

Social Sciences Academic Skills Workshops
PGTA Guide

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Introduction to the Social Sciences Academic Skills Module

This module has been designed to help develop the academic skills and attributes required to succeed at university. It is made up of a series of eight video-streamed lectures available through the Blackboard course “SSAS 1001—Social Science”. The videos are accompanied by a series of four workshops delivered by postgraduate teaching assistants during weeks 2 to 5 of the first semester. As per below, some of the videos are intended for personal viewing, whilst others will be shown in the workshops in conjunction with a series of tasks outlined in the remainder of this workbook.

Online Lecture Topics

1. Accessing support and managing expectations
2. Effective use of lectures
3. Time management and effective reading
4. Research practice and academic integrity
5. Making the most out of feedback
6. Essay writing
7. Group work and presentations
8. Exam technique and revision methods

Workshop Topics

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Week 2 | Accessing support and managing expectations
Effective use of lectures
Time management and effective reading |
| Week 3 | Research practice and academic integrity
Making the most out of feedback
Essay writing |
| Week 4 | Group work and presentations |
| Week 5 | Exam technique and revision methods |

Attendance at these workshops will be monitored and failure to participate in the module may impact on your progress. All students who attend the workshops will be awarded 10 Graduate Passport Points (for information see: www.soton.ac.uk/careers/passport).

This module has been designed to be interactive and engaging, and you will be guided through it with the support of a PhD student in the Faculty (referred to here as your PGTA: Postgraduate Teaching Assistant). Do not hesitate to speak with them if you have any queries.

Please remember to bring this workbook with you to all workshops and use it to make notes throughout the module. Should you lose it, a PDF version is available for download on Blackboard.

Week 2 Workshop

Effective use of lectures

Time management & effective reading

This 45-minute workshop focuses upon developing your skills in note-taking, active reading, and time management. It is accompanied by one video lecture that will be shown at the start of class — ‘Effective Use of Lectures’ — as well as two critical supplementary lectures — ‘Time Management & Effective Reading’ and ‘Accessing Support & Managing Expectations’ — which you should review before or after your first workshop. The former of these two additional videos is a necessary complement to many of the activities you will be completing in this workshop. The latter provides answers to key questions, including email and web contacts for critical services at the university.

Some of the activities on the following pages are identified as optional. If time permits, your PGTA will lead you through them. Otherwise, please aim to complete them as soon as possible after the workshop.

Corresponding Online Lectures

Accessing Support & Managing Expectations

Effective Use of Lectures

Time Management & Effective Reading

Activity | Note Taking

Use the central spaces below to take notes as you watch the video on ‘Effective Use of Lectures’.

Actively taking notes during lectures helps to consolidate the information which is being presented to you, and is also a good way of maintaining concentration.

ACTIVITY: Note Taking

Pre-Lecture Preparation

During Lecture Learning

Note to PGTAs

As this is the first workshop, you will likely want to spend 5 minutes introducing yourself, the module, and this workshop’s aims. Several more minutes might also be allotted to students introducing themselves.

The ‘Effective use of lectures’ video explains the basics of note-taking and lecture-based comprehension. It is supplemented by the adjacent list of common problems and proposed solutions (see p.9 of this workbook), which students should review on their own time. As the video lecture is being screened, students should actively take notes by completing the underlying activity in an effort to model best practice.

If time permits, share your own experiences in preparing for and negotiating lectures as a student.

Recommended Time

20 minutes, including screening of the video lecture, introductions and any necessary time for questions & answers.

Post-Lecture Reflection



For more tips on note-taking, see http://www.academic-skills.soton.ac.uk/studytips/lecture_notes, and review the Blackboard Study Skills Toolkit activity on ‘Academic speaking, listening, and note-taking skills’.

For Review Only | Getting the most out of lectures (adapted from Price & Maier 2007)

See below for a list of common problems that students encounter in relation to lectures, including suggestions for managing those problems. Do not hesitate to speak to your lecturer for further guidance. (NB. Aim to review this list before or after attending your Week 2 workshop.)

