

Essay assignment description

An essay is an individual and original piece of work on a topic/question of your choice, which must be related to the course. Essays can take two forms: a survey and critical reflection on a certain topic or question you might have, or a more applied similarly to the weekly assignments. Other forms of essay are possible, you are welcome to pitch your ideas to us.

In the former case, you are mostly expected to read a substantial number of articles and contributions on a topic of choice, summarise them and critically reflect upon them from your own perspective.

In the latter case, you are expected to formulate a research question, and approach it. The most common approach is empirical: you get some data, perform an analysis, discuss its results in view of previous literature.

Please make use of the (non-graded) assignment in Canvas, to pitch to us what you plan to do and ask any questions you might have.

Guidelines

Please upload your work as a **single .pdf file (max 8 pages excluding references)**; you can, but do not need to, use the provided LaTeX template. If you have developed code and used data for your essay, please add a reference to it from the text. For example, add a reference to a GitHub public repository that we can access.

The essay demonstrates the following skills:

1. The ability to independently identify and select sources and to interpret and analyse them;
2. The ability to independently formulate a clear and well-argued research question;
3. The ability to write a clear and well-structured argumentation on the research results in English;
4. The ability to critically apply concepts and/or practices from classes and readings AND/OR
5. The ability to conduct empirical research and reflect on its results.

The final essay will be assessed on the following (this is not a layout!):

1. Research question / Hypothesis: quality and outline of research questions
2. Methods and Literature: legitimization and explanation of theoretical/historical framework and method
3. Structure: quality and logic of argumentative build-up; clear and coherent structure
4. Execution of research: professional nature and quality of the (practical) execution of the research
5. Personal contribution, or original approach: ability to process and develop own position in relation to the literature and/or ability to provide creative (yet substantiated) solutions for problems
6. Substantive conclusions
7. Style, grammar, language, required length, consistent use of style guide

The total is 100 points, and this will weight in to 40% of your final grade. The weights in this rubric differ for different essay typologies. E.g., Methods and literature weights higher for a survey essay, while Execution of research weight higher for an applied essay.

Please note that an appropriate use of language and formalism is important, also in your later career. The grade for an assignment or paper can be reduced by up to 20/(100) points if there are multiple misspellings and inaccurate grammar or formulations.

Code of conduct

You are expected to do your work independently. Keep in mind we will run plagiarism detection. Please carefully cite your sources (including if you borrow substantial sections of code, e.g., from StackOverflow).