

ESSAY GRADING GUIDELINES

Excellent (“A” range)

CONTENT: An ambitious, clearly defined thesis that is supported by well-chosen, insightful, substantial, and consistently relevant textual citation. Essay must demonstrate excellent close readings, analyses, and unique interpretations of text(s).

ORGANIZATION: Thesis planned so that essay progresses through clearly ordered and necessary stages and develops with significant attention to proportion and emphasis; paragraphs coherent and insightfully developed, unified by one topic, and committed to advancing an aspect of the thesis; transitions between paragraphs must be logical and clear.

SENTENCE STRUCTURE: Skillfully constructed, persuasive, and effectively varied.

GRAMMAR, PUNCTION, SPELLING, CITATION STYLE: Clarity and effectiveness of expression promoted by impeccable use of formal (appropriate) grammar, punctuation, citation, and spelling.

Very Good (“B” range)

CONTENT: A significant, clearly defined thesis that is supported by concrete, substantial, and consistently relevant textual citation. Essay must demonstrate effective close readings and analyses of text(s).

ORGANIZATION: Thesis planned so that paper progresses by clearly ordered and necessary stages, and develops with consistent attention to proportion and emphasis; paragraphs coherent, unified by one topic, effectively developed, and clearly advance an aspect of the thesis; transitions between paragraphs must be logical and clear.

SENTENCE STRUCTURE: Competently constructed, persuasive, and effectively varied.

GRAMMAR, PUNCTION, SPELLING, CITATION STYLE: Clarity and effectiveness of expression promoted by consistent use of formal (appropriate) grammar, punctuation, citation, and spelling.

Good (“C” range)

CONTENT: Thesis apparent, but too general, pedestrian, or trite; supported with concrete detail that is occasionally repetitious, irrelevant, or sketchy.

ORGANIZATION: Plan and method of thesis apparent, but not consistently fulfilled; developed with occasionally disproportionate or inappropriate emphasis; paragraphs unified, coherent, usually effective in their development; transitions between paragraphs clear, but abrupt, mechanical, or monotonous.

SENTENCE STRUCTURE: Sometimes uneven clarity and effectiveness of expression; competently constructed.

GRAMMAR, PUNCTION, SPELLING, CITATION STYLE: Uneven use of formal (appropriate) grammar, punctuation, citation, and spelling.

Unacceptable (“D” range)/Failing (F)

CONTENT: Essay lacks a thesis/central idea, or thesis is confused or not supported by concrete, substantial, and relevant textual detail.

ORGANIZATION: Plan and purpose of essay is not apparent; some material irrelevant, redundant, or inconsistent; paragraphs incoherent or not adequately developed; transitions unclear or ineffective. **SENTENCE STRUCTURE:** Frequent run-on, fused, incomplete, and/or monotonous.

GRAMMAR, PUNCTION, SPELLING, CITATION STYLE: Communication obscured by frequent deviations from appropriate grammar, punctuation, citation, and spelling.