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1. Introduction

1.1. Welcome to the MA Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck

The staff of the Department of Psychosocial Studies would like to warmly welcome you to the MA Psychosocial Studies. We hope that this course will be an exciting and challenging learning experience, and we look forward to working with you.

This handbook contains all the information that you need to know about the course. It would be helpful if you could bring it with you to your teaching sessions. In addition to this handbook, each individual module has its own handbook that contains details of the content, reading and assessment for that module. You can find this information on the module Moodle page.

NB. You will find an electronic version of the handbook on Moodle which may be updated as we proceed through the year.

1.2. Staff Team

Academic Staff:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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Administrative and Other Staff:

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<th>Name</th>
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1.3. Duration and Workload

MA Psychosocial Studies can be taken full-time over one year or part-time over two years. Full-time students will attend the course a minimum of two evenings per week. Part-time students attend a minimum of one evening per week. In addition, there are a small number of teaching sessions on Saturdays during the year to introduce students to qualitative research methods (full-time or Year 2 part-time students only).

Teaching methods include lectures, seminars, tutorials, and group and individual supervision offered by staff and advanced doctoral students at Birkbeck Psychosocial Studies, as well as workshops and guest lectures by visiting staff.

1.4. Student Support

Each student will be assigned a personal tutor at the beginning of the academic year. Students usually meet with their tutors once a term in order to discuss any issues that arise in relation to your experience on the course. These might include particular aspects of the course curriculum that you want to discuss, or more general issues related to your experience of teaching and learning.

There are many other forms of support for students that are detailed in your Student Handbook and on the My Birkbeck website (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services), including disability support, extra learning support, the University counselling service, the Student’s Union and the Careers Service. Please speak with your tutor if you have difficulty accessing any of these services, or if you require other forms of support that are not detailed in this handbook.

1.5. Moodle

In keeping with many higher educational settings, we are using a Virtual Learning Environment called Moodle to support the learning and teaching of this course. You can use Moodle to communicate with staff and fellow students, to access some of the set reading, to submit assignment and receive feedback, and many more things besides. Please make sure you familiarize yourself with Moodle near the beginning of the course. If you experience any difficulties with Moodle please let a member of staff know.

1.6. Student-Staff Exchange Committee

The course committee meets once a term to ensure smooth running of the course, and to discuss any issues arising from the course, implements changes, etc. An extremely important function is considering the views of students and resolving problems as they arise, as far as is possible.

At the start of each term, two students (one full-time and one part-time) are elected by the student group as their course representatives. These representatives meet once a term with the Programme Director, Dr Silvia Posocco for a Student-Staff Exchange Committee.
The meeting dates for the academic year 2014/15 are:

Tuesday 18th of November 2014
Tuesday 9th of March 2015
Tuesday 2nd of June 2015

All meetings will take place at 5.00 pm, before the teaching sessions.

Prior to the Student-Staff Exchange Committee, the course representatives are sent an email asking them to meet with the rest of their cohort to discuss any matters pertaining to the course they would like raised. This can be done in the form of a meeting when students are attending the course and tutors will be willing to give over time for this, or via email. Once any issues have been identified, the course representatives should email Dr Posocco with items for the agenda. Matters can be raised anonymously if appropriate.

For guidance, course representatives should encourage their co-students to identify strengths of the courses as well as any areas of concern. The following webpage gives information about Student-Staff Exchange Committees: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/su/classrep/. In addition, a Course Representative Handbook is available from the Birkbeck Student’s Union.

Matters discussed at the Student-Staff Exchange Committee are brought to the course committee which is attended by all the staff involved in the course.

1.7. Birkbeck Term Dates 2014/15

Autumn Term: Monday 29 September to Friday 12 December 2014
Spring Term: Monday 5 January to Friday 20 March 2015
Summer Term: Monday 20 April to Friday 3 July 2015
2. Course Structure

In order to complete the MA Psychosocial Studies, students are required to take two compulsory core modules, two optional modules, and a dissertation (the double-weighted Independent Research Module). You must pass all five modules in order to be awarded the degree of MA Psychosocial Studies.

Students who complete Core Modules 1 and 2, and two optional modules, but do not complete the dissertation may be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychosocial Studies. Students who complete at least one Core Module and one other module (either Core or Optional) may be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in Psychosocial Studies. These are exit-only awards.

2.1. Core Modules (Autumn Term)

The two core modules are:

- Core Module 1: Theories and Sites of the Psychosocial (30 credits, PSSL040S7)
- Core Module 2: Texts and Interpretation (30 credits, PSSL039S7)

2.2. Optional Modules (Spring Term)

Students choose one or two optional modules (30 credits each) in the Spring term, depending on their part-time or full-time status. One of the options must be chosen from the portfolio offered by the Department of Psychosocial Studies; the other could be chosen from a range of modules across the College, including those from the Department of Psychosocial Studies. Some of the Psychosocial Studies options will be introduced at the Induction Day. For a full list of descriptions, please see the separate Optional Module Booklet. Please contact the Programme Administrator if you would like to take a module that is not listed.
Dissertation

The dissertation is part of the Independent Research Module (60 credits, PSSL007D7). It gives you the opportunity to undertake a piece of supervised independent research of your choice in the field of psychosocial studies. It allows you to test and develop your knowledge and understanding of the field gained in the prior core and optional modules and represents the culmination of your learning.

The topic of your research must be relevant to Psychosocial Studies. You can undertake either a piece of qualitative empirical research or a theoretical research project. **Students undertaking empirical research will need to submit an ethics form for approval by the ethics committee prior to undertaking any research.**

Students will be assigned to a supervisor at the end of the spring term who will expect to see them individually three times. See the Appendix at the end of this document for College guidelines on the role and responsibilities of dissertation supervisors. In order to support your work on the dissertation, you will attend the research training led by Mrs Magda Schmukalla, as well as the Dissertation Support Sessions in the summer term also led by Mrs Schmukalla.

2.2.1. Full-Time Students

Full-time students must attend the Research Training sessions on selected Saturdays during the autumn and spring terms. Full-time students must also attend and actively contribute to the Dissertation Support Sessions scheduled for the summer term.

Submission deadline: Monday 14th September 2015

2.2.2. Part-Time Students (Year 1)

You must attend the Research Training on Saturdays and the Dissertation Support Sessions during your second year. You are welcome to attend the Dissertation Support Sessions in your first year as well in order to support your full-time colleagues, and learn more about the research process, but this is not compulsory.

Submission deadline for final dissertation: September 2016

2.3. Study Skills

A series of three optional sessions on study skills will be held after the Saturday workshops in the autumn term from 2pm to 4pm.

There are also other resources on study skills available at Birkbeck. Please see [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/support](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/support) for further information.
2.4. **Summer Programme: Film Screenings and Psychosocial Studies Annual Lecture**

During the summer term, students will attend Dissertation Support Sessions followed by a series of film screenings and panels organised by Dr Amber Jacobs, as well as the Psychosocial Studies Annual Lecture to be given by a distinguished invited guest.

