PORTFOLIO (HPRS4904):

Guidelines on Writing an Encyclopaedia Article

1. An encyclopaedia article will enable you to display analytical and presentational skills and to demonstrate the ability to *select* relevant material and to present that material in a succinct and accessible manner. Remember that encyclopaedia articles are intended to *introduce* a particular topic to a fairly wide readership.
2. You are advised to start this assignment by consulting some encyclopaedia articles to determine *what* should be included and *how* it should be presented. There are numerous encyclopaedias in the university library and available online (and the tutor will be able to advise you on which items to consult, depending on your chosen topic).
3. As you read sample entries, ask the question – How is the article structured? How much detail is included (e.g., references, quotations)? How does the author strike a balance between description and analysis? Are sub-headings used? What about illustrations, diagrams or charts?
4. If you can find entries on your chosen topic in published encyclopaedias (such as *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* or *The Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women* on the internet) then incorporate some of the analyses you find there into your answer. Work that demonstrates some level of additional research alongside reading these entries will impress the examiners. Additional research can be drawn from monographs, book chapters, journal articles or, in some cases, web articles. You will also find that the module content will address some of the key issues of relevance for your topic.
5. You may wish to include a short introductory paragraph (for the benefit of the marker, and not part of the article, before the encyclopaedia article itself, explaining in what kind of encyclopaedia your article would appear (general encyclopaedia such as *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* or a subject-specific encyclopaedia such as *Encyclopaedia of Religion* or *Encyclopaedia of the Bible*).
6. Remember only to include material of *direct relevance* to the topic under consideration. Given the limited word count you will not be able to cast the net too widely and therefore you should not include sections on general background issues, extensive quotations from the primary or secondary sources, detailed comparisons of the views of a wide range of scholars. The focus should be on outlining *key themes and issues* that relate to the topic under consideration.
7. While footnotes should be avoided in encyclopaedia articles, you are strongly advised to use the Harvard referencing system (e.g., Smith 2000: 456) within the

main text. This is the method of referencing normally used in encyclopaedia articles because it does not disrupt the flow of the narrative. If you wish, you can also set out your encyclopaedia article in two columns.

8. You are expected to include a short list of books/essays/articles consulted while preparing the encyclopaedia article.