Problem	Solution
You have very high expectations of the lectures which are not being met	Look at the module outline to ensure you are aware of the content to be addressed. Speak to the lecturer if materials are being excluded or you are otherwise having difficulty following the content.
You are unable to cope with the volume of information being given to you because it is all new	Increase your pre-lecture preparation by reading the module outline, and reviewing the assigned readings for the lecture as well as any Blackboard notes available prior to the lecture.
You quickly go into information overload and give up taking notes	Review key concepts and terminology in advance to ensure you understand them prior to the lecture. Review your note-taking strategy—consider applying the Cornell Method: http://lsc.sas.cornell.edu/Sidebars/Study_Skills_Resources/cornellsystem.pdf
You do not recognise or understand some of the new terminology	Increase your pre-lecture preparation by reading the module outline, and reviewing the assigned readings for the lecture as well as any Blackboard notes available prior to the lecture.
The information seems very detailed and in great depth	Aim to do some reading before the lecture to get a better understanding of the topic and to prepare you for the terminology and associated concepts.
You are distracted easily in lectures	Be selective about where you choose a seat in the lecture room and with whom you sit. Avoid sitting next to those who distract you. Aim to sit near the front of the room, close to your tutor.
You find it hard to take in information due to the manner that it is delivered	Speak to your lecturer for guidance. Review your note-taking strategy to see if it can be appropriately modified. Consider setting aside time after each lecture to review notes with your classmates and discuss the subject matter.

Activity | Active Reading (adapted from Price & Maier 2007)

Active reading entails, in part, critical analysis of academic and non-academic texts. The table below presents some general questions, and possible responses, to apply to most reading materials that you’ll encounter at university. Use this to guide your reading of the article on the following page. Your PGTA will then lead you through a short group discussion of the content.

Question	Response	To consider...
Are the author’s ideas a summary of someone else’s research?		Look for words like: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– according to...– a research study by..– cited in...
Is the argument sound & strong? What evidence is provided?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">– look for research and references that back up the same line of argument
Is the evidence reputable?	Regroup and lead students through a summative discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the reading.	
Is the evidence refutable?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">– question what methods were used to gather the evidence– is the evidence based on assumptions or rigorous resources?
Are there any unfinished threads in the text or inconsistent statements?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">– review each idea against what the author has said/concluded about it: does the evidence substantiate the argument?– the find facility is useful for searching the content of electronic texts

Note to PGTA’s

Ask students to review the ‘Time management & effective reading’ and ‘Accessing support & managing expectations’ lectures on Blackboard on their own time following this workshop. Introduce them to the table below and consider asking them about their current strategies for critically reviewing texts. Have students, either independently or in small groups, read the article excerpt on the following page (p.11) and contemplate its content in light of the table’s questions. Prompt them to use the mind mapping activity on p.12 to help process their reading of the article.

Recommended Time

25 minutes, including approx. 5 minutes to familiarise students with the task/ resources, 5 minutes for reading time, and 15 minutes for small group and full group discussion.

Activity | Active Reading

Read the excerpt below and consider it in light of the active reading questions listed on the preceding page. Your comments will then inform a group discussion, moderated by your PGTA, on the strengths and weaknesses of the article.

Bringing Hominins Back to Life

Excerpt from Michael Balter, 2009, *Science* 325:136-139.

To reconstruct our ancestors, paleoartists weave art and science together in a sometimes uneasy marriage. The result is lifelike models that influence how both researchers and the public view ancient humans.

The interplay between art and science makes reconstruction “a two-way street,” says Gary Sawyer, who has been reconstructing hominins at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City for more than 30 years. The artists must track researchers’ latest anatomical interpretations, and reconstruction helps scientists think about issues such as “what kind of muscles a hominin had and how it walked on the landscape”...Some researchers argue that reconstructions influence how scientists view ancient hominins and interpret their behavior. “The scientific community requires a lengthy period of time to absorb and adapt to new ideas, and these illustrations are often part of the process by which you see the change,” says Stephanie Moser, an archaeologist at Southampton University in the United Kingdom. “These artistic representations are part of the knowledge cycle and not outside it.”

