Term Paper Grading Standards

100 % The paper is exceptional in every regard and there is little that can be done to improve the paper. It is responsive to the assignment; thoughtful, well written, well organized, consistently follows a generally accepted format and includes references to the most recent materials available. The syntax is precise and clear.

95% The paper is responsive to the assignment, thoughtful, well written and logically organized. Its format should be consistent and easily followed. The paper is well illustrated and well documented. The syntax communicates the ideas clearly. The bibliography is reasonably complete and up-to-date. It is clearly superior to the run-of-the-mill papers. It is a polished product with a minimal number of grammatical and spelling errors.

90% A very good paper that is well written, correct, and thoughtful. It must be well organized and respond to the assignment. It should include good documentation. The topic [or hypothesis] of the paper is clear and the paper relates to that hypothesis without rambling. It should not contain irrelevant nor incorrect information.

85% An above average paper with some sections clearly above average. The paper is well done and generally correct. It responds to the assignment and demonstrates good documentation combined with clear writing. The paper is organized and presents a cohesive argument with sentences that are clear and concise.

80% A good paper that is clearly better than the average paper. The paper should be organized and written in a style so that the major points or arguments are apparent to the reader. Documentation should identify the major works relevant to the topic of the paper. There should be few errors in grammar, spelling or syntax.

75% An average, run-of-the mill paper. Some documentation combined with a paper that addresses the assignment but does not suggest that the author spent much time or thought on the topic, organizing the materials or writing the paper. The paper tends toward reorganizing and repeating materials that are available in any text. Some errors of grammar and spelling may be present but they should not be excessive.

70% An average paper that contains above average number of errors including poor syntax and spelling. It responds to the assignment in a minimal way and shows poor organization. The paper may tend to “ramble” without drawing any clear conclusion.

65% Some major problems in an otherwise average paper. It has many of the aspects of a first draft. Paper may ramble with no direction or purpose. Documentation is minimal.

60% Not responsive to the assignment, the paper is below average for college work, and appears to have been written hastily with the elements of a first draft.

Below 60% The paper reflects less than minimal effort for college work. It is generally unresponsive to the assignment and demonstrates little thought about the assignment. It may also test the patience of the reader.