Writing Assignment 2: Assessment of Student Work

Below is an assessment of three samples of student work that range in level (low, medium, high)

Low-scoring Student (5.5/10)
This student did not submit the online assignment and did not participate in the in-class discussion. The poor quality of the paper's argument likely reflects a lack of preparation. The student presents no evidence in the paper of having read the assigned scholarly article (which he would have had to have done for the online assignment). One of the central problems with this paper is its poor style (incomplete sentences, ungrammatical language, lack of formatting). Beyond this problem, however, the student shows no evidence of having thought about what the terms “feminist” or “misogynist” might mean with regard to Euripides’ play. The student begins the paper with a clear statement that the play is “misogynist” and tries to argue for this reading by tracing Medea’s character over the play as a decline into monstrosity. The student’s argument is marred by gross generalizations (rather than references to the play itself) and the chosen evidence from the text does not help to support the already weakly supported thesis.

Mid-level Student (7.5/10)
This student got a 1.6/3 on the online assignment and did not participate in the in-class discussion. The student thus had partial preparation for the writing assignment. This student falls into the trap that many students did on this paper: arguing that the play is feminist because Medea (a woman) is the central character and is successful at getting revenge against her husband (this led to a 2-point deduction for style). This paper, as with many others, although it took a stance on the prompt, responded with broad strokes and superficial understanding of “feminism” to make its point. This paper received .5 points off for style, as it contains phrases not appropriate for formal writing (such as, “pretty much”). While the paper does cite from the text, its argument is weakened by generalizations and vague statements (“the entire situation happening in the play is all because of…”).

High-level Student (10/10)
This student received a score of 2.9/3 on the online assignment and participated in the in-class discussion. This essay is distinguished by its serious engagement with the topic in a way that responds directly to the kind of work presented in the scholarly essay, which frames its discussion of feminism and misogyny in the play in terms of how it reflects societal roles and expectations for women. The student did extra research into Athenian society in order to ground his response in a discussion of the cultural background to the play. He then goes into his analysis of citations from the text in a way that links the way they depict women in relation to the cultural context for the play. This student has clearly internalized the ideas and methods presented in the scholarly essay in order to make his argument. His writing is clear and error-free. This student is a senior (Microbiology major), so his experience and maturity likely contributed to the sophistication of his work.