Yet the comfort level about reconstructions varies among scientists. AMNH paleoanthropologist Ian Tattersall, who has collaborated with Sawyer and other paleoartists, says he wishes they weren’t necessary. “I would rather not do these, but we have an obligation to the public, which ultimately supports this research and wants to see its results. But [reconstructions] require lots of decisions that science can’t answer.” Did our earliest ancestors smile? How fat were they? “The reconstructions allow us to ask the questions but not to answer them,” says Tattersall.

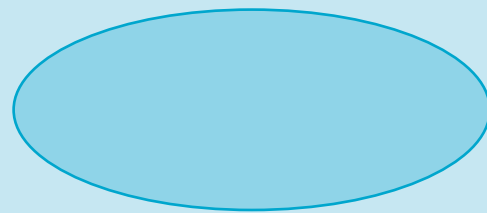
...Researchers and paleoartists have been working together since the 19th century, when the first hominin fossils were discovered. The effects of science on the art and vice versa were obvious almost immediately. One celebrated battle of reconstructions was sparked by the 1908 discovery of a nearly complete Neandertal skeleton at La Chapelle-aux-Saints in southern France. French paleontologist Marcellin Boule concluded that the Neandertal did not walk fully erect and played no part in human ancestry. The artist he enlisted created a brutish, stooped, hairy creature, more ape than human. But Scottish anatomist Arthur Keith, who had concluded that Neandertals were ancestral to modern humans, commissioned a rival drawing of the La Chapelle-aux-Saints Neandertal sitting on a rock and looking very human as it pensively knapped a stone tool. Boule’s brutish conception dominated until at least the 1950s, when new fossils and research convinced most anthropologists that Neandertals were either our ancestors or our very close relatives. (The latter view predominates today; see *Science*, 13 Feb, p. 870.) Thus, today’s Neandertal reconstructions tend to emphasize their humanity.

Part of the shift, some researchers say, can be explained by a change in social attitudes, as in the 1960s Neandertals came to be seen as more peaceful. “Reconstructions tend to reflect our deepseated views” of hominins, says paleoanthropologist Steven Churchill of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. “Do you assume that they are like us but just a little more primitive or that they were very different? It affects how questions are asked”...

Activity | Using Mind Maps to Summarise

Mind maps and summary sheets are effective tools for summarising what you have learnt about a particular topic in a lecture or reading. Summarising as you go along will save you time when it comes to revision.

You are encouraged to create a mind map to help process your reading of Balter's (2009) article on the preceding page. Use the space below to note ideas to contribute to the group discussion.



Note to PGTAs

Ask students to brainstorm their understanding of the argument presented in Balter 2009 (on the preceding page) via a mind map. Note to students that mind maps are particularly useful in summarising or encapsulating ideas, for instance at the end of lectures, readings, or in preparing for assignments and exams. They are one of several note-taking techniques which might be effective for students.

Recommended Time

To be done in conjunction with the preceding activity on active reading.

Optional Activity | Managing Assignments

By now you may be aware of the deadlines for some of your upcoming assignments. Use the system below to plan bite size deadlines for one such assignment and then aim to adhere as closely as possible to those deadlines.

By recording the date you completed the task, you will be able to assess whether your planning was viable or overly optimistic. This approach is simply one means of organising yourself: if it does not suit you, feel comfortable in developing strategies that meet your specific needs.

	Details	Deadline	Date Completed
Confirmed choice of assignment			
Identification of sources			
Reading of sources and note taking			
Planning			
First Draft	<p>Note to PGTAs</p> <p>If time permits, ask students to complete the activities on this and the following page. Students should be prompted to review the Blackboard video and slides on 'Time management & effective reading' and 'Accessing support & managing expectations' to complement these exercises.</p>		
Final Draft			
Re-read & circulate for others to read			
Final submission			This deadline will, of course, be fixed by your tutor.

Optional Activity | Time Management

As you now know your timetable for the semester, you can use the table below to plan your week. Be realistic. Whilst you might not always follow this schedule, it should help you to develop a routine early on which will ultimately set you in good stead for the rest of your university career.

