

# Grading Criteria

## **C/C+ paper**

### ***Argument/Thesis/Position/Project***

- The paper addresses the assignment/prompt.
- The paper has some sense of purpose and intention, even if the statement of purpose is not yet well articulated.
- The statement of the paper's purpose may be stated, if confusingly, in the introduction or it may appear elsewhere in the paper, as late as the conclusion.
- The statement of the paper's purpose may be stated vaguely or broadly.
- For a C+, the paper might have a clear purpose but that purpose may only reiterate what was covered in class.

### ***Support/Evidence/Work with Text/Quotation/Synthesis/Connection***

- The paper demonstrates the student's ability to work with the ideas of the readings in support of the paper's purpose and intention; that is, the paper contains more than simply a summary of the readings—if there is summary, it is directed in support of the student's project in the paper.
- The paper demonstrates that the student is beginning to work closely with text through quotation. This work will usually involve some analysis of the quotations or indication from the student of how the quotation functions in support of the paper's project.
- In a C+ paper, the student may be consistently analyzing quotations but may not provide any indication how this analysis support the central project of the paper.
- Papers in the passing C range might still include the student's opinion, but that opinion is not offered as the sole support of the argument of the paper.

### ***Organization***

- Although the paper may not have a clear over-arching organization, individual paragraphs cohere.
- Despite the lack of a clear overall structure, at least some paragraphs are logically related.
- A C+ paper, in particular, attempts to have a structure, but this structure may be flawed in one or more places.

### ***Grammar/Language/Presentation***

- The paper shows evidence of at least basic proofreading.
- The paper has limited serious grammatical error—the kind that impedes meaning.
- The paper shows that the student has attempted to provide citation where needed.

## **B-/B/B+ paper**

**Papers in the B range demonstrate all the qualities of papers in the passing C range and reflect these additional criteria.**

### ***Argument/Thesis/Position/Project***

- The paper has a clear statement of purpose. That is, the thesis/argument is articulated in a sentence or series of sentences that can be readily identified. B- papers may have residual difficulties in expressing this purpose clearly.
- The argument/thesis of the paper moves towards an original contribution to the conversation of the texts. That is, rather than mirroring class discussion, the student begins to stake her or his own stance on the issues of the prompt/assignment.
- B papers might also have an original point but repeat the point in the paper rather than developing it.
- A B+ paper might have a particularly strong, original, or complex purpose, stated with clarity and authority.

### ***Support/Evidence/Work with Text/Quotation/Synthesis/Connection***

- The paper's purpose is well-supported through evidence gathered from the texts.
- The paper includes close work with quotation, in which the student provides interpretation of the quotation in support of her or his project in the paper. The paper might also include instances of paraphrase that are also used in support of the paper's project.
- Papers in the B- range might still include student opinion, but they also demonstrate that the student is beginning to move beyond a reliance on opinion and is instead working more closely with substantial forms of evidence such as quotation.
- In B+ papers, the student begins to assume more authority in relation to the texts. She or he will work extensively with quotation but might begin to interrogate the authors through analysis of these quotations or might extend the ideas of the authors. In other words, a B+ paper shows that the student is beginning to enter the conversation of the texts.

### ***Organization***

- The paper has a clear organization and a reasonable coherence overall.
- B- papers may have a clear organization but poor indication of that organization through awkward or missing paragraph transitions.
- B papers may have organizational structures or transitions that are mechanical and repetitive.
- B+ papers tend to start moving towards more sophisticated organization and transitions. Each paragraph has a function in the paper and movement between the paragraphs is fluid.

### ***Grammar/Language/Presentation***

- The paper has been proofread and is free from serious error.
- B- papers might have persistent patterns of error.
- B papers begin to show that the student is learning how to recognize and correct patterns of error.
- B+ papers should have minimal error.

## **A-/A paper**

**Papers in the A range demonstrate all the qualities of papers in the B range and reflect these additional criteria.**

### ***Argument/Thesis/Position/Project***

- Papers in the A range have original, complex, insightful, sophisticated, or nuanced purposes, stated clearly and concisely.
- Rather than simply having the texts or authors talk to each other, the student assumes a confidence and authority in speaking to, with, and against the texts.
- An A- paper might have a particularly promising argument that falls short in one or two moments of the paper.

### ***Support/Evidence/Work with Text/Quotation/Synthesis/Connection***

- The paper shows particularly sophisticated work with quotation, either through especially insightful analysis, surprisingly or original analyses, or strong connective work across the essays.
- The argument of the paper is thoroughly supported by the textual evidence of the paper.
- An A- paper might have particularly strong use of quotation, except for one or two instances in the paper.

### ***Organization***

- The paper is seamlessly organized, with strong transitions throughout.
- An A- paper might have one or two places where the organization is unclear, but the paper as a whole continues to cohere.

### ***Grammar/Language/Presentation***

- The paper is essentially error-free.
- An A- paper might have some minor errors.