

Grading Rubric for Paper Assignments

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1. Substance & Content

1. *Task Completion.* (a) Stay on topic and (b) complete the entire task set forth by the instructor in the paper assignment. (Adding a few short things that are not particularly relevant to the assignment task will not necessarily hurt your grade, but it can if you spend too much space on it and then not enough on the real task at hand.)

Very Good | Pretty Good | Okay | Poor | Very Poor/Fails

2. *Accuracy & Acumen.* The paper should demonstrate an accurate understanding of the material from class and, if applicable, philosophical acuity in evaluating it. (Remember that accuracy is still important regarding fine details and even minor differences in words can drastically change the meaning of a sentence.)

Very Good | Pretty Good | Okay | Poor | Very Poor/Fails

3. *Depth & Coverage.* Move beyond simple description and summary and reflect an in-depth understanding of the topic and material. Be sure to discuss all and only the relevant points (roughly, what is crucial for understanding the issue at hand and your thesis). A good essay goes beyond a typed up version of your class notes by demonstrating that you know how all the material connects together conceptually (e.g. by using examples when appropriate to illustrate key ideas).

Very Good | Pretty Good | Okay | Poor | Very Poor/Fails

2. Structure, Mechanics, and Style

4. *Introduction, Thesis, & Thesis Statement.* The introductory paragraph(s) should briefly orient the reader to the topic and provide a conceptual map of the rest of the paper. Avoid lengthy or dramatic introductions. The paper should have a clear thesis statement (which is usually best stated toward the end of the introduction) that addresses the paper topic and expresses an interesting claim that the author intends to defend. Make sure your thesis statement is clear, specific, declarative, and on-topic.

Very Good | Pretty Good | Okay | Poor | Very Poor/Fails

5. *Body Support & Organization.* The body of the paper should support the paper's thesis with appropriate and ample evidence from the class readings and lectures. The body paragraphs should be organized in a logical manner, appropriate in length, and framed by topic sentences that support the paper's thesis and interpret the evidence in the paragraph. (Note: The paper may have a relatively short conclusion/summary, but it is *not* required.) Use quotations as needed to ground your discussion of someone's view, but don't rely too heavily on them. When you use quotes, be sure to introduce them; don't just insert them without any explanation of who said it and what the relevance is.

Very Good | Pretty Good | Okay | Poor | Very Poor/Fails

6. *Writing Mechanics and Style.* Overall, the paper should demonstrate a command of the writing process and the author's care in crafting it. Avoid many errors of spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, verb tense, and vocabulary. But don't worry about being fancy with your writing style in philosophy (e.g. avoid flowery prose and vague language). The clarity and organization of your thoughts is most important.

Very Good | Pretty Good | Okay | Poor | Very Poor/Fails

Grade:

Additional Comments: