

Organisation & Identity (BUS302) 2023-24

The Photo Essay Advice Document

- Please read the whole document carefully alongside the PHOTO ESSAY OVERVIEW and MODULE OUTLINE documents.
- This is your extended guide to the photo essay task and your approach to it.
- If you have read the whole document carefully and any points are still unclear, please speak to the module organiser.

The Assessment

The module is assessed through a single coursework 'photo' essay (100%).

Deadline

The deadline is set as **Friday 3rd January 2024, 16:00**

The coursework submission dropbox will be open from Monday 16th December, though the January deadline is intended to allow you to make full use of the study time that will be available to you after term has finished.

Word Limit

The word limit is **2,750 words** excluding bibliography. This is a strict limit with no additional percentage allowance. You should be looking to make the most of the full word count available to you to develop your points properly.

*Please make sure you are familiar with the following from the departmental undergraduate handbook: Late submission policy - Plagiarism policy
- Extenuating Circumstance and Extensions guidelines*

THE PHOTO ESSAY TASK

The photo essay will serve as a record of your learning on the module. As specified in the Module Outline, the task will provide an opportunity for you to show how one or other theories or perspectives on the module (usually associated with a particular main text) has allowed you to see some aspect of your own everyday lived experience in a different way than you did before. It also invites you to share your reflections on how the insights you have gained from this application can provide you with a richer understanding of human relations at work, and of the lived experience of work, management and organisation.

The essay will be illustrated using three interrelated photographs (that you will have taken, or that have been taken of you) that can help you unpack (1) different aspects of the example that you have chosen to focus on; and (2) different elements of the theory or approach you will be applying to that example.

What is being looked for is therefore not only a demonstration of the quality of your understanding of your chosen module theory or approach (supported by close scholarly textual engagement), but also your ability to *apply* that theory; and to show how this application has led to a new perspective on some aspect of your everyday life. It is also an opportunity for you to relate these reflections to the wider relations of management, organisation and society in which we our lives are situated and in which we are participants.

The text of the essay should include the following three things, ideally in this order and in their separate sections:

- 1) An introduction to and *explanation* of the key theory or approach from the module that you wish to focus on in your essay, briefly situated within the context of the wider module and supported by close scholarly textual engagement.
- 2) The *application* of your chosen theory or approach to some aspect of your everyday lived experience, as illustrated by your three interrelated photographs. This application should be based on an account of coming to see this aspect of your everyday

lived experience, as illustrated by your three interrelated photographs. This application
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experience differently from the way you may have seen it before as a result of the application of your chosen theoretical perspective.

3) A reflection back on the application you have made in the previous section, where you will consider the possible value of the insights you have gained through this application for developing richer understandings of human relations at work, and the lived experience of work, management and organisation.

The aspect of your lived experience on which you have chosen to focus may be some aspect of your personal or family life, or it could derive from your participation in roles in education, work experience, paid employment, leisure time, sport, community groups – or indeed any other aspect of your daily life.

The application you make will ideally arise naturally during the term as you start to get practice week-to-week applying the concepts to aspects of your everyday life. The ideal in these regards would be less of you having chosen an idea, and instead more of a sense of *the idea having chosen you* – with regard to such a selection having arisen in a quite organic way at some point in the term rather than having to sit down and force such a choice. In any case, hopefully you will already have lots of these kinds of associations that you will record in the learning diary that you are recommended to keep week-to-week (see the GUIDE TO MODULE PARTICIPATION document on QMplus).

YOU ARE STRONGLY CAUTIONED AGAINST USING OFF-MODULE RESOURCES

Please note this advice well. You are being tested not only on your ability to write about module-related themes, but also of the quality of your engagement with module-specific texts and other resources. You will have *plenty* to work with in the key readings and topic-based extended reading lists, as detailed in the module outline, so please follow this advice well and stick to these!

The only exception to this advice is if you wish to reference sources which would support the particular example that you have chosen to focus on, and would thereby be of a strictly

supplementary nature. In other words, such supplementary sources should not be a substitute for your engagement with core, module-specific resources, texts, perspectives and ideas.

You will therefore be assessed on four things:

(1) Your ability to *explain* your chosen theory or approach through careful engagement with appropriate supporting material, and to briefly situate this within the wider module.

