

The final essay

The final essay has three parts:

- 1) Deep dive in one theory or idea within the course
- 2) Your future life – reflection
- 3) Personal learning points

Here are instructions for each of these three parts:

Part 1) Deep dive in one theory or idea from the course

The lectures and the readings have introduced many theories, themes, and ideas. Your task is to dive deeper into one of them.

- 1) Choose the topic
 - a. Think back on the topics, theories, themes, and ideas of the course and choose a topic that is especially interesting and/or relevant to you.
- 2) Identify two articles on the topic written by researchers of the topic
 - a. When you have decided your topic, your task is to identify two articles related to it
 - b. Google scholar (scholar.google.com) is a good place to search for scientific articles. You can, for example, type the name of your topic and 'review' in the search field. That can help you identify some review articles on the topic, which typically are a good way to get a glimpse on what is known about the specific topic.
 - c. People working in the university libraries (or even general libraries) are professionals in finding relevant articles on any topic. You can also use their help to find relevant articles on your chosen topic.
 - d. There probably are newspaper articles on the topic that reference some scientific work. Often in such articles a researcher on the topic is interviewed or some important scientific study on the topic is mentioned. So finding a newspaper story on the topic in some high-quality newspaper could help you identify some key studies or key researchers on the topic (in the latter case, you can then go to google scholar to search for articles made by that researcher).
 - e. Many of the course readings also include references. So if you choose a topic that has been part of the readings, examining the list of references in that particular reading can be a good place to find articles on the topic.
 - i. Harvard Business Review articles don't always include clear references. However, the authors of those articles are typically experts on the topic they write about. So you can try to find whether they have written something else on the same topic in addition to their HBR article.
 - ii. Tip: If you find it hard to identify relevant literature on your chosen topic, then it might be easiest to choose a topic for which it is easy to find relevant readings. And the references in the articles we read could be the best way to start.

- f. If you have a topic you would be eager to read about, but don't seem to find anything relevant to it, you can also contact Frank (frank.martela@aalto.fi) and he can help you find some articles on it.
- 3) Read the two articles and reflect on the topic
 - 4) Write a reflection that is at least 1 page long on the topic, where you answer the following questions
 - a. What was your chosen topic?
 - b. Why did you choose this particular topic? What interested you in this topic?
 - c. What were the key claims the articles made about the topic? Provide a brief summary about what the articles said about the topic
 - d. What new things did you learn about the topic from the articles?
 - e. Were the two articles in agreement about the topic? What were the key differences between how the articles approached the topic?
 - f. Does this seem to be a topic about which we have much research knowledge or something about which we still don't know too much about?
 - g. Did you find from the articles any information about the topic that is practically applicable? Did you get some insights that are applicable to your own life?
 - h. Please ensure that you list the two articles you read somewhere in the document (either before or after your reflection).

Part 2) Your future life

Provide answers to the following questions:

- 1) What would be your dream life 10 years from now?
 - a. Think about different aspects of your life, including work, family, hobbies, and other dimensions.
 - b. Try to be as specific as possible. For example, instead of writing 'I want to be a lawyer', try to describe what your dream workday would consist of – what kind of tasks, challenges and activities would it involve.
- 2) Looking at your dream life, contemplate on what would be needed to make that into reality
 - a. What would you need to be doing to get there?
 - b. What are the key obstacles on your way there?
 - c. How realistic is your dream life? Does getting there involve many activities that would not be part of your dream life? What sacrifices are you willing to make to turn your dream into reality?
 - i. For example: Who of us wouldn't mind being an Olympic gold medalist? However, very few of us are willing to live a daily life that is completely devoted to training, with all decisions about how to spend one's day, what to eat, when to go to bed, and so forth determined by that one goal.
 - d. What do you need from people around you and from the society to get there?
 - e. What would you need to differently from what you do now to get there?
- 3) Two alternative dream lives
 - a. Your future is not determined but there are many possibilities that might unfold. And your values, needs and strivings will also change.

