

Grading Criteria for History 152 Papers

General criteria

Content

1. The paper has a clear thesis that addresses the question(s) posed in the assignment.
2. The paper presents a logically organized argument in support of the thesis.
3. The paper reflects thoughtful analysis of the assigned materials by using evidence drawn from those materials to support and illustrate the argument.

Mechanics

1. The paper observes the rules of standard English diction and syntax. It is free of spelling and grammatical errors and avoids the “seven deadly sins” of editing and punctuation:
 - improper use of commas (especially the “comma splice” used in place of a period)
 - improper use of semicolons
 - improper capitalization
 - improper use of apostrophes
 - use of dangling modifiers
 - homonyms and other “Spell-Check errors” (e.g., “lead” for “led”)
 - inaccurate or improper word usage (e.g. “comprised of” for “composed of”; use of “they” for “he/she/it” when both gender and number are clear).
2. The paper is stylistically consistent. It has appropriate sentence and paragraph structures and makes effective use of expository devices such as transitions.

Basic grading categories

- A* = The paper exceeds basic requirements regarding content. The thesis and argument show independent thought, careful analysis, and creative engagement with the material; the paper takes account not only of supporting evidence but also of possible objections to the argument and/or evidence that may contradict it. The paper has no major errors of grammar or usage and displays a good sense of style.
- B* = The paper meets basic requirements regarding content and mechanics. The thesis addresses the assigned question(s); the paper includes supporting evidence from the assigned materials, though the argument may not be as fully or carefully developed as in an A paper. The paper has few errors of grammar or usage.
- C* = The paper barely meets requirements regarding content and/or mechanics. The thesis may be unclear or fail to address the assigned question(s); the argument may reflect a less intensive engagement with assigned materials, e.g., it may ignore significant evidence that supports or contradicts the author’s thesis. Errors of grammar or usage may be more numerous or more significant; paragraph structure, transitions, etc. may be weak.
- D* = The paper fails to meet minimum requirements regarding content and/or mechanics. It may lack a coherent thesis or fail to develop a coherent supporting argument. Errors of grammar, usage, and/or organization may be numerous and/or significant.
- F* = (Usually reflects plagiarism, failure to complete an assignment, etc.)

Thesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper has a clearly stated thesis. • The thesis suitably addresses the question(s) posed in the assignment. 	4 3 2 1
Argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper presents a logically organized argument in support of the thesis. • The argument shows originality of thought and/or depth of analysis. 	4 3 2 1
Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper demonstrates careful reading and analysis of the assigned text. • The paper offers appropriate examples in support of the argument. 	4 3 2 1
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper has an effective introduction and a convincing conclusion. • Paragraphs are cohesive and well organized. • The paper makes effective use of transitions to move from one paragraph to the next. 	4 3 2 1
Mechanics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper employs proper sentence structure. • The paper does not have errors of spelling, grammar, or punctuation. 	4 3 2 1

(4 = excellent 3 = acceptable 2 = could use improvement 1 = unsatisfactory)