(2) Your ability to *apply* your chosen theory / idea to a specific example from personal experience, drawing out this application in proper detail, as an account of your own learning experience of coming to see something in your own life differently from the way you saw it before.

(3) Your ability to reflect on the significance of the insights gained from that application – and the experience of learning that the development of these insights has involved – for arriving at richer understandings of human relations at work, and the lived experience of work, management and organisation.

(4) Adhering to the guidelines for *presentation, formatting and referencing* are also important – as detailed in the next section; particularly double line spacing and Times New Roman font.

Part of the challenge of this task is the development of an *applied* relationship to module theories and ideas. In order to develop this approach, it will not only be important to achieve a thorough engagement with key module texts and ideas, week-to-week, through careful private study and seminar participation, but also to practice this applied relationship to module ideas through application to aspects of your everyday experience (see the MODULE OUTLINE for the recommended week-to-week tasks in these regards).

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Essay Formatting

The essay should have a cover page with title and other details, and be formatted as follows:

- Times font size 12
- **Double line spacing**,
- Justified margins
- Numbered pages
- Paragraph line breaks

It is important that you create a **title for your photo essay** which should take this form:

Your title here: A Photo Essay

The whole essay should be properly referenced in the Harvard style with a full bibliography. As with all academic work, if you are referring to a part of a text rather than the text as a whole, or quoting a passage of text, specific page numbers should be given (e.g. Curtis, 2023: 19-20).

Your three photographs should be pasted into the Word document at appropriate places in the essay narrative (i.e. in the applied section) and given numbered titles that you can refer to in the body of your essay (e.g. Image One: <your image title here>).

There is no need for an essay coversheet, but it would be good to include your name and student number in the header or footer.

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PHOTO SHARING EXERCISE

As mentioned in module outline, to help you in your preparation for the task, the first seminar after reading week (week 8) will be dedicated to a photo sharing session. In the session you will be invited to share an image that you have taken during the first half of term, that will be reflective of a particular theoretical application that you have made (unassessed; further more detailed advice to follow).

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

In the second half of term, everybody will have the chance to have one round of formal written feedback on their photo essay idea (also unassessed).

The idea should be laid out using the below template with no more than 2-3 sentences under each numbered heading.

The completed outline should be sent to me as an attachment with the heading 'PHOTO ESSAY OUTLINE' with a covering email message to my usual email address r.curtis@qmul.ac.uk. Feedback will not be provided on any other types of submissions. Please also don't send me any photographs.

You should send your completed form to me by end of SUNDAY 8TH DECEMBER at the latest. I will endeavour to get back to your email within a week but it may take longer depending on the volume of submissions I receive. I will work through the outlines in the order that they are received. Please give some proper thought to the idea before you send me your outline as you will only get one round of written feedback. Once you have your written feedback, if necessary this can then be followed up with a one-to-one meeting in my office hours if timings work out.

PHOTO ESSAY FEEDBACK REQUEST FORM

NAME:

STUDENT NUMBER:

1) PROPOSED TITLE: Your title here: A Photo Essay

<This should be concise and reflect your overall themes of interest >

2) KEY MODULE IDEA / THEORY / READING:

<The particular key reading on which you have chosen to focus, and the specific concepts within it that will be most important for the interpretations that you will be developing in your application (as below)>

3) ASPECT OF YOUR LIVED EXPERIENCE:

<The aspect of your everyday lived experience that will be the focus of your photo essay, an indication of the change in perspective on which you will be focussing, and the concepts from your chosen key reading that will be most important for developing these insights (as above)>

4) CONNECTION TO WORK, MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION:

<Some indication of the value you have found in the insights you have gained from the above application for developing richer understandings of human relations at work, and the lived experience of work, management and organization, including an indication of the specific further readings that might help you to develop these connections>

5) KEY REFERENCES (3-5 maximum):

<Try and include in these: (i) one set seminar reading, (ii) appropriate sections of the Knights & Willmott module companion text and, if possible, (iii) an indication of 2-3 further readings that may help you develop the specific themes that will be of interest.>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. When should I be looking to start working on my photo essay?

