# Comments for teachers

These guidelines are intended for the students. So the document is like a template which serves as inspiration and as a check list, and should be adapted to suit the course in question and the requirements in the academic regulations before being given to the students. It is not an official text, and you can remove, add or change elements at your own discretion. Comments or information which you should present to the students are marked with square brackets and red text. Remember to delete the brackets and change the text colour to black. The text was written by Anders Foss, Media Studies, AU (mail@andersfoss.dk) in December 2012, based on the specified literature and his own experiences (and those of his colleagues).

# Guide for combined exams in the course [title, year, level]

These guidelines deal with taking exams involving both a written **synopsis** and an **oral presentation** followed by a discussion – cf. the provisions of the academic regulations for exams in this course.

The exam consists of three elements in addition to participation in the teaching:

1. A written **synopsis** of [3-5] standard pages of 2,400 characters. Everything apart from the bibliography is included in the number of characters. Make sure you comply with the required length. The synopsis must be submitted by [date, time, place and other conditions].
2. An oral **presentation** which you have prepared [date, time, place and other conditions].
3. A brief **discussion** between you, the examiner and the co-examiner in continuation of the presentation. You can’t prepare for this discussion, apart from revising the syllabus.

# Written + oral = an entire exam

You should regard the written and oral parts of the exam as a single whole. *Combined*, the two parts must include everything that an independent exploratory assignment contains: [adjust the following list to fit the course] motivation, thesis statement, methods section, presentation of theory, delimitation of materials, presentation and/or analysis, discussion, conclusion, literature and appendices.

Your oral presentation should *not* simply repeat everything in the synopsis. Instead, the synopsis should provide the examiner and co-examiner with the prerequisites for understanding the oral part of your examination, in which the synopsis is used as a starting point.

This does not necessarily mean that the oral presentation must continue chronologically from where the synopsis left off, and to some extent it is up to you to decide what to present in the written and the oral parts.

# The synopsis must contain the following elements as a minimum:

* An **introduction** with a description of the issue and the project, including a good and precise **thesis statement**
* A presentation and delimitation of the **topic**/subject/material/empirical data of the analysis
* **A definition of concepts**, when necessary
* The main points of the **analysis**
* **A list of references and sources**

# One or more of these elements should be included in the oral presentation

* Further details of the analysis
* Motivation for the project
* A presentation of the conclusion
* Arguments for the conclusion
* Putting the topic, problems and results into perspective
* A discussion of methods and/or theory
* A discussion and/or elaboration of the results of the analysis.

*Regardless of how you choose to distribute the content and forms of presentation between the written and oral parts of the project, it is important that nothing significant is missing overall.*

# Project management

The written and the oral parts must make up a single coherent whole, so you need to produce a preliminary outline of the oral presentation *while* writing the synopsis. You don’t need to produce a detailed manuscript for the oral presentation while you are writing the synopsis, but you need to have a reasonable idea of what you want to use the presentation for. Otherwise you risk having too much material, too little material, or the wrong material for the oral part of the exam.

# The synopsis

The written part must be just as well-prepared, well-structured and devoid of mistakes as any other written exam assignment, and it must be written in more or less the same genre. You should therefore ask other people to provide feedback and proofread the text before submission.

If you intend to expand on particular points in the oral exam, it may be a good idea to note this in the synopsis. For instance, you could write: “This will be discussed (further) in the oral presentation”. In other words, you should point out any significant gaps in the synopsis so that the examiner and co-examiner know what to expect. Naturally, it is important to actually deliver on what you have promised.

# Preparing for the oral presentation

Your oral presentation must take [xx-xx] minutes. If you exceed the time limit, you will be stopped.

## Tips for the oral presentation

* Think about whether you would like to write a *verbatim* manuscript *in spoken language*. This manuscript guarantees
* that you observe the time limit
* that you say the right things (and nothing else)
* that you are able to continue if you get stuck
* Practise your presentation several times. If you do this thoroughly enough, you don’t need to read aloud from your manuscript, but can simply have it lying near you for support.
* If you prefer not to write a verbatim manuscript, you should at least produce an outline of what you want to say and in what order. You should in any case practise your presentation several times.
* Make a visual presentation (e.g. in PowerPoint) that supports the oral part of your presentation. This is particularly important when the topic contains tables, diagrams, images or other information requiring visual decoding.
* If you discover any serious mistakes and/or omissions in the synopsis, you should briefly correct them. However, don’t turn your presentation into a question of correcting minor errors in your written work.
* Try to predict the questions that you might be asked. Don’t intentionally omit important content from the synopsis or your presentation. But you might be able to steer the discussion in a certain direction. It is quite likely – but not guaranteed – that the first question the examiner asks is based on the last thing you said.

# Grades

You will be given one grade only. This is an overall assessment which as a general rule places equal weight on the oral and the written parts (50/50).

# Further reading

**Greve**, L. (2010). *Den gode præsentation*. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.

* Contains a good chapter on how to structure an oral presentation.

**Hedelund**, L. & **Stray Jørgensen**, P. (2004). *Mundtlig eksamen med skriftlig materiale/synopsis*. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.

* This guide is based generally on Hedelund and Stray Jørgensen’s text.

**Stray Jørgensen**, P. & **Rienecker**, L. (2012). *Den gode opgave*. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.

* This book is a must-have for all students and teachers on advanced degree programmes within the humanities. It contains *the pentagon* describing the elements which an independent study must contain. A revised fourth edition has just been published (December 2012).