2.5. **Timetable Core Programme**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Autumn term</th>
<th>Spring term</th>
<th>Summer term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Module 1</td>
<td>Tue, 6-8.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core Module 2</td>
<td>Wed, 6-8.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Training</td>
<td>Sat, 11am-2pm</td>
<td>Sat, 11am-2pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>18 Oct 2014</td>
<td>24 Jan 2015</td>
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<td>15 Nov 2014</td>
<td>21 Feb 2015</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6 Dec 2014</td>
<td>14 Mar 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Skills (optional)</td>
<td>Sat, 2-4pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>18 Oct 2014</td>
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<td>15 Nov 2014</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6 Dec 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation Support Sessions</td>
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<td>Tue, 6-8.30pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dates TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Programme: Film &amp; Annual Lecture</td>
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### 2.6. Timetable Optional Modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Autumn term</th>
<th>Spring term</th>
<th>Summer term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Psychoanalysis and Culture (PS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mon, 6-8.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Culture, Community &amp; Identity (PS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, 6-8.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Querying the Unconscious (PS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thu, 6-8.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Education, Power and Resistances (PS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thu, 6-9.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The Horror, The Horror (EH)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, 7.40-9pm</td>
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<td>6. A Confusion of Tongues (EH)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thu, 6-7.20pm</td>
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<td>7. Time for Revolution (EH)</td>
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<td>Thu, 7.40-9pm</td>
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<td>8. Freud in the world: psychoanalysis literary writing and the legacies of history</td>
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<td>TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Coming to London (HCA)</td>
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<td>Tue, 6-8.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Africa in the European Imagination (HCA)</td>
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<td>Wed, 6-8.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Queer Histories/Queer Cultures (HCA)</td>
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<td>Wed, 6-8.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. The Soviet Experience (HCA)</td>
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<td>Thu, 6-8.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Anthropology: Theory &amp; Method (GEDS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tue, 6-8.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Futures: The Globalization of Human Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mon, 7.30-9pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Gender, Sexuality and Criminal Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, 6-7.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Crime and Control (Law)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thu, 7.30-9pm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Philosophy and Gender (Ph)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thu, 6-8.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Qualitative Social Research (Pol)</td>
<td>Tue, 6-9.00pm</td>
<td>Tue, 6-9.00pm</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>19. Political Sociology (Pol)</td>
<td>Fri, 6-9.00pm</td>
<td>Fri, 6-9.00pm</td>
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For descriptions, please see the separate Optional Module Booklet.
3. Additional Academic Events

There are a range of additional, optional academic events that are held throughout the year at Birkbeck. This is a provisional list of events you might be interested in, but please do visit the Birkbeck website regularly for updated information about other events.

3.1. Visiting Professor: Professor Judith Butler

Judith Butler continues this year as our Visiting Professor on the MA Psychosocial Studies. Details of her visit will be confirmed later in the year.

3.2. BISR, BIH and BIGS

There are numerous other opportunities for learning in the College, including seminars and public talks run by the Birkbeck Institute for Social Research (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/bisr/), the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/bih/) and the Birkbeck Institute for Gender and Sexuality (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/research/bigs/). Details of these programmes will be provided at the beginning of each term. In addition, please check the webpages of these institutes regularly for updates of their programmes.
4. Syllabus

4.1. Core Module 1: Theories and Sites of the Psychosocial

Term, day and time: Autumn Term, Tuesdays, 6.00-8.30pm
Module Co-ordinator: Dr Silvia Posocco

4.1.1 An Introduction to the Course

The course provides an introduction to the domain of psychosocial studies. The emphasis is on a broad field of theory, analysis and critique that is concerned with understanding the relations between power and subjectivity.

The aim is to introduce students to a plurality of interventions through which the psychosocial can be understood and combine a wide range of cutting-edge perspectives in social and cultural theory, notably contributions in feminist, postcolonial and queer studies, with readings of classic texts by, for example, Freud, Lacan, and Fanon.

The course adopts an interdisciplinary approach to the psychosocial, with a strong emphasis on theory. Interdisciplinarity is a mode of knowledge production which does not assume a shared disciplinary history as a context for analytical interventions, but rather, works towards generating knowledge across disciplinary contexts, histories and domains. It values perspectives which may be located in-between more traditionally constituted fields and is therefore dependent upon knowledge-practices of crossing, traversing and connecting for the generation of understanding and critique. This approach is reflected in the course teaching team, whose expertise in sociology, social anthropology, psychology, literary studies, psychoanalysis and cultural studies intersects productively with the fields of feminist, gender, postcolonial and queer studies.

Weekly lectures and seminars cover a wide range of analytical tools and review debates over the meanings and uses of key concepts. Topics and debates covered include: a genealogy of the field of psychosocial studies and the relation between psychosocial studies and the ‘masters of suspicion’, namely Marx, Nietzsche and Freud; Freud’s topographical (conscious/preconscious/unconscious) model of the mind and the structural (ego/id/superego) model of the mind; Freud’s notions of psychosexual stages of development, the drives, the Oedipus Complex, repression and defences, and transference; Lacan’s tri-partition of subjectivity into the three dimensions, registers or orders of psychic reality, namely the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real; ‘worlding’ psychoanalysis and psychosocial studies; Fanon’s analysis of racism, identification, disidentification and the conditions of possibility for ‘decolonizing the mind’; theories of ideology, interpellation and subject formation; theories of power, discourse and subjectivation; subjectivation and ‘the fold’; ‘Body without Organs’ (BwO), virtuality, assemblage, nomadic thought, rhizomes, difference, becoming; histories of feminist theory; feminist theorisations of the making and unmaking of gendered and sexual identities; feminist analyses of the intersections between different forms or systems of domination and discrimination; intimacy and personal life, theories of individualization, and sociological analyses of changing practices of family and kinship; queer theory’s and queer studies’ critiques and ‘post-conventional psychoanalysis’ (queer and relational approaches); black or third world women’s feminist shifting articulations of subjectivity and the political; diasporic geographies and dynamics of memory and history in the making in black and third world feminist theory; violence, exception and immunity and auto-immune crisis as psychosocial analytics.

Lectures and seminars draw on social and cultural theory to explore how theoretical accounts connect to the analysis of specific social processes, sites and political contexts. Throughout the course, we aim to situate the psychosocial spatially, temporally and conceptually. We grapple with the emergence of the psychosocial in modernity/coloniality and reflect on how this genealogy...
reconfigures psychosocial studies as a domain of knowledge production concerned with the critical analysis of subjectivity as socially, culturally and historically located experience. Students are invited to situate, mobilise and deploy theoretical constructs to examine and understand key aspects of contemporary life such as the fluctuating gendered dimensions of desire, identification and belonging, alongside the dynamics of racism, political violence, conflict, resistance and crisis.

