

## Grade Descriptors for Essays

	Argument	Theory Analysis	Writing Style
<p>[Excellent]</p> <p>A (85–92)</p> <p>or</p> <p>[Very Good] A- (80–84)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You provide a <b>detailed and specific thesis statement</b> that clearly describes the main claim(s) you will be arguing for and indicates how what you plan to say adds something to the discussion, rather than mostly repeating the material we have read.</li> <li>You <b>defend your claims</b> in a well-developed way by giving and explaining your reasons for your position.</li> <li>You identify likely <b>objections</b>, present them charitably and respond to them effectively.</li> <li>You carefully explain the theoretical and/or practical <b>implications</b> of your argument.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You provide an <b>accurate account</b> of the relevant parts of the theory.</li> <li>You illuminate the relationship between the theory’s <b>conclusion(s) and its arguments</b>.</li> <li>You quote relevant <b>key passages</b> with proper citations.</li> <li>You define <b>key terms</b>, and explain their role and how they relate to each other.</li> <li>You discuss what the thinker would probably have said about an issue by drawing on what he/she did say about other related matters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You choose your words carefully. The language is <b>precise</b> rather than vague, <b>natural</b> rather than awkward, <b>straightforward</b> rather than ostentatious.</li> <li>Each piece of the essay is presented in a way that makes it clear to the reader how it is <b>relevant to your thesis</b>.</li> <li>Where appropriate, you use real or hypothetical <b>examples to help illustrate</b> abstract points.</li> </ul>
<p>[Good]</p> <p>B+ (76–79),</p> <p>B (72–75) or</p> <p>B- (68–71)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thesis statement is clear, but general and unambitious.</li> <li>The reasons given to support claims are occasionally weak or too brief. Some claims in need of defence are merely asserted.</li> <li>Some key objections are not considered, or the response is weak or too brief.</li> <li>Theoretical and/or practical implications are not explained, or the explanation is vague and imprecise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are minor inaccuracies in the account of the theory. Some small points are overlooked.</li> <li>The theory’s arguments for its conclusion(s) are described, but the relationship between them is not explained, or the explanation is vague and imprecise.</li> <li>Use of quotations is sometimes missing or erratic or without proper citations.</li> <li>Some key concepts are not defined, or are defined carelessly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The language is generally clear, but occasionally lacks precision or naturalness or desirable simplicity.</li> <li>The relevance of small parts of the essay is not made clear.</li> <li>Illustrative examples are used rarely or not at all.</li> </ul>
<p>[Fair]</p> <p>C+ (64–67),</p> <p>C (60–63) or</p> <p>C- (56–59)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thesis statement is absent or insignificant or confused.</li> <li>The reasons given to support claims are usually weak or too brief. Many claims in need of defence are merely asserted.</li> <li>Objections are not considered, or they are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are significant inaccuracies in the account of the theory. Some major points are overlooked.</li> <li>The theory’s conclusion(s) are described without reference to its arguments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The language is often unclear, due to being vague or awkward or ostentatious.</li> <li>The relevance of significant parts of the essay is not made clear.</li> <li>Illustrative examples are used incorrectly or not at all.</li> </ul>

	<p>only a straw-man version, or the response is ineffective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implications are not identified, or they are asserted without explanation.</li> <li>• The argument is likely to contain contradictions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of quotations is missing or erratic or without proper citations.</li> <li>• Key concepts are not defined, or are defined incorrectly.</li> </ul>	
<p>[Pass]</p> <p>D+ (53–55) or</p> <p>D (50–52)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You demonstrate an awareness of what an argument is, and try to make one.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You grasp at least the main features of some of the theory’s most important points.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The language is intelligible more often than not.</li> </ul>
<p>[Fail]</p> <p>F (0-49)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You show little awareness of what an argument is, fails to make an argument, and shows almost no effort to make one.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You fail to grasp <i>any</i> of the major features of the theory. You have a fundamentally flawed and distorted understanding of the major points of the theory. On the whole, you demonstrate almost no effort in representing the theory accurately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The language is more unintelligible than not and the meaning of the language is very hard to discern. The essay is thoroughly unorganized.</li> </ul>

