

## Guidelines for Final Essays

The aim of a final essay – in this course – is

- to assess your general understanding of the topics and approaches discussed
- to test your ability to apply abstract theories and models to concrete social phenomena
- to practice a form of non-scholarly, more journalistic style of writing

Requirements:

- A final essay or a presentation is necessary to pass the course
- The final essay should have around 6-8 pages (between 12000 and 16000 characters)
- Make use of the concepts and theories we discussed in class and apply them to empirical examples from everyday life or contemporary public discourses
- You have to give your essay a personal touch, connecting sociological concepts to your experiences and lifeworld
- You should write your text in an easy understandable and non-theoretical way as if it would be written for an intellectually-minded newspaper, magazine or blog
- Check the orthography and the grammar before you submit your final paper; it is advised, particularly if you are not an English native speaker, to give the paper, before handing it in, to a friend or fellow student for proofreading
- You may use AI for research and style purposes, but please do not submit an AI-generated paper (I have already read to many of those); don't use subheadings and bullet points and strive to maintain a coherent flow of argument throughout the essay, something that AI is notoriously bad at
- The final essay has to be submitted online via IS
- Deadline for the online submission of the final essay is May 31, 2025

Recommendations:

- A good essay has a beginning, a middle and an end: First introduce the phenomenon or map the problem that you want to tackle, then develop the argument, finally come to a conclusion (a brief summary, moral or prophecy – whatever suits you)
- Don't write the essay like a thesis or research paper! You don't need to have a separate literature review, a theoretical chapter or separate chapters at all
- The fact that the final essay as a non-theoretical text does not mean that you shouldn't use theory, but that you have to do it subtle and practical: introduce the theory while using it
- Don't quote too much or too extensive: the reader of an essay might like to know from which articles or books you got your ideas from, but he or she is most likely not using your essay for scholarly purposes