Dr Silvia Posocco, Summer 2014.

**Timetable**
The course is taught in 10 x 1 hour lectures + 15 min Question and Answer session and 10 x 1 hour seminars. Seminars follow the weekly lecture and are led members of the Teaching Team. Lectures and seminars take place on Tuesdays, 6-8.30 PM. Term dates are available here: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/term-dates](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/term-dates)

**Teaching Team**
The course is team-taught by Faculty in the Department of Psychosocial Studies, with lectures and seminars by Dr Silvia Posocco, Dr Laurence Spurling, Dr Alistair Black, Professor Lynne Segal, Dr Gail Lewis, and Professor Sasha Roseneil. Weekly seminars will be facilitated by Dr Silvia Posocco (Seminar Group A) and Ms Magda Schmukalla and the weekly lecturer (Seminar Group b).

**Course requirements**
Students are expected to prepare for the weekly lecture and seminar by reading at least two of the key readings each week, and posting a 300 word summary of their reading on Moodle, in advance of the lecture. This is a requirement and an important component of the course. Although these summaries will not be subject to formal assessment, they will form the basis of discussion within the seminar and will often inform the lecturer's subsequent lectures on the topic. Please note that the key readings are made available on Moodle in electronic format to facilitate access to the course materials. In addition to this, students are expected to familiarise themselves with the Birkbeck Library and the numerous electronic and hard copy collections relevant to the MA Psychosocial programme of study.

**Assessment**
The assessment for this module takes the form of a 4,000 word essay on an aspect of psychosocial theory. Students can choose from the essay titles listed below. Please see general guidelines for writing essays in your handbook. The deadline for submission of the essay is given in your Handbook.

1) What did Freud mean by “the unconscious” and what were Freud’s models of the mind? Critically consider the relevance of these Freudian analytical constructs for contemporary psychosocial studies.

2) How does the distinction between the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real contribute to our understanding of identity and desire in contemporary society?

3) How does Lacan’s ‘return to Freud’ open up possibilities both for psychoanalysis and psychosocial studies?

4) In what ways – and in view of what concepts – can we think of Fanon as a psychosocial theorist?

5) ‘Identification is a more complex and supple term than identity, which is a matter of social regulation, the allocation or the assimilation of each individual to a social group, a class, a gender, a race, a nation – concepts that are themselves in question. The term identification, on the other hand, owing to its psychoanalytic resonance, carries an ontological and an epistemological valence, such that the question, Who or What am I?"
becomes a question of being and knowing, a question of desire.’ (de Lauretis 2002:54). Discuss the meanings and implications of this statement in relation to the work of Frantz Fanon.

6) Compare, contrast and evaluate the contributions made by Fanon, Althusser, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Spiller and/or Braidotti to a psychosocial understanding of processes of subject formation.

7) Compare, contrast and evaluate two distinct approaches to theorising subjectivity and consider their relevance for contemporary psychosocial studies.

8) Critically consider the proposition that Guattari’s thought can be understood as a radicalization of Lacanian psychoanalysis.

9) Discuss some of feminism’s recurring paradoxes, especially the tensions between those who have wanted to affirm the ‘feminine’ in phallocratic cultures and those trying to oppose gender hierarchies and deconstruct gender binaries.

10) How might psychosocial studies develop truly psychosocial understandings of contemporary experiences and practices of intimacy and personal life?

11) ‘Black/third world feminism offers a way to re conceptualise the political project of all feminist praxis.’ To what extent do you agree/disagree with this statement and why?

12) What is ‘black’ and/or ‘third world’ about black and third world feminism?

13) Critically consider to what extent theories of biopolitics, necropolitics, exception and/or immunity can offer an account of the racial logic of power and its production of ‘bare life’ as racialized life.

14) What are ‘immunity’ and ‘auto-immunity’ and how can these terms contribute to a psychosocial analysis of the political?

**Lectures and Seminars Outline**

1. Week 1, Tue 30 September 2014 – Dr Silvia Posocco
   Psychosocial Studies: An Introduction

2. Week 2, Tue 7 October 2014 – Dr Laurence Spurling
   An Introduction to the work of Sigmund Freud

3. Week 3, Tue 14 October 2014 – Dr Alistair Black
   Reading Lacan: the imaginary, the symbolic, and (touching on) the real

4. Week 4, Tue 21 October 2014 – Dr Silvia Posocco
   Fanon, Subalternity, Postcoloniality

5. Week 5, Tue 28 October 2014 – Dr Silvia Posocco
   Ideology, Interpellation, Subject Formation

6. //Reading Week// 3 November – 7 November

7. Week 7, 11 November 2014 – Dr Silvia Posocco
   Desiring Subject, Desiring-Production, Desiring Machines: Between Foucault and Deleuze & Guattari

8. Week 8, 18 November 2014 – Professor Lynne Segal
   Contested Foundations, Fantasies and Futures of Feminist Thought
9. Week 9, 25 November 2014 – Professor Sasha Roseneil
   Intimacy and Personal Life
10. Week 10, 2 December 2014 – Dr Gail Lewis
    Black Feminisms' Moving Subjects, Moving Objects
11. Week 11, 9 December 2014 – Dr Silvia Posocco
    Bio/Necropolitics, Exception, Immunity
Core Module 2: Texts and Interpretation

Module Co-ordinator: Dr Andrew Harvey
Term, day and time: Autumn Term, Wednesdays, 6.00-8.30pm

4.1.1. Aims

The main aim of this module is to gain understanding of the different philosophical traditions which inspire research and interpretation within the field of psycho-social studies. Leaving behind metaphysical notions of truth and objectivity, this module explores different hermeneutical traditions which acknowledge the centrality of contexts, power structures and subjective/discursive positions in the process of meaning formation and production of knowledge. Key concepts to be discussed in this module are language, discourse, meaning, context, desire and power.

4.1.2. Organization of the Module

1. Written Responses

The students are expected to prepare their assigned readings and write for each session a written response (around 300 words) and post them prior to the session on Blackboard. The written responses should accomplish two tasks: first, to present a summary of the essential concepts and ideas of the text and the way they are related to each other, and to offer a critical analysis of the implications of these ideas in the production of knowledge, interpretation and research process.

2. Students’ Presentation and Group Discussions

Each session is divided in two parts, in the first one there will be a Lecture and in the second a group discussion about particular topics covered by the Lecture.

4.1.3. Assessment

The Module will be assessed through an Essay (4000 words) which will be marked according to the College numeric marking system. Students have to submit a title and short description of the paper they want to write (200 words) to be discussed and approved by the Lecturer two weeks before the term ends.

The deadline for submission of the essay is Wednesday 7 January 2015.

Session 1

The first part of the module will cover the central debates around what has been called “cultural turn” in opposition to claims about objective science and epistemology. We will critically debate the idea and implications of social production of knowledge, the relations of power implicated in such process, its cultural and philosophical sources and its material implications over reality.

