**Academic Achievement Teaching Programme (Arts, Social and Professional Studies Faculty)**

**This is designed as a voluntary programme of additional acadmeic skills classes, so that students can choose to engage with it as a fully scaffolded and complete course or to participate whenever they choose.**

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| **Class title and LOs** | **Student-facing information for booking.**  Using the ‘writing a great assignment’ theme throughout is intended to resonate with students’ priorities and highlight the range of activities and skills that underpin writing an assignment. | **Skills Development**  The programme is scaffolded to facilitate the development of a range of academic skills but the three strands of criticality, digital capabilities and personal development and wellbeing\* are embedded throughout. How learning activities are designed to enable this is highlighted below:  **Criticality; Digital capabilities; Personal development/wellbeing**  \*building confidence and encouraging self-efficacy underpin all classes, whereas this refers to specific aspects of their wellbeing | **Inclusivity and Decolonisation.**  This is to be reflected throughout the class themes and teaching resources. Where appropriate, these respond to specific highlights from the EDI calendar. Religious celebrations will be also be acknowledged, by, for example, the first presentation slide including a celebratory message (some suggestions of these are included here). |
| **Reading for your assignments**  Explain the difference between note-taking and note-making  Use and evaluate different strategies for active reading and note-making  Formulate critical reading questions relevant to your subject area | Writing a great assignment starts with effective reading. So, this class will cover:   * How to make useful notes for your assignments * How to read with critical analysis | Analysis of the role reading plays in academic work  Critical reading approaches – developing and applying critical questioning of a source  Experimentation of active reading/note-making strategies to reflect upon which works best for them  Using online tools for active reading and effective note-making (e.g. Adobe annotating to be modelled) will be encouraged.  Suggestions for using One Note, Jamboard or Canvas e-portfolios to store readings and notes.  Organisation of resources and tips for reading in short chunks with regular breaks to avoid too much screen time, with suggestions such as going for a walk, listening to a podcast or some of music for relaxation/study available online, have positive effects on wellbeing.  Subject matter enables students to express their own experiences if personally affected. | *Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans History Month*    **Reading for your assignments:**  Activities use the article ‘Can police training reduce ethnic/racial  disparities in stop and search? Evidence from a  multisite UK trial’. Critical reading activity leads into evaluation of arguments and the development of a supported discussion on the issues of racial profiling and stop and search. Will enable inclusion of different subjects – policing, sociology, criminology etc |
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| **Summarising your reading**  Explain what summarising is and its purpose  Analyse the relationship between summarising and active reading  Combine summaries to create synthesis between sources | A great assignment has the information and ideas from your reading summarised in your own words. So, this class will cover:   * How to write summaries from your reading and notes * How to use summaries to compare and contrast information | Active reading is foundation of the class: summarise by questioning rather than as a mechanical exercise.  Identifying key points most relevant in response to a question – incudes analysis of a question and evaluation of relevant information  Compare, contrast and synthesise different arguments and use of evidence  Encouragement of own academic voice  The use of digital tools such as One Note, Jamboard, Padlet or Canvas e-portfolios to store notes/summaries of reading will be suggested. Jamboard to be used in class activity to develop digital capabilities and model.  The starter activity (summarising their experiences to date of studying at LJMU as a way of establishing concept) encourages them to express and bring their experiences into the classroom to be used, commented on and validated, and to reflect on their experiences as students. Issues related to wellbeing will be addressed when relevant and if appropriate. |
| **Interpreting numbers and graphs for your assignments**  Examine numbers and graphs with greater confidence  Infer meaning from numerical data  Analyse numerical data to develop and support your points | You may need to use numbers and graphs (for example, of population growth or crime figures) to write a great assignment. So, this session will cover:   * How to make sense of numbers and graphs in your sources * How to avoid taking numbers and graphs at face value | Critical reading/analysis of numerical/statistical information  Using secondary quantitative research to develop interpretations of a topic and support points  Integration of quantitative research with qualitative sources  Develops familiarity with digital software used to present and analyse quantitative information    Numerical anxiety is especially prevalent amongst APSS students and leads to the avoidance of using specific sources and completing assignments. This can result in greater anxiety – acknowledged here but allayed with explicit reference to wellbeing |
