



A still image from *We Will Sing* (2025) by Ann Hamilton, Salt's Mill Bradford.

Academic Essay Writing 101

Coexistent Perspectives (ADAA7000)

Module at a Glance

- The **Coexistent Perspectives** (ADAA7000) module is a 20-credit module that provides an introduction to a broad range of complex theoretical and philosophical ideas with a focus on independent academic research supporting a praxis philosophy – where underlying theoretical ideas and research inform creative practice.
- This module is primarily taught through four weekly lectures that take place at **09.30am and 1.30am on Thursdays and 9.00am and 1:30pm on Fridays**. Ideas introduced during lectures will be discussed in weekly seminars also held on Thursdays and Fridays. One-to-one tutorials are available to support academic research, writing skills and to further develop a contextual understanding of practice and theory.
- The lecture programme will include a number of different voices and provides a perspectival approach to practice and theory.

Coexistent Perspectives (ADAA7000)

Module Learning Outcomes

1. To **critically evaluate** and comment upon a range of approaches to **creative research** and practice.
2. To deploy **systematic research methods** appropriate to an organised and discipline specific inquiry.
3. To formulate and **effectively communicate a creative proposition** in an explicit and informative manner.

Coexistent Perspectives (ADAA7000)

Assignment Brief

- To complete this module, you will need to **write an academically referenced 4000-word research essay**, which should, where applicable, be supported by visual examples.
- The **research essay** will need to be submitted via Turnitin by **Wednesday 7th January 2026 (Wednesday 29th April 2026 for Part-Time students)**.
- In order to complete this module, you will also be required to **produce and present a 'research poster'**.
- The research essay and 'poster' presentation combined will form 100% of the mark for this module. The research poster should visually identify the central concerns and arguments of the research undertaken for your essay.
- The submission date for the **research poster** is by **Friday 9th January 2026 (Friday 1st May 2026 for Part-Time students)**.

Coexistent Perspectives - Lecture Series (Week 1 – Week 3)

Day/Date	Time	Staff	Weekly Themes and Lecture Titles	
		WEEK 1 - The Contemporary Condition		
Friday October 3rd	09.00 - 10.30	Rob	LECTURE 0: Coexistent Perspectives 101	
Friday October 3rd	13.30 - 15.00	Rob	LECTURE 1: The Contemporary Condition	QT1
		WEEK 2 - De/constructing the Human: Self, Identity and Other		
Thursday October 9 th	09.30 - 11.00	Shellie	LECTURE 2: Poststructuralism	QT2
Thursday October 9 th	13.30 - 15.00	Shellie	LECTURE 3: Feminism and Gender	QT2
Friday October 10 th	09.00 - 10.30	Rob	LECTURE 4: Psychoanalysis – The Self, Identity and Difference	QT2
Friday October 10 th	13.30 - 15.00	Rob	LECTURE 5: Posthumanism	QT2
		WEEK 3 - Between Space and Place: Landscapes and Liminality		
Thursday October 16 th	09.30 - 11.00	Rob	LECTURE 6: Place and Space	QT3
Thursday October 16 th	13.30 - 15.00	Rob	LECTURE 7: The Politics of Place and Postcolonial Spaces	QT3
Friday October 17 th	09.00 - 10.30	Rob	LECTURE 8: The Psychology of Place – Weird Places and Uncanny Spaces	QT3
Friday October 17 th	13.30 - 15.00	Rob	LECTURE 9: The Sublime – A Contemporary Retrospective	QT3

Coexistent Perspectives - Lecture Series (Week 4 – Week 6)

