AN/GS/WS 215 SEXUALITY & GENDER
IES Abroad Cape Town

DESCRIPTION:
The purpose of this course is to familiarise and critically engage students with the various ways of theorising and understanding gender and sexuality – from traditional and popular theories of gender and sexual development to theories that actively challenge these dominant ways of understanding gender and sexuality. This course will take a social constructionist perspective, to explore the ways in which gender and sexual identities are socially constructed, rather than innate or biological, and the implications of these constructions on our everyday lived experiences within a South African context. Specifically, this course will explore the ideology of heteronormativity and how heteronormative ideas around sexuality and gender mean that we are socialised to become kinds of gendered and sexual beings and that there are social, cultural, and political consequences when we do not.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
To critically engage with the topics of gender and sexuality in a variety of ways, classes for this course will make use of a combination of methods including, but not limited to, lectures, class discussions and debates, class activities, as well as audio-visual screenings such as advertisements, documentaries, TED Talks, and films. Moodle will be used as a hub for students to keep up to date with the syllabus and assessments, as well as to communicate with students, allow for ongoing discussion about topics related to the course, and to upload readings and links to the videos that students need to watch for this course. In addition to this, a Facebook Group will also be opened for this course, where students will be able to engage with the instructor and each other on current news topics or events around sexuality and gender that arise during the course. In addition, Moodle will be used to communicate with students and to upload readings and links to the videos that students need to watch for this course.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
The final grade is determined according to the following percentage assigned to each component of this course:

- Course Participation – 10%
- Facebook Group Participation - 10%
- Reflective Exercises - 15% (5% for each of three reflective exercises)
- Midterm Assignment- 30%
- Final Take-home Exam - 35%

Class participation
The topics covered in this course, given its focus on gender and sexuality, will be of a sensitive and, sometimes, controversial nature. As such, some topics will make some students feel uncomfortable. However, because categories of gender and sexuality are central to the way in which our social world is organised and, as a result, are an integral part of how we perceive ourselves and others, understanding and engaging with ideas and beliefs around gender and sexuality is important.

Engaging and participating in the discussions, debates, and/or activities that occur during class is essential for the success of this course, for students own learning, as well as for navigating a complicated social world. All attempts will be made to create a ‘safe space’ that allows all students the opportunity to voice their own opinions, to be heard, and to be engaged with in a respectful and
collegial way. To do this, the following ‘Rules of Engagement’ will be discussed, adapted if need be, and agreed upon in the first lecture:

- Before voicing an opinion, all students will be required to bear in mind the impact of their words and actions on fellow students as well as the instructor. If a student thinks that their words may be hurtful or offensive, they should try to voice their opinion in a way that attempts to minimise the offense or hurt;
- All students must recognise that participation and learning in this course does not mean simply being able to voice an opinion, but also includes active listening and respecting the rights, views, and opinions of fellow students;
- When engaging with the instructor or fellow students, all students must voice their opinions and/or disagreements in an academic, respectful, and collegial manner;
- Importantly, given the subject matter and that gender and/or sexual identities have personal significance and relevance to some students more than others, all students must always show respect and understanding to each other and the instructor.

Students are expected to do the required readings before each session to come to class able to participate and engage adequately in the activities and/or discussions that take place during class. Please note that, for some weeks, there is more reading assigned than other weeks; this is due to some readings for certain topics being more theoretically dense and requiring more engagement than others. The list of required readings for each topic is given later in this document.

**Facebook group participation**

Almost daily, issues related to sexuality and gender feature in the news, on social media, and various other platforms. Therefore, as part of this course, students will be expected to participate in a private Facebook group that will be set up for this course, to be moderated by the faculty. On this group, students will be expected to post articles and participate in discussions on current affairs related to sexuality and gender. To receive the full Facebook participation grade (i.e. 10%), students must: Post one relevant article and constructively comment on at least four posts on the Facebook group (i.e. there is a 2% grade for each post and each comment, with a maximum of 10%). All posts made to the group must be accompanied by ‘Content and/or Trigger Warnings’ and contain a description on why the student has posted the article to the group. Please note that the Facebook group will be moderated by the instructor of the course and that students are bound by the 1996 South African Constitution, which prohibits hate speech or discrimination of any kind and, as such, measures will be taken should students post offensive comments or posts that contravene other students’ dignity or rights.