| **Interpreting texts and images for your assignments**  Explain the content and context of a range of textual and visual primary sources  Analyse the relevance of a primary source’s context to its content  Compare and evaluate primary sources to develop a conclusion | You may need to use a range of primarytexts and images (e.g. diaries, newspapers, professional reports, photographs and paintings) to write a great assignment. So, this session will cover:   * Questions to ask yourself when working with primary sources * How to compare and contrast primary sources | Critical questioning and reading of primary sources  Comparison and synthesis of primary sources  Textual and visual literacies developed through analysis  Integration of secondary and primary sources  Evaluation of sources to develop and support interpretations  Using online databases to access primary sources demonstrated and used in class to introduce how they can use them to source more for their own work.  Analysis of sources enables development of a more inclusive awareness of trans identities and related issues – personal development. This will also allow any trans students to bring their experiences into the classroom if they wish for recognition, validation and enrichment of discussion. |
| **Take a stance: developing an argument for your assignment**  Explain what an academic argument is  Compare and evaluate different academic arguments  Use your evaluation of academic arguments to construct your own | To write a great assignment, you will often need to develop an argument. So, this class covers:   * How to analyse and compare different academic opinions * Using your evaluation of those opinions to develop your own argument | Critical reading of sources, including comparison, synthesis and evaluation, and the part played by them in academic arguments  Building an academic argument as their critical response/interpretation to a range of sources  Using critical, evaluative and persuasive language throughout  Online peer groups (e.g. on Teams) to discuss topics and try arguments out will be recommended after using breakout rooms (with structured questions) as in-class example of how they can be used for open discussion.  Encouraging building online peer groups into assignment preparation helps avoid isolation and supports wellbeing, as well as developing learning, by building a sense of group identity and belonging. |
| **Planning your assignment: putting it all together**  Describe the stages of effective planning  Organise and synthesise notes and ideas in response to an assignment brief  Produce an effective assignment structure, with particular focus on essays | A great assignment has been planned thoroughly and has a clear structure. So, this class will cover:   * Putting all your notes, ideas and interpretations together in a plan * How to build a clear structure that stays focused on your question | Analysis of questions/assignment briefs  Selecting information for and applying it to a question  Synthesis of information and ideas  Prioritisation of information  Construction of a coherent argument  Mind mapping software will be suggested/demonstrated.  Office facilities such as One Note or Jamboard can be used as digital post-it notes for collecting and organising ideas during planning. These to be used in class and students to evaluate how effective it could be for their personal use.  Using facilities in Word, such as highlighting, to help track and visualise a structure between and within report sections, also suggested.  Suggest talking through assignments briefs with peers online and try some group mind mapping to benefit from group creativity, peer support and lessen feelings of isolation/anxiety.  The use of Teams as an online writing group will be suggested: having the Teams meeting open as they plan and start writing is a less collaborative use of the online space but the presence of others, even silently, can help motivate us and encourages productivity (similar to working silently in a library with friends\*). Using the Pomodoro method could be suggested as a way of structuring the writing group’s session to help them take regular breaks.  \*online recordings of ‘library noise’ can be highlighted as way of replicating a productive writing environment if they usually find the library to be one. |
