What is a Conclusion?

The final paragraph or section of your academic work. This is your opportunity to reflect on and bring together all the strands of your research, so that your ideas make sense to readers. The conclusion is also the final opportunity for you to present your thesis statement (argument) to readers so that you may convince them of its validity. Below is a basic structure that may help you:

1. Re-state your thesis (not verbatim).

2. Explain how your work has proven your argument by summarising the main points/ highlights.

3. State the broader significance of your ideas/ thesis. Ask yourself: "so what?" and "why should the reader care?"

4. You may address any limitations in your research (e.g. scope) and/or make further research recommendations (e.g. remaining gaps).

What to Avoid in a Conclusion:

- Presenting **new information or evidence**, i.e. such information and evidence should have been introduced and examined in the body paragraphs already.
- **Repetitive language or phrasing**, i.e. vary your vocabulary and examine your ideas from different angles.
- Simply **rephrasing the introduction**, i.e. while the introduction and conclusion often mirror one another in terms of content, remember that they have different and bespoke functions in academic writing. See the UCD Writing Centre's handout on introductions for more information.
- Overtly **vague or generalised statements**, i.e. your arguments will be more convincing if they are focused and specific.
- Making overtly **sentimental or emotional appeals**, i.e. maintain a professional/ critical tone. Stick to the facts that you have presented, as well as to the logical interpretations and conclusions you have deduced based on critical analysis.
- Summarising with **personal opinions**, i.e. maintain critical objectivity here as elsewhere in your work. Again, claims should be based on logical deductions based on critical analysis. See the UCD Writing Centre's handout on critical analysis for more information.
- **Concluding too hastily**, i.e. it can be tempting to rush at the end of your assignment, but remember that this is the last impression the reader will have of your work. Take your time.
- Using **clichéd phrasing** such as "in summary" or "in conclusion", i.e. given that this is the final paragraph/ section of your assignment, the fact that it is a conclusion to the work is already implied.
- **Selling your ideas short**, i.e. you are still convincing your reader of the validity of your arguments, so conclude with confidence by avoiding such phrases as "hopefully", "maybe", "perhaps", etc. Be bold about the claims you have made and the position you have presented.
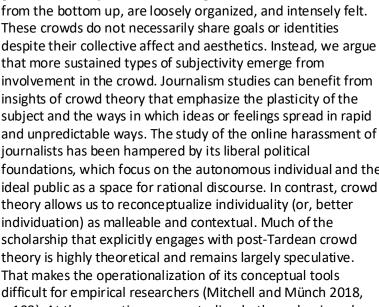
UCD Writing Centre resources
provide general writing advice
only and students should
always follow the specific
rubric required by their School.

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Example

1. Return to central topic and central thesis statement.

4. Limitations of and gaps in existing research.

4. Research recommendations.

Using the Philippines as a case study, we have drawn insights from crowd theory to understand how and why online mobs gather to abuse journalists. We argue that crowds are formed from the bottom up, are loosely organized, and intensely felt. These crowds do not necessarily share goals or identities despite their collective affect and aesthetics. Instead, we argue that more sustained types of subjectivity emerge from involvement in the crowd. Journalism studies can benefit from insights of crowd theory that emphasize the plasticity of the subject and the ways in which ideas or feelings spread in rapid and unpredictable ways. The study of the online harassment of journalists has been hampered by its liberal political foundations, which focus on the autonomous individual and the ideal public as a space for rational discourse. In contrast, crowd theory allows us to reconceptualize individuality (or, better individuation) as malleable and contextual. Much of the scholarship that explicitly engages with post-Tardean crowd theory is highly theoretical and remains largely speculative. That makes the operationalization of its conceptual tools difficult for empirical researchers (Mitchell and Münch 2018, p.108). At the same time, many studies, both academic and produced by industry, have used terminology from crowd studies in un-critical ways and without referencing its origins (See, for instance Facebook's "emotional contagion study" [Kramer et al. 2014]). When employed in more deliberate and critical ways, crowd theory provides an approach to online harassment understood in terms of affective intensities, online interactions, the relationship between human and non-human actors in material networks, and the development of shared cultural practices. Shifting the focus of research on press censorship away from the state and corporate actors raises difficult questions for journalists and news organizations. We have relied on a review of existing research to draw out key ideas about online crowds and the harassment of journalists in the Philippines. However, there is a need for more empirical research studying instances of online harassment on social media and focused on the dynamics of online interaction between users and journalists. Future research in this area may address the question: how can news organizations produce spaces that promote more democratic forms of cultural practices and affective engagement with the news? And, what does it mean for journalists to engage with online crowds, rather than individual audience members?

3. Stressing significance of research.

2. Synthesising/ summarising research presented in the body.

Neilson, Tai and Ortiga, Kara. "Mobs, Crowds, and Trolls: Theorizing the Harassment of Journalists in the Philippines", *Digital Journalism*, vo. 11, no. 10, 2023, pp. 1924-1939.