

BACHELOR'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT
PPE – Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	Political Philosophy and Religion through the Minds of Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss
Student's name:	Yelizaveta Frolova
Referee's name:	Janusz Salamon

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	28	
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	7	
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	8	
Total		43	
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	4	
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	2	
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	3	
Total		9	
TOTAL		52	

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria:

It may be good to start with stating that I consider Yelizaveta Frolova's Bachelor's thesis as meeting the minimal requirements (with the stress on the "minimal") for a passable Bachelor's thesis in PPE (due to its interdisciplinary focus). It doesn't help that the research question is formulated in a confused manner, leaving the reader uncertain what to expect and demand. In the Introduction to her thesis, the Author informs the reader that "The central question of this thesis is: How do the philosophical perspectives of Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss illuminate the relation between political philosophy and religion in shaping societies?" However, in the Conclusion of her thesis she states that „The goal of this thesis is to look at the works of Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss and through their perspectives discover the role that religion plays in shaping contemporary politics.“ The difference might appear subtle but it introduces ambiguity that can be felt throughout the work, since one is uncertain whether Yelizaveta Frolova seeks to answer the question: how religious ideas influenced political *philosophy* of Arendt and Strauss, or rather an entirely different question: how according to Arendt and Strauss the relation between religion and politics should be conceived (or

is the Author seek an answer to yet different question). In practice, the Author brings out these rather rare occasions when religion and religious ideas come to the fore in Arendt's and Strauss' writings and sets them in the broader context of their political philosophy. Alas, the Author's claim to have discovered through the study of Arendt's and Strauss' works „how interdependent the disciplines of religion and political philosophy are“ sounds somewhat baffling in the light of the conclusions of the relevant sections of her work, when she rightly points out that Arendt focuses in her analysis on the political consequence of secularisation, the consequence of which is that „Religion loses its political aspect, while social life becomes deprived of the religiously transcendental authority and ability“, while „According to Leo Strauss, philosophy and revelation are incompatible.“ Some sections of the thesis read like a stream-of-consciousness philosophising of the Author about the relation between religion and politics without clear reference to either Arendt or Strauss. The secondary literature listed in the bibliography appears to be a result of a hit and miss selection governed by a pattern that perhaps only Strauss himself with his appreciation of „the esoteric“ might be able to discern.

Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): E

Suggested questions for the defence are:

Are the views of Arendt and Strauss on the issue addressed in your research question similar or significantly different?

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	C	= good
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory
51 – 60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	F	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.