Key Readings:


**Recommended Reading:**


**Session 2**

**OCTOBER 8**

The main goal of this session is to link knowledge to the notion of performativity and power. How does knowledge reproduce, challenge or change existing hierarchical social structures?

**Key Readings:**

Austin, J.L. *How to do things with words*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976 (Lecture 2)

Bourdieu, P. *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge : Polity Press, 1999 (Ch. 1, 3, 7). Chapter 1


**Recommended Reading:**

Berger, P. and Luckmann, T. *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of*
Session 3

OCTOBER 15

This session deals primarily with the notions of 'feminist epistemologies', that is, it questions from a gender perspective the supposedly 'objective' and 'value free' standpoint of science and knowledge.

Key Readings:


Recommended Readings:

Braidoti, R. “Body Images and the Pornography of Representation”, in *Knowing the difference: feminist perspectives in epistemology*; edited by Kathleen Lennon and Margaret Whitford, Routledge, 1994.


Session 4

OCTOBER 22

This session deals with ways in which knowledge intersects with 'racial' ideas of others producing subaltern knowledges and reproducing racially informed social hierarchies.
Key Readings:


Yegenogly, M (1998) Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism (Introduction, Chapter 1 and 2)

Recommended Readings:

Mignolo, W, Local histories/global designs: coloniality, subaltern knowledges and border thinking, Princeton UP, 2000 (Introduction; Ch.1)


Session 5

OCTOBER 29TH

This session examines what is meant by queer epistemologies and to assess its value in recuperating ‘lost’ or ‘hidden’ queer histories in addition to its promise to destabilise fixed categories of gender and sexuality. The session will ask whether queer methodologies can unsettle domains of knowledge that lie outside of gender and/or sexuality.

Key Readings:


Recommended Readings:


***READING WEEK NOVEMBER 5TH***

Session 6
From Marx to post-Marxism

In this session, we start by examining the work of Karl Marx and his critique of capitalism and liberalism. We then turn to look at two contemporary post-Marxists to see how they reformulate Marxism for analysing and diagnosing contemporary society: Ernesto Laclau and Antonio Negri. This gives us the opportunity to think about the relevance of Marx today.

Key readings


Recommended readings (Marx)


David McLellan, Karl Marx: His life and thought


Also in Great Political Thinkers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).


Recommended readings (post-Marxism)


Laclau, E., ‘Gramsci’, in S. Critchley and W. R. Schroeder (eds), A Companion to
Session 7
NOVEMBER 19TH

The study of semiotics started with Ferdinand de Saussure (1906) who stated that language is an arbitrary system of signs and that there is no intrinsic link between the “signifier” and the “signified”. Within this tradition of thought, concepts don’t represent reality, but they are defined by their differences from other terms. This idea became very influential in the fields of linguistic, anthropology, literary criticism and psychoanalysis in the sixties, and it evolved into what is called today Deconstruction.

Key Readings:

Foucault, M Archeology of Knowledge, Routledge 2002. (Appendix: The Discourse on Language)


Recommended Readings:


Session 8
NOVEMBER 26TH

This session has a double aim. First, it will examine the thought of Ernesto Laclau and examine the value of hegemony as a way of understanding dominant modes of knowledge. The session will finish with a look at neo-liberal formations of knowledge production through the notion of Capitalist Realism.

Key Readings (Laclau):


Key Readings (Capitalist Realism)


Recommended Reading (Laclau):


Laclau, E. *Emancipation(s)*. Verso 2007 (Ch. ‘Why empty signifiers matter to politics?’

**Recommended Reading (Capitalist Realism):**


---

**Session 9**  
**DECEMBER 3RD**

This session will focus on the analysis of how the psychoanalytic concept of desire has contributed to widen and further un-stabilize the relation between being, language and power.

**Key Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**

*Cixous, H. The Helene Cixous Reader*, Routledge, 1994


Session 10
DECEMBER 10TH

**Deconstruction: method and practice**
In this session we cover three things: (1) deconstruction as method for social analysis; (2) Jacques Derrida’s concept of iterability; and (3) an example of deconstruction and iterability in practice.

**Key readings**


**Additional readings** (Derrida and deconstruction)


**Additional readings** (deconstruction and method)

**Additional readings (iterability)**
4.2. **Independent Research Module: Dissertation**

In order to support your work on the dissertation, you will attend the research training led by Mrs Magda Schmukalla.

4.2.1. **Research Training**

**Module Co-ordinators:** Mrs Magda Schmukalla and Mr Luca Bartozzi  
**Term, day and time:** Autumn, Spring Terms, six selected Saturdays, 11am-2pm and Summer Term, four selected Tuesdays, 6-8.30pm.

4.2.1.1 **Aims**

The module is designed to help students to learn the skills and knowledge that will enable them to undertake a long piece of independent research as part of their MA programme in Psychosocial Studies.

4.2.1.2 **Organization of the Module**

The module is divided into two parts:

**Part 1: Six research training sessions held on a Saturday morning in autumn and spring terms**

These sessions are designed to introduce students to a diverse range of research methods that they might employ in the preparation of their dissertation. It is understood that students may write dissertations involving different methodologies that require different approaches to research. All sessions will involve students in their own learning process and will be a combination of lecture, group work, discussion and feedback.

**Part 2: Four Dissertation Support Sessions held in the summer term**

Dissertation Support Sessions in the summer term are designed to motivate students to make progress with their work and to offer them the opportunity to get feedback and to discuss any difficulties they are having. In each session students will make presentations on their work in progress to their peer group and tutor. Further details of these sessions will be provided towards the end of the spring term.

4.2.1.3 **Student Milestones**

**Student Milestone 1:** By end of autumn term (Friday 12 December 2014) students must write a 300 word paragraph on their initial ideas of a dissertation topic. The student is not held to this topic but should give some indication of their thinking. In particular the student should say what research methodology they are considering so that the spring programme can be tailored accordingly.

**Student Milestone 2:** Students should submit a 2000-3000 word research proposal at the end of the spring term (Friday 20 March 2015). In terms of format, the following guidelines may be useful. A proposal will include a discussion of the following (depending on the type of project, some points may not apply):
• What is your general topic?
• What questions do you want to answer?
• What is the key literature and its limitations?
• What are the main hypotheses of the work?
• What methodology do you intend to use?
• What are your case studies, if any, and what are your case selection criteria?
• Timetable of research

Deadline for submission of proposals: Friday 20 March 2015.

**Student Milestone 3:** Students should agree with their supervisor the date for submitting a draft chapter of their dissertation. This would normally be before the end of the summer term but can be varied by negotiation and agreement. Students can expect feedback on the chapter and direction on completion of the full dissertation. It will be the last opportunity students will have for feedback as the dissertation is considered an examination to be completed independently.