A. My suggestion is that in the first half of term you don't worry too much about the photo essay itself but put your focus on (1) doing the private study necessary to participate fully in the weekly seminar discussions; as well as (2) getting practice applying the ideas to aspects of your own day-to-day life experience; while (3) keeping a 'learning diary' to note down these thoughts and associations as they arise through the term. You are also encouraged (4) to get some practice taking photographs to reflect these experiences. As indicated above, and you will have the opportunity to share one of these in the Week 8 seminar after reading week (more details to follow).

Q. What is the best way to choose a theme for my photo essay?

A. As indicated above, my strong suggestion is to allow your idea for the photo essay to arise out of your week-to-week engagement with module ideas, and your experiments with applying the ideas to aspects of your day-to-day life experience. This should help you to arrive at a focus for your photo essay that arises organically through the module, rather than trying to choose one in abstraction, with the latter approach likely to result in writing that is lacking the kind of rich insights and development that have arisen from reflections on your own learning experiences through the term

Q. What does it mean 'to show how one or other idea may have helped you to see something differently from the way you saw it before'?

A. Think of this a bit like the experience of going to the cinema and seeing a thought-provoking film, and the way the world can look different when you leave the cinema from when you went in, even though it is the same street you walked down on the way there. On this module we appreciate how ideas, theories and academic texts can change our ways of seeing and being-in-the-world, in a similar way to the way a good film, book, travel experience or even conversation can. This is one of the reasons why the reading of novels and the watching of quality films are encouraged within the module. I am hoping that you will be able to share one such transformative experience that has taken place for you during the term, as a focus for your photo essay.

Q. What do we mean by 'thinking sociologically' and why is this important on the module?

A. By 'thinking sociologically' (esp. wk 5 & 6) we mean developing an appreciation of how problems or experiences of a 'personal' nature are always also 'social' experiences, to the extent that we are always making sense of ourselves and our experiences through interactions with others, and through aspects of language and meaning that are particular to the cultures or society of which we are a part. In accordance with such sociological thinking, we would also not expect to be able to fully understand such social relations (and the ways in which they are reproduced or transformed) without understanding how they are enacted through the lived experiences of its participants.

As we will be exploring through the first half of term, such sociological perspectives are distinct from individualistic forms of thought (such as we will consider in behaviourism), which tend to treat the individual and their behaviour in an abstracted, isolated way. As we explore within the module, relational psychologies such as symbolic interactionism go some way to helping us to think in more relational terms, though which tend to be restricted in their analyses to bounded, localised groups, rather than developing an understanding of these interactions as forms of participation in wider social formations that have their own histories (though as we explore in week 4, Blumer starts to develop a sociological appreciation of these kinds through the notion of 'joint action'). Such psychological approaches also have a tendency to neglect the kinds of questions of power and inequality that we will also be developing through the term (see below for more on this) (esp. weeks 6 and 10).

Q. What do you mean by reflexivity and is this important in the photo essay task?

A. By reflexivity we mean our ability to take ourselves and our experiences as the objects of our own work of reflection (see esp wks. 4, 5). This is a very important element of the coursework task, and your ability to think, write and apply module ideas reflexively will be something that I will be keen to see and to reward in your photo essays. In approaching the photo essay task, you might ask yourself questions like: 'Where am I in this scenario?'; 'What is it that makes this question or problem of *personal* relevance to me?'; 'What have been the

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emotional and *embodied* dimensions of this experience for me?'. Such reflexive considerations might also include reflections on your learning experiences while participating in the module, including your engagement with the photo essay task. I hope you may also develop reflections on this theme of reflexivity through your engagement with specific relevant module resources (esp. weeks 4 and 9).

Q. In what sense is this module a *critical* module, and in which ways should we be showing signs of 'thinking critically' in our photo essays?

A. In academic work, in describing something as critical, we may simply be referring to the evaluation of sources and the interrogation of arguments for the particular framing assumptions they may make. In this regard, I will indeed be looking for signs of such critical evaluation of the texts and ideas you will be working with rather than just a straightforward application or regurgitation – including testing the ideas that you are working with through application to your chosen example. To the extent that you might identify particular limitations of the sources and perspectives you are working with, you might also consider how one or other of the further readings might help to overcome such limitations to some extent.

