IMSISS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	**Glasgow** 2582361 **DCU** 20109423 **Charles** 60475822 **Trento**
Dissertation Title	Russian Information Operations via Sputnik Srbija: The Case Study of Russia-Ukraine War

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Reviewer 1 Initial Grade **A2 [21]**	Reviewer 2 Initial Grade *A2 [21]*	Late Submission Penalty *NONE*

Word Count Penalty *(1-15% over/under = 1gr point; 15-20% over/under = 2 gr points; 20-25% over/under = 3 gr points; more than 25% over/under = 0 fail)*

Word Count: *21546* **Suggested Penalty:** *NONE*

JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

Final Agreed Mark. *(Following correspondence reviewers should list the agreed final internal grade taking before and after any penalties to be applied).*

Before Penalty: A2 [21]   *After Penalty:* **A2 [21]**

DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

Assessment Criteria	Rating
A. Structure and Development of Answer This refers to your organisational skills and ability to construct an argument in a coherent and original manner	
• *Originality of topic*	Excellent
• *Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified*	Excellent
• *Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work*	Excellent
• *Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions*	Excellent
• *Application of theory and/or concepts*	Excellent
B. Use of Source Material This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner	
• *Evidence of reading and review of published literature*	Excellent
• *Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument*	Excellent
• *Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence*	Excellent
• *Accuracy of factual data*	Excellent
C. Academic Style This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	

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• *Appropriate formal and clear writing style*	Excellent
• *Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation*	Excellent
• *Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)*	Excellent
• *Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?*	Yes
• *Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)*	Not required
• *Appropriate word count*	YES

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

This is a very original and thoughtful analysis of the conceptual underpinnings of 'information war' as it has been practiced by Russia, and in particular *Sputnik Sjrbija* within the wider context of the war in Ukraine. The student takes a critical perspective on Russia's 'aggressive geopolitical campaign' (Mark Galeotti) and demonstrates an impressive grasp both of the conceptual underpinning of Russian information warfare and its application in the Serbian context.

The student demonstrates a command of the most important secondary sources. Just as importantly, they are able to situate their own interpretation within this wider literature. The prose is generally very clear and the dissertation has a logical and effective structure that provides coherence to the overall argument. The 'research puzzle' is outlined very clearly and effectively.

I was also impressed with the discussion of the limitations that are inevitable in an assignment of this length. The Serbian case is very particular, not least because of the sympathy that exists between Serbian and Russia elites and, to an important extent, Serbian and Russia societies. But this limitation is also a strength because it provides an original perspective on the dynamics of Russian information policy towards a largely friend state. There is interesting scope for this to become part of a wider comparative study should the student ever wish to undertake doctoral research.

Overall this is an outstanding piece of work that demonstrates very considerable promise should the student ever decide to pursue doctoral studies.

Reviewer 2

This is an extremely competent, insightful, and useful dissertation. It provides an excellent understanding of the Russian information approach towards Serbia in the context of the Russo-Ukraine War. Moreover, the dissertation is built up with great confidence and expertise. It clearly identifies its niche in the literature, develops a theoretical model and presents with great clarity the discourse analysis of Sputnik Srbija's texts about the current war. The author's framing of the Russian information operation in the concept of memory diplomacy is an original added value of the dissertation.

When looking at this dissertation's topic, some concerns pop into one's mind. Is the framing of information warfare the most suitable for the two friendly countries? Does analysis of Sputnik's articles give a complete picture of Russian information operation's effectiveness? Should not we also analyse the impact of Sputnik's narratives? If Sputnik takes over most of the narratives from Serbian sources, is it still a Russian operation in information warfare?

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Fortunately, the author is aware of these and other concerns and acknowledges them in the list of limitations. Regarding the "warfare" issue, the dissertation comes with an elegant solution – "proxy warfare" and Serbian culpability. The author creates a functional model in which Serbia is a proxy in a larger Russia-West information war.

To conclude, this dissertation is a highly intelligent piece of writing which was a pleasure to read. The author demonstrated great competence and creativity in forming the conceptual model, so the analysis works and contributes well to the literature on information warfare.