

## Grading Criteria for Essay Assignments:

The average essay (C) covers the basics of the assignment, and is organized and understandable. C papers are characterized by some of the following: analysis has some lesser errors and/or omissions; arguments are clear but are underdeveloped; analysis reflects awareness of issues or concepts but not significantly more than to be expected from reading the text and attending class. For a C grade, papers must have the following components:

1. originality
2. meet the minimum bar for all major assignment parts such as length, number of sources, works cited page, etc.
3. meet the type and purpose of assignment
4. focused topic and a clear and identifiable thesis statement
5. identifiable introduction, body and conclusion
6. awareness and discussion of relevant issues/concepts
7. decent writing free of major errors in grammar, spelling and word usage
8. relevant research and examples are, for the most part, properly cited; some analysis and discussion of source material

The good essay (B) is well organized and well developed. The development of the topic reflects a clear (not just a superficial or basic) understanding of the subject. The B essay is clearly above average and polished. In addition to meeting all the requirements for a C essay, B papers have the following components:

1. fully developed and graceful introduction and conclusion
2. clear organization of main points and/or supporting material
3. wider range of research than the bare minimum
4. discussion of relevant issues/concepts illustrates some awareness of nuances and complexities; discussion is marked by a high standard of critical analysis using appropriate conceptual frameworks
5. arguments are clearly structured and are well-developed
6. relevant research and examples are properly cited; thoughtful analysis and discussion of source material
7. written with style and is without errors in grammar, spelling or word usage

The superior essay (A) reflects an outstanding comprehension of the topic. The content is fully developed and easy to follow. In essence, the A essay is almost flawless. In addition to meeting all the requirements for a B essay, A papers meet the following components:

1. evidence of thorough preparation, including research above and beyond the minimum requirements
2. imagination and creativity in topic selection and development
3. discussion of relevant issues/concepts illustrates strong awareness of nuances and complexities; discussion is marked by a very high standard of critical analysis using appropriate conceptual frameworks
4. written in a fluent, polished manner that strengthens the impact of the analysis

The below average essay (D) is lacking in some of the criteria for a C essay. The poor essay (F) is lacking in many of the criteria for a C essay, or contains fabricated supporting materials and/or is plagiarized. The 'D' or 'F' critique does not conform to the basic requirements of the assignment in a few or many significant ways. For example, the discussion may rely on description over analysis, and/or the attempt at analysis is superficial, containing errors or omissions; the discussion shows some awareness of issues but also confusion; the subject may be too broad or narrow for the page limit, the essay is lacking a works cited page, the essay fails to meet minimum page or research requirements, the essay relies on inappropriate material for supporting evidence and research, or the essay is exceptionally poorly written. Additional deficiencies include: poor or inadequate use of references and/or citations, superficial use of relevant examples or research, weak or no understanding of concepts, weak or no analysis (establishes a few relevant points but superficial and confused exposition of issues).