Colour code different activities to allow you to visualise how you are distributing your time.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
09 - 10							
10 - 11							
11 - 12							
12 - 13							
13 - 14							
14 - 15							
15 - 16							
16 - 17							
17 - 18							
Early Evening							
Late Evening							



Study



Socialising



Paid Work



Other

Week 3 Workshop

Making the Most Out of Feedback

Essay Writing

This 45-minute workshop focuses upon developing your skills in essay writing, in understanding marking criteria, and in responding to the critical feedback of your tutors. It is accompanied by two video lectures that will be shown in class — ‘Making the most out of feedback’ and ‘Essay writing’ — and one lecture that you should review on your own: ‘Research practice & academic integrity’. These resources are necessarily supplemented by your discipline handbooks, which specify the bibliographic and citation formats you should follow, along with other research and stylistic guidelines.

It is essential for you to be familiar with the university’s academic integrity policy. It can be accessed online at www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/academicintegrity-statement.html. You can easily review your understanding of this policy via the web-based quiz available on the Blackboard site for this module.

You will begin the following workshop by watching the video on ‘Feedback’, after which your PGTA will lead you through an activity which prompts you to study the marking criteria specific to your discipline. Subsequently, you will be shown the lecture on ‘Essay writing,’ and your PGTA will then ask you to critically analyse various sample essays produced by other first-year Social Sciences students. In this way, you can review the quality of different pieces of work and compare your assessments with those of the original marker of that work.

Corresponding Online Lectures

Research Practice and Academic Integrity

Making the Most Out of Feedback

Essay Writing

MARKING CRITERIA: Politics and International relations	
80-100%	Displays all the characteristics below
1st Class (1st) 70-79%	<p>Displays most of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Good knowledge and understanding of the implications of the question and subject area. – Analytical confidence in evaluating different theoretical approaches, concepts, evidence and arguments and makes clear links with other areas of the subject – Well structured and sustained argument – Reading and study beyond lecture materials – Citation and referencing accurate, consistent and in appropriate style
Upper second class (2.1) 60-69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Knowledge and understanding of the implications of the questions and the subject area with no major errors or omissions
Lower second class (2.2) 50-59%	<p>Feel comfortable in screening the videos and leading students through the following activities at your own prerogative. Given time constraints, the materials on 'Research practice & academic integrity' will have to be reviewed by students in their own time, although they should be made aware that the content is imperative to academic success.</p> <p>Following viewing of the 'Making the most out of feedback' lecture, guide students through a brainstorming session on the criteria that they think their assignments are being assessed upon. Consider using concept-mapping approach to guide this brainstorming session.</p> <p>Provide students with 5 minutes to review their relevant disciplinary marking criteria as outlined in the following pages. Ask them how these criteria converge with their expectations. Make students aware that, in most cases, these criteria pertain to Year One ONLY. Students should consult their discipline handbooks for the most up-to-date information.</p>
Third class (3rd) 40-49%	<p>Recommended Time</p> <p>15-20 minutes, including screening of the 'Feedback' lecture, review of assessment criteria and discussion.</p>
Compensatable fail 25-39%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Some mistakes in citations and referencing (for essays only) – Sufficient evidence to support progress to Level 2 – Minimal knowledge and understanding of the subject, marred by serious errors and omissions of key issues – No recognition of different theoretical approaches, concepts, evidence and arguments – Poor structure and focus of argument – No attempt to identify relevant materials beyond lecture materials – Organisation and presentation poor – Mistakes in citations and referencing (for essays only)
Uncompensatable fail 0-24%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Negligible knowledge and understanding of the subject with serious and significant errors and omissions – No recognition of different theoretical approaches, concepts, evidence and arguments – Poor structure and focus of arguments – No evidence of serious study – Organisation and presentation poor – Significant mistakes in citations and referencing (for essays only)

MARKING CRITERIA: Economics	
80-100%	Displays all the characteristics below
1st Class (1st) 70-79%	Shows most of the following characteristics: Knowledge of key concepts, well-organised, covers relevant issues, competent, analytical, showing command of lecture material, evidence of reading beyond core lecture material, identifies relevant economic theory, addresses issues raised in the question.
Upper second class (2.1) 60-69%	Shows knowledge of most relevant concepts, competent with no major errors or omissions, some evidence of reading beyond material presented in lectures, some attempt to address the question.
Lower second class (2.2) 50-59%	Shows some knowledge of relevant concepts, mainly competent, but limited to the lecture material, some omissions and minor errors. Not well-directed at the question.
Third class (3rd) 40-49%	Limited evidence of knowledge of basic concepts, errors and omissions; incomplete understanding of lecture material; not directed at the question. Sufficient evidence to support progression to Level 2.
Compensatable fail 25-39%	Minimal evidence of knowledge of lecture material with significant errors and omissions; does not attempt to answer the question; does not identify key issues.
Uncompensatable fail 0-24%	Very little evidence of serious study, only slight knowledge of the subject area, contains serious errors and omissions.

