**Special Lecture (Social Sciences)**

**College of Global Liberal Arts, Ritsumeikan**

**Individual Essay and Research Proposal Guidelines**

**Individual Essay (30% of the entire grade)**

**Due by 23:59 JST on 13 June 2025**

**(In-class writing sample (written in class on 18 June) must follow the essay.)**

**Task**

Evaluate how an international development initiative has impacted local communities

in a developing country by analysing one case study from the following sectors:

* Infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, hydropower)
* Rural development (e.g., agriculture, microfinance)
* Human rights (e.g., gender equality, labour rights)
* Tourism (e.g., community-based tourism)
* Environment (e.g., waste management, conservation)
* Other development sectors

**Objective**

in response to student attainment objective 1

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Evaluate the socioeconomic impacts of international development initiatives on local communities by examining a case study

**Your essay must have the following components**

1. A 1000-word essay (excluding bibliography and references)
2. Add bibliography (outside of an essay word limit)
3. Add acknowledgment about the use of generative AI software (outside of an essay word limit)
4. In-class writing sample (This is to be submitted on 18 June. No need to submit this with the essay on 13 June.)

**Submission**

* + GLA Students
* File Name: “Surname\_Student Number” (e.g., Smith\_24112600123)
* Submit to manaba “Assignments”
  + SXC students:
* File Name: “SXC\_Surname” (e.g., SXC\_Rijal)
* Submit by email [mh-rep@gst.ritsumei.ac.jp](mailto:mh-rep@gst.ritsumei.ac.jp)
* Use: “Essay Submission” in a subject line.

**Essay Structure**

**A. INTRODUCTION (roughly 200 words)**

1. Introduce your central question – the narrower the better

- Why is your question or topic important/interesting?

1. Review relevant literature (concisely in a few sentences!)

- What is the current understanding of the topic?

1. Introduce your essay

- What is your approach? (i.e., What are the empirical issues examined in this essay and how are they selected? What concept does the essay use and why?)

- What is the line of your argument?

1. How are you going to structure your essay?

**B. CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW (roughly 300 words)**

A strong argument is often informed by theory or concept. Therefore, the main text begins with a conceptual overview and discussion of general comments *relevant to the perspective you are going to employ in the following section*.

E.g., “Sustainable livelihood approach” “capability approach” “human development”

Note: Don’t simply describe different discussions within the literature. The aim of this section is to provide the framework within which you examine your empirical cases.

**C. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS (350 words)**

Empirical Analysis needs to be based on the framework that you set up in the previous section.

**D. CONCLUSION (150 words)**

1. Reiterate your argument by reflecting on what you have established in your discussion (don’t be too repetitive). What was the original problem? How have you explored it? What have we learned from this exercise?
2. broader implication / future research agenda (but don’t start a new topic)

Note: Your conclusion should not simply be that ‘something matters’. An important point to argue is ***how*** they matter (or do not matter).

**Bibliography**

**Acknowledgment about the use of generative AI software (see the next page)**

Copied from the syllabus

**Use of Generative AI-based Softwares in This Course:**

This course allows students to use AI-based software, as long as students acknowledge “how, why and when you have used AI technology” ([https://www.ncl.ac.uk/academic-skills-kit/good-academic-practice/artificial-intelligence/acknowledging](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/academic-skills-kit/good-academic-practice/artificial-intelligence/acknowledging/)). I need students of this course to follow the guideline below, copy and pasted from New Castle University’s website.

“This may take the form of a short statement at the end of your reference list that includes:

* a list of the AI tools used and why you chose them
* a brief explanation of what you used the tool for (for example, to gather information, to aid your understanding of a concept, topic or course materials, to generate new ideas or plan your writing, to check facts, or to analyse data)
* example prompts you might want to highlight, including annotations or a comment on why they were useful.”

It is important to keep records of the conversations you have with generative AI-based software.

**This rule (acknowledgement) applies to all written submissions of this course – including weekly comment and question about designated chapters. No acknowledgement is regarded as you did**

**Assessment Criteria**

1. Outstanding formulation of a clear research **question (15%)**
2. Clear, sharply focused and incisive **argument (15%)**
3. Displays outstanding skill in elucidating a **concept or theory** and using it in conducting analysis **(15%)**
4. Shows a comprehensive **knowledge** of the topic and associated literature, a well expressed and highly sophisticated understanding, and an ability to integrate one’s own approach within the wider literature. **(20%)**
5. Outstanding quality of **analysis** based on evidence, and approach is maintained consistently throughout the piece of assessed work. **(15%)**
6. Outstanding **literary style and presentation**, including economy of expression, and very good grammar and punctuation. **(10%)**
7. **Referencing** in line with current professional standards. **(10%)**