		WEEK 4 Time, Memory and the Archive: In Search of Lost Time		
Thursday October 23rd	09.30 - 11.00	Rob	LECTURE 10: Sculpting in Time	QT4
Thursday October 23rd	13.30 - 15.00	Hamish	LECTURE 11: Nostalgia & Melancholy	QT4
Friday October 24 th	09.00 - 10.30	Estefani	LECTURE 12: Memory and the Archive	QT4
Friday October 24 th	13.30 - 15.00	Rob	LECTURE 13: Order within Chaos	QT4
		WEEK 5 - Design Thinking and Material Practices		
Thursday October 30th	09.30 - 11.00	Rob	LECTURE 14: Materialism: Old and New	QT5
Thursday October 30th	13.30 - 15.00	Cath	LECTURE 15: Material Practices	QT5
Friday October 31st	09.00 - 10.30	Rob	LECTURE 16: Generative Design	QT5
Friday October 31st	13.30 - 15.00	Gav	LECTURE 17: Information Design and Semiotics	QT5
Friday November 7 th	All Day		PECHA KUCHA	
		WEEK 6 - The Politics of Desire – Postcapitalism and Platform Culture		
Thursday November 13 th	09.30 - 11.00	Rob	LECTURE 18: The Politics of Desire	QT6
Thursday November 13 th	13.30 - 15.00	Gav	LECTURE 19: POSTER WORKSHOP	ALL
Friday November 14 th	09.00 - 10.30	Mart	LECTURE 20: Expression or Exploitation	QT6
Friday November 14 th	13.30 - 15.00	Rob	LECTURE 21: AI, The Human and the Posthuman	QT6

Coexistent Perspectives – Self-Directed Study and 1-2-1 Tutorials

			Self-Directed Stage and Bookable 1-2-1 Tutorials	
Thursday November 20th	11.30 - 13.30	Rob/MA Staff	Bookable 1-2-1 Essay/Poster Tutorials	
Friday November 21st	All Day		[Collaborative Dialogues Day]	
Thursday November 27 th	11.30 - 13.30	Rob/MA Staff	Bookable 1-2-1 Essay/Poster Tutorials	
Friday November 28 th	All Day		[Collaborative Dialogues Day]	
Thursday December 4 th	11.30 - 13.30	Rob/MA Staff	Bookable 1-2-1 Essay/Poster Tutorials	
Friday December 5 th	All Day		[Collaborative Dialogues Day]	
Thursday December 11 th	11.30 - 13.30	Rob/MA Staff	Bookable 1-2-1 Essay/Poster Tutorials	
Friday December 12 th	All Day		[Collaborative Dialogues Day]	
			XMAS & NEW YEAR	
Friday January 9 th 2026			Essay 7th Jan/ Poster 9th Jan Submission	

The Module Assignment Brief

what you have to do...

- **Assignment Component 1 – 4000-word academically referenced essay (80%)**
- **Essay Submission– Wednesday 7th January 2026 (Wednesday 29th April 2026 for Part-Time students).**
- **Assignment Component 2 – Poster Presentation (20%)** The poster ‘presentation’ should visually communicate key concepts researched in your Coexistent Perspectives essay. As part of the poster presentation you will be required to discuss your visual discourse in a clear and concise way: A 5minute verbal rationale for your visualisation of key theoretical concepts addressed in your essay.
- **Poster Submission – Friday 9th January 2026 (Friday 1st May 2026 for Part-Time students).**

Coexistent Perspectives Essay Assignment Questions for 2025-2026

Write a 4000-word academically referenced essay

- Choose **one** of the following questions to guide your research essay. Each question corresponds to a thematic strand explored in the lecture series. Your response should focus on one or two **contemporary artists, designers, or makers**, and must demonstrate rigorous critical analysis and engagement with relevant theoretical and scholarly sources.
- **Question 1. The Contemporary Condition:** *How do contemporary creative practices articulate or intervene in the complex conditions of late modernity, including ecological precarity, social fragmentation, and global uncertainty? What imaginative or critical strategies do they offer for navigating these crises?*
- **Question 2. De/constructing the Human:** *In what ways do contemporary artists and designers challenge and reconfigure dominant constructions of the human subject through lenses such as feminist theory, posthumanism, queer critique, or psychoanalysis? How do such practices trouble the boundaries between self, other, and machine?*
- **Question 3. Space and Place:** *How do contemporary creative practices engage with the politics and poetics of space, including questions of displacement, postcolonial geography, affective architectures, or the uncanny? What critical frameworks can be used to analyse these spatial imaginaries?*
- **Question 4. Time, Memory and the Archive:** *In what ways do contemporary artists and designers reimagine time, memory, and archival practice, whether through repetition, rupture, slowness, or non-linear temporality? How do these temporal aesthetics intersect with cultural, technological, or historical concerns?*
- **Question 5. Design Thinking and Material Practices:** *How are contemporary practices of design and making reshaping ideas of authorship, agency, and materiality in response to shifting technological, ecological, and philosophical paradigms? Consider how approaches such as speculative design, generative systems, or post-digital craft are contributing to these developments.*
- **Question 6. The Politics of Desire:** *How do contemporary creative practices reflect, critique, or disrupt the politics of desire in late capitalist or postcapitalist society, particularly in relation to image culture, affective economies, algorithmic and AI-driven systems, and the commodification of identity, labour, or attention?*