**Reflective exercises**

For some topics in this course, students will be required to submit two-page reflective exercises. Each exercise will be graded PASS or FAIL, and submitting each reflective exercise counts 5% towards the final grade. A total of three reflective exercises will need to be submitted. The aim of these reflective exercises is to give students the opportunity to engage with the theory/theories on a topic, and integrate and apply these theories to the video clips that they will be required to watch as well as their own experiences and/or opinions on the topic. These need to be submitted to the instructor, who will provide feedback and comments to guide the student in learning how to critically engage with the theory/theories as well as their own opinions on a topic. These reflective exercises will also be useful for students in their mid-term assignment and final exam.

**REFLECTIVE EXERCISE TOPICS:**

The purpose of the reflective exercises is to give students a chance to engage with the theories and content covered in class in a personal way and, importantly, to receive formative feedback on whether they are demonstrating critical thinking and critical engagement with the topics. Students will be expected to engage with the theories and readings covered in class as all as additional reference material they will need to source for themselves in a personal way. As such, these reflective exercises do mean that students will be expected to engage with their own personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences. However, students are not required to divulge any information that they are not comfortable with. Furthermore, only the instructor will be reading and commenting on these reflective exercises and, as such, all information contained will remain and be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
Reflective exercises should be around two pages in length. Specific due dates for each reflective exercise will be given during the first of the course, but the topics for each exercise are as follows:

**Reflective Exercise 1: Gender in Contemporary South Africa (Due: End of 3rd week)**
The first two weeks of this course looks at the various ways in which gender is socially constructed in the South African context. For the first reflective exercise, students are required to watch two StreetTalk TV videos entitled ‘Gender – Who Cares’ part 1 and part 2. These videos are each around fifteen minutes long. These videos are available to watch freely online and the links to where the videos can be found are in the ‘Content’ section as well as under the ‘Filmography’ section. After watching these two videos, students are required to reflect on the following questions in their reflective exercise:

1. Critically engage with the ways in which gender and sexual identities have changed over the last few years, according to the participants in these two videos.
2. How do these participants challenge and/or reinforce heteronormative understandings of gender and sexuality?
3. How does the heteronormative culture of South Africa try to restrain people’s gender or sexual identities?
4. How can we use Butler’s theories of sex and gender to understand the views of these participants?

**Reflective Exercise 2: Gender, Sexuality, and Heteronormativity in South Africa (Due: End of 6th week)**
Heteronormativity constructions of gender influence the ways in which people construct their sexual identities and has an impact on how they experience the social, cultural, and political world around them. For this reflective exercise, students are required to watch a TEDTalk spoken word video entitled ‘A powerful poem about what it feels like to be transgender’ and two StreetTalk TV videos entitled ‘Gay Guys’ and ‘Gay and Proud of it!’ These videos are each around fifteen minutes long and, please note, that there is a trigger warning for these videos as there is a discussion around experiences of homophobia, violence, and discrimination. These videos are available to watch freely online and the links to where the videos can be found are in the ‘Content’ section as well as under the ‘Filmography’ section. After watching these three videos, students are required to reflect on the following questions in their reflective exercise:

1. Critically engage with the impact of heteronormativity on the experiences and the kinds of prejudice and discrimination the people in the videos encounter in their everyday lives.
2. How are do the experiences differ and how do these people understand these differences?
3. How do participants challenge or reinforce heteronormative ideas around gender and sexuality?