### 4.2.2. Dissertation Presentation and Submission Guidelines

The assessment of your research is done by a dissertation of 10,000-12,000 words (no 10% leeway). The dissertation is a written report of either an empirical or theoretical study. You should write the dissertation as if you were going to submit it for publication to an academic or clinical journal. It is very important for you to familiarize yourself with published articles, whether they are empirical, theoretical or narrative reviews. Equally important is to be prepared to plan, draft and revise the dissertation before handing it in.

All text in the main body of the dissertation including long quotations, abbreviated references (author, year, page number), footnotes, endnotes, captions, etc, are included in the word count but the bibliography, figures, tables or appendices are not. (NB. Footnotes and endnotes are explanatory notes to the main body of text and bibliography is the full list of references at the end of your dissertation).

Meeting the word count is considered an important part of academic practice and will be a factor in assessment. It requires planning ahead, designing a structure, prioritising between arguments and evidence, and being concise. Standard word processing software offers tools for doing word-counts (in MS Word under Tools). Exceeding the maximum word count may lead to the deduction of marks. The markers may also return the dissertation to you for shortening. If the word count for your assignment is below the target, the mark for the dissertation is likely to be negatively affected because of a lack of substance.

Dissertations must be word-processed using double line spacing throughout on A4 sized paper. Pages should be numbered consecutively.
The title page should state the following information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>[in middle of page]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissertation submitted as partial fulfilment for the Degree of MA Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck, University of London

Research Dissertation

Word count

Submission Date

An abstract providing a summary of the dissertation (max 300 words) should begin on page two. This will not be included in the word count.

All publications referred to in the dissertation should give the surname(s) of the author(s) followed by the date of publication in brackets. All references should then be listed in alphabetical order in the bibliography at the end, giving full publication details. A consistent style of referencing should be adopted. Please use the guidelines in this handbook for referencing.

The dissertation needs to be submitted electronically on Moodle via Turnitin, where it will be checked for plagiarism and word count.

4.2.3. Assessment Criteria

There are four grades for the dissertation: Distinction (69-100%), Merit (60-69%), Pass (50-59%) and Fail (0-49%). Below is a description of each grade:

**Distinction 70 – 100%**

An excellent dissertation that excels on most if not all of the specified criteria. Specific criteria includes comprehensive and accurate coverage, evidence of comprehensive reading and the use of a wide range of resources, theoretical insight, clarity of argument and expression, critical evaluation of evidence, sophisticated analysis and interpretation, evidence of independent thinking both in terms of the research question and the research process. A mark of 86 + is an exceptional dissertation that meets all criteria and has further qualities that set it apart from the norm. *These are in addition to the qualities expected in a merit.*

**Merit 60 – 69%**

A very good dissertation that fulfils most if not all of the specified criteria. Specific criteria includes reasonably comprehensive and accurate coverage, some evidence of comprehensive reading and the use of a range of resources, good understanding of material and theory, development of a coherent argument, consistent and appropriate use of evidence to support/challenge arguments and theory, critical awareness of the implications of the research; sensible analysis, some evaluation of evidence.

**Pass 50 – 59%**
An adequate dissertation with an acceptable level of competence that fulfils most if not all the specified criteria. Specific criteria includes basic coverage that is generally accurate, adequate understanding of material, some use of evidence to support/challenge arguments and theory, clear presentation, sensibly organized with some potential for the development of an argument, appropriate analysis, some awareness of the implications of the research, some evaluation of the material, an attempt to evaluate the evidence.

Fail 40 – 49%

A weak dissertation that shows some understanding and knowledge but is characterized by the following: sparse coverage of material which misses important information and contains inaccuracies, assertions not supported by evidence, poor understanding of the material and no evidence of wider reading, inappropriate or incomplete analysis, poor structure and little development of argument.

Theoretical and empirical dissertations are marked according to the criteria specified below:

Theoretical dissertations:

Introduction and literature review
- A clear and coherent set of aims associated with a specific thesis or argument.
- Appropriate and comprehensive (not exhaustive) coverage of relevant literature or theoretical material, and a rationale given for its selection.

Theoretical argument and discussion
- Accuracy with which theoretical material is described.
- Demonstration that the material examined has been critically understood.
- Extent to which a clear and logical argument is presented, supported or backed up the source material or other additional material.
- Quality of the arguments presented.

Literary quality and overall impression
- Literary quality of the dissertation including the use of footnotes, appendices and references.
- Overall scholarly quality of the dissertation, including critical reflections on the research process.
Empirical dissertations:

Introduction and literature review
- A clear and coherent research question(s) and set of aims.
- Appropriately comprehensive review of the relevant extant literature.

Methodology
Discussion of the methodological options considered and the appropriateness of the chosen method with regard to your research question.

Method
Clearly presented design and procedures section.

Results and discussion
- Quality of data analysis.
- Quality of the interpretation of the findings in light of the extant literature.
- Critical reflection on the issues raised by the study (e.g. ethical) and on the research process itself.

Literary quality and overall impression
- Literary quality of the dissertation including the use of footnotes, figures and tables, appendices and references.
- Overall scholarly quality of the dissertation, including reflections on the research process.

4.3. Ethics

1) No research activity especially fieldwork, including preliminary and pilot studies can be undertaken until it has gained ethics approval. Research proposals classified as routine will be approved by the departmental Ethics Committee. Research proposals classified as non-routine will be reviewed by the departmental Ethics Committee first. They will then have to be approved by the School Ethics Committee.

2) Details about how to gain ethics approval -
- For accessing ethics form please see, http://www.bbk.ac.uk/sshp/research/sshp-ethics-committee-and-procedures/proposal-procedure
- For an explanation of what is classified as routine and non-routine research please see, http://www.bbk.ac.uk/sshp/research/sshp-ethics-committee-and-procedures/proposal-procedure
- For information on research procedures and training materials please see, http://www.bbk.ac.uk/sshp/research/sshp-ethics-committee-and-procedures/other-references

Please note these procedures are under review, these should be checked before you begin your research.
5. Assessment Guidelines and Deadlines

Each module is assessed separately. You must pass the set assessment in order to complete the module.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Submission Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Module 1</td>
<td>4000 word essay</td>
<td>Tuesday 6th January 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Module 2</td>
<td>4000 word essay</td>
<td>Wednesday 7th January 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPS Optional Modules</td>
<td>See individual Options</td>
<td>April/May 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation</td>
<td>10,000-12,000 word dissertation</td>
<td>Monday 14th September 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each Optional Module has its own assessment which is described in the handbook for that module. Students must pass the assessment of two optional modules in order to complete the course.

Students with disabilities and dyslexia may be eligible for special arrangements for examinations e.g. extra time, use of a word processor, amanuensis, enlarged examination papers etc. In order to receive special arrangements students must provide Medical Evidence of their disability (or an Educational Psychologist’s Report if you are dyslexic) to the Disability Office. You are however, strongly recommended to contact the Disability Office well before this date, preferably soon after starting the course.