MARKING CRITERIA: Social Statistics	
80-100%	Displays all the characteristics below.
1st Class (1st) 70-79%	Displays most of the following characteristics: Knowledge of key concepts, well-organised, covers relevant issues, competent, some evidence of analytical thinking, showing command of lecture material, evidence of reading beyond core lecture material, identifies relevant theory and/or methods with appropriate application, addresses issues raised in the question.
Upper second class (2.1) 60-69%	Shows knowledge of most relevant concepts, competent application of appropriate theory and/or methods with no major errors or omissions. Some evidence of reading beyond material presented in lectures. Some attempt to address the question.
Lower second class (2.2) 50-59%	Shows some knowledge of relevant concepts. Mainly competent, but limited to the lecture material. Some omissions and minor errors in the application of appropriate theory and/or methods. Not well-directed at the question.
Third class (3rd) 40-49%	Limited evidence of knowledge of basic concepts or incomplete understanding of lecture material. Errors and omissions in the application of appropriate theory and/or methods, and not well-directed at the question. Sufficient evidence to support progression to Level 2.
Compensatable fail 25-39%	Minimal evidence of knowledge of lecture material with significant errors and omissions in the application of appropriate theory and/or methods. Does not answer the question appropriately. Does not identify key issues.
Uncompensatable fail 0-24%	Very little evidence of serious study or knowledge of the subject area. Contains very serious errors and/or omissions.

MARKING CRITERIA: Applied Social Science/Sociology and Social Policy	
High First Class (1st) 85-100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– an exceptionally clear understanding of the question– an exceptionally clearly structured analysis and argument, very well-supported by evidence– exceptionally strong awareness of the subject and its basic concepts– exceptionally strong ability to summarise and evaluate key evidence– strong evidence of wide background reading beyond key sources alone– very well presented and referenced
First Class (1st) 70-79%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– a very clear understanding of the question– a very clearly structured analysis and argument, well-supported by evidence– comprehensive knowledge of the subject and its basic concepts– strong ability to summarise and evaluate key evidence– evidence of wide background reading beyond key sources alone– very well presented and referenced
Upper Second Class (2-1) 60-69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– a clear understanding of the question– a clearly structured analysis and argument, supported by evidence– good awareness of the subject and its basic concepts– good ability to summarise and evaluate key evidence– some evidence of background reading beyond key sources alone– well presented and reference
Upper Second Class (2-1) 60-69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– a broadly accurate understanding of the question– sufficiently structured to allow the reader to follow most of the analysis and argument, supported by evidence– competent awareness of the subject and its basic concepts– competent ability to summarise and evaluate key evidence– largely reliant on reading of key sources– competently presented and referenced, with some errors
Third Class (3rd) 50-59%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– a superficial understanding of the question– a weakly structured argument, with little supporting evidence– acceptable awareness of the subject and its basic concepts; with some errors or omissions– adequate ability to summarise and evaluate key evidence– Adequate knowledge of relevant literature– adequately presented, with deficiencies; referencing partly consistent with many deficiencies
Compensatable fail 25-39%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– a limited understanding of the question– weak structure, with inadequate supporting evidence– little awareness of the subject and limited ability to refer to appropriate concepts, or a use of them in inappropriate or inaccurate ways– limited ability to summarise and/or evaluate key evidence– limited knowledge of the relevant literature– very poorly presented and reference
Incompenstable fail 0-24%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– a failure to demonstrate an understanding of the question– a very weak structure, with hardly any supporting evidence– very limited awareness of appropriate concepts, or a use of them in inappropriate or inaccurate ways– very limited ability to summarise and/or evaluate key evidence;– very limited knowledge of the relevant literature– very poorly presented and referenced.

