



ESSAY EXAMS

Description	What to do .....
<b>1. What are they?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Essay exam questions reflect the themes /topics/concepts covered in the course.</li><li>• You might write an essay type response generally covering a number of concepts.</li><li>• It is important to read and follow the instructions carefully because the marks are likely to be allocated across the various sections of the exam. For example, one essay question (50 marks), two short answer questions (15 marks each) and 10 multiple choice (2 marks each; 20 marks for 10) on an exam for 100marks in total.</li></ul>
<b>2. Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Essay questions in exams require you to demonstrate your ability to recall and synthesise information in a structured and logical sequencing of ideas.</li><li>• You may be required to show how certain theories have contributed to discipline specific knowledge.</li></ul>
<b>3. Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your subject calendar relating to the outline of lectures and tutorials will assist you to identify the main themes/concepts within the subject.</li><li>• Ensure that your lecture and tutorial notes are complete, thorough and well organised. Concept maps or tabulating information can be helpful.</li><li>• Develop sets of likely questions within each topic.</li><li>• Identify important references for various topics and work out how and where you might use them.</li><li>• Practise responding to the types of questions in your exam and check that your answers address each question fully – this might involve critical thinking.</li><li>• Practise writing to the time limit you will have in the exam. If you are not accustomed to hand writing, practise is important to ensure you can write quick.</li></ul>
<b>4. Taking the exam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan your exam time.</li><li>• Highlight or underline key words.</li><li>• Determine where the marks are allocated so that you divide your time and energy according to the marks. If the essay is worth half the marks you need to allocate half the time to the essay question.</li><li>• Consider the questions you plan to answer. Don not be too quick to discard questions: think about the topics you are best able to answer.</li><li>• Analyse each question carefully so that you write on the topic.</li><li>• Plan before you write. Note the main information in point form. Include the main points you will make in the introduction, the body and the conclusion.</li><li>• During the exam, watch the time so you keep to schedule – perhaps you will write about four key points in your body paragraphs and then you will write an introduction and conclusion. Thus six paragraphs in total and so you will need to divide your time accordingly. Allow time for review and editing.</li><li>• If you are running out of time, write down your ideas as notes or dot points so the marker can see that you were able to answer the question.</li></ul>

### Useful strategies:

- **Number your answers-** If you have to write more than one essay, always indicate the number of the essay so it is clear to the marker which question you are answering.
- You do not have to answer questions in the order in which they appear in the exam paper.
- **Start with the easiest** question first and do the hardest last. This strategy helps to reduce anxiety and facilitates clear thinking.
- **Allocate a set time** for each essay. For example, in a 2 essay exam allocate 50 minutes for each and 10 minutes for planning and editing.
- Write as legibly as possible.
- **Inform your marker**, if you decide to include a paragraph/section in your essay, mark the entry point with a symbol and tell the marker to turn the page to the symbol that indicates the paragraph to be inserted.
- **Write on every second line** when using an exam booklet, then you will have space to add information when reviewing and editing.