- b. Come up with two alternative live possibilities 10 years from now that should be very different from your original dream life but still types of lives that you would find highly interesting and attractive
 - c. The idea is to help you not to commit to a single future but realize that you could be happy and find meaning in highly different life situations
- 4) Your key goals for the year 2019
- a. It's February and most of this year is still ahead of you. Think about what are your key goals that you want to commit to throughout this year?
 - b. Write down these goals. Their number could be anywhere between two to eight.
 - i. Try to ensure that you have goals in various domains of life such as school, work, personal relationships, hobbies, self-development, etc.
 - c. After each goal, write briefly why this goal is important to you. Why do you want to accomplish it, what do you get out of it?
 - d. After each goal, write briefly what kind of plans, routines and work you need to do to accomplish that goal
 - i. Remember, the more concrete your plans, the more prone you are to succeed in actually executing them.
- 5) Keeping your goals, values and commitments up to date
- a. In ten years – indeed already in a few years – your dream has probably changed to some extent. Same goes for your values and goals. Sticking to a goal when it no longer resonates with you is a bad idea. Think about how you will ensure that you keep your goals, values, and commitments updated.
 - i. What kind of regular habits or exercises could help?
 - b. Also, in our everyday life we easily loose track of our goals and what is truly important to us.
 - i. What kind of monthly or weekly routines, habits or rituals could help you stay aware of what is truly important to you? Try to come up with routines that you could realistically commit to.
 - c. Is there something you could do with your friends, with your colleagues or with some other dedicated people to help you stay on track?

Part 3) Personal learning points

Think about the course as a wholeness. All the lectures, readings, discussions, and other parts of the course. Reflect on what you have personally learned through this process. Remember also that your personal learning points can be something that was not said during the lectures, but something you came up with yourself, or something that came up when you discussed the course topics with your friend.

- 1) What new things did you learn about motivation, happiness, meaning, our current era, other topics, and human nature in general?
- 2) What new things did you learn that are especially relevant for your own life?
- 3) Of the six lectures, which lecture was the most interesting from your point of view? Why?
- 4) Critique: What claims of the lecturer or theories presented were the least convincing from your point of view? What were the things where you had a different opinion as compared to what was presented in the course?
- 5) How will you personally be a different person in the future because of this course?

Each question should be answered with 1-4 paragraphs of text. One paragraph is approximately 70-120 words.

Technical instructions

The deadline for returning the final essay is Friday 1st of March.

Language: You can write your essay in English, Finnish or Swedish, according to your preferences.

Please return the final essay through MyCourses as one document.

- Return preferably in pdf-format
- Use a basic font, font size 12, and line spacing of 1.5.
- Name the file: SURNAME_FINAL ESSAY.pdf
- Deadline for returning the final essay is 1.3.
 - Final essay will be evaluated on a scale from 0-40.
 - Final essay returned within 1 week after the deadline will be evaluated on a scale from 0-20 points
 - Final essay returned more than 1 week after the deadline will be evaluated on a scale from 0-10 points.
 - No returns will be accepted 2 weeks after the deadline.
 - Exemptions can be granted for important reasons.

Grading criteria

- The student demonstrates that she/he can apply the key theories and concepts of the course to the reflections about her/his own life
- The student demonstrates his/her ability to think critically, reflectively, and independently. The student's observations and remarks are insightful, justified, and to the point.
- The student is able to come up with one's own thoughts and points of views on the topic. And to provide reasons and justifications for these points of views.
- The student demonstrates his/her capability to understand "the big picture" and limit the analysis to the most essential points.
- The answers are well-written: The structure is consistent and compact. The writing is fluent and readable.

NOTE: Grading will be solely based on parts 1 & 3. Part 2 has to be done and returned, but it will not be graded (how could I grade your future life plans?). So part 2 is for your personal benefit and can be as short or long as you deem best for yourself.