

## Honours thesis writing workshop

### ***Writing a good thesis: structure, coherence, and the quest for the “Perfect introduction”***

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#### Introduction: Definition of a good thesis?

- Frequently heard/read examiners’ positive comments
  - ‘Clearly/lucidly/forcefully/cogently argued’
  - ‘Interesting/engaging/illuminating/made me rethink...’
  - ‘Convincing argument/thesis’
  - ‘Clear progression of ideas’
  - ‘sustained by evidence throughout/clearly situated in existing work/convincing use of sources
  - ‘Beautifully presented/faultlessly written/consistent in style and referencing’
- Frequently heard/read examiners’ negative comments
  - ‘thesis didn’t live up to introduction’
  - ‘student didn’t do what the introduction promised’
  - ‘argument unclear/argument not sustained throughout/I just didn’t know where they were going’
  - ‘repetitive/unstructured/loosely structured/“a dog’s breakfast”
  - ‘contribution to the field unclear’/ ‘position in existing scholarship not explored’
  - ‘limited use of sources/lacking evidence’
  - ‘riddled with inconsistencies/grammatical errors/spelling mistakes/badly edited/reader distracted by annoying mistakes’
- Comments on these?

#### **So where do we start? At the introduction!**

What should an introduction do? (whiteboard discussion)

#### **Other important points:**

**Dealing with a large body of text**

**Highlighting argument**

**Coherence (REAL, not pretend!)**

**Editing – some practical suggestions**

**Additional comments?**