5.1. Submission Guidelines

All course work needs to be submitted electronically on Moodle via Turnitin, where it will be checked for plagiarism and word count. In submitting any work, whether on paper or electronically, you agree to abide by the College's regulations on plagiarism. You also undertake that the work is all your own, that you have properly acknowledged and cited all materials used from the published or unpublished works of others, and that the work has not previously been submitted for any other of your modules. You also agree, in submitting the work, that the College may take steps to authenticate the material submitted, including (but not limited to) submitting the work to a plagiarism checking service and copying the work to another member or members of staff.

Essays must be word-processed using double line spacing throughout on A4 sized paper. Pages should be numbered consecutively.
The title page should state the following information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MA Psychosocial Studies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Co-ordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. With the exception of the dissertation, never put your name on any coursework.

For the dissertation submission criteria, please see 4.3.2. Dissertation Submission Guidelines.

5.2. Word count

All text in the main body of the dissertation including long quotations, abbreviated references (author, year, page number), footnotes, endnotes, captions, etc, are included in the word count but the bibliography, figures, tables or appendices are not. (NB. Footnotes and endnotes are explanatory notes to the main body of text and bibliography is the full list of references at the end of your dissertation).

Meeting the word count is considered an important part of academic practice and will be a factor in assessment. It requires planning ahead, designing a structure, prioritising between arguments and evidence, and being concise. Standard word processing software offers tools for doing word-counts (in MS Word under Tools). Exceeding the maximum word count may lead to the deduction of marks. The markers may also return the dissertation to you for shortening. If the word count for your assignment is below the target, the mark for the dissertation is likely to be negatively affected because of a lack of substance.

5.3. Deferral of Examinations

Permission to defer any part of the examination, including submission of the dissertation, may be granted for reasons judged adequate in the particular case by the Examination Board and the College. Subject to such exemption being granted, candidates will be informed of the marks they obtained in those elements in which they have been examined and the examiners may determine the exemptions which will be allowed on re-entry. Successful completion of the course involves attaining a pass in all elements of the examination. Normally, candidates who have been granted a deferment of entry to one or more elements of the examination will be expected to complete the course in the next academic year.

In order to obtain permission for a deferral, you must make an application to the Programme Director, Dr Silvia Posocco. A copy of this application should go to the Course Administrator, Edel
Quinn. Where appropriate, you should supply documentary evidence supporting your application for deferral.

Candidates who do not attend an examination or who do not submit written work without being granted permission to defer or withdraw their examination entry shall be deemed to have failed the examination on that occasion.

5.4. Late Submission of Work for Assessment and Resubmission of Failed Work

Work to be considered for formal assessment that is submitted late is given two marks: a penalty mark of 50%, assuming it is of a pass standard, and the ‘real’ mark that would have been awarded if the work had not been late.

Students may request mitigating circumstances by providing written evidence, medical or otherwise, as to why their work was submitted late. This should be made on the standard pro forma and submitted to the Course Director, Dr Silvia Posocco, and the Course Administrator, Edel Quinn. The case will then be considered by the appropriate sub-board or delegated panel. If no such documentation is received prior to the meeting of the Exam Board, the ‘real’ mark will not be considered and the penalty mark will stand. If the case is made and accepted then the examination board may allow the ‘real” mark to stand.

If you have failed a piece of work you will be given one opportunity to resubmit your work in order to try to pass the module. You will be given detailed written feedback from the module co-ordinator indicating what you need to do in order to pass the assignment. If the work is awarded a mark lower than 40% students must re-take the module.

Unless otherwise agreed with the Course Director, resubmission deadlines are as follows:

- Core Module 1: Monday 16th March 2015
- Core Module 2 & Term 2 DPS Options: Monday 1st June 2015
- Dissertation: Monday 14th September 2016

5.5. Mitigating Circumstances

The College Policy on Mitigating Circumstances determines how boards of examiners will treat assessment that has been affected by adverse circumstances. Mitigating Circumstances are defined as unforeseen, unpreventable circumstances that significantly disrupt your performance in assessment. This should not be confused with long term issues such as medical conditions, for which the College can make adjustments before assessment (for guidance on how arrangements can be made in these cases please see the College’s Procedures for Dealing with Special Examination Arrangements).
A Mitigating Circumstances claim should be submitted if valid detrimental circumstances result in:

a. the late or non-submission of assessment;
   b. non-attendance at examination(s);
   c. poor performance in assessment.

For a claim to be accepted you must produce independent documentary evidence to show that the circumstances:

a. have detrimentally affected your performance or will do so, with respect to a, b and c above;
   b. were unforeseen;
   c. were out of your control and could not have been prevented;
   d. relate directly to the timing of the assessment affected.

Documentation should be presented, wherever possible, on the official headed paper of the issuing body, and should normally include the dates of the period in which the circumstances applied. Copies of documentary evidence will not normally be accepted. If you need an original document for another purpose, you should bring the original into the Department Office so that a copy can be made by a member of College staff. (Where a photocopy is made by a member of staff they should indicate on the copy that they have seen the original).

Discussing your claim with a member of staff does not constitute a submission of a claim of mitigating circumstances.

You are encouraged to submit your claim for mitigating circumstances in advance and at the earliest opportunity. The final deadline for submission of a claim is normally 1 week after the final examination unless otherwise stated by your School. Where possible, claims should be submitted using the standard College Mitigating Circumstances claim form (available from your School office) which should be submitted in accordance with the procedure for submission published by your School. Claims should always be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.

You should be aware that individual marks will almost never be changed in the light of mitigating circumstances. Assessment is designed to test your achievement rather than your potential; it is not normally possible to gauge what you would have achieved had mitigating circumstances not arisen. Where mitigating circumstances are accepted, and it is judged by an examination board that these circumstances were sufficiently severe to have affected your performance in assessment the usual response will be to offer you another opportunity for assessment without penalty, at the next available opportunity.

Guidance on what may constitute acceptable mitigating circumstances is available as an appendix to the policy, available from http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules/mitcircspol.pdf; you should note that this is not an exhaustive list, and that each case will be treated on its merits by the relevant sub-board or delegated body.
5.6. Break in Studies

Students may apply for a break in studies for a maximum of two years in total during their programme of study and this will normally be for a period of one academic year. Requests for breaks in study must be made in writing to the Programme Director, Dr Margarita Palacios. More information can be found on the following webpage:
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/break-in-studies.
6. General Marking Criteria

Essays will be marked in accordance with content, structure, clarity and quality of analysis. Source of quotations should be indicated. A list of all references should be included at the end of the essay. The number of words in the essay should be stated. Essays significantly over length will incur a penalty.

