Guidelines for the examiner (*sensurveiledning*) for:

ENG4508 A Social History of the Media in Twentieth Century Britain

The portfolio exam for this course consists of two parts, a term paper and source analysis essay, where the paper counts for 70% of the final mark, while the source analysis counts for 30%. Candidates must pass both parts of the portfolio exam individually in order to obtain an overall pass mark.

The portfolio exam as a whole emphasises critical analysis and application of central course themes in the answers. There is some difference in the scope and approach of each component, however. The term paper topics (the students choose one from a selection or develop their own topic in consultation with the course leader) requires that students produce a broad ranging answer which looks across the twentieth century, and they are expected to supplement seminar readings with relevant further sources. For the source analysis, students must pick one source from the list provided and undertake an analysis which focuses on the specific features of the source, and contextualizing them in relation to the broader themes and developments discussed in the course.

The term paper should also be organised as thematic discussion, adhering to a classic humanities-type arrangement of the text, consisting of an introduction, a main part and a conclusion. References and a complete bibliography must be included, but we do not require students to use any specific system of referencing. They have a free choice in this, but consistency is expected. For the term paper, students are required analyse at least three mediums covered in the course to develop their analysis, and to use at least four core seminar readings and at least four further readings, for a total of eight sources as a minimum. The term paper tests the candidates' ability to construct an academic analysis of the topic they have chosen, with all means of aid available. Emphasis in the assessment should be placed on (in a declining order of importance): intellectual focus and application of key themes, depth of analysis, depth of knowledge, ability to make comparisons and connections across different mediums and themes, structure, language, and technical set-up (references and bibliography).

The source analysis is a test of the skills which have been developed via primary source analyses in seminars across the semester. The candidates will be presented with a set of 8 questions, where they need to answer 2. They should not attempt to answer more than two questions. It is necessary to pass both the two questions they choose to answer in order to pass the written exam. The student is again, like in the term paper, expected to construct an analytical argument to answer each of their chosen questions. This is not expected to be to the same level of depth as in the term paper, but students have been instructed to present an argument and the phrasing of the questions suggests this is required. No references are required in the exam. Language also counts in the written exam, and the examiner may compare the standard of English in the term paper with the written exam. While a higher standard may be expected in the term paper, the discrepancy should not be too marked.

For the general description of marks at ILOS, see:

https://www.uio.no/studier/eksamen/karakterskala/fagspesifikk-karakterbeskrivelse/hf-ilos-endelig-felles-karakterbeskrivelse.pdf

The essay topics for the term paper and a list of the primary source for the source analysis which were provided on Canvas are enclosed with this document.

Aaron Ackerley

Course organiser

Term paper – essay topics

ENG4508 students are required to write ONE full-length essay of 9 standard pages as part of their exam in ENG4508. The other part is a 3-page source analysis essay. The essay counts for 70% of the final mark, while the written exam counts for 30%.

The essay topic must be chosen from the list below.

For your essay, we expect you to look for material beyond the set reading for the course, and a good place to start is the University Library pages for British and American studies. Generally speaking, your essay is likely to improve with the use of *different* sources of information about the *same* topic, not the least, perhaps, because all the essay questions below will require you to *discuss* some or other issue/problem. For a MA course such as this one, we will be stressing the importance wide engagement with the relevant academic literature and independent research beyond that which is expected at undergraduate level, so this is a point worth bearing in mind. The *minimum* requirement for ENG4508 is to use at least four core seminar readings from Canvas, and at least four further academic sources which you can choose from the Further Readings document or find yourself, for a total of at least eight academic sources. Your essay answer should also make sure to engage with the terms of the question, and offer an analysis across the twentieth century. This does not mean you have to go from 1900 to 1999, but your answer should obviously engage with long-term developments across most of the century. Students can choose from the list of questions below, or develop their own question in consultation with the course organiser.

Set-up & requirements

Now that you have commenced on a MA course, you will presumably have had some experience in writing an academic text, and are familiar with requirements relating to referencing etc. In addition to this, however, there are a couple of specific requirements for the set-up of your ENG4508-essay, which you need to make a note of. They are:

- **Length** should be 9 standard pages +/- 10%, excluding footnotes/references and bibliography. One standard page is defined as 2300 characters excluding spaces.