**Reflective Exercise 3: Constructions of Gender, Sexuality, and Race in Advertising (Due: End of 9th week)**
Having looked at the ways in which media perpetuates and reinforces heteronormative understandings of gender and sexuality through the theories students will learn about in class, students will be asked to find their own piece of South African media (e.g. advert, film TV series, song lyrics, music video, game, etc.) and critically analyse what this piece of media tells us about how people should be based on the sex they were assigned at birth. In their analysis, they will need to consider intersectionality and what these representations say about particular kinds of people.

**Mid-term assignment (Due: End of 8th week)**
Each student will be expected to submit an assignment, which will be graded and form part of their final grade for this course. Students will be given a list of topic options to choose from or they will be given the opportunity to choose a topic relevant to the course that they want to engage with for their assignment. If students choose their own topic, it will need to be discussed and approved by the instructor. While this is an assignment, students can choose how they want to present this to the instructor. In other words, students can choose to do a written assignment, a presentation, a poster, or a video. While the assignment can be presented in any format, students must engage with a topic relevant to the course as well as demonstrate that they are able to apply, integrate, and critically engage with a theory or theories covered in the course. Assessment guidelines and an assessment rubric have been provided to the students in Appendix A.

The mid-term assignment will be due in Week 8 of the course, but further information on the exact due date and time as well as where the assignment will need to be handed in will be given in the first session of this course.
Final exam (Due: Last Week of Course)
The final assessment task for this course will be a written take-home exam. Students will be given 48 hours to submit a response on a topic that will be sent by the faculty member responsible for this course. Students’ response to the exam question will require students to integrate theories covered in this course with their own arguments and/or opinions on a specific issue. Assessment guidelines and an assessment rubric have been provided to the students in Appendix A.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
The primary aim of this course is to develop and use students’ critical thinking skills in understanding and working with ideas around gender and sexuality. Specifically, by the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Explain, assess and critique the various ways in which gender and sexuality development has been theorised;
- Analyse the ways in which gender and sexuality are socially, culturally, and historically constructed;
- Develop their own argument for how we become gendered and/or sexual beings, drawing on theories covered in the course;
- Compare and analyse the ways in which our gendered and sexual identities intersect with our ‘other’ identities, such as race, culture, religion, etc.;
- Explain and analyse the implications of current constructions of gender and sexuality on the lived experiences of individual people and society as a whole, specifically within a South African context;
- Apply content covered in this course to their everyday lived experiences as well as to the social, cultural, and political problems we currently face in South Africa and globally.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Students are expected to attend all classes. Should a student be too ill to attend a class, they must inform the lecturer and Academics Manager before class begins. A letter from a doctor may be requested, particularly where more than one class has been missed.

According to the Academic Policy Guidelines, class attendance is mandatory. This, however, is not the only reason students should try to attend all classes for this course. The structure of this course is such that each topic builds on the previous topic covered. Therefore, missing a class could result in the student not gaining a clear understanding of the connections between each topic and, as a result, being unable to engage with the course content in the required way.

CONTENT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>• Burbules and Berk. Critical thinking and critical pedagogy: relations, differences, and limits. <a href="http://faculty.education.illinois.edu/burbules/papers/critical.html">http://faculty.education.illinois.edu/burbules/papers/critical.html</a></td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Contemporary Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Sex</td>
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<td>Session 4: Feminist theories</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Stainton Rogers and Stainton Rogers. Feminist challenges, pp. 120-157.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Steyn. A New Agenda: Restructuring Feminism in South Africa, pp. 41-52.</td>
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<td>Session 5 &amp; 6: Social constructionism</td>
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<td>• Marecek, Crawford and Popp. On the construction of gender, sex, and sexualities, pp. 192-216.</td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Gender and Sex as Socially Constructed and Performative</th>
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<td>Session 7: Butler and feminist theories of sex and gender</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Salih. On Judith Butler and performativity, pp. 55-68.</td>
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<td>Session 8: Sex as also being socially constructed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Butler. Subjects of sex/gender/desire, pp. 1-34.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Session 9: Butler’s theory of gender as ‘performative’</td>
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<td>• Butler. Performative acts and gender constitution, pp. 519-531.</td>
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**Homework:**
Students to watch two StreetTalk TV Video Clips:

**Deliverables:** REFLECTIVE EXERCISE 1

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<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Deconstructing ‘Masculinities’ and ‘Femininities’</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Session 10: Theoretical perspectives on Hegemonic masculinities in (South) Africa</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Moolman. Rethinking ‘masculinities in transition’ in South Africa considering the ‘intersectionality’ of race, class, and sexuality with gender, pp. 93-105.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger and Hamlall. Hegemonic masculinity: Reviewing the gendered analysis of men’s power in South Africa, pp. 3-21.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Constructionist Approaches to Sexuality</strong></td>
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| Session 14: Deconstructing ‘heterosexuality’ | • Jackson. *Gender, sexuality and heterosexuality: the complexity (and limits) of heteronormativity*, pp. 105-121.  
| **Week 6** | **Sexual Identities in the (South) African Context** |
• Yuval-Davis. *Intersectionality and feminist politics*, pp. 193-209. |
• Tamale. *Confronting the politics of nonconforming sexualities in Africa*, pp. 31-45. |
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<tr>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Marriage, gender, and sexuality in South Africa</th>
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| Session 20: Heteronormativity and marriage | Judge. *For better or worse? Same-sex marriage and the (re)making of hegemonic masculinities and femininities in South Africa*, pp. 67-73.  
Msibi. *They are worried about me: I am also worried*, pp. 22-28. |

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<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Constructions of ‘The Family’ in Post-apartheid South Africa</th>
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Session 18: The relevance of Quare Theory in theorising black sexualities in the (South) African context.

- Johnson. ‘Quare’ Studies, or (almost) everything I Know About Queer Studies I Learned from My Grandmother, pp. 1-25.

**Homework:**
Students to watch three short video clips: *(TW/CN: Homophobia, Violence, Discrimination)*

   [https://www.ted.com/talks/lee_mokobe_a_powerful_poem_about_what_it_feels_like_to_be_transgender#t-49229](https://www.ted.com/talks/lee_mokobe_a_powerful_poem_about_what_it_feels_like_to_be_transgender#t-49229)
2. Gay Guys (No date).  

**Deliverables:** Reflective Exercise 2
| --- | --- |
| Session 24: Queer families and parenting | • Lubbe. Mothers, fathers, or parents: Same-gendered families in South Africa, pp. 260-283.  
**Deliverables: Mid-term Assignment** |
| **Week 9** | **Media Representations: Men and Masculinities**  
| | Session 27: Representations of masculinity and race | • Leopeng and Langa. Black middle-class masculinities in postapartheid South Africa: Consumerism, fashion and the portrayal of masculine identities in *Destiny Man* magazine, pp. 1-27. |
| **Week 10** | **Media Representations: Women and Femininities**  
• Holtzhausen, Jordaan and North. The portrayal of women in South African television commercials, pp. 167-183. |
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<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>Media Representations: Intersections between race, gender, and sexuality</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reygan. <em>Black lesbian (non)representation in 'gay' media in Cape Town: Constructing a globalized white, male, affluent, gay consumer</em>, pp. 85-98.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Implications of Current Constructions of Gender and Sexuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 35: ‘Homophobia’</td>
<td>• Msibi. <em>The lies we have been told: on (homo) sexuality in Africa</em>, pp. 55-77.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Week 13

### A Look to the Future: What Can We do?

#### Session 37: Challenging ‘rape culture’

- Final exam question given to students

#### Session 38: Challenging heteronormativity


#### Session 39: Wrapping up

- Students submit final exam

### COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

During this course, students will have the opportunity to participate in two course-related trips aimed at giving students a glimpse into what kind of work is being done within the area of gender and sexuality. The course content is theoretically dense and, as such, the site visits will give students a chance to see how this theoretical work is and can be used in the ‘real world’ to make a difference in our social, cultural, and political contexts. Please note that students have to attend both course-related trips.