Writing as Research

Making it Relevant and Meaningful to You

Think PRAXIS!

writing is thinking

If you can't say it you can't write it

The Research Question

what... is your **quest-ion**?

Preliminary Questions..

- What is your research '**question**' ?...
- Could you write a research statement
- Have a point....an 'argument'...
- What have you been exploring...



BRIDGEKEEPER: What... is your quest?

LANCELOT: To seek the Holy Grail.

Framing the **question** and setting up your **argument** is one of the hardest parts of the process of writing, because once you are able to ask the question you have made the first step towards answering the question.

Workshop Task 1 – Talk to the Neighbour(s)...

10-minutes – back and forth

- Can you explain your ideas to your neighbour (sat next to you)?
- Some Starter Questions...
- **What theme(s)** are you drawn to/interested in? **Why?**
- **What** are your particular theoretical interests relating to this theme?
- **How does this** (i.e. theoretical interest) **relate to your own creative practice?**
- **What** artists/designers/makers **and/or** artworks/designs/products interest you?
- **How** do you chosen artists/designers/makers **and/or** artworks/designs/products connect with your theme and/or your theoretical interests?

Example Research Questions...

1. Why does **Hito Steyerl's** critique of digital media and visibility reflect the challenges of navigating **truth and representation in the contemporary condition**?
2. In what ways do **Cindy Sherman's** and **Zanele Muholi's** photographic practices interrogate and expand traditional **notions of selfhood and otherness**?
3. How does **Rachel Whiteread's** use of negative space in works like House reveal the emotional and **psychological dimensions of place**?
4. To what extent does **Andrei Tarkovsky's** approach to cinematic time provide a meditative response to the **accelerating pace of modernity**?
5. How do the **material transformations** in **El Anatsui's** and **Otobong Nkanga's** practices critique global histories of trade, labour, and environmental impact?
6. Why does **Jenny Holzer's** public art disrupt traditional **understandings of desire** and consumerism in the **context of late capitalism**?

why not **what**

critical

descriptive

Keep in mind that you are trying to answer the **question** posed by your **argument**

Having a 'good' Argument?

The Basis for Essay

An argument is where you support one perspective.

But you also examine the pros and cons of the other side to create discursive depth to support your point.

What is an Argument?

- Poor basis for Essay:
- Summaries don't make for an 'argument': "This essay will examine the history of romantic art."
- Indicating that you will examine two sides of a debate is also not great.

What is an Essay's Argument (aka thesis)

- Formulate the **argument** from the...**question**...
- Research **QUESTION...**
- *How does Rachel Whiteread's sculptural practice engage with the psychology of domestic spaces?*
- Research **ARGUMENT:**
- *The essay argues that Whiteread's work transforms familiar domestic spaces into uncanny sites of memory and absence, exploring the psychological dimensions of place.*

Formulating an Argument

- Can be written in one sentence...
- Put it in such a way that you **are writing from one perspective**. Make it sound like an argument....

EXAMPLE

Research Question:

How does Louise Bourgeois' sculptural practice engage with psychoanalytic themes of self and trauma?

Research Argument:

Bourgeois' work visualises the fragmentation of the self, embodying tensions between internal desires and external realities.

Workshop Task 2 – what's your argument?