6.1. Assessment Grades

There are four grades for assessed work: Distinction (70-100%, divided into ‘High Distinction’ [80%+] and ‘Distinction’), Merit (60-69%), Pass (50-59%) and Fail (0-49%). The following table gives an indication of what is expected for each range of marks.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Marks Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>80-100% High Distinction</strong></td>
<td>Marks in this range indicate an exceptionally high level of scholarship and outstanding performance in terms of all of the dimensions outlined. While work at this level exhibits scrupulous completion of the requirements of the assignment, it will also exhibit a high degree of initiative, high quality of analysis, academic sophistication, comprehension and critical assessment, making a novel contribution to psychosocial studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>70%–79% Distinction</strong></td>
<td>Marks in this range indicate high levels of scholarship, and high performance in terms of all of the dimensions outlined. Comprehensively argued writing of interest and originality which is also well organized and presented exhibiting a sound, critical and analytical grasp of the relevant literature(s) and drawing on an extensive range of relevant academic sources. The work will display an excellent understanding of underlying theory as well as employing appropriate analytical techniques, resulting in an argument of interest and significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>60%–69% Merit</strong></td>
<td>Work that demonstrates a good command of the subject and relevant literature(s) as well as a sound grasp of critical issues, with evidence of independent thought and a high standard of argument as well as good presentation. Work towards the bottom of this range may have occasional weaknesses and flaws but will nevertheless show a generally high level of competence. Work towards the top of this range will be highly competent on all dimensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>50%–59% Pass</strong></td>
<td>Marks in this range indicate general capability, but with moderate levels of weaknesses on one or more dimensions indicated above. Work in this range may contain inaccuracies, the arguments may lack clarity or rigour, or there may be a lack of critical understanding. It will however be coherently structured and presented, showing a sound command of the subject, some awareness of critical debate, and the ability to construct a generally coherent argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks</td>
<td>Description</td>
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| 40%–49% | **Fail**  
Marks in this range do not quite meet the minimum standards for a pass, with considerable levels of weaknesses on one or more dimensions. Work in this range may suffer from flawed arguments, weak structure and presentation, an inadequate command of course materials, or a serious failure to reflect on those materials. It will however demonstrate a basic understanding of psychosocial studies and show evidence of reasonable attention to the course materials. |
| 30%–39% | **Low Fail**  
Marks in this range display major levels of weaknesses on two or more dimensions. The work may be reliant on a minimal range of reading and reflection with poor attention to detail. Work in this range may be characterised by assertions lacking supporting evidence or argument, or by seriously flawed understanding of key concepts. |
| 0%–29% | **Very Low Fail**  
Marks in this range indicate general incompetence, with highly serious levels of weaknesses on two or more dimensions. Work in this range will either fail to present any real argument or opinion, or fail to engage at all with the topic in question. Work may quote heavily from a small number of sources, but fail to integrate them and provide little or no narrative to explain their relevance. |

For the dissertation marking criteria, please see 4.3.3. [Assessment Criteria](#).  

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7. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the most common form of examination offence encountered in universities, partly because of the emphasis now placed on work prepared by candidates unsupervised in their own time, but also because many students fall into it unintentionally, through ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism. Even if unintentional, it will still be considered an examination offence.

This section of the Course Handbook is intended to explain clearly what plagiarism is, and how you can avoid it. Acknowledgement is made to guidance issued by the USA Modern Language Association (MLA, 1998).

Plagiarism is the publication of borrowed thoughts as original, or in other words, passing off someone else’s work as your own. In any form, plagiarism is unacceptable in the Department, as it interferes with the proper assessment of students’ academic ability.

Plagiarism has been defined as “the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person’s mind, and presenting it as one’s own” (Lindsey, 1952, p2). Therefore, using another person’s ideas or expressions or data in your writing without acknowledging the source is to plagiarise.

7.1. Borrowing others’ words, ideas or data without acknowledgement

It is acceptable, in your work, to use the words and thoughts of another person or data that another person has gathered but the borrowed material must not appear to be your creation. This includes essays, practical and research reports written by other students including those from previous years, whether you have their permission or not. It also applies to both ‘hard-copy’ material and electronic material, such as Internet documents. Examples include copying someone else’s form of words, or paraphrasing another’s argument, presenting someone else’s data or line of thinking.

This form of plagiarism may often be unintentional, caused by making notes from sources such as books or journals without also noting the source, and then repeating those notes in an essay without acknowledging that they are the data, words or ideas belonging to someone else. Guard against this by keeping careful notes that distinguish between your own ideas and researched material and those you obtained from others. Then acknowledge the source.

7.1.1. Example 1

Original source:

To work as part of a team, to be able and prepared to continue to learn throughout one’s career, and, most important, to take on board both care for the individual and the community, are essential aspects of a doctor’s role today.


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**Plagiarism:**

The essential aspects of a doctor’s role today are to work as part of a team, be able and prepared to continue to learn throughout one’s career, and, most importantly, to take on board both care for the individual and the community.

**Acceptable:**

One social writer believes that the essential aspects of a doctor’s role today are to work as part of a team, be able and prepared to continue to learn throughout one’s career, and, most importantly, to take on board both care for the individual and the community (Greengross, 1997).

7.1.2. Example 2

**Original source:**

The binary shape of British higher education, until 1992, suggested a simple and misleading, dichotomy of institutions. […] Within their respective classes, universities and polytechnics were imagined to be essentially homogenous. Their actual diversity was disguised. […] The abandonment of the binary system, whether or not it encourages future convergence, highlights the pluralism which already exists in British Higher Education.


**Plagiarism:**

Prior to the removal of the binary divide between polytechnics and universities in 1992, there was a misleading appearance of homogeneity in each sector. Now there is only one sector, the diversity of institutions is more apparent, even if convergence may be where we’re heading.

**Acceptable:**

Peter Scott has argued that prior to the removal of the binary divide between polytechnics and universities in 1992, there was a misleading appearance of homogeneity in each sector. Now there is only one sector, the diversity of institutions is more apparent, even if convergence may be where we’re heading. (Scott, 1994)

In each revision, the inclusion of the author’s name acknowledges whose ideas these originally were (not the student’s) and the reference refers the reader to the full location of the work when combined with a footnote or bibliography. Note that in the second example, the argument was paraphrased – but even so, this is plagiarism of the idea without acknowledgement of whose idea this really is.

In writing any work, therefore (whether for assessment or not) you should document everything that you borrow – not only direct quotations and paraphrases but also information and ideas. There are, of course, some common-sense exceptions to this, such as familiar proverbs, well-known quotations or common knowledge.

But you must indicate the source of any appropriated material that readers might otherwise mistake for your own. If in doubt, cite your source or sources.
For further information particularly with regard to Birkbeck procedures when plagiarism is suspected, please make sure you look at the relevant Birkbeck Registry web page:
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regs/assmtoff.

When submitting coursework you will need to sign an Academic Declaration form, stating that you have read the sections on plagiarism in this Handbook and confirming that the work is your own, with the work of others fully acknowledged.