ACTIVITY | Essay Marking 1

This is a generic example of one of the feedback forms that markers use to give you critical commentary on your writing. Read one of the essays that your PGTA has distributed to you, and use the relevant disciplinary marking criteria on the preceding pages to grade the work. Your PGTA will lead you through a discussion of your findings.

	Excellent	Good	Competent	Weak	Poor
Knowledge of relevant literature					
Addresses the question/task set					
Analytical ability					
Structure and focus					
Draws on relevant examples/evidence					
Bibliography and citation					
What are the strengths of the essay?	<p>Note to PGTAs</p> <p>Following viewing of the 'Essay writing' video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Divide students into groups of 3 to 4 - Give each group two essays (on the same topic) whose quality of work is distinct and contrastable (i.e., 1st class versus 3rd class; 2:1 versus 2:2) - Have groups take each essay in turn, reading and assessing the content, and using the underlying feedback form to record their commentary - Allow students some time for discussion of why they marked it as they did; then provide them with the original grade assigned to the piece of work, along with the marker's feedback - Aim to distribute the same essays to at least two of the groups in order to compare and contrast their marking procedures and assessments <p>Recommended Time</p> <p>25-30 minutes, including screening of the 'Essay writing' lecture, review of one or two essays, and group discussion.</p>				
What are its weaknesses?					
How might it be improved?					
Recommended Grade	Marker				

ACTIVITY | Essay Marking 2

This is a generic example of one of the feedback forms that markers use to give you critical commentary on your writing. Read the second of the two essays that your PGTA has distributed to you, and use the relevant disciplinary marking criteria on the preceding pages to grade the work. Your PGTA will lead you through a discussion of your findings.

	Excellent	Good	Competent	Weak	Poor
Knowledge of relevant literature					
Addresses the question / task set					
Analytical ability					
Structure and focus					
Draws on relevant examples / evidence					
Bibliography and citations					
What are the strengths of this essay?					
What are its weaknesses?					
How might it be improved?					
Recommended Grade	Marker				

Week 4 Workshop

Group work & presentations

This 90-minute workshop focuses upon developing your skills in working within a team and in delivering oral presentations to both small and large audiences. It is accompanied by one video lecture that will be shown at the start of class — ‘Group work & presentations’. This workshop seeks to provide you with an opportunity to practice your public speaking and group work skills in a supportive, calm environment. It aims to boost your confidence and give you a chance to reflect on your capabilities in a non-demanding context.

Your PGTA will divide you into groups and ask you to brainstorm possible topics for presentation to your classmates. Using the ‘Checklist’ on the following page, work with your team to prepare a 5-minute talk to which each member of the group will contribute. You will then be asked to use the ‘Self-Evaluation’ form to reflect on your presentation skills, and to guide discussion with the larger class about presentation skills and techniques.

Corresponding Online Lectures

Group Work & Presentations

ACTIVITY | Checklist for Preparing Talks

Use the table below to organise your teamwork and prepare for your oral presentation. Be sure to delegate tasks amongst your team, and keep track of the time for both preparation and delivery of your talk. Think critically about the format you want to use for the presentation, and consider letting that format guide your division of labour.

Task	Notes	Responsibilities
Decide on the title and general topic for your talk (see mindmapping activity on following page)		
Decide on group roles and delegate tasks		
Research the topic —make sure you feel confident enough to develop an angle		
Refine and narrow the topic —ascertain your main points or headings		
Write brief notes on prompt cards to make sure that you will cover all the ground you want to		
Look carefully at the evaluation criteria to be used		
Check the room you are doing the talk in: does it have the equipment you need?		
Decide and prepare the visual aids you need		
Practise giving your talk and timing it		

Note to PGTAs

Following screening of the video lecture, divide students into groups of 4-5 and encourage them to use this checklist to guide their teamwork. Students should aim to apply an appropriate brainstorming technique—e.g., the mind map on the subsequent page—to settle upon a topic and its structure.

