

Rubric for Grades on Literature Papers

A (+/-)

Mechanics: **A** papers exhibit no significant (but perhaps one or two minor) syntactical, grammatical, punctuation or format (i.e., citation) errors.

Analysis: **A** papers exhibit a sustained, consistent level of analysis appropriate to the linguistic, rhetorical and thematic aspects of the work; they employ appropriate direct references (in the form of citation) to the primary work (and, in research papers, to secondary sources); they avoid whenever possible paraphrase, summary or irrelevant generalizations. Essay and paragraph development are coherent and logical and explore the implications of a clearly stated thesis. In the case of explication papers, an **A** paper states clearly the direction and/or mode of analysis.

Style: **A** papers exhibit a mature and, ideally, graceful style, with a sense of decorum (i.e., appropriateness of diction and form) and contain no lapses in clarity. Sentence structure varies and word choice is unproblematic.

—An **A+** paper essentially has to be perfect.

—An **A-** paper may err slightly in one of these three categories.

B (+/-)

Mechanics: **B** papers exhibit 2-3 significant syntactical, grammatical or punctuation errors and may not always follow the appropriate format for citation.

Analysis: **B** papers exhibit a less sustained, less consistent level of analysis appropriate to the linguistic, rhetorical and thematic aspects of the work; they may not always employ appropriate direct references (in the form of citation) to the primary work (and, in research papers, to secondary sources); they may descend on occasion to paraphrase, summary or irrelevant generalization. Essay and paragraph development are generally coherent and logical, but may show evidence of confused or faulty reasoning, disorganization or unsubstantiated interpretation. There may not be a clear relation at all times between paragraphs and thesis or, in the case of explication papers, between paragraphs and the stated direction and/or mode of analysis.

Style: **B** papers exhibit a less mature and often wooden style, characterized by infelicitous or imprecise phrasing, and may include occasional lapses in clarity or decorum (i.e., appropriateness of diction and form). Sentence structure does not vary much and word choice may at times be problematic.

—A **B+** paper exhibits minor problems in only one of these three areas;

—A **B-** paper may exhibit problems in more than one (though not all areas or to a pervasive degree).

C (+/-)

Mechanics: **C** papers exhibit multiple and significant syntactical, grammatical and punctuation errors and may not follow the appropriate format for citation.

Analysis: **C** papers exhibit almost no sustained or consistent level of analysis appropriate to the linguistic, rhetorical and/or thematic aspects of the work; they may not employ appropriate direct references (in the form of citation) to the primary work (and, in research papers, to secondary sources); they may descend frequently to paraphrase, summary or

irrelevant generalization. Essay and paragraph development are frequently incoherent or illogical, (i.e. show evidence of confused or faulty reasoning, lack of organization or unsubstantiated interpretation). There may not be a clearly stated thesis or, in the case of explication papers, a clearly stated direction and/or mode of analysis.

Style: C papers exhibit an immature and often wooden style, characterized by infelicitous or imprecise phrasing, and may include multiple lapses in clarity and decorum (i.e., appropriateness of diction and form). Sentence structure is often paratactic (i.e., lacks subordination) and word choice may often be problematic.

—A C+ paper exhibits problems to a pervasive degree in only one of these three areas;

—A C- paper may exhibit problems in all (though not all to a pervasive degree).

D (-/+)

Mechanics: D papers exhibit pervasive and significant syntactical, grammatical and punctuation errors and do not follow the appropriate format for citation.

Analysis: D papers may lack any attempt at analysis whatsoever or may exhibit a confused sense of the level of analysis appropriate to the linguistic, rhetorical and/or thematic aspects of the work; they typically do not employ appropriate direct references (in the form of citation) to the primary work (and, in research papers, to secondary sources); they may descend pervasively to paraphrase, summary or irrelevant generalization. Essay and paragraph development are generally incoherent or illogical (i.e., show evidence of confused or faulty reasoning, lack of organization or unsubstantiated interpretation). There is often no clearly stated thesis or, in the case of explication papers, a clearly stated direction and/or mode of analysis.

Style: D papers exhibit almost no sense of style and a general lack of clarity and/or pervasive lapses in decorum (i.e., appropriateness of diction and form). Sentence structure is often paratactic (i.e., lacks subordination) and word choice may be pervasively problematic.

—A D+ paper exhibits problems to a slightly less than pervasive degree in perhaps only two of these areas;

—A D- paper may exhibit problems in all to a more or less pervasive degree.

D (and E) papers exhibit a level of writing inappropriate for 200-level course work.

E

Mechanics, Analysis, Style: Like the D paper, only worse.

E papers also fail to respond to the assignment.