One trip will be to an organisation such as Triangle Project or Sonke Gender Justice. Both Triangle Project and Sonke Gender Justice provide a number of services to the public; for example, offering healthcare services and support to gender non-conforming and/or queer people, working with friends and families of queer people, challenging heteronormative ideologies, and advocating for human rights and social justice. At this site, students will be able to not only observe what kind of work can be done, but also be given the opportunity to participate in some of the activities planned by these organisations. For example, Triangle Project and Sonke Gender Justice do awareness raising workshops and community engagement initiatives, which the students will be able participate in.

The second trip will be to the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, which exhibits contemporary art from various African and international countries and aims to encourage an intercultural understanding of social and political issues. Of particular relevance to this course is the work of art visual activist Zanele Muholi, whose photography attempts to challenge heteronormative ideas around the representation of black womxn and black lesbian womxn. This site visit will give students the opportunity to discuss and explore issues around gender and sexuality in a creative and interactive way. Furthermore, the kind of work on display at this museum includes not only ‘traditional’ art works, but also photography, documentaries, and audio clips.

Specific dates and more detail on these trips will be given before this course begins, once dates have been finalised.

### FILMOGRAPHY:

- Lee Mokobe, TEDWomen: A powerful poem about what it feels like to be transgender, 2015. (URL: https://www.ted.com/talks/lee_mokobe_a_powerful_poem_about_what_it_feels_like_to_be_transgender#t-49229)
- Jo Menell and Mills, Richard, StreetTalk TV: Gay Guys (Season 2, Episode 20), No date. (URL: http://streettalktv.com/episode/gay-guys/)
- Jo Menell, StreetTalk TV: Gay and Proud of it! (Season 1 Episode 12), 2017. (URL: http://streettalktv.com/episode/gay-and-proud-of-it/)
REQUIRED READINGS FOR COURSE CONTENT:

The course content will tackle various topics in the area of gender and sexuality, with each topic requiring students to do the required readings before each topic begins. As much as possible (in line with copyright regulations), the required readings will be given in a reading pack at the beginning of the course. The following are the full references for the required reading students will be expected to do:

- Johnson, Patrick. E. “’Quare’ studies, or (almost) everything I know about queer studies I learned from my grandmother”, in Text & Performance Quarterly, 21 (2001), pp. 1 25.