Within sociological traditions of inquiry however, thinking critically can also mean taking into account of questions of *power and inequality* – including the ways in which particular framings of management and organisation may neglect the more political and *contested* aspects of organisational life. Through these notions of power and inequality we will explore the limitations of unitaristic perspectives (week 6) that would reduce these aspects of organisational life to merely technical problems of optimisation and efficiency, to consider specifically who might be benefit from particular organisational arrangements, outcomes and priorities, and who may not; such as considering the differencing perspectives and priorities of the employer and employee; or those between different individuals, groups or classes of employees (week 6; see also week 10).

Q. Can I use the first-person tense in my writing?

A. Yes, contrary to usual academic convention where the third person is routinely expected, given that you will be expected to explore dimensions of your own lived experience, and in

A. Yes, contrary to usual academic convention where the third person is routinely expected, you'll be expected to explore dimensions of your own lived experience, and in reflexive ways (as described above), the first-person tense is welcomed and probably essential to a proper engagement with the task. That said, the photo essay is still an academic essay, and broadly speaking all other normal academic habits and formalities of referencing etc. should still be observed (see formatting guidelines, above).

Q. Are you interested to hear about my opinions in the photo essay?

A. While you will certainly be developing a perspective within your photo essay which I hope will be reflective of certain personal viewpoints and preoccupations, as in your wider academic work, statements of opinion or 'soapbox' ranting are not substitutes for persuading the reader through careful scholarly engagement (with key module texts and concepts and their careful and focussed application); so please try and avoid deviations into polemical rambling or editorialising, which are likely to detract from the specific task at hand.

Q. Would you like to see a wide range of different ideas and theories in my photo essay?

A. The coursework task is to show how **one** particular theory/approach/reading has enabled you to see something in your own life differently from the way you saw it before. In responding to the task it is therefore important that you find a clear point of focus for your essay, to isolate one particular theory and reading that has been important for you, and to introduce, explain and apply it in the ways described above. As with many things in life, breadth is often at the expense of depth, and I would suggest that the best photo essays are ones which achieve a clarity of focus and a careful selectivity in use of materials, to allow you to unpack, explain and apply the idea in proper depth and detail rather than skimming the surface of many different elements.

It may also of course be that you bring in related further readings (and the ideas that they offer) in a secondary role, particularly in the discussion section towards the end of your essay. This can help you reflect back on your original application and develop and expand upon your original point of focus. None of this should be at the expense of a clear point of focus on the particular theoretical perspective on which you originally focused, and the example to which it will be applied, and it would be good to see explicit connections in these regards.

Q. In choosing a 'module theory or perspective' for the photo essay, do you mean one of the weekly topics?

The idea you choose could be a particular theory, concept or theme. This is usually best achieved through a focus on a particular set reading within a particular topic week. That said, please bear in mind that your ability to write a good photo essay on any particular topic will also be a product of your feel for the module as a whole and the way its different elements relate and build on one another, rather than treating each topic as strictly self-contained. It is usually very clear from the ways in which the photo essays are written as to whether this more holistic engagement with the module and its topics has taken place during the term. This is one of the main reasons why I am stressing the importance of consistent engagement and participation through the different weeks of term.

Q. Can I write my photo essay by comparing and contrasting two different ideas from the module?

A. This is one possible approach, though it can be difficult to do well and it can risk spreading yourself too thinly. If you do decide to follow this approach please make sure that you use the applied aspect of your photo essay to compare and contrast the ways in which the same example might be seen differently according to the two different perspectives, rather than applying different ideas to different examples. This will help you to demonstrate the contrast between these different perspectives, and thereby to evaluate their relative strengths and weaknesses through the application that you make. You could also use the discussion section to push your essay in a slightly different direction, having maintained a clear focus earlier on. I would suggest that you let me (or your seminar leader) know if you have particular ideas in this regard to make sure you're on the right lines.

Q. Will my photo essay be primarily assessed on the applied section or the theoretical material?

A. The important thing with the photo essay task is to take up the applied task in a way that brings the theoretical material to bear on a particular aspect of your own life experience. In this regard, both aspects are equally important. I would like to stress here that your ability to make an effective application will be dependent upon *the quality of your scholarship and*

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close reading of the texts and ideas you have chosen to focus on and which we will be working with week-by-week. It's the quality of your engagement in these regards that I will be looking for. As per the advice above, this is an approach best developed through consistent participation in the week-to-week module programme.

Q. Am I expected to share intimate personal details?

A. It is in the nature of the task that I would also expect all photo essays to involve some reflection on aspects of personal experience, including the personal significance of example you have your chosen to focus on. It would therefore be good to see clear signs of reflexive thinking and awareness (see the Q&A point on 'reflexivity', above). That said, as I will be emphasising in our weekly seminar discussions, it is also important that you only share those things that you feel comfortable in so doing. In addition to this, through the learning we will be doing on the module, I hope that you may also have begun to consider the limitations of simple binary separations between aspects of the 'personal' and the 'social' – or the 'in here' and 'out there' – and you might like to demonstrate some signs of this learning in your writing and approach (see also the Q&A point on 'thinking sociologically', above).

Q. Does this task involve storytelling?

A. In some ways a good photo essay will share some of the characteristics of good storytelling: being able to use descriptive language to evoke aspects of lived experience so that the reader is able to relate to them and potentially to learn from them too; particularly as they are then further interpreted through module ideas. This is one of the reasons why we take an interest in novels and films in this module (see also the Lawler set reading in week 5 on the narrative work involved in experiences of identity and selfhood.) Good storytelling will not be enough alone though, and, as I have been stressing, rigorous engagement with the particular sources and module concepts you have chosen to work with will be essential for getting proper credit for your ideas.

Q. Do I have to make connections to management and organization throughout my photo essay?

A. In exploring the aspects of your everyday experience that you have chosen to focus on, it is quite possible that you will find your essay moving away from anything we might

conventionally think of as work, management and organisation. It will also be important for you to demonstrate an ability to learn from the insights you have gained from these reflections on personal experience, however, and to draw connections with the sorts of lived experiences that we can expect in relations in work, management and organisation. If these connections aren't clear from the examples you have drawn on earlier in your essay, it is important that you use the essay's discussion section to make these connections clear, including by drawing on appropriate further module resources. I will be helping you to make these connections to relations at work through the weeks of the module. The second half of term will be focussed on developments and applications of the perspectives that were introduced in the first half of term. The set seminar readings in the second half of term will all be of an applied, case study nature, which should also help you to make these connections.

Q. Is it important to be consistent through the different sections of my essay?

A. It is very important that you establish a clear theme and point of focus at the outset of your photo essay and to follow a clear line through the explanatory, applied and discussion sections of your essay. Achieving and sustaining this clear focus will be an important and integral part of the task.

Q. Is it important for my photo essay to have an Introduction and Conclusion?

A. Yes, these are very important, and can really help to bring together the different elements of the essay into a coherent whole for the reader to understand what its main contributions and insights will be. The Introduction comes before your Explanation section, at the very start of the essay should provide a clear and concise overview of the essay, its chosen focus and its main sections and elements. I am recommending this is not longer than 4-5 sentences, or 150 words. The Conclusion should provide a clear and concise review of the essay and its main contributions and insights. Again, I would suggest that this should be no longer than 4-5 sentences, or 150 words. My strong advice would be to avoid waffly, rambling introductions and conclusions, which often add little of value to your essay and use up valuable word count. I would also suggest avoiding introducing points in your Conclusion which haven't already been engaged with in the main body of your essay. If the points are

worth making then I would suggest they should be worth making the space in the main body of your essay to explain and develop them properly.

Q. Can you please give me some more advice on the structuring of my photo essay, what is looked for in each section, and the recommended wordcount distribution?

The PHOTO ESSAY OVERVIEW document has been developed to provide you with exactly this advice, as a guide to structuring your essay and its contents, and as to exactly what will be looked for in the marking of your work (see QMplus).

Q. What is the role of the further readings?

A. The further readings are there to enable to build upon and develop your reading beyond the weekly set seminar readings. Once you start to develop a specific area of interest within the module, I recommend having a skim through all the further readings in that area and getting a feel for which might be most interesting or relevant for the particular perspectives and ideas you are developing. It is likely to be one of the set seminar readings that will provide the main focus for your photo essay.

Please be careful if you decide to take one of the further readings as your primary reference point for your essay without close reference to the set seminar reading for that week's topic, as this can lead to deviation from our core module interests (please check with me or your module leader if unsure, or this should also come out in your photo essay written feedback).

