

Evaluating Your Thesis

This assignment will help you develop more fruitful means of integrating feedback on your written work into your future writing, and, more substantively, into your learning process. Rather than being a passive recipient of a grade handed out by me, you are here invited to become an active participant in critiquing your own work.

Please review the rubric below. Then, read your thesis and my comments. After reviewing your work and my comments, please write a 2-page single-spaced evaluation of your own essay using the guidelines below. Also, use this opportunity to respond to my marginal comments. Finally, calculate your own suggested grade for this assignment and return this form to me with your response and a copy of your essay with any marginal notes you have made.

NAME:

Depth of Historical Research (35%) _____
Quality of Expression (20%): _____

Analysis and Use of Evidence (30%): _____
Presentation (15%): _____

TOTAL: _____

Please add any comments here:

| Element | A Range | B Range | C Range | D Range |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Depth of Historical Research | <p>The quality of the research is excellent. Students used exclusively scholarly secondary sources and it is clearly evident that the material listed in the bibliography was well-understood and well-considered. Students acquired multiple kinds of primary sources and used more than 4 major primary sources extensively in the paper. Students demonstrated tenacity and creativity in their research.</p> | <p>The quality of the research is very good. Students used scholarly secondary sources but also relied to some extent on textbooks, encyclopedias, or other tertiary sources. Students primarily relied on one type of primary source (for instance, textual documents) instead of using a variety of sources. Student used at least 2 major primary sources in the text of their paper.</p> | <p>The research did not rely primarily on scholarly sources but derives from texts that were not written by historians or other scholars. Students have included information obtained from other websites or relied very heavily on textbooks. The basic information, however, is still factually accurate. Students relied on 1-2 primary sources of the same type (i.e., newspaper articles, speeches, etc.).</p> | <p>The research is flawed and some of the information provided is inaccurate. There are references to things that are unverifiable; some of the information provided misconstrues the information in the scholarly texts. The students relied heavily on texts that were not written by scholars. Research shows minimal effort.</p> |

| Element | A Range | B Range | C Range | D Range |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Strength of Argumentation | <p>An "A" essay shows command of interpretive and conceptual tasks required by assignment and sources. In an "A" essay, the ideas are original, often insightful. Students derive their theses <i>from</i> their analysis of primary sources. In an "A" essay, students engage in deep reading of primary texts.</p> | <p>A "B" essay shows a good understanding of the texts, ideas and methods of the assignment. It goes beyond the realm of obvious conclusions. Students may derive their argument from secondary source reading but use primary evidence to elaborate and illustrate their thesis. A "B" essay may have minor conceptual inconsistencies but contains an otherwise clear, specific, argumentative thesis central to the essay. A "B" essay may have left one or two minor terms undefined.</p> | <p>A "C" essay shows a general understanding of the basic ideas and information involved in the assignment but may have factual, interpretive, or conceptual errors in the general thesis or controlling idea and does not adequately define central terms. Students in a "C" essay use primary sources to "prove" a factual assertion rather than as a source to be analyzed. "C" essays often include generalizations and undefined terms.</p> | <p>A "D" essay shows inadequate command of sources or has significant factual and conceptual errors; does not respond directly to the demands of the assignment; and confuses more than one significant idea. The thesis of a "D" essay is vague or may be little more than an observation.</p> |

| Element | A Range | B Range | C Range | D Range |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Quality of Expression | <p>“A” range essays are built upon a clear, precise, well-defined thesis that is sophisticated in both statement and insight. Uses well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently throughout paper; uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident. An “A” essay includes appropriate, clear and smooth transitions; arrangement of paragraphs is optimal for pursuing argument. Topic sentences serve to drive the argument forward throughout the paper instead of describing information. Student demonstrates care for the quality of the assignment. Student chooses quotations from primary material to serve as an object of analysis and rarely if ever uses block quotes.</p> | <p>A “B” essay pursues thesis consistently, develops a main argument with clear major points and appropriate textual evidence and supporting detail and makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically. Stylistically, a “B” essay includes distinct units of thought in paragraphs controlled by detailed topic sentences. Although, in a “B” paper, topic sentences may occasionally be descriptive rather than argumentative. Student makes clear transitions between paragraphs that are internally cohesive and that are organized in a logical way. Student includes well-chosen quotations from primary material. Few block quotes.</p> | <p>A “C” essay only partially develops an argument and demonstrates a general lack of coherent organization. A “C” essay may include primary source evidence but leave it floating, unmoored to specific ideas. “C” essays usually include awkward transitions; some brief, weakly unified or undeveloped paragraphs whose arrangement may not appear entirely natural. Topic sentences are largely descriptive and do not substantially differ in form from transitions. Student may rely heavily on block quotes.</p> | <p>A “D” essay tends to narrate or summarize instead of argue. The author wanders from one topic to another. The author may not use primary source evidence as anything other than a reference. The ideas in the paper are almost incoherent. Paragraphs are incomplete and possess little visible internal organization. Students seemed to make no effort to organize the paper in a coherent way.</p> |

| Element | A Range | B Range | C Range | D Range |
|--------------|--|---|--|---|
| Presentation | <p>Prose includes sophisticated, grammatically coherent sentences used effectively. Authors of "A" essays usually choose words aptly; strictly observe conventions of written English, and make few technical errors. "A" essays show maximum attention to detail. Students follow technical aspects of assignment (citation format) perfectly. Student uses active verbs for the most part and demonstrates a sophisticated vocabulary. The tone of "A" papers is professional and scholarly without being unnecessarily verbose. Student endeavors to develop a distinct voice in their writing.</p> | <p>Prose is clear but not particularly sophisticated. "B" essays may reflect some mechanical difficulties or stylistic problems. Students may make occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors, perhaps relying too much on colloquialisms. Often students of "B" essays make punctuation errors. Students mostly follow technical aspects of assignment. Student may rely a bit too heavily on passive voice constructions but has visibly tried to minimize them. Student may have a relatively simple vocabulary but chooses words precisely. The tone of "B" papers is professional if not scholarly. The writing may occasionally be very simple but it is almost always clear.</p> | <p>"C" essays often include excessive wordiness at the expense of clarity. Sentences may be ungrammatical as well as unclear. Students use words imprecisely, relying on colloquialisms very often. Students of "C" essays may rely heavily on the passive voice and on simple, "to be" verbs. "C" essays contain major grammatical errors (subject-verb agreement, comma splice, etc.). A "C" essay often seems hastily written. The tone of "C" papers veers towards the conversational. Students make significant errors in the technical aspects of the paper.</p> | <p>"D" essays possess major grammatical or proofreading errors (subject-verb agreement; sentence fragments). The language of a "D" essay includes many clichés, generalizations, and colloquialisms. "D" essays demonstrate a general lack of attention or care. The tone of "D" essays are often inappropriately the casual. Students do not make any visible effort to follow the technical requirements of the assignment.</p> |