MES4610 Voices of the Middle East Fall 2024 Evaluation Guide

Final Exam Podcast and Presentation assignment

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Note to examiners
In this document, you will find the final exam prompt, along with the individual directions for each assignment, which was disseminated earlier in the semester. The students should have worked on them throughout the term and would have already received feedback from their advisors.

These podcast and PPT presentation submissions should represent their current stage of their MA research project. They are therefore works-in-progress!

Also, the grading guideline/rubric is found at the very end of the document.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if anything is unclear.

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Directions to the Students:

The exam is a set of three to four submissions, depending on your theme. You are to submit the podcast, the PowerPoint presentation recorded with audio, and finally one or two abstracts. See point three underneath for details regarding the abstracts.

1. approximately 5 minute podcast uploaded in appropriate sound file (mp3, for instance) submitted on Inspera
2. approximately 5 minute PowerPoint presentation that is recorded and submitted on Inspera (this should include your own voice and PPT presentation slideshow). It is not obligatory that you reveal your face on the recording. We just need to hear that it is you presenting.
3. Abstract(s): The third submission item depends on the following:
    1. If both your podcast and PPT discuss the same aspect or theme, then you should submit one extended abstract at least 1 to 2 pages with requisite bibliography. (If you are writing 1 page, please use single space.)
    2. If the PPT and podcast discuss different subjects, then you must submit two abstracts of approximately equal length for both.

Make sure to submit the correct files.

Podcast Overview

This second assignment for this course involves producing your own micro-podcast of some aspect/dimension* of your MA thesis project.

(Please note: These recordings will not be released to the general public and are only meant for the ears of your peers and advisor(s).)

Objectives and Outcomes for this Assignment:

- Explore multiple forms and modes of engaging general audiences with your MA thesis research
- Learn to use audio recording and gain editing skills that may be useful beyond the classroom
- Communicate effectively through oral, written, and visual methods appropriate to the audience, situation and purpose
- Demonstrate knowledge within Middle Eastern Studies
- Use information literacy and appropriate technologies to access, evaluate, synthesize, and communicate information

Directions

1. Content

   The podcast should include the following:

- Introduction to MA thesis project, using the simple formula: "This is a story about X and it's interesting because Y."
    - Be sure to provide context at the beginning of your podcast! Set the scene for us, the readers.
- Sound narration of certain aspects of the topic/research that you have been exploring. In short, you must "tell the story," and in some way, describe what it is like to "be part of the story." By the term "story," I mean your thesis project and one dimension of it that the public would benefit from learning about.
- Be accessible to a broader audience—meaning, some ideas and terms should be explained in plain language (in other words, it should be expressed as jargon-free and conversational)

2. You must submit along with your podcast a short written script (basic outline) sketching out your topic; this is typically a 150-200 word overview of your specific contribution to making the podcast--this will be uploaded on Canvas!
    a. In it, discuss what the podcast will cover, how it will cover that topic, and why this is an important conversation to have
    b. Essentially, this text will act as a basic outline for your podcast; some have referred to this as an "episode description" that explains the content and draws in us, your potential listeners.

3. Production value:
    - Is the recording clear?
    - Are there audio inserts (such as music, soundbites) included? That's fine by me!
    - Do you speak clearly and assuredly about your subject? Can the reader/listener follow you?
    - Do you know what you're talking about?

4. Length

- The podcasts must be at most 5 minutes in length. For those in pairs, it should be no more than 7 minutes! (This will allow for ample feedback during class time since there are so few students in the course).

5. Audio format: Audio file of podcast in .mp3, .mp4, .wav, or .aac format

6. Deadline of draft podcast

- Uploaded to Canvas by Sunday night, October 27, 2024**,** when you will present your work to the class.
    - It is my hope that your advisors, too, will attend so that they are able to witness the development of your MA thesis and offer one-on-one feedback! (If they don't, then you will have to send it to them via email!)
    - From our feedback, you are highly encouraged to integrate it into your podcast so that it is in its best shape by the time you submit to me and your advisor the final version for your grade.

*What do I mean by "one aspect of your thesis"? For instance, in the imaginary MA thesis that pertains to the COVID pandemic in Nordic countries and how it impacted Muslim communities, then your podcast could potentially be about Iraqi communities in Oslo and how they felt about public health initiatives during one particular lockdown. This is just one example.

