

MARKING RUBRIC FOR PAPERS

Christina Hendricks' courses

The following provides a rough guide for what “A” papers, “B” papers, etc., might look like, according to the categories in the “Guidelines for Writing Papers” document. Note that the statements below are not exhaustive for what may occur in each category, but serve as common examples. The most important categories are “Strength of Argument” and “Insight,” though problems in “Organization” can weaken your argument because the reader may not be able to follow or understand it. This rubric is not intended to allow you to calculate your mark for the paper as a whole based on how you did in each category, as marking papers is not mechanical enough to allow for that. Rather, this should be considered a tool to help you think about what should be in your paper before you turn it in, and what you might need to work on for the future.

Grade	Strength of argument	Insight	Organization	Style & Mechanics
A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thesis is supported excellently—the arguments in the essay work well together to support the thesis; the claims in these arguments are themselves supported well 2. No significant objections emerge upon reading, or they are answered well 3. Adequate textual evidence provided for your claims about the text 4. No inaccuracies in discussion of texts, &/or non-standard interpretations defended well 5. Explanation of arguments in texts adequate to clarify the views, or to use them well in your argument, or for audience requirement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creative, original thesis, argument, and interpretations of texts that spark new ideas and questions in the reader beyond what is in the texts and lectures; takes risks and reflects deep thought and effort 2. The insightful thesis, argument, interpretations are supported well and/or fit well with the text(s) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thesis is clear and accurately reflects the main argument in the essay 2. Points are linked in an order that reveals well how they work together to support the thesis 3. Paragraphs are coherent 4. Excellent transitions btwn. paragraphs 5. There is an engaging introduction and a conclusion that rounds out the essay well 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Few to no typos, spelling, grammatical or punctuation mistakes 2. Style is clear and easy to read; sentences flow well; little to no awkward wording 3. Citations given where needed and formatted consistently (and accurately, if a particular citation format is required) 4. All parts of the topic addressed (if applicable)
B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thesis is mostly defended well, but a few important claims in the thesis or in the arguments for it need further support or explanation 2. A minor-moderate objection seems immediately clear that weakens the argument, and that should be addressed 3. Adequate textual evidence provided for your claims about the text(s) in most places, but need more in a few places 4. Accurate discussion of claims and arguments from texts, but could use more explanation to clarify the views, or to use them well in your argument, or for audience requirement 5. Controversial or non-standard interpretations of texts need more defense by reference to the texts 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thesis, argument, &/or interpretations of texts reflect some original thought, but mostly suggests lack of deep thought and appealing to what was given in class 2. There are some issues with how well the creative solution to a proposed problem fits with the text(s) or works as an argument 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The thesis statement is vague, or the essay argues something slightly different 2. One or two paragraphs could be better organized internally or moved to improve the argument flow 3. Missing some transitions btwn. paragraphs 4. One or two problems with intro or conclusion (e.g., one includes parts of arguments that should be in body of essay) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A few typos, spelling, grammatical, or punctuation mistakes 2. A few awkward sentences and/or words 3. Citations given where needed and formatted consistently (and accurately, if a particular citation format is required) 4. All parts of the topic addressed (if applicable)

Grade	Strength of argument	Insight	Organization	Style & Mechanics
C	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some parts of the thesis need further evidence/argument to support them (either textual evidence or other evidence/arguments) 2. Several claims are given too quickly, with little support (by reference to the text or through other arguments) 3. Two or more points in the argument are in tension (though this might be resolved, the essay doesn't discuss how) 4. Numerous and/or very serious objections to the argument weaken it considerably and need to be addressed 5. A few inaccuracies in the discussion of the texts 6. Controversial or non-standard interpretations of texts not defended adequately 7. Explanation of the texts inadequate to clarify the views, or to use them well in your argument, or for audience requirement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The arguments in the essay just repeat what was given in class, with little to no evidence of thinking about the issues and arguments beyond that 2. The essay attempts to provide an original argument, but it is not well supported or explained 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thesis is hard to find and/or difficult to understand 2. The essay sometimes goes off track and makes points that are largely disconnected from the main thesis 3. It's hard to see why the paragraphs are organized in the way they are, though with effort the reader can see how they support the thesis 4. Serious problems with intro or conclusion (e.g., both include arguments that should be in the body of the essay; they don't read like intro or conclusion at all) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Somewhat frequent typos, spelling, grammatical, or punctuation mistakes 2. Somewhat frequent awkward sentences and/or words 3. Some citations not given where needed and/or formatted incorrectly 4. Some parts of the topic not addressed well
D or F	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The points given in the paper do not work to support the thesis, or there are major gaps in the argument where aspects of the thesis are left undefended (whether by reference to the texts, other evidence, or other arguments) 2. It is difficult to tell what you are arguing for and how 3. There are objections that weaken the argument for the thesis so much that thorough revision is required to fix it 4. Parts of the argument are inconsistent with other parts and it's not clear how this could be resolved without major revision 5. Many points in discussion of texts are inaccurate 6. Controversial interpretations hardly or not defended at all by reference to texts 7. Little to no explanation of the texts to clarify the views, or to use them well in your argument, or for audience requirement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The essay attempts to repeat arguments or ideas from texts or lectures/discussions, or attempts to give an original argument, but shows a serious lack of understanding of the material in either case 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is not a clear thesis statement 2. Points seem to be listed somewhat randomly rather than having clear transitions and a logical order 3. The essay is not broken up into coherent paragraphs for different points 4. There is no intro or no conclusion; (e.g., the essay may stop seemingly in the middle of an argument) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enough typos, spelling, grammatical or punctuation mistakes to make the essay difficult to read at times 2. Very frequent awkward sentences or words 3. Few to no citations given where needed and/or formatted incorrectly 4. Several parts of the topic not addressed at all