- Use at least **1.5** line spacing and font size **11** or **12**. (Note that you may end up on more or less than 5 pages depending on the width of the margins used, type of font and, indeed, the number of footnotes on each page. It is the number of characters that defines the 'standard' page. 5 x 2300 = 11500 characters.)
- **Page numbers** must be included on every page.
- The essay must include a **bibliography** of consulted works at the end.
- Make sure to give **references** to the works you use in the text (as mentioned above).
- Finally: **Style**: We aim to write formal prose, so it is best to avoid abbreviations such as 'don't', 'can't', 'it's' etc. Write 'do not', 'cannot', 'it is' and so on. Best to avoid colloquialisms and slang as well.
- More detail on formal requirements can be found in the booklet *Essay writing: Guidelines for Students*, which can be down-loaded from the course Canvas-room.

POSSIBLE ESSAY TOPICS

1. Did the media in twentieth century Britain do more to promote a British identity, an imperial identity, or local identities?
2. Did the British media do more to reinforce than to subvert traditional gender identities and gender divisions in the twentieth century?
3. Throughout the twentieth century, the British media played an important role in perpetuating class divisions. Discuss.
4. Did the media help reduce racism and xenophobia in twentieth-century Britain?
5. How centrally important was the influence of the media in British society becoming more permissive throughout the twentieth century?
6. Do you agree that James Curran's 'radical interpretation' is the best way to understand the history of Britain and the British media in the twentieth century?
7. The most important characteristic of the history of the British media in the twentieth century was consumerism and commercialism. Discuss.
8. Did the quality of journalism and news reporting improve in Britain throughout the twentieth century?
9. Were recurrent fears about the impact of the media in twentieth-century Britain cases of moral panic?

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS

Choose **ONE** source to analyse, in relation to the key themes covered throughout the course.

Engage with the detail of the source itself, but add wider context as necessary. Although this is a primary source analysis and you should be devoting your main focus to a close engagement with the primary source, you should also use some secondary sources to add context, to support your claims, and to help explains elements of – or the relevance of – elements of the sources.

Set-up & requirements

Now that you have commenced on a MA course, you will presumably have had some experience in writing an academic text, and are familiar with requirements relating to referencing etc. In addition to this, however, there are a couple of specific requirements for the set-up of your ENG4508-source analysis, which you need to make a note of. They are:

- **Length** should be 3 standard pages +/- 10%, excluding footnotes/references and bibliography. One standard page is defined as 2300 characters excluding spaces.
- Use at least **1.5** line spacing and font size **11** or **12**. (Note that you may end up on more or less than 5 pages depending on the width of the margins used, type of font and, indeed, the number of footnotes on each page. It is the number of characters that defines the 'standard' page. 5 x 2300 = 11500 characters.)
- **Page numbers** must be included on every page.
- The essay must include a **bibliography** of consulted works at the end.
- The main primary source does not need to be referenced every time it is referred to, to save repetition an space.
- Make sure to give **references** to the works you use in the text (as mentioned above).
- Finally: **Style**: We aim to write formal prose, so it is best to avoid abbreviations such as 'don't', 'can't', 'it's' etc. Write 'do not', 'cannot', 'it is' and so on. Best to avoid colloquialisms and slang as well.
- More detail on formal requirements can be found in the booklet *Essay writing: Guidelines for Students*, which can be down-loaded from the course Canvas-room.

SOURCES

Source 1: Newspaper. Section of page 6 of the Daily Express, 27 June 1930. (Apologies for the poor quality of the text, but that is one of the issues of using these kinds of sources!)

Source 2: Newspaper cartoon. Michael Cummings, 'I don't know what effect my troops will have on the enemy, but, by God, they frighten me!", Sunday Express, 8 February 1987.

Source 3: Newspaper. (In colour and clearer black and white): Front page of The Sun, 4 May 1982.

Source 4: Newspaper. Front page of the Manchester Evening News, 22 September 2022.

Source 5: Newsreel. *London's Biggest Blitz* (1941), British Movietone.

Source 6: Newsreel. London University students participate in Rag Day festivities in Hyde Park (1949), Source 7: Gaumont British Newsreels (1949).

Source 9: Film. Clip from Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (1960).

Source 10: Radio. 'Fashion and Feminism' from the BBC radio show The Public Ear (1964).

Source 11: Radio. First Episode of the Tony Blackburn Radio Show, 30th September 1967.

Source 12: TV. 'Interview with Jerry Lee Lewis' from ITN News (1958).

Source 13: TV. 'Jellied eels on the streets of London', from BBC TV show A Taste of Britain (1975).

Source 14: TV. Clip from episode 1 of series 2 of In Sickness and in Health (1985), a sequel to the earlier series Till Death Us Do Part (1965-75).

Source 15: TV. Clip from Queer as Folk (1999).