Conference Paper and PPT Presentation Overview

Abstract and conference presentation Assignment (Two-parts)

1) Your goal is to write a conference paper abstract and be able to present it to a wider audience.
2) This abstract does not need to be about your entire thesis—but one key aspect of it. For instance, if you would like to explore a subsection of it that has to do with a theoretical dimension, please do. (But remember, this is just a subsection.)
3) For the abstract, include a one-page extended abstract (double-spaced, size 11 or 12 font)
    a) "An extended abstract should contain references, comparisons to related work, key theories, and other details found in an extended paper. Thus, an extended abstract is more than a long abstract. It should clearly specify theoretical and empirical gaps that the researcher is addressing, a concise review of seminal work, a brief description of the methodology used, results obtained, the expected contributions(s) to theory and practice, and the conclusion resulting from the study."
    b) Main body text of the abstract can include a concise review of extant literature methodology, findings, discussion, and summary sections.
    c) It should include your name, a conference paper title and at least 4 key words.

5) For solo presenters, prepare an approximately 5 minute PowerPoint of your intended MA project (For duo presenters, prepare a 7 minute PowerPoint presentation.)

- You should discuss key elements of this work (you can offer a summary of the project or even present two larger points/perspectives of your overall MA project.)
- You will present these in class during Seminar 4.
- Remember, try to be as professional as possible—expect feedback from your peers and me!

It is highly advised that you follow the format below and jot down some notes so that we, the readers/audience, can follow your presentation.

- in the class presentation, you must include the following acts (some can be slides, too!):

i) Research question and/or subquestions

(1) Remember to alert our attention to what you will focus on specifically

ii) Significance of project /justification of the project

iii) Hypothesis/ what are you arguing?

iv) Methodology

(1) Here you want to describe the type of study— whether it's quantitative, qualitative or a combination of the two, as well as an explanation of why you chose the method or methods you used. If you conducted original research, you will want to detail the study population, sampling methods and other details pertinent to your studies, while you'll also want to detail how you analyzed your data.

v) Process-- FOR INSTANCE: did you do fieldwork? Did you consult archives? If so, where, when?

vi) Results (if you have), meaning: what are the main concepts, chapters, points of your thesis

vii) Discussion- How do the results of your research support your overall thesis argument? Be sure to include slides that discuss your overall findings and how they relate to your original question.

viii) Preliminary conclusion (30 sec) or analysis that refers to your overall argument

(1) Concluding slides should restate your original research questions, represent the results of your research, suggest future research and make any final recommendations.

ix) Thank you slide

General Grade Evaluation Criteria Rubric

The source for this rubric is to be found on this page.

A (Excellent)

Originality

Paper/presentation looks at the assigned material from an unexpected but appropriate angle, explores a significant and appropriate original topic, and/or finds appropriate evidence in unusual or unexpected places.

Has an argument that goes significantly beyond material discussed in class or found in the course outline and textbook.

Mastery of the Subject Material

Paper matches its argument and evidence perfectly: finds exactly the evidence necessary to demonstrate its thesis; matches its thesis exactly to the limits of the available evidence.

Has exactly the right mix of secondary and primary sources: handles secondary sources critically when required; relies on them for support or background information when appropriate. Does not use tertiary sources like encyclopaedias or non-scholarly sources from the Internet when better sources exist and are more appropriate.

Goes far beyond description, using evidence analytically.

Integrates its evidence flawlessly into the argument.

Quality of Writing/Presentation

Paper is clear and, within the limitations of its subject matter, interesting and easy to follow.

Matches styles and diction to the subject matter and argument.

Is well structured and appropriately and thoroughly documented.

Quality of Writing/Presentation

Paper reports facts accurately and in a fashion appropriate to their original context.

Recognises and confronts (where appropriate) possible counter-arguments.

Maintains a clear distinction between demonstrable assertions and necessary but undemonstrable assumptions.

B (Very good)

Originality

- Paper successfully applies standard approaches to material, or reaches well-supported but obvious conclusions.

- Successfully applies or tests pre-existing approach against new set of evidence.
- Attempts an intelligently chosen and original approach or topic with only partial success.
- Shows signs of adhering to a formula.

Mastery of the Subject Material

Paper demonstrates sound knowledge of primary and (where appropriate) secondary material.

Is able to use evidence analytically to support argument.

Has an appropriate mix of primary, secondary, and, when required, tertiary sources. Generally avoids tertiary and especially non-scholarly sources except when appropriate or necessary to subject matter.

Works evidence into the argument with little or no trouble.

Quality of Writing

Paper is mostly clear and, within the limitations of its subject matter, interesting and easy to follow.

Paper usually matches styles and diction to the subject matter and argument.

Paper is mostly well structured and appropriately documented.

Accuracy

Paper reports facts accurately and in a fashion appropriate to their original context.

Paper recognises and does not attempt to hide possible counter-arguments or disguise unproven or undemonstrable assumptions as facts.

Presentation

Paper is mostly well-formatted and error-free. There are few or no typographical, grammatical, or spelling errors; standards of assigned style guide usually have been followed with care.

Quotations and references to the work of others show no more than exceptional inaccuracies. Bibliography/documentation is complete.

C (Range from Good to Satisfactory)

Originality

Paper correctly applies standard approaches to material or reaches obvious conclusions.