RECOMMENDED READINGS:
I have not provided a list of recommended readings as students will need to do some research of their own to find additional sources related to the topics covered in this course for their reflective exercises, mid-term assignment, and final exam assignment. Learning how to find, evaluate, and critically engage with various sources of information is an important aspect of this course.
## APPENDIX A: Assessment Rubric (AN/GS 315 SEXUALITY & GENDER)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE:</th>
<th>100%-80%</th>
<th>70%-79%</th>
<th>60%-68%</th>
<th>50%-59%</th>
<th>49%-20%</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation of Issue/s</strong></td>
<td>Issue is stated clearly and described comprehensively with an explanation given on why this topic is relevant and in need of critical engagement.</td>
<td>Topic or issue is stated clearly and described with an explanation given on why this topic is relevant but some information is missing which does not seriously impede on the understanding of the issue or topic.</td>
<td>Topic or issue is introduced but is lacking in description. Furthermore, some explanation is given on why this topic is relevant but not enough to show why critical engagement is necessary.</td>
<td>Topic or issue is stated and described with no explanation on why the topic is relevant and in need of critical engagement.</td>
<td>Topic or issue is not introduced and, as such, there is no description or explanation on why this topic is relevant and in need of critical engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student's perspective</strong></td>
<td>Position is clear and acknowledges the limits of this position, while also synthesizing others' points of view.</td>
<td>Position is clear and attempts to acknowledge others' points of view as well as the limits of their position.</td>
<td>Simply describes different positions but own position is unclear.</td>
<td>Student’s position is simplistic with little engagement with this position.</td>
<td>Student’s position is unclear and different positions are ignored.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence i.e. Selecting and using information</strong></td>
<td>Relevant and extensive information taken from sources is used with the viewpoints of experts being questioned thoroughly.</td>
<td>Relevant information taken from sources is used with some viewpoints of experts being questioned.</td>
<td>Information taken from sources is enough to explain the issue but little demonstration questioning.</td>
<td>Not enough information taken from sources and/or some irrelevant information taken from sources and used without questioning.</td>
<td>Little or no information taken from sources and/or does not respond to the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connections to Experience i.e. Connects relevant experience and academic knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Meaningfully synthesizes connections among own experiences to deepen their understanding and broaden their position, while also using the experiences of others to illuminate concepts and theories relevant to the topic.</td>
<td>Effectively selects examples of experiences to infer differences, as well as similarities to academic knowledge. Student acknowledges the perspectives others and attempts to engage with these.</td>
<td>Student includes their own experiences and uses this to confirm or disconfirm information from academic sources. Different perspectives or experiences are not acknowledged or engage with.</td>
<td>Student describes own experiences, but not in a critically engaging way with different experiences being ignored.</td>
<td>Student does not include reference to their own experiences OR Student simply uses their own experiences with little or no link academic literature and different experiences are ignored or dismissed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Student reflects on their own problematic assumptions and beliefs and how these could negatively impact on others around them, as well as envision a future self which takes into account the new information they have gained.</td>
<td>Student acknowledges their own problematic assumptions and beliefs and is able to see how these may negatively impact on others around them but does not reflect on the possibility of a future self who takes these things into account.</td>
<td>Student merely articulates the strengths and challenges they faced with little engagement with their own problematic assumptions and beliefs.</td>
<td>Student simply refers to the challenges they have faced and does not critically engage with these.</td>
<td>Student’s reflection is non-existent or superficial and simplistic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Style and Formatting</td>
<td>Formatting meets the criteria and work is neat and well-presented.</td>
<td>A few formatting issues, but work is still neat and well-presented.</td>
<td>Formatting is inconsistent with departmental guidelines, but work is still neat and well-presented.</td>
<td>Many errors in formatting and work is somewhat untidy.</td>
<td>Formatting does not meet the criteria and work is untidy and not well-presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Main points divided into paragraphs and signalled by use of smooth transitions, where sentences within each paragraph relate to each other and are relevant to the overall topic. There is clear evidence of an introduction and conclusion effectively related to the overall topic and the reader has no problem following the assignment.</td>
<td>Most main points are separated into paragraphs and mostly signalled by smooth transitions. There is an introduction and conclusion which introduces the topic and the reader has no problem following the assignment.</td>
<td>Many main points are separated into paragraphs and signalled by (sometimes awkward) transitions. There may be a few minor points that digress from the topic but no major ones. There is an introduction and conclusion but these tend to repeat the assignment topic.</td>
<td>Only some main points are set off by paragraphs with transitions that are awkward but some points digress significantly from the topic. The introduction and conclusion repeat the assignment topic and the reader has some difficulty following the essay.</td>
<td>No organisation or structure and paragraphs are clumsy or non-existent. No introduction and/or conclusion and no transition between paragraphs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of Sources</td>
<td>Extensive use of required sources and more than four additional academic sources included which are relevant to the topic.</td>
<td>Required sources included with at least four additional academic sources included which are relevant to the topic.</td>
<td>Some use of required sources with two to three additional academic sources included which are relevant to the topic.</td>
<td>Some use of required sources with only one additional academic source included with some irrelevant sources.</td>
<td>Minimal use of required sources and no additional academic sources included or irrelevant sources included.</td>
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