

MARKING RUBRIC FOR PAPERS in 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. Adequate textual evidence provided for your claims about the text 3. No inaccuracies in discussion of texts, &/or non-standard interpretations defended well 4. Explanations of arguments in texts or your own arguments are adequate to clarify the views, or to use them well in your argument, or for audience requirement 5. No significant objections emerge upon reading, or they are answered well | <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 | <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, with good topic sentences 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. Very few to no typos, spelling, grammatical or punctuation mistakes 2. Style is clear and easy to read; the author’s voice comes through well; sentences flow well; little to no awkward wording 3. Citations given where needed and formatted correctly 4. All parts of the topic addressed (if applicable) |
| B | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thesis is mostly defended well, but one or two of the arguments for it need a bit more support or explanation 2. Adequate textual evidence provided for your claims about the text(s) in most places, but need more in one or two places 3. Mostly accurate discussion of claims and arguments from texts, but one or two minor inaccuracies; or, controversial or non-standard interpretations of texts need more defense by reference to the texts 4. Could use more explanation of arguments in the texts or your own arguments to clarify them or to use them well in supporting the thesis 5. A minor objection seems immediately clear that weakens the argument, and that should be addressed | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thesis, argument, &/or interpretations of texts reflect some original thought, but could use more | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thesis statement is vague, or the essay argues something slightly different 2. One paragraph should be moved to a different part of the essay to improve the argument flow 3. One or two paragraphs could be better organized internally, or missing topic sentences for 1-2 of them 4. Missing some transitions between paragraphs 5. One or two problems with intro or conclusion | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A few typos, spelling, grammatical, or punctuation mistakes 2. A minor problem with style, such as a few awkward sentences and/or words, words/phrases repeated too often, the author’s voice doesn’t come through well 3. Citations given where needed and formatted correctly 4. All parts of the topic addressed (if applicable) |

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|--------------|---|---|---|---|
| C | <p>1. One or two important parts of the thesis need further evidence/argument to support them (either textual evidence or other evidence/arguments), or several claims in the arguments for the thesis are given too quickly, with little support (by reference to the text or through other arguments)</p> <p>2. More textual evidence is needed in several places</p> <p>3. A few inaccuracies in the discussion of the texts, or controversial or non-standard interpretations of texts not defended adequately</p> <p>4. Explanation of the texts or your own arguments inadequate to clarify the views, or to use them well in your argument, or for audience requirement</p> <p>5. Numerous and/or very serious objections to the argument weaken it considerably and need to be addressed</p> <p>6. Two or more points in the argument are in tension, inconsistent with each other (though this might be resolved, the essay doesn't discuss how)</p> | <p>1. There is not much evidence of original thought or interpretations; the arguments in the essay focus on was given in class or in the texts</p> | <p>1. Thesis is hard to find and/or difficult to understand</p> <p>2. It's somewhat difficult to follow the thread of the argument in the essay, to see why the paragraphs should be in this order (though with effort the thread can be found), or the essay makes some points disconnected from thesis</p> <p>3. It's hard to follow the internal organizational structure of several paragraphs.</p> <p>4. missing transitions throughout</p> <p>5. 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)</p> | <p>1. Frequent typos, spelling, grammatical, or punctuation mistakes</p> <p>2. Significant problems with the style, such as frequent awkward sentences and/or words, frequent repeated words or phrases, or other problems with style makes for some difficulty reading</p> <p>3. Some citations not given where needed and/or formatted incorrectly</p> <p>4. One part of the topic not addressed well</p> |
| D or F | <p>1. The points given in the paper do not work to support the thesis, there are major gaps in the argument where aspects of the thesis are left undefended, or it is difficult to tell what you are arguing for & how</p> <p>2. Very little to no textual evidence is provided</p> <p>3. Many points in discussion of texts are inaccurate, or controversial interpretations hardly or not defended at all</p> <p>4. Little to no explanation of the texts to clarify the views, use them well in your argument, or for audience</p> <p>5. There are objections that weaken the argument for the thesis so much that thorough revision is required to fix it</p> <p>6. Parts of the argument are inconsistent with other parts; it's not clear how this could be resolved without major revision</p> | <p>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</p> | <p>1. There is not a thesis statement</p> <p>2. Points seem to be listed somewhat randomly rather than having clear transitions and a logical order</p> <p>3. The essay is not broken up into coherent paragraphs for different points</p> <p>4. There is no intro or no conclusion; (e.g., the essay may stop in the middle of an argument)</p> | <p>1. Enough typos, spelling, grammatical or punctuation mistakes to make the essay difficult to read</p> <p>2. Serious problems with the style</p> <p>3. Few to no citations given where needed and/or formatted incorrectly</p> <p>4. One or more parts of the topic not addressed at all</p> |