, omissions, contradictions and weak definition and application of concepts. They may fail to focus, lack structure, or offer a series of disconnected insights rather than articulating a clear position. The main issues are understood, but often presented in a superficial manner. Some passages may do little more than replicate the content of course materials. A position piece of Merit quality may be graded in the Pass bracket if it is too short, or unfinished. Referencing is incomplete, imprecise and/ or inaccurate.
Fail	**30 – 49**	Basic, below-average position pieces which nevertheless show evidence that there is some understanding of the subject and the relevant course materials. They are often weak narrative/descriptive accounts, which display only a partial grasp of the topic, the different aspects of debates, and the manner in which to construct a piece of academic writing. Argument fleeting and frequently simplistic or generic – but the position piece should make sense and show some sign of organisation. Evidence of basic familiarity with the facts, but also inaccuracies, omissions, or irrelevant passages. Pieces that are accurate, but largely reliant on course lectures for their content and/or structure, will be failed. Pieces that are accurate, but largely reliant on materials from outside the course will also be failed. Referencing has numerous mistakes and is incomplete, and there may be unattributed or unreferenced quotes.
Bad Fail	**0 – 29**	Very weak position pieces which lack relevance, direction, accuracy and substance. Pieces that demonstrate little or no evidence of engagement with the course materials should also be graded in this category. Referencing is completely inadequate, has numerous mistakes and is incomplete, and there may be unattributed or unreferenced quotes.