Presentations should be 5 minutes maximum, and each member of the group will need to contribute to its staging and delivery. Time for one or two questions at the close of each presentation should be provided—chaired by yourself as PGTA. Immediately postpresentation, students should be encouraged to reflect on their performance (both on paper using the self-evaluation sheet on p.26, and aloud if appropriate) and you should feel comfortable providing constructively critical advice to the full group based on your observations.

If time permits, following delivery of their presentations, lead a discussion about the difficulties students encountered working as a group. Brainstorm possible solutions.


Recommended Time

Aim to break the workshop down generally as follows, although adapt as necessary:

- 10 minutes: introduction and video screening
- 10 minutes: brainstorming
- 20 minutes: group planning, preparation and practicing
- 40 minutes: 5 minutes each for presentations, plus 5 minutes each for questions, discussion and turn-around time
- 10 minutes: group discussion and reflection

ACTIVITY | Mind Maps

Using the mind-mapping technique introduced in Week 2 (or a similar brainstorming strategy of your choice), select a topic for presentation to your classmates in the form of a 5-minute talk. Build on that topic by delegating one member of your team to write down ideas as others call them out loud. Try not to discuss these ideas in depth until everyone has contributed as many points as possible to the mind map. Once brainstorming is complete, return to each point to evaluate, classify, sort and tease out their interrelationships. This process should provide you with a good foundation for structuring your talk.



ACTIVITY | Oral Presentation: Self evaluation

Use this table to critically assess your performance and to guide discussion with your PGTA about your team’s overall delivery of the talk.

Presentation Topic:			
Planned Learning Outcomes	Score out of ten	Strengths	Goals for next time
Academic Context <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Knowledge and understanding of core material– Extent, quality and appropriateness of research– Conceptual grasp of issues, quality of argument and ability to answer questions			
Quality Management <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Pacing of presentation, adherence to time limits– Effective use of visual aids– Organisation and structure of material (intro, main body & conclusion)			
Quality of Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Audibility, liveliness and quality of presentation– Confidence and fluency in use of English– Appropriate use of body language– Responsiveness to audience			

Note to PGTAs

Ask students to use this self-evaluation form to reflect on the delivery of their presentations. Use the form yourself to evaluate students’ performances. Following each talk, ask students to comment upon their perceptions of their own delivery. Provide supportive feedback to the group based on your evaluation.

Week 5 Workshop

Exam technique & revision methods

This 45-minute workshop focuses upon developing your skills in preparing for and writing exams. It is accompanied by one video lecture that will be shown at the start of class — ‘Exam technique and revision methods’.

Your PGTA will lead you through a brainstorming activity which prompts you to reflect on the study strategies that are most meaningful to you.

Corresponding Online Lectures

Exam technique & revision methods

ACTIVITY | Brainstorming

Use the space below to consider the study techniques you find most useful to you in preparing for exams. These will be specific to you and your learning style, and may be affected by the topic you are studying. Compare your techniques with those of one of your classmates. Your PGTA will then guide you through a group discussion of successful revision strategies.

Note to PGTA

- Following viewing of the video lecture,
- Ask students to brainstorm about their personal preferences regarding study techniques on the page below, and allot several minutes for students to then share these preferences with a classmate.
 - Regroup and ask the class to call out their preferred techniques while you record them on the whiteboard. These should include some or all of the following:
 - Summarisation of notes/handouts into ‘distilled notes’ (key words, phrases) on flash cards or A4 sheets
 - Colour-coding of interrelationships and key ideas
 - Concept & mind maps
 - Peer group revision
 - Reviewing past exams and responding to them in a mock-exam environment
 - Repeating information out loud to yourself or recording it on to audiotape and replaying the tape to yourself
 - Rewriting notes word-for-word
 - Reviewing past essay questions and preparing mock essay plans in response to those questions
 - Indicate to students that revision methods are specific to the individual, and success often depends not only on their applicability to the subject matter, but on the environment and overall context in which they are used.

Recommended Time

15 minutes, including screening of the ‘Exam technique’ lecture, brainstorming and general discussion.

Key References

COTTRELL, S. (2008) *The Study Skills Handbook*. 3rd ed. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
PRICE, G. & MAIER, P. (2007) *Effective Study Skills*. Harlow: Pearson/Longman.



www.soton.ac.uk/socsci