

## Grading Rubric

The following rubric is used in all Writing Program courses to ensure consistent standards for evaluating student essays.

### A=Superior

Convincingly and ardently communicates a noteworthy idea to an audience through sophisticated use of rhetorical strategies.

- **Thesis/focus**—demonstrates an awareness of audience, is sophisticated, and is clearly established and maintained throughout.
- **Organization**—has a clear sense of logical order appropriate to the content and the thesis.
- **Development**—demonstrates critical thinking that is clear, insightful, in depth, and relevant to the topic.
- **Syntax and Diction**—uses sophisticated language that engages the reader; manipulates sentence length to enhance the total effect of the essay; uses precise language that expresses complex ideas clearly.
- **Format and Design**—fully integrates elements of design to best serve rhetorical purpose.
- **Research** (if applicable)—uses sources effectively and documents sources accurately.
- **Mechanics**—contains very few errors of spelling, grammar, paragraphing or manuscript format.

### B=Strong

Effectively conveys an insightful idea to an audience through consistent and controlled use of rhetorical strategies.

- **Thesis/focus**—is intelligent, clearly established, and consistently addressed throughout.
- **Organization**—is logical, clear, and controlled.
- **Development**—demonstrates critical thinking that is more than adequate, with significant detail; may show depth in thinking and research.
- **Syntax and Diction**—demonstrates knowledge of and skill with complex and varied sentence constructions and vocabulary.
- **Format and Design**—consistently contributes to the persuasive aims of the assignment.
- **Research** (if applicable)—uses sources effectively and documents accurately.
- **Mechanics**—may contain errors, but these errors do not interfere with the essay's overall effectiveness.

### C=Competent

Communicates an idea, but does not consistently address the needs of its audience.

- **Thesis/focus**—has a central idea that is conventional or general.
- **Organization**—the essay's organization is choppy and may, at times, be difficult to follow.
- **Development**—demonstrates limited critical thinking and limited knowledge of the subject.
- **Syntax and Diction**—demonstrates competency with language use, but sentence constructions and vocabulary may be limited or repetitive.
- **Format and Design**—unevenly incorporates elements of design to aid its argument
- **Research** (if applicable)—lacks sufficient research for the topic, poorly incorporates sources, or fails to document accurately
- **Mechanics**—contains multiple errors that hinder the essay's readability.

### D=Inadequate

Ineffectively communicates its idea to its intended audience.

- **Thesis/focus**—is superficial and inconsistently addressed; reveals limited awareness of audience
- **Organization**—reveals no apparent strategy and lapses in focus and logic.
- **Development**—displays little knowledge of the subject, does not form conclusions, or fails to exhibit critical thinking or clear reasoning.
- **Syntax and Diction**—contains repetitive, incorrect, or ineffective sentence structure; displays a limited vocabulary.
- **Format and Design**—bears little relevance to the assignment's rhetorical purpose or guidelines.
- **Research** (if applicable)—lacks sufficient research for the topic, poorly incorporates sources, or fails to document sources accurately.
- **Mechanics**—contains many errors that garble the meaning or intent.

### F=Incompetent

Fails to present its ideas to the audience and does not meet some or all of the criteria for the assignment.

- **Thesis/focus**—lacks a central idea; has no awareness, or limited awareness, its audience and purpose.
- **Organization**—is random and without focus or logic.
- **Development**— displays little or no knowledge of the subject, does not form conclusions, or fails to exhibit critical thinking or clear reasoning
- **Syntax and Diction**— fails to demonstrate competency with language use; sentence constructions and vocabulary may be inappropriate, facile, or incoherent.
- **Format and Design**—makes no attempt to use the elements of design to help persuade its audiences
- **Research** (if applicable)—fails to include sufficient sources for topic, incorporates irrelevant or inadequate sources, or plagiarizes.
- **Mechanics**—contains serious and multiple errors that seriously hinder the reading of the paper.