10-minutes – back and forth

- Try to write and articulate (say) your one-line (single sentence) 'ARGUMENT' for your chosen question/theme.
- With your neighbour(s) try to 'speak' your essay argument/thesis
- **Remember** this is **NOT** the **question theme** itself you have chosen eg. theme 3. (ie space and place) but your perspective on it in relation to the question...*how do the walking practices of Richard Long and Hamish Fulton relate to their representation in the gallery space?*

Examples of Research ‘Questions’ with their corresponding ‘Arguments’

- **Research Question:** How does Olafur Eliasson’s *The Weather Project* reinterpret the sublime in contemporary art?
- **Research Argument:** Eliasson’s work evokes awe and transcendence through immersive installations, connecting viewers to environmental and existential concerns.
- **Research Question:** How does Christian Boltanski’s installation work embody themes of nostalgia and loss?
- **Research Argument:** Boltanski’s installations transform personal and collective memory into meditations on the passage of time.

Purpose of Creating the Argument

- It will help you to structure your essay before you write it.
- Structure essay using the Art of Mind-mapping.

Research - The Search Begins...

- **You will need to read a lot.**
- An immediate test of your proposed essay question is **are you able to find sufficient research literature** – i.e. peer reviewed/published books and journal articles – don't overly rely on secondary sources – websites as they are less 'stable' or 'reliable'.
- Yes – for sure you will end up reading about your chosen artists and their work(s) but let this not be the sole focus of your research. The **theoretical perspectives** are what should be in focus here – and how your chosen artists/work function in relation to that.
- **Suggestion:** Make an **annotated bibliography**.

Research - The Search Begins...

- You will need to read a lot.
- Aim for a minimum of 12 books and/or articles overall (i.e. 4000-word essay). That's just 3 research/reference items per 1000 words.
- Make NOTES when you read – and make sure that you record page numbers at the time.
- Better to **make your own notes** than just to highlight and copy chunks of text for **paraphrasing** later.

Write an Outline – Form and Structure

- Now you have to write an outline. This is the most difficult part of writing an essay, and it's not optional. **The outline of an essay is like the skeleton of a body.** It provides its **fundamental form and structure.** Furthermore, **the outline is basically the argument** (with the sentences themselves and the words serving that argument).
- The fundamental outline of an essay should not get much longer than ten to fifteen sentences.
- So, try to **write a ten to fifteen sentence outline of your essay as a mapping exercise – just as bullet points or short sentences for now.**

BASIC STRUCTURE – THREE PARTS

- Beginning - **Introduction** – Tell e'm what ya gonna tell 'em
- Middle – **Main Body** – Tell 'em
- End – **Conclusion** – Tell them what you told 'em

NOTE: With the introduction and conclusion – it's a good idea to block in a basic version – that you can craft and style later – just so that you actually have stated the aims (and conclusions) of your essay.

The 'Five-Paragraph' (Section) Essay [EXAMPLE]

- **1. Introduction (500 words)**

(Tell e'm what ya gonna tell 'em)

- The most important thing to remember to do here is state the aim/objectives of your essay,
- Set the 'scene' context, background for the essay

- **Main Body (3000 words)**

(Tell 'em)

- 2 – Theoretical Background **(1000 words)** – establish what your theoretical perspectives are...feminism, space, place, time, design thinking, Key thinkers – Deleuze, Braidotti, Baudrillard, Haraway....etc
- 3 – Artist/Designer/Artwork 1 **(1000 words)** -
- 4 - Artist/Designer/Artwork 1 **(1000 words)** -

- **5. Conclusion (500 words)**

(Tell them what you told 'em)

...here you assess /evaluate your compare and contrast 3 + 4 in relation to 2.

TASK 3 – Drafting an Essay Outline

5-minutes – back and forth

- **1. Introduction (500 words)**

(Tell e'm what ya gonna tell 'em)

- What's the Argument? What's the point of the essay? The most important thing to remember to do here is state the aim/objectives of your essay,
- Set the 'scene' context, backgroud for the essay

- **Main Body (3000 words)**

(Tell 'em)

- 2 – Theoretical Background (1000 words) –
- 3 – Artist/Designer/Artwork 1 (1000 words) -
- 4 - Artist/Designer/Artwork 1 (1000 words) –
- **NOTE -: This is just one model – you may be focusing on just one artist/designer and one or more works...**
- **5. Conclusion (500 words)**

(Tell them what you told 'em)

...here you assess /evaluate your compare and contrast 3 + 4 in relation to 2.

compare and contrast

Essay model that sets up a comparison between two things, discusses them and evaluates them in relation to each other through a common theoretical lens. Keep in mind that it is important to have a point of comparison – a common reference point.