**Research Proposal as a Group Project (50% of the entire grade)**

**(1) Portfolio (10%)**

* Due: Friday, 23 May by 23:59 JST
* Group submission focusing on your central research question and literature review
* Submission: A representative GLA student from each group gets confirmation about the content from all group members and submit a piece at manaba “Assignments”
* File Name: “Portfolio\_Group\_X” (e.g., Portfolio\_Group\_9)

**(2) Group Presentation (40% total)**

* Handouts Due: Friday, 20 June by 23:59 JST
* Presentation Dates: 25 June and 2 July in class
* Breakdown: 30% for detailed handout, 10% for presentation delivery
* Submission: A representative GLA student from each group gets confirmation about the content from all group members and submit a piece at manaba “Assignments”
* File Name: “Handout\_Group\_X” (e.g., Handout\_Group\_9)
* File Name: “Presentation\_Group\_X” (e.g., Presentation\_Group\_9)

**NOTES:** TOPICS FOR GROUP PROJECT (one topic will be assigned to each group)

1. Effective Waste management in developing countries (research to be offered to Himalayan Life Plastics or Pokhara Municipality Government)
2. Sustainable tourism in developing countries (research to be offered to the Nepal Tourist Board)
3. Supporting women’s rights (research to be offered to an NGO in Nepal)
4. Infrastructure development (research to be offered to the Nepal Office of Japan International Cooperation Agency or the Chinese embassy in Nepal)
5. Nepali migrants in Japan (research to be offered to an NGO in Japan)

**Tasks**

Create a group research proposal.

* Group Portfolio on the central question and the gap in the literature **(1-3 in the “structure” below; about 800 words excluding bibliography)**, due by 23:59 JST on 23 May 2025. **– 10%**
* Group Presentation (two sets of handout to be submitted by 23:59 JST on 20 June, and presentation delivered in class on 25 June and 2 July)
  + **1-6 in the “structure” below**
  + One handout is detailed handout (in the form of essay 2000 words) – **30%**
  + The other handout is a presentation powerpoint – **10%** (assessed in combination with the verbal performance at time of presentation)

**Objectives**

in response to student attainment objectives 2 and 3

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

* Create a group project proposal that incorporates ideas to empower local communities in development initiatives
* Demonstrate cross-cultural leadership skills by successfully managing a group project and adapting communication styles across cultures

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

**(FINAL SUBMISSION)**

**“Portfolio”**

**Structure:**

1. Central question
2. Justification of the question (why is it important?)
3. Literature review
4. Methodology
   1. Framework
   2. Methods
   3. Sources
5. Preliminary research
6. Potential policy recommendation

**Number of words:**

* Sections 1-3 (submitted as Portfolio) 800 words
* Section 4 600 words (we will work on this later)
* Sections 5 and 6 600 words (we will work on this later)

Students are highly encouraged to develop their research proposal, by reflecting feedback students received on their earlier submission.

**Prepare Your Group Portfolio**

Discuss your idea about the following points with your classmates in a group (the following instruction is for Portfolio (sections 1 to 3). Further instruction of sections 4-6 will be given in seminar 9 on 13 November 2024).

1. **Formulate your question**

You are writing a research proposal, which means you will not be researching with primary materials and answering your question within this course. However, you should still raise a very specific research question that can be answerable by your research in Nepal for a week.

For those of you who do not travel to Nepal, imagine that you can do some research in Nepal for a week, and that you will be writing a paper of 3000 words (In other words, you are not writing a book, which is about 60000 words).

* 1. Pattern 1: So broad a question that you cannot answer it within 3000 words.

⇒ Make it more specific by thinking about how each word can be narrower, and by adding some specific contexts.

Example: “Why do climate change happen in Nepal?”

⇒Think about a better question: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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* 1. Pattern 2: If you are using a future tense or you have a “how can” question, reformulate your question to the present or past tense (e.g., “How/why did…” “How/why have….” “How/why does”?)

Example: “How can the Nepalese government promote eco-tourism?”

⇒Think about a better question: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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* 1. Pattern 3: If you had more than one question, you must select only one, and narrow it down.

1. **Think about the purpose and the argument of the literature review, and write the opening sentences (not too long - three at most) of the literature review section.**

Example:

Question

How is the Nepalese government’s policy on gender equality in primary school education implemented in urban areas?

Literature review – opening sentences

These two show the purposes of the literature review.

“This section reviews the literature on primary school education in Nepal to identify the major patterns of gender inequality in primary school education and the main causes of each pattern. It finds that a lack of efficient policy implementation, economic needs, and traditional customs are the main causes in all the patterns, amongst which the problem of policy implementation is the shortest-term solution to address the gender inequality issue. However, while the literature focuses on the policy implementation issue in rural areas, less attention has been paid to that in urban areas.

This kind of argument is aligned to the question, and to methodology (which we will learn in Seminars 8 and 9).

“However” – try to show a problem of the literature.

“It finds” – show the finding of the literature review.

1. **Make sure the question and argument of the literature review are logically aligned.**