| **Express yourself: showing critical analysis in your assignment**  Define critical analysis and explain what it looks like in Arts, Humanities and Professional and Social Studies assignments  Examine sources critically to prepare for critical writing  Use language and structure to produce pieces of critical writing | Great assignments express your own ideas and arguments (your critical analysis) So, this class will cover:   * What critical analysis looks like in your assignments * How to use structure and language to express your critical analysis | Critical reading – analysis and evaluation of sources  Evaluation of theories and perspectives  Development of an academic argument  Encouragement of own (supported) ideas and academic perspectives and opinions – development of their academic voice  Use of critical and persuasive language  Use Padlet/Jamboard etc to share ideas in class – external tool.  Encourage use of online facilities like Teams or form a WhatsApp group to share and express ideas when studying to develop critical analysis - each read the same article and ask each other what you think, working through critical reading questions.  Trying a peer study/discussion group online or using WhatsApp to share ideas can foster sense of belonging and group identity whilst stimulating their critical discussion and engaging in different perspectives.  The key question enables students to express and reflect upon their own reasons for studying in HE, which is also an opportunity to encourage and motivate them whilst validating their own reasons/feelings. |
| **Developing your academic writing style**  Identify and describe the conventions of an academic writing style  Assess the academic language in examples of writing and apply techniques to improve them  Reflect on your own academic writing and areas for development | To write a great assignment, you need to start using an academic style. So, this class will cover:   * What an academic style of writing is * How to start using key features of an academic writing style | Critical reflection of their own academic writing style, areas for development and identification of how to start developing/correcting  Analysis and evaluation of examples of student writing  Use software (e.g. screen readers)/read back facility in Word/voice recording but especially use Word’s grammar tool, spellcheck, synonyms, how to save words to dictionary to be used in class for them to assess which they would find useful. This will have a focus on checking for clarity, accuracy and style.  By reflecting on their own writing, there is an opportunity to create positivity by developing personal and achievable action points.  To encourage a sense of belonging in HE, the coded practices of academic writing will be exposed with the open acknowledgement that these can appear alien and intended to exclude but they are simply conventions they can learn and adopt. |
| **The final touches: editing and proofreading**  Describe a range of editing and proofreading strategies  Apply editing and proofreading strategies, including the use of digital software  Reflect on assignment writing experiences and new learning to create an editing action plan | To make your assignment really great, you need to make time to edit and proofread before submitting. So, this class will cover   * what to look for when editing and proofreading * ways to edit and proofread | Critical reflection of own current academic writing style and areas for development  Using reflection to develop action plan  Analysis and evaluation of example writing  Use software (e.g. screen readers)/read back facility in Word/voice recording but especially use Word’s grammar tool, spellcheck, synonyms - how to save words to dictionary in there. All to check for clarity, accuracy and style  Editing and proofreading opens up discussion of time management and benefits of it on wellbeing. Advice that checking work before submission can reduce assignment anxiety will be emphasised.  Focusing on specific tasks (e.g. editing for different purposes, such as structure on first edit and references on next) breaks work down into manageable chunks, which is also less stressful and enables breaks. Reminders of activities for wellbeing to try out during breaks will be provided.  Editing in a different place to writing highlights the importance of environment when working for stimulation and wellbeing. |
| **Preparing for exams**  Identify a range of revision strategies, including the use of digital software  Explain the role of wellbeing in exam preparation  Experiment with and evaluate some strategies to create your own preparation plan | Exams are another form of assignment that you might have to do this year. So, this class will cover:   * Techniques to prepare for different types of exams * How to look after yourself as you prepare to take exams | Critical reflection of previous exam preparation experiences, leading to some action planning.  Critical evaluation of different revision strategies and assessment of how and when to apply them.  Use of software/online tools (e-portfolios etc) to organise and store revision notes will be suggested.  Making audio notes to aid revision and tools for this will be demonstrated.  Suggestions will be made for creating online quizzes for self/peers and for revision/study groups online, e.g. Teams.  Advice will be given for approaching online exams (e.g. environment, checking tech).  There will be emphasis on the importance of using peer groups to support wellbeing during exam periods and avoid isolation but also to contact tutors to clarify regulations etc.  The importance of building in regular breaks throughout to refresh and reduce anxiety, along with suggestions for relaxation, exercise and nutrition, will be embedded throughout. |