The Writing Process: Produce Quick – Edit Slow

- You should think of the essay writing process as twofold.
- **The first major step is the first draft**, which can be relatively quick and dirty. For the first draft you can use your notes, extensively, and rough out the essay. If you get stuck writing anywhere, just move to the next outline sentence. You can always go back.
- **The second major step is editing.** **Production (the first major step) and editing (the second)** are different functions, and should be treated that way. This is because each interferes with the other. The purpose of production is to produce.
- **The function of editing is to reduce and arrange.** If you try to do both at the same time then the editing stymies the production. It's not faster to combine them, nor is it better, and it is bound to be frustrating.

MICRO-EDITING

- FIXING STYLE
- ARE ANY SENTENCES TOO LONG?
- DRAFTING – ROUGH DRAFT – FIRST (SECOND) DRAFT – FINAL DRAFT

Harvard Referencing – (in-text) Citations

- When you write a sentence that contains what is supposed to be a fact or at least an informed opinion, and you have picked it up from something you read, then you have to refer to that source. Otherwise, following convention, people may accuse you of plagiarism, which is a form of theft (of intellectual property).
- **Bibliography** – your references are included here.
- EG. *Smith, E. (2016) How to improve your research project. 2nd Ed. Plymouth: Kiln Press.*
- **In-Text Citations** - for all **quotes** and all **paraphrased** ideas.
- EG. *(Smith, 2016, p.5)*
- Check out **Harvard Referencing Guide** – ‘think’ Harvard Nickname is **(Author/Date)**

...in the essay

Tarkovsky's Knight of Faith

In Tarkovsky's films the holy fool becomes a universal figure, capable of providing a critical power and radical critique of modern society., This is not only because the character of the holy fool assumes such an important place in his films, but also due to his outstanding contribution towards the modernisation of the figure. (Birzache, 2016, p8)

...in the Bibliography

Birzache, A. G. (2016). *The Holy Fool in European Cinema*. Routledge.

The Abstract

200-250 words)

EXAMPLE

Research Question: How does Rachel Whiteread's sculptural practice engage with the psychology of domestic spaces?

Thesis Statement: Whiteread's *House* transforms familiar domestic spaces into unsettling meditations on memory and absence.

Theoretical Pairings:

- Sigmund Freud (*The Uncanny*).
- Gaston Bachelard (*The Poetics of Space*)

Abstract

This essay explores Rachel Whiteread's *House* (1993) through Freud's concept of the uncanny and Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*. Whiteread's cast of a demolished house transforms a familiar domestic space into an unsettling memorial, evoking themes of absence, memory, and the traces of lived experience. The analysis examines how the work disrupts perceptions of home, creating a liminal space where the personal becomes public. The essay concludes that Whiteread's *House* embodies the psychological dimensions of place, addressing the complexities of identity and belonging.

The Abstract combined with the Research Poster (for Catalogue Publication)

How do transhumanism and heterotopias intertwine in the contemporary context?

Abstract

Observing technological progress, a place limited to a physical location can be questioned. The liminality of transhumanism has emerged in the progress of civilisation. Reflecting through artistic activity on the perception of space and place in relation to transhumanism, drawing on the theories of Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, Yi-Fu Tuan, Marc Auge, and Arnold van Gennep. Our assumptions, even in the most imaginary creations, transcend the boundaries of the human; this illustrates how transhumanism and heterotopias intertwine in the contemporary context. The transhuman evolution is not only related to cognitive abilities but also to new levels of intellectual functioning and spiritual development. Transitioning from the past to a suspension between organic and inorganic life hides true gender and personal identity. The point of reference is the notion of heterotopia, liminality, and the triad of perceived, imagined, and experienced space. Heterochrony, in relation to the rest of the space. The rules of closure and opening system. Juxtaposing transhumanism and heterotopia on the sense of identification and external space. People transcend their human condition by achieving a new status, imagining a permeable space while insulating from the rest of the space.

Keywords: *Space and Place, Heterotopias, Non-places, Transhumanism, Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, Yi-Fu Tuan, Marc Auge, Arnold van Gennep*