Q. What is the role of the Knights & Willmott text?

A. As stated in the module outline, the Knights & Willmott (1999) *Management Lives* text is designated as a *companion* text rather than a textbook. This is to make clear that this is not a compendium of all the things you might need to study in the module, and certainly not a substitute for the key readings we will be working with together in your weekly seminars. I do strongly recommend *Management Lives* as a support to your week-to-week learning,

however, and which students usually find very helpful for orienting themselves within the module and in providing support to the main lecture materials.

As the module goes on, the 'four concepts' that Knights & Willmott explore in the book will become increasingly important. You will also the book provides our set seminar readings for weeks 3 and 8. I also recommend particular chapters from the text in the topic-by-topic further reading lists.

Q. What is the role of Knights & Willmott's 'four concepts' model?

A. The 'four concepts' model is not a theory as such, but more of a learning aid, and to make sure that we understand these different elements in their interrelations rather than separately: so if you find yourself focussed on themes of identity you don't forget to explore them *in their interrelation with* experiences of insecurity; or if you find yourself focussed on this identity-insecurity relation, that it can provide a helpful reminder that you should be considering the significance of its interrelation with themes of power and inequality, and vice versa. Please be assured I will talk explicitly about this in lectures in the second half of term.

Q. Should I draw on off-module resources?

A. The short and clear answer to this is a firm '**No**'. You will have seen in the module outline that we have a wide range of carefully selected reading material for you to draw on and there is no need for you to go 'off module'. That said, you may feel it important to bring in one or more sources in a supplementary role that relate to the the particular example you will develop in your photo essay, but **do not** let it be a substitute for engagement with module specific resources.

I emphasise this as the rare times that people fail the module is usually where they have either ignored a key feature of the task, or where they have failed to engage with the module-specific texts and other resources. You are assessed in this task not only on your ability to engage with key module themes, but also for the quality of your engagement with the module-specific readings and the other resources that we will be working with week-to-week. One more time... ***Stick to module-specific readings!***

Q. Can I draw on one of the four module novels in my photo essay?

A. Yes indeed – many students in previous years have developed an interest in one or more of the four novels, and some decide to draw upon sections of one of the novels to help illustrate and bring out aspects of the personal experience they have chosen to focus on in their photo essays. As with all your photo essays, however, make sure you don't neglect your engagement with the theoretical material from the module, or the personal, reflexive dimensions of the task, so you are not only talking about the experiences of particular characters and scenes in the novels, but also your own relationship to them and their significance in your own everyday life.

Q. How many references do you want to see in the photo essay bibliography?

A. My advice on this module is to go for quality of engagement over quantity: better to have read and engaged 2-3 sources really thoroughly, rather than 8-12 sources that you have just skimmed and from which you are extracting fragmented elements. As indicated above, I would suggest all photo essays should probably feature one of the key readings as a reference point (they are key readings for a reason) and would likely also make reference to the Knights & Willmott companion text, as a supplement to the other academic source material.

Q. Can we please have some examples of some good past 'photo essays'?

A. This is an understandable request; however I make a principled point of not sharing past student work on this module as it is an important part of the coursework task that it should be an original and personally-specific piece of work. If past student work were shared then there would be a strong likelihood that the work would be imitated in various ways, and this would clearly work against what is most distinctive and challenging about the task. In place of such sample essays, you are instead provided with extensive advice on your approach to the task. You will also be given many different opportunities to get feedback on your ideas and other support throughout the term (including through the Photo Sharing Exercise and Feedback Process, described above).

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Q. Will you read my draft essay please?

A. In a word, no! There are over 200 students registered on the module, so there is no way I could fit in reading everyone's draft. It would also not be fair to give such feedback to some students and not others. Everyone does have the opportunity before the end of term to gain formal written feedback on their essay plan, however, as detailed above.

Q. I find the module ideas and readings hard – is this just me?

A. This is a final year module, which engages themes of a reflective and at times philosophical nature. It also involves styles of teaching and learning that may be different from the other modules you have taken so far. It is therefore well understood that you may find aspects of the module challenging, and that some of the language may be unfamiliar, and extensive support will be available to you, both in seminars, but also one to one support in my office hours. It is clear though that some dedicated application and consistent private study will be required from all students to be able progress well within the module.