### ***Grade Descriptors for Essay Examinations***

<p>[Excellent] A (85–92) or [Very Good] A- (80–84)</p>	<p>Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You faithfully reconstruct the author’s positions, and prove this knowledge by knowing the argument(s) supporting the theses in the text.</li> <li>You evidence independent and self-initiated thinking and understanding of the arguments and philosophical problems through your ability to present your own counter-arguments and possible replies to counter-arguments.</li> </ul> <p>Theory Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You exhibit thorough understanding of the relations of the themes presented in the various texts.</li> <li>You demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the relations between the various subjects and authors discussed in the course.</li> <li>You demonstrate an above-average facility in judgment by applying the various theories to cases and situations presented in the course of the exam.</li> </ul>
<p>[Good] B+ (76–79), B (72–75), or B- (68–71)</p>	<p>Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can faithfully reconstruct the author’s positions, and demonstrate a basic comprehension of the arguments supporting those positions.</li> <li>You show some independence in thinking, but have difficulty developing your own criticisms and rebuttals to criticism.</li> </ul> <p>Theory Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You exhibit relatively complete understanding of the relations between the authors and the themes presented in the various texts.</li> <li>You show some basic, though average, facility in judgment by applying the various theories to cases and situations presented in the course of the exam.</li> </ul>
<p>[Fair] C+ (64–67), C (60–63), or C- (56–59)</p>	<p>Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You demonstrate an ability to properly relay information about the various texts and the positions contained therein, but have difficulty re-constructing the arguments, presenting counter-arguments, and criticism.</li> <li>You can faithfully relay information, but you show no independence in philosophical thinking, fail to show basic competence in philosophical argumentation and have a difficulty understanding arguments.</li> </ul> <p>Theory Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You show an incomplete understanding of the relations between the authors discussed in the course as well as the themes presented in the various texts.</li> <li>You demonstrate competence to memorize information, but you have some difficulty applying various theories to cases and situations presented in the course of the exam.</li> </ul>
<p>[Pass] D+ (53–55), or D (50–52)</p>	<p>Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You demonstrate some understanding of the course content, but have difficulty relaying accurate information about the positions and the arguments for such positions in the text.</li> </ul> <p>Theory Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the answers are readable, you exhibit seriously incomplete understanding of the content as well as the relationships between authors and themes covered in the readings and discussed in class.</li> <li>You fail to demonstrate facility in the application of various theories to cases and situations presented in the course of the exam.</li> </ul>

<p>[Fail] F (0-49)</p>	<p>Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You demonstrate no understanding of the course content. You relay inaccurate information about the positions and arguments for those positions in the text.</li></ul> <p>Theory Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The answers are unreadable, and your answers exhibit a complete lack of understanding of the relationships between authors and themes covered in the readings and discussed in class.</li></ul>
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### ***Grade Descriptors for Tutorial Performance***

<p>[Excellent] A (85–92) or [Very Good] A- (80–84)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You concisely explain the relevant material in a way that clarifies how the various pieces are meant to fit together.</li> <li>● You raise and clearly explain your own insightful questions of interpretation about the material.</li> <li>● You raise and clearly explain your own challenging yet fair objections to the material.</li> <li>● You construct charitable replies on the author’s behalf to your points, and provide your own rejoinders.</li> <li>● You carefully discuss the significance of your points and their theoretical or practical implications.</li> <li>● In discussion, you demonstrate a willingness to share newly formed ideas, and you effectively begin to develop ideas on the spot through constructive yet critical interaction with others.</li> </ul>
<p>[Good] B+ (76–79), B (72–75) or B- (68–71)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explanation of material contains minor errors, or is correct but adds little or nothing.</li> <li>● Questions/objections are relevant, but obvious.</li> <li>● Author’s reply is absent or oversimplified.</li> <li>● Implications are not discussed or are only briefly explained.</li> <li>● Good effort at discussion, but hesitant to take risks and has difficulty developing ideas on the spot.</li> </ul>
<p>[Fair] C+ (64–67), C (60–63) or C- (56–59)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explanation of material contains significant errors or oversights.</li> <li>● Questions/objections are often confused or unclear.</li> <li>● Author’s reply is absent or mistaken.</li> <li>● Implications are not discussed or are confused or unclear.</li> <li>● Little or no effort at discussion.</li> </ul>
<p>[Pass] D+ (53–55) or D (50–52)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You attend and show a reasonable interest in the discussion and a willingness to participate minimally if called upon.</li> </ul>
<p>[Fail] F (0-49)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You rarely attend or do not attend at all. You show little or no interest in the discussion and a general lack of willingness to participate if called upon.</li> </ul>

Note: Marks cannot be given for mere “attendance”, but may be deducted for “absences”.