

# GETTING READY

## *Learning Model*



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## **CLASSROOM STRUCTURE**

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As detailed in the welcome message to this module, our academic belief is that knowledge is best developed through co-construction. Specifically, we value the power of discussion and collaboration to demonstrate that an individual understands the subject. As a result you will see that our modules are structured around the development of shared activities that require interaction and the sharing of ideas, opinions and experiences amongst your classmates.

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## **INSTRUCTORS/TUTORS**

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Whilst our instructors/tutors are experts in their field, they are not in the classroom to regurgitate the theory to you. They are there to help facilitate the conversation, and guide the class on the journey of development. Of course they will be there to assess your individual performance as well, and provide you with regular feedback on your individual contribution.

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## **MATERIALS/RESOURCES**

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Each classroom is structured around some core materials. At a very minimum, this will be a single textbook, but in most cases this will also include journal articles from the Library and academic papers (students will receive access to the Library after starting the first academic module). Some modules will also include media such as presentations, videos and audio files. The purpose of all of this is to provide the class with grounding in the theory, and often highlights the conflicting views that already exist in the academic field.

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## **RESEARCH**

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In addition to the materials provided within the class, students are expected to continue their reading outside of the class and perform their own reviews of existing literature on each subject. The University of Liverpool is a research university, and expects that work completed at this level be supported by research that exists in the

field. Much of this can be achieved through searching the University of Liverpool Online Library, which will be introduced to you during your first academic module. Further guidance on research can be found in the Research, Citation and Referencing section of this course.

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## **SYLLABUS**

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It is a requirement that every academic module contains a Syllabus. The Syllabus is the official document outlining the structure of the module. It details the aims and learning outcomes of the module as determined by the University of Liverpool when the module was designed and approved. It also details an overview of the assignments, as well as a guide to the grading for that module. We strongly advise all students to access, read and save the syllabus at the beginning of each new module.

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## **ASSIGNMENTS**

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Following the reading of each resource for the week, there will usually be an assignment of some description that focuses on the subject matter described in the reading. Typically the objective of these assignments is to ascertain your understanding of the subject and gain an insight into how this relates to your experiences. Were you aware of the subject? How is it being applied in your environment? Is it having a positive or negative impact?

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## **SHARED ACTIVITIES**

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Most commonly in our programmes (although not always) shared activities take the form of a discussion. In our view this is the fun bit, and where the classroom really gets interesting.

Now that you have read the materials and expressed the initial view of the subject, these shared activities allow the class to share and contrast their views, opinions and experiences. This is invaluable input, especially as our classrooms are highly international and the experience of our students is so broad. It's very common to see opinions change, and to realise the different impacts of culture and environment on widely accepted theory.

It is important to remember the purpose of these activities. They are designed to develop co-constructed knowledge. As a result they require you to participate and contribute in a meaningful way. What does that mean? In short, you can't hide at the back of the class and keep quiet. To be successful you need to engage with these activities, and once you do we think you will realise their value.

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## **PROJECTS**

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Although not standard in every module, it is common that a module will have a large project. These can either be projects requiring group collaboration or individual projects of substantial work. Whilst it is common that assignments focus on specific subjects within a module, the project will normally task you to pull all those subjects together.

If your module requires a project, make sure you begin working on it before the week it is due for submission. This usually makes it easier to complete and will allow you time to perfect it.

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## **GRADES AND FEEDBACK**

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At the end of each week/unit it is normal that you will receive personal feedback from your instructor and a grade for each of the submissions you have made (shared activities are usually a single grade).

The purpose of the feedback is to highlight any areas that you have underperformed on, and to assess your overall performance. Please do not expect a detailed analysis and corrections for each assignment you submit, this is not the way we work. However you will be clearly told if something was wholly incorrect or where improvement can be made.

Please also be mindful of the University's grading expectations. Typically there are no right or wrong answers at this level of academia, and it is therefore unlikely that you will ever see work submitted that achieves perfection. Within the University it is not typical to be awarded A or A\* grades. For those of you that strive for this, ensure you read the module syllabus in detail so that you understand the requirements and grading system.

We would encourage all our students to recognise that your degree is a marathon not a sprint. By this we mean that you should not expect to achieve perfection right from the beginning of your studies. There is a learning curve that all of our students will experience, and each of you will experience a few knocks along the way.

A lower grade than desired is not the end of the journey, it is the beginning.

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## THE ACADEMIC WEEK

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We strongly advise our students to develop a study routine that you apply to each week/unit of the module. For the most part we try to ensure that modules are similar in design, so that you can develop a study rhythm, but there can be small variations. Again ensure you review the syllabus document at the start of each module.

Whilst this is an online programme and as such you have the flexibility of when and where you study, there are specific deadlines that must be met. Do not miss those deadlines, as grade penalties will apply and it may result in automatic failure of your work.

In all our programmes a Week/Unit will always begin on a Thursday. Dependant on your programme the week/unit will run for one or more weeks, but will always end on a Wednesday. We would advise all students to ensure that they access the week/unit on the Thursday and download the required materials and begin working your way through the readings.

It is common for our students to develop a study routine that sees them access class almost every day. This is due to the nature of our collaborative classrooms, where discussion is taking place continuously. Accessing the class every day is not a requirement, but you will see minimum contributions and requirements for participation in discussions to take place over multiple days (so that it is a discussion and not a commentary).

Critically, you must determine what works for you. We would advise that for the first module you start with the expectation of above average or daily classroom engagement, whilst you evaluate your own study routine and gain a feel for how much time the programme will take you.

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