Department of Anthropology

General essay and take-home assessment grade criteria

The following scheme for grading of marks applies to summative assessments including: summative course work essays, research essays, and take-home assessments (also known as online exams).

There are distinct criteria for: position pieces, the AN286 research proposal, the AN286 ethnographic essay, the AN397 special essay (dissertation), and for in-person exams taken in an exam hall.

Attributes listed for each class are assumed to include the best attributes from the class below. Referencing for all work must include in-text citation with dates and page numbers and a separate bibliographic reference list at the end of the document that contains all citations in full. Where an assessment does not involve a set question (for example, a self-designed research essay), references to 'the question' in the criteria should be read as referring to the essay's chosen topic or title.

Class	Marks (%)	Attributes
Brilliant First (1)	**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 accurate and precise.
First (1)	**70 – 79**	Work that is well presented and argued with sophistication, maturity and incisiveness, and that demonstrates a wide familiarity with the subject matter and anthropological debates, especially as revealed through the course readings, lectures and class discussions. Such work often also displays independent judgement and originality. Referencing is accurate and precise.

High Upper Second (2:1)	**65 – 69**	Competent work, presented as a cogent (if not original) argument, showing understanding of all the main ideas and concepts relevant to the question. Addresses the question directly and relevantly. Good critical evaluation and discussion of the literature, presented in a clear, well reasoned, and logical manner. Demonstrates understanding of most of the relevant literature and debates covered in the course readings, lectures and class discussions, and may also draw on literature beyond these. Involves close, granular engagement with the details of texts being cited. Factually correct, attentive to nuance, and comprehensive in coverage, although there may be minor slips and omissions. Referencing is precise and accurate.
Low Upper Second (2:1)	**60 – 64**	Competent work, well argued in parts, showing understanding and/or awareness of many of the main ideas and concepts relevant to the question. Addresses the question directly and relevantly. Satisfactory critical evaluation and discussion of the literature, presented in a clear, generally well-reasoned and consistent manner. Demonstrates understanding of a selection of the relevant literature and a range of reading, and engages with some of the anthropological debates. Factually correct and comprehensive in coverage, although there may be slips, omissions, and a lack of nuance. Referencing is largely accurate but may be inconsistent in style.
Lower Second (2:2)	**50 – 59**	Work that demonstrates some understanding of the subject matter and evidence of some reading, but is marred by lack of sophisticated argument or knowledge and is often generalising in nature. The writing is frequently narrative in style, addresses the question only indirectly or inadequately, or fails to focus. Work often includes unsupported generalisations, occasional inaccuracies, irrelevance, omissions, and contradictions, and is weak in definition and application of concepts. Although the main issues are understood, concepts and arguments are often presented in a superficial manner. Some passages may do little more than replicate the content of course materials and readings. Referencing is incomplete, imprecise and/or inaccurate. A 2:1 piece of work may be graded 2:2 if it is too short, or unfinished.

Third (3)	**40 – 49**	Basic, below-average work which nevertheless shows evidence that there is some understanding of the subject and the relevant course materials. Work often displays only a partial grasp of the topic, and the different aspects of debates, and barely attempts an analysis. Arguments are fleeting and frequently simplistic or generic – but the work should make sense and show some sign of organisation. Evidence of basic familiarity with the facts, but inaccuracies and omissions occur. Work that is accurate, but that does not engage with the course readings, lectures and class discussions, relying instead on materials from outside the course, should be graded third class. Referencing has numerous mistakes and is incomplete, and there may be unattributed or unreferenced quotes.
Fail	**20 – 39**	Very weak work that lacks relevance, direction, accuracy and substance, and that includes unattributed or unreferenced quotes. Essays that demonstrate little or no evidence of engagement with the course materials should also be graded in this category.
Bad Fail	**0 – 19**	The material presented is almost totally irrelevant to the question set. This includes answers which have been barely attempted.

Please also be aware that other departments will have their own criteria, against which their courses are assessed. It is your responsibility to consult the marking guide that is relevant to external courses.