Is over-ambitious in its attempts to take a more original approach or subject—for example, by making obvious mistakes, or failing to avoid obvious limitations in the nature and availability of evidence.

Obviously following a formula.

Mastery of the Subject Material

Paper demonstrates basic knowledge of primary and assigned secondary material.

Evidence is usually presented analytically, rather than descriptively (i.e. argues position instead of supplying plot summary).

Evidence is usually appropriate to subject but may not always be well-integrated into argument.

Evidence is usually adequate for argument being made; some points may be poorly or insufficiently supported.

Care is not always taken to avoid inappropriate use of tertiary or non-scholarly resources as sources for essential facts or arguments.

Quality of Writing

Mostly observes the norms of University-level writing: few serious errors in essay, paragraph, or sentence structure; uses appropriate diction.

Documentation is mostly present and reasonably complete

Accuracy

Paper reports facts more-or-less accurately and in a fashion appropriate to their original context.

Paper does not attempt to hide or ignore obvious counter-arguments or to disguise unproven or undemonstrable assumptions as facts.

Presentation

Paper is mostly well-formatted and checked for errors. There are a number of minor typographical, grammatical, or spelling errors; standards of assigned style guide have been followed more often than not

Quotations and references to the work of others are accurately presented. Complete bibliography can be recovered from the documentation or list of works cited.

D (Poor)

Originality

Paper uncritically follows approaches suggested in assigned question, textbook, or class discussion.

Paper is more-or-less coherent, but takes an inappropriate approach or one that betrays an ignorance of the standards and expectations of subject.

Argument shows signs of incoherence.

Carelessly implements ‘original’ or ‘non-standard’ approach. Ignores obvious and foreseeable evidentiary or logical problems.

Carelessly follows formula.

Mastery of the Subject Material

Paper restricts self to extremely limited range of evidence.

Overlooks obviously superior evidence in favour of easily accessible material or examples from the textbook or class discussion.

Makes insufficient or too limited use of necessary secondary sources.

Commonly uses tertiary or non-scholarly resources to support key facts and arguments.

Evidence is usually presented descriptively rather than analytically (i.e. engages in plot summary rather than argument).

Evidence is usually present but often inappropriate or poorly sourced.

Other obvious evidence of incomplete preparation or reading.

Quality of Writing

Requires improvement: frequent errors in basics of essay, paragraph, and sentence structure; inappropriate—too formal, too informal, or poorly chosen—diction.

Documentation is often missing or incomplete.

Accuracy

Paper is sometimes inaccurate either in fact or context.

Paper fails to recognise or occasionally appears to skirt around obvious counter-arguments; sometimes appears to mistake unproven or undemonstrable assumptions for facts.

Presentation

Paper has some serious formatting errors, or has not been adequately checked for errors. There are frequent typographical, grammatical, and/or spelling errors; standards of assigned style guide have been ignored more often than not.

Quotations and references to the work of others are carelessly presented. Bibliography is mostly recoverable from documentation or works cited

F (Failing)

Originality

Paper is carelessly argued and pays no attention to approaches suggested in assigned question, textbook, or class discussion.

Paper takes completely inappropriate approach or ignores standards and expectations of subject.

Argument is non-existent or completely incoherent.

Recklessly implements ‘original’ or ‘non-standard’ approach as means of hiding lack of evidence or the poverty of its underlying argument.

Essay is far too short or shows other evidence of failing to adhere to the set instructions.

Mastery of the Subject Material

Paper shows basic unfamiliarity with one or more sources of evidence used in argument.

Ignores (or plagiarises from) even the most basic primary or secondary sources

Evidence is non-existent, incoherently presented, completely inappropriate, or extremely poorly chosen.

Other obvious evidence of extremely poor or non-existent research.

Quality of Writing

Far below University-level standards: constant errors in the basics of essay, paragraph, and sentence structure; completely inappropriate—too formal, too informal, or poorly chosen—diction.

Documentation is missing or extremely incomplete (Warning: Failure to document correctly carries with it significant penalties, beginning with an F on the assignment).

Accuracy

Paper has serious or frequent inaccuracies in fact or context.

Paper fails to recognise and/or often skirts around obvious counter-arguments; assertion often mistaken for evidence.

Presentation

Paper is poorly formatted, and/or full of errors. Typographical, grammatical, and/or spelling errors are common; standards of assigned style guide have been ignored.

Quotations and references to the work of others are non-existent or badly and inaccurately presented. Bibliography is mostly or completely missing (Warning: Failure to check your work carefully or follow the assigned style guide carries with it an additional penalty of at least 1/3 letter grade; failure to cite sources is plagiarism: my usual penalty for plagiarism is a grade of F *for the course* and a letter to the Dean for inclusion in your student record).