Coursework essay topic

Write an essay in response to the following question. Observe the instructions detailed below.

“What is the significance for financial economics of the concept of arbitrage?”

To ensure that there are no last minute hitches, please do not leave it until the last minute.  Under School of Social Sciences rules an extension of one week only can be given via the extenuating circumstances procedure, and only if supported by compelling documentary evidence.  If you attempt to upload your essay one second after the deadline the computer will “say no”.  Anyone failing to submit may be given the opportunity to resit in the summer, delaying their graduation.  If there are good reasons for failing to submit, the extenuating circumstances procedure should be invoked.  As this module is now a core module for almost all students taking it, it cannot be compensated – so it must be passed, either on first sitting, or on resit.  No second resit opportunities are permitted.

Coursework essay instructions

In the past, essays have been given a mark which was the aggregate of marks obtained for the ten aspects of the essay detailed below.  This is not the case now.  Each essay will receive a single mark reflecting its quality – but the ten aspects will all be taken into consideration and failure to observe the instructions on any aspect will led to loss of marks.  Failure to fulfil any aspect of the requirement for a category may result in a loss of marks directly, but it will also very likely result in the loss of further marks elsewhere.  For example, if your English is poor, you are likely to lose marks for poor English, but you will inevitably lose further marks to the extent that it obscures your meaning.

Presentation

1          Formatting

2          Diagrams

3          Introduction and conclusion

4          Bibliography and references

5          Standard of English

Content

6          Correct (or defensible) answer

7          Clear logic

8          Material is well integrated

9          Relevance

10        Critical appraisal

1.         Formatting

The essay must be word-processed.  Number the pages.  On the first page write your name and programme, and the date, the text of the question, an abstract of not more than 100 words, and a word-count, which should include everything except the bibliography.  Start the text on the second page.  Do not exceed 2000 words.  Do not use foot- or end-notes: if it’s relevant, include it in the text, if not, exclude it. Divide up your essay clearly into sections with titles and numbers.

2.         Diagrams

If you wish to use one or more diagrams, make them large – at least a half-page – bold, and clear.  Make sure that the labelling is clear, and that a source, if required, is clearly stated.

3.         Introduction and conclusion

Include an introduction and conclusion to wrap the whole thing up nicely. “Tell them what you're going to tell them; tell them; tell them what you told them.”  The introduction should address the question, explaining what it means and how you are going to go about answering it.  It will include a brief preview of the answer, and a statement of the structure of the essay.  The conclusion will summarise the results of your work, and state succinctly ‘the answer’ you have given to the question.   You may want to discuss the limits of that answer here. The introduction, like the conclusion, may be the last things you write, but it will often, with the abstract, be the first thing the marker reads.  More help on writing an introduction and conclusion, and structuring your essay, is available from a variety of sources, include the web.  If in doubt, consult the module leader.

4.         Bibliography and references

Please use the Harvard system of referencing, subject to one small modification explained below.  You must include a bibliography.  This will contain a list of the sources you have used, in alphabetical order of the family name of the first author of the item.  If you obtained the item from the internet, say so.  Every reference in the text should correspond to an entry in the bibliography and vice versa.  Follow this pattern for entries in your bibliography:

a. For an article

Andy Denis (2002) “Collective and individual rationality: Maynard Keynes’s methodological standpoint and policy prescription”, Research in Political Economy 20, December, 187-215.

b. For a book

Robert Skidelsky (1975) Oswald Mosley London: Macmillan; ch 23

Note that for a book, I want to see the chapter(s) or section(s) you have used.  Including items just to pad out the list, when there is no evidence in the essay that you have actually used them, will be penalised.

c. For an internet resource

Daniel Defoe (1999) The fortunes and the misfortunes of the famous Moll Flanders. [online] Champaign, Illinois: Project Gutenberg. Available at: <<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/370>> [Accessed 18 November 2005].

Reference your work thoroughly throughout.  Much of the point of written assessment is to see what you've been reading and what you've got out of it.  Use the following pattern for inline references in the text of your essay:

… text text text, as suggested by Denis (2002: 210), although the contrary case has been made elsewhere (Skidelsky, 1975: 302).  More text more text more text …

Please note the page number at the end of the inline reference.  This is a modification of the Harvard system, which, in other respects, is a model you should follow religiously.  Failure to reference properly defeats much of the purpose and will be penalised heavily.  Plagiarism of any kind is cheating and will lead to disciplinary action. All coursework scripts will be submitted to Turnitin.

5.         Standard of English

We are looking for English of a publishable standard.  Incomprehensible English will inevitably lead to failure in this assessment.  In the past, the overall standard of English I have seen in coursework essays has often been very poor.  (Also every year a number of people lose marks in the exam by writing illegibly, making it difficult to work out what they are saying: it will be worth your while to invest in this skill, but it cannot be dealt with here.)  Spelling, grammar, syntax, capitalisation and punctuation when weak distract attention from – and often obscure – what you are trying to say.  Read through your coursework before submitting it and, if in doubt, get someone else – someone whose first language is English – to look through it as well.

6.         Correct – or defensible – answer

This speaks for itself.  Your answer should display evidence of wide and thoughtful reading.  In particular, you should show that you have profitably consulted the readings indicated for this module.  Simply including them in the bibliography is not enough.

7.         Clear logic

Even if you get the answer wrong, through misunderstanding some aspect of the question, you may still be able to demonstrate your knowledge of the topic and insight into the issues, by addressing the question in a clear and logical manner.  On the other hand, you may know what the answer is, but if you can’t explain that in an orderly and coherent manner you are going to lose marks heavily.

8.         Material is well integrated

You may decide that there are several sub-topics that you need to address in order to answer the question fully.  Your account should in that case make clear what the links are between the various parts of your answer, not just list them.

9.         Relevance

Keep your eye on the ball: ensure that every paragraph and every sentence – indeed every word – does some work and makes a contribution towards answering the question. Do not just assume that it's OK if vaguely related to the topic.  “Answer the question, the whole question, and nothing but the question.”

10.       Critical Appraisal

Don't just report: evaluate, appraise, criticise. Show some initiative: give your own opinions; don't be afraid to take sides.  Exercise judgement. This is not something additional.  It is not a case of reproducing material and then giving “your own opinion” at the end.  On the contrary, the whole essay is your professional opinion as a trainee economist.