As detailed in the GUIDE TO MODULE PARTICIPATION, I will be encouraging students to get practice in a slower and more patient style of reading than you may have been used to on other modules. Through consistent engagement and private study you will find that your reading of the texts will get easier, however, as you get week-to-week practice with reading and discussing the texts together in your seminar group. You are therefore encouraged to think of the seminars as a kind of study group where we not only discuss the set question but also get support with the specific things we may be finding difficult week-to-week.

The more specific you can be on these points of difficulty the more able we will be able to work on these together, such as particular sections of the texts or particular concepts. Often the thing that one person finds difficult is shared by others and so we can help each other by sharing these in our weekly session. You can also be reassured that the classes throughout the term are not formally assessed in any way, and so bringing up such difficulties will not count against your final module grade in any way.

In sum, if you put in the private study time, participate in seminars and make use of the support that is available to you, things will get easier for sure! One-to-one support is also

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available in my office hours each week for those who feel like they may need it, so if you are feeling like you are having specific difficulties, please get in touch with me by email to make an appointment (r.curtis@qmul.ac.uk).

Q. I still haven't come up with an idea for my photo essay – what should I do?

A. If we are getting late in the term and you haven't yet found that one more of the ideas has connected for you in the ways in which I have been describing, this may well be because you need to go back to the readings and develop a more thorough engagement with the particular ideas that they contain. Once you have a proper engagement with the texts and their specific concepts then you will be in a better position to start to see how they may be *applied* to aspects of your everyday life. Putting in the study time and creating calm spaces for study, thought and reflection will be important to your development of this approach. As above, if you have been doing these things and still having difficulty, please let me know and I will be happy to make time to see you in my office hours.

Q. Do the photographs have to be taken by me?

A. The photographs should either be taken by you or should be of you. This is an important part of the task and it is not appropriate to just lift photographs from the internet or other such sources.

Q. Can the three photos be of three different things?

A. The three photos are expected to help you draw out different aspects of the same example and hopefully, through the applications, to draw out different aspects of the particular theoretical approach you have chosen to work with. As with the theoretical material, so with the application it is much better to find a clear point of focus and expand on it in proper detail than to try to move across multiple examples and thereby spread yourself very thinly. In sum, use the three photos to help unpack different aspects of a single example rather than introducing multiple different examples. Please do heed this advice well as it can make a big difference to the quality and depth of your engagements.

Q. Will we be marked on the quality of the photographs?

A. No, this is not a photography competition – it's the use you make of the photographs as illustrations of your applications of key concepts that that will be important here. That said, it should be clear how they are helping you to illustrate the example you have chosen to talk about (see previous point) and it will be expected that you please give each of the three photographs a number and title so you can refer to them in the text (e.g. Image One: <Image title here>).

Q. Where should I put the three photographs?

A. They should be cut-and-pasted into your essay Word document at the relevant points in your essay where you wish to refer to them, usually in the middle applied section of your essay.

Q. Can I do something more creative with the images?

A. Some students with an art or photographic background have in the past done some more creative things with the three images. If you are thinking of doing something like this I recommend coming to talk to me or your seminar leader about it first to make sure you're on the right lines.

Q. Is the title I choose important?

A. The title is important, and should reflect the content and themes of your essay. You may find the process of finding a title and adapting it helpful as part of developing a clear focus as you draft and redraft your essay.

Q. Is the 2,750 word limit a strict one?

A. Yes, please do not write more than this amount or you may be penalised. You can of course write less than the lower end of the range but I recommend you use the full word count available so that you have sufficient content and development of your ideas. This word limit excludes your bibliography / reference list.

Q. Do I need to keep to the recommended three-section structure for the essay?

A. The three-section structure is recommended as it should help to make sure you cover the specific things the things that I will be looking for in your essay, as laid out in the PHOTO ESSAY OVERVIEW document. You are free to shape your essay in a different way, but my advice would be to make sure this doesn't end up with key elements of the task being neglected. Again, if you have specific ideas in this regard you might like to come and talk them through with me or your seminar leader first.

