Grading Rubric: Midterm Essay

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|  | **Does not meet** | **Partial** | **Good** | **Excellent** |
| **Thesis** | Does not include a clear thesis. The paper may be off-topic or its purpose unclear. | Does not included a stated thesis but the paper ultimately presents a clear argument regarding a specific topic. | Presents a thesis that is relevant to the assignment and course. | Presents a clear, readily-identifiable thesis that is relevant to the assignment and course. The thesis contains an argument or clear position. |
| **Framing and argument** | The paper is unfocused and of limited relevance to the question. The content covers several unrelated topics. | The author may ignore key aspects of the question or topic. The work may veer off-topic or does not fully support the central argument of the paper. | The author does a good job supporting the central thesis, with relevant examples and content. Its content could use a bit more engagement or depth to fully develop the argument. | The author builds a strong case in support of its thesis, drawing in multiple relevant theories, examples, and/or viewpoints. The content has a clear purpose and is relevant to the central argument. |
| **Accuracy and Understanding** | The information presented contains inaccuracies or does not appear to understand the topic. It may mischaracterize or misrepresent supporting evidence. | The information presented may misrepresent or misunderstand some minor aspects of the topic, but is accurate in its understanding of the primary topic. | The information presented is almost free of factual errors, and any factual errors are very minor. It presents a good understanding of the topic and supporting evidence. | The information presented is free of factual errors. It demonstrates a strong understanding of the topic and supporting evidence. |
| **Analysis** | The paper lacks an analysis of the content presented, instead presenting generalizations, opinions, or misinformation. | The author tends to not move beyond narrating and describing. It shows a general grasp of the topic but does not critically engage with it. | The author presents a good analysis of the topic, but could develop the author’s analysis a bit further. For example, the analysis may be a bit rushed, rely more on quoted sources than the author’s own voice, or lack consideration of counter-arguments or perspectives. | The author presents a solid, convincing analysis using the author’s own voice. The analysis is supported by examples and considers counter-arguments. |
| **Supporting evidence** | The paper does not have supporting evidence, and instead draws primarily on things like opinion, memory, and/or unsubstantiated content. | The author does not include enough evidence to support its key points, or relies too heavily on quotations to present its argument. The work may draw primarily from one source, even if meeting the source requirements. | The author includes evidence to support specific points and the overall argument, drawing on a balance or variety of sources. The work meets the required number of sources, presenting a good understanding of the sources and/or the data used and its relevance to the paper. | The author includes evidence to support specific points and the overall argument. The work engages with the sources or data, perhaps expanding beyond them, challenging arguments made, or presenting counter-perspectives. |
| **Citations and Bibliography**  (Note: plagiarized content receives an automatic zero for the assignment) | The paper does not contain proper citations and/or it does not contain a bibliography. Despite lacking citations, the work is still the student’s own. | The paper makes an effort to cite but citations are not quite accurate or a few are missing. May contain a bibliography that may be missing one or two citations included in the paper. | The paper is cited properly, with a few minor errors in formatting or scope. Contains a properly formatted bibliography. | The entire paper is properly cited and contains a properly formatted bibliography. |
| **Structure and organization** | The paper’s organization is confusing, making the argument difficult to follow. The paper may lack a clear introduction and/or conclusion. | The paper presents information in a generally clear and logical order, but its organization is unclear in parts, perhaps presenting information whose purpose or relevance is uncertain. The structure may lack a solid introduction and/or conclusion. | The paper is generally well-structured and well-organized, with a clear introduction and conclusion. The content, organization, and structure support the paper’s thesis. The concluding analysis may be a bit underdeveloped or a slight improvement in organization could strengthen the overall paper. | The paper is clearly organized with a logical structure and relevant content that serve to build, challenge, and support the overall thesis. The paper contains a clear introduction and a well-developed concluding analysis. |
| **Grammar and spelling** | Has significant grammatical and/or spelling errors, which may cause confusion regarding the author’s intended meaning. | Has somewhat frequent errors in grammar and/or spelling, that is noticeable to the reader. | May contain a few minor errors, but they are not distracting and do not cause confusion. | Almost entirely free of grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. |

Please note that any paper that does not meet the assignment guidelines will be graded outside of the rubric. Papers containing plagiarized content will receive an automatic 0.