

STANDARDS FOR EVALUATING WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Written assignments are evaluated on a scale from A+ to C- or No Credit (NC) for unacceptable work. Permission to rewrite papers will be given at my sole discretion.

A Demonstrates commanding grasp of the subject and studious consideration of the material and its implications for thesis
Thesis exhibits independent and original thought, is well developed, and clearly focused on all aspects of the assignment
Argumentation is interesting, insightful, and well organized
Supporting evidence is thorough and relevant, exhibits creative thought
Narrative and description kept to minimum needed for analysis
Conflicting evidence and counter-arguments are subtly and consistently acknowledged and accounted for
Introduction clearly announces the thesis and sets out how the issue will be presented, does so in an engaging manner
Conclusion emerges logically from main arguments
Citations and footnotes are used when needed; footnotes and bibliography use consistent and appropriate format
Logically organized and well written with engaging, precise language that inspires confidence in ideas and judgment
Errors of style (grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice, phrasing) are few and minor

B Demonstrates serious thought on the subject and substantial knowledge of topic and methods
Thesis is adequately developed, addresses all aspects of assignment
Argumentation is logical and developed but may demonstrate occasional omissions or failures
Supporting evidence is less thorough and/or relevant than in top category, but is still substantial
More narrative or description than is necessary at the expense of argumentation
Conflicting evidence and counter-arguments are usually acknowledged and treated
Introduction adequately presents thesis
Conclusion is logical extension of arguments in rest of essay, but may be somewhat weak or unpersuasive
Citations and footnotes usually used when needed; footnotes and bibliography use consistent and appropriate format
Satisfactorily organized, with good use of paragraph structure and transitional sentences
Clearly, if not elegantly, written; thoughts expressed in clear, readable sentences
Errors of style are few but detract from the presentation

C Demonstrates a thin grasp of subject and methods
Thesis exists but needs further explication or definition, or is obvious, or is not sufficiently focused on assignment
Argumentation is confused and difficult to follow or assertion dominates over argumentation
Supporting evidence employed but is too sparse, or its relevance is not always made clear
Too much narrative or description at expense of analysis
Little concern for conflicting evidence and counter-arguments or they are not refuted convincingly
Introduction overly terse, lengthy, or confused to be effective or does not agree with conclusion
Conclusion is insufficiently related to arguments in paper
Citations and footnotes are not always used when needed; footnotes and bibliography may sometimes use inconsistent and/or inappropriate format
Adequate organization (introduction, body, conclusion) but structural flaws compromise presentation
Errors of style are regular or serious enough to compromise presentation

NC Thesis is unclear, unproven, missing, or fails to address the assignment
Supporting evidence is irrelevant or missing; essay relies on assertion rather than demonstration
Narrative or description far outweigh analysis
No treatment of conflicting evidence or counter-arguments; evidence twisted to fit thesis
Conclusion fails to draw on arguments in the paper or is missing
Footnotes and/or bibliography are absent, incomplete, or improperly formatted
Deficient organization, mechanics, and style result in an incoherent paper
Deviates from prescribed format for assignment
Inappropriate/non-academic style
Paper is plagiarized in part or whole
Paper lacks a completed (and accurate) "Checklist For Papers"