

Details of formal coursework assessment for GG3077A ICT4D

This course is explicitly designed to develop students' skills in a diversity of areas, including Group Work (also referred to as Team Work), Web Design, Oral Presentation, and Critical Analysis. Formal coursework assessment of these skills forms an integral element of the assessment package for the course, and is designed to help ensure that students have gained appropriate levels of expertise in these areas on completion thereof. This coursework element will account for 30% of the total assessment, with 70% being assessed through a two-hour examination at the end of the course when two out of six questions must be answered.

To deliver these objectives, the formal coursework assessment consists of three elements, design of which has been discussed with colleagues in the Geography Department (notably Professor Lowe, Dr. McGregor, and Dr. Hodgkins) as well as with staff in the EDC (particularly Mick Thomas). Each element accounts for 10% of the total course mark, and it is recommended that they should therefore only be moderated.

A Group web-page (10%)

Team work and group work are critical skills for which employers of all kinds now seek. Students will be given a formal introduction to this element of the course, which will include advice both on working in teams and also on the required web-content.

Details of the group work assessment are as follows:

- Each group will consist of four or five students;
- Groups and topics will be self selecting [This option is preferred, since it enables students to concentrate on areas where they have a particular shared interest, it prevents problems arising when particular students have difficulty in working with other individuals, and it limits the problem of some students doing most of the work whilst others benefit from this]
- All students in a group will be given the same mark [experience elsewhere, as at Oxford Brookes Life Sciences, shows that intricate systems of weighting are not only cumbersome, but in practice have negligible effect on degree grade outcomes; this element is worth only 10% of the course, and marginal differences, weighted by perceptions of contribution, are unlikely to have a major significance on overall outcomes]
- A specific set of criteria for assessing the web-pages created by students will be developed, drawing on good practice elsewhere and through discussion with the Educational Development Centre (EDC). It will build in part of the Department's existing grade descriptions for poster presentations. All web-pages will contribute to the ICT4D site, and external comments will also be invited.
- The assessment grading will be undertaken by one member of staff, with the material also being available to a moderator.

Oral presentation (10%)

All students will give an oral presentation of 15 minutes duration at one or more revision symposiums towards the end of the course. If possible, one or more external person (from the private sector, civil society, or the public sector) will also attend to provide comment and feedback. These presentations will not only give students experience at making presentations in a supportive environment, but will also provide an opportunity for the class as a whole to benefit from the individual efforts of each member. This provides an excellent forum for revision.

If there are less than 25 students undertaking the course, individual 15 minute presentations will be made. However, should numbers doing the course be higher than this (or should students prefer to work together), the format of the presentations will change, so that students will do the presentations in pairs, with each student speaking for 10 minutes. In both cases, students will be given individual assessments and feedback.

The Department already has a set of marking criteria for oral presentations and these will be used as a basis for assessment. However, this element of the course is innovative in that it will involve peer assessment. There is an emerging literature on the value of student peer assessment, both for formative comment, and also for summative grading (see for example McDowell and Mowl, 1996; Brown *et al.*, 1994; Race, 1998). Peer assessment has many strengths:

- It encourages greater student involvement and motivation
- It helps students to become much more aware of marking criteria
- It enhances group cohesion, and provides a much greater amount of comment than could be provided by a single staff assessor.
- It treats assessment as part of learning
- It enhances the development of autonomous learning, by encouraging students to evaluate their own performance more carefully.

Research suggests that many of the anticipated problems with peer assessment are unfounded, although there may be a slight tendency for students to mark their peers more harshly than do staff.

Peer assessment will therefore be used as a formative element of oral presentation assessments, and may at some time in the future also be used summatively (for which a specific course revision proposal will need to be submitted). The Department is not ready to permit summative peer assessment at present, and all presentations will therefore be graded summatively by one member of staff. Students will also be asked to submit their presentation notes in hard copy so that these can be available to the course moderator. A staff member of EDC will also be invited to attend the presentations to provide additional feedback on this mechanism of assessment.

Annotated bibliography (10%)

All students must prepare an annotated bibliography, including at least 30 references, each of which should have approximately 100 words of critical

description about its content. At least half of the references should be of material not mentioned on course handouts. The assignment is to be submitted in hard copy towards the end of the course. This assignment is designed to encourage students to read around the course, to develop critical thinking, and to serve as a useful revision mechanism.

Assessment criteria will need to be drawn up for this element of the course, and will build on those already in use by the Department for coursework essays. The assessment grading will be undertaken by one member of staff, with the materials also being available to a moderator.

Review of Assessment procedures

Student feedback on the entire course is monitored regularly through the Department's annual monitoring system, but in addition to this, students will be invited to comment in further detail on the assessment practices associated with this course so that they can be revised and enhanced if appropriate. Discussions will also be held with staff in the EDC to monitor the procedures, and they will be invited to participate in reviewing the materials presented by students as part of this course.

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