7.1.3. Copying material verbatim

Another example of plagiarism is the verbatim copying of chunks of material from another source without acknowledgement even where they are accepted facts, because you are still borrowing the phrasing and the order and the idea that this is a correct and complete list. Also, you might be infringing copyright (see below).

7.1.4. Re-submission of work

Another form of plagiarism is submitting work you previously submitted before for another assignment. While this is obviously not the same as representing someone else’s ideas as your own, it is a form of self-plagiarism and is another form of cheating. If you want to re-work a paper for an assignment, ask your lecturer whether this is acceptable, and acknowledge your re-working in a preface.

7.1.5. Collaboration and collusion

In collaborative work (if this is permitted by the lecturer) joint participation in research and writing does not constitute plagiarism in itself, provided that credit is given for all contributions. One way would be to state in a preface who did what; another, if roles and contributions were merged and truly shared, would be to acknowledge all concerned equally. However, where collaborative projects are allowed, it is usually a requirement that each individual’s contribution and work is distinguishable, so check with your lecturer. Usually, collusion with another candidate on assessed work (such as sharing chunks of writing or copying bits from each other) is NOT allowed.

7.1.6. Copyright infringement

Finally, you must guard against copyright infringement. Even if you acknowledge the source, reproducing a significant portion of any document (including material on the Internet) without permission is a breach of copyright, and a legal offence. You may summarise, paraphrase and make brief quotations (as I have done from my sources), but more than this risks infringing copyright.

References:

8. Guidelines for References

It is important to include the following details in your list of references, and it may save time if you get into the habit of recording all these details as you do your reading rather than have to hunt them out at the end.

8.1. References in the Body of the Essay/Dissertation

References in the body of the essay or dissertation (as distinct from the Reference section) can occur in different contexts. Fundamentally, whenever reference is made to a published article or other source (e.g. the Internet) details should be given in the text in the form of the name(s) of authors and the date of publication. For example: ‘recent writing on hysteria (e.g. Mitchell, 2000) discusses…’. Or: ‘Mitchell (2000) claims that…’. If a quotation is given, it should conclude with the name of author, date of publication, and exact page number. For example:

By recognising our uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside. (Kristeva, 1988, p.192)

Note here that a quotation is often presented indented in the text. An alternative, when the quotation is of one sentence or less is to simply put quotation marks around it. For instance, there has been much discussion of the experience of otherness in psychoanalysis: as Kristeva (1988, p.192) comments, ‘By recognising our uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside’.

If a text has two authors, both should be given (e.g. Elliott and Frosh, 1995); if more than two authors use the convention et al after the first author’s name: e.g. Pattman et al, 1998. All the authors should be listed in the references at the end of the essay/dissertation.

8.2. References at the End of the Essay/Dissertation

At the end of the text, all references should be gathered together in a standard format, in alphabetical order. There are basically three relevant ways of presenting a reference, depending on whether it is to a book, a chapter in a book, or a journal article.

8.2.1. Books

Authored:
Name, initial. (date) Title Place of publication: Publisher


Multi-authored:
Name1, initial., Name2, initial. and Name3, initial. (date) Title Place of publication: Publisher

As with books, but with (eds) added after the authors.


**8.2.2. Chapter from a Book**

Name of author(s) of the chapter, Initial. (date) Title of chapter. In Initial. Name of editor(s), *Title of Book*, Place of Publication


**8.2.3. Journal articles**

Name of author(s) of the article, Initial. (date) Title of article. *Journal title in full, volume: start page number – end page number*


All authors should be listed for jointly written books, chapters and articles.

**8.2.4. Referencing from Secondary Texts**

If your only source for a reference is from another text, this should be acknowledged in the references as: Full reference of original, quoted in, full reference of secondary source.

**8.2.5. Internet Resources**

As with books or journals, but with the internet address appended.


Remember: a reference list should be a complete list of all sources actually referred to in your essay/dissertation. It is different from a bibliography, which lists sources drawn on but not necessarily explicitly referred to.

9.1. Role of the Supervisor

The role of the supervisor is to assist the student by providing advice and guidance on how to prepare, produce and improve their dissertation. It may include giving advice on choosing a suitable topic; drawing up a suitable preliminary bibliography; planning the primary and secondary research the student will need to do for the dissertation; using suitable research methods; methods of improving the presentation of the dissertation; sources of information, advice and guidance in undertaking the dissertation and other general academic advice. The supervisor should be available to advise the student on approach, coverage, questions to be asked and the outline structure and research design.

More specifically, the supervisor is expected to:
- assist the student in the definition and organisation of the project in the early stages of preparation
- advise the student on the feasibility of what (s)he plans to do
- approve the dissertation proposal

The supervisor is under no obligation to:
- find the student a suitable topic for the dissertation
- read preliminary drafts of the student’s work
- offer the student guidance or assistance after the end of the summer term
- proof read the final draft

It is not the role of the supervisor to direct the research or ensure that a dissertation is of sufficient quality to pass; this is the responsibility of the student. Any opinion expressed by the supervisor relating to the quality of the work should not be taken to represent the opinion of the relevant sub-board of examiners.

9.2. Responsibilities of the Student

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate contact with their dissertation supervisor once the supervisor has been allocated. Students should contact their supervisors within 10 working days of the supervisor being nominated, to agree a date for an initial meeting or other working methods.

The student and supervisor should agree a timetable at the outset for completion, which should normally include provision for at least two meetings in advance of submission. Students are responsible for providing their supervisor with drafts of work to be discussed, as agreed with the supervisor, and no later than five working days before any meeting.

9.3. Responsibilities of the Supervisor

Once a timetable for submission of drafts and for supervision meetings is agreed, supervisors should ensure that appropriate feedback is provided on submitted draft work at supervision meetings. Where written feedback is agreed this should normally be provided within a reasonable time from the agreed date for submission of draft work.
The student should normally have up to three meetings with their supervisor. These could be, for example:

- an initial discussion identifying the topic, questions and methodology and sketching out an initial action plan and bibliography
- an intermediate meeting to assess progress on the dissertation and discuss the likely structure of the first draft
- a final 'trouble-shooting' meeting.

Many dissertations are carried out when staff may be on leave or otherwise unable to meet with the student. Where a supervisor will be out of contact for a period of longer than four weeks then they, or their department should ensure that an alternative supervisor is available to cover during this period.

As stated above, it is not the role of the Supervisor to ensure that a dissertation is of sufficient quality to pass. Supervisors should refrain from commenting on the likely outcome of assessment, and focus solely on advice on how to improve the dissertation.

9.4. Complaints

Where a student considers that their supervision is not adequate then they may request a change of supervisor by writing to their Programme Director or Assistant Dean of the relevant Department. Any change will be at the discretion of the relevant Assistant Dean. Formal complaints about supervision should be submitted in accordance with the College’s Student Complaints Policy.