Q. How should I distribute the wordcount within my essay?

A. Please see the guidance offered in the PHOTO ESSAY OVERVIEW document, as referred to above (on QMplus).

Q. Is it a good idea to draft and redraft my photo essay?

A. Yes – this is a very good idea. You might, for example, aim to have a draft before Christmas and then redraft after. It can often be good to have a longer first draft and then edit down. This can help you to make the most of the limited word count that is available to you. Careful proof reading is also highly recommended. I would suggest such drafting and proof reading can add 10-15% to your overall mark by helping to refine your work in key areas and avoid silly mistakes. Please make sure you also adhere to the formatting instructions, which will make your essay easier to read and which can help improve the focus of your marker when they happen to be marking a large volume of your essays (!).

Q. How do I know what is expected for me to achieve particular marks?

A. There is an indicative mark scheme by degree class in the MODULE OUTLINE. This should be cross-referenced with the overview of sections in the PHOTO ESSAY OVERVIEW document.

Further advice based on conversations with students in previous years:

- Take the time to explain properly the most important key terms and ideas in your essay. For example, it might be that you introduce the idea, then in a second sentence you explain it in the a different way ('By this we mean that...'). If the concept is really

explain it in the a different way ('By this we mean that...'). If the concept is really

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important to your essay you might also give a brief example to illustrate this, ideally drawn from your key source. This way it should be really clear that you understand the idea and should set you up well for your subsequent applications. Avoid drawing on ideas in your applications without having explained them properly beforehand.

- I will be looking for a close, scholarly reading of the key texts you are working with, including the ability to draw selectively on brief quotations to support your reading of them where appropriate, though such quotations should not be a substitute for explanation in your own words (and with proper Harvard in-text referencing with page numbers, as usual).
- If you are talking about a particular experience that you have had – including with regard to the learning experiences you might have had in relation to that example – try to share some of the detail of the lived experience in its embodied and emotional dimensions. This will really help the reader to understand why an engagement with such lived experience can be so valuable for understanding the richness of human relations and lived experience in organisational life, and a generally neglected in more abstract 'textbook' approaches (see weeks 2, 8 and 9 especially).
- Identity: try to move beyond simplistic notions of identity as some kind of inner essence or authentic 'inner self' to the more fluid, dynamic, relational, contextual and sociological ways of understanding that we will be developing together, including with regard to the experiences of insecurity and 'othering' we will be exploring (see esp. weeks 4, 5, 9, 10, 11).
- Self and authenticity: as above, the commonplace notion that we have some kind of real and unchanging 'inner self' is a notion that we will subject to extended critical scrutiny on the module. This is something we will also address directly when we consider the *performative* dimensions of selfhood in week 11 (see also the Lawler week 5 set reading on narrative, and week 5 further readings).
- Motivation theory: though we will consider questions of motivation along the way, we do not work with mainstream motivation theory as such on this module – in fact the Sievers further reading (weeks 4, 8) offers a *critique of* motivation theory, which he sees as having become a kind of *surrogate* for the kind of dimensions of meaning with which we will be engaged on the module.

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- Importance of avoiding a purely 'managerialist' perspective: as with my response to the above question on 'being critical', in developing sociological perspectives on organisational life, you will be encouraged to consider how particular organisational outcomes or arrangements may look different depending on whose perspective we take, including with regard to the contrasting interests and experiences of different constituencies and 'stakeholders' in organisational life (see week 6 and 10 especially on relations of power in work and employment). We are interested in the lived experience of people in work, management and organisation – and perhaps also of those like us who are studying them – not in claiming some kind of abstract objective viewpoint of 'the firm' or 'management' as such, though the role of such moments of abstraction within organisational life may also be important (see esp. Watson, *In Search of Management*).
- Let me say this one more time in case it has been missed – **BEHAVIOURISM IS NOT A SUFFICIENT OR APPROPRIATE FOCUS ALONE**. We use behaviourism as an example of a 'behavioural' or 'management science' perspective, and a jumping-off point for the module to contrast it with perspectives that engage with the symbolic, the relational and aspects of lived experience, all of which behaviourist approaches neglect in different ways.
- Also **STICK TO MODULE-SPECIFIC RESOURCES!**

Try and enjoy the task – as an opportunity to share your learning on the module and the reflections on aspects of your own lived experience that you have developed – while not forgetting that academic, scholarly rigour and source engagement is definitely also required.

We shall look forward to reading your photo essays in the new year!