

GRADING RUBRIC FOR PHILOSOPHY PAPERS

I. Argumentation (30 or 40%)

An exemplary paper:	.95	.85	.75	.65	.55	An unsatisfactory paper:
Presents, in a clear manner, strong and well-developed arguments in support of its central claims. Addresses any relevant counterarguments and also anticipates and defuses potential objections to its central claims and arguments. Is in many ways subtle, original, and insightful.						Fails to adequately defend its central claims. Fails either to rebut relevant counterarguments or to anticipate and defuse potential objections to its central claims and arguments. Is always trite, trivial, or unoriginal.

II. Exposition and Mastery of the Pertinent Material (30 or 40%)

An exemplary paper:	.95	.85	.75	.65	.55	An unsatisfactory paper:
Demonstrates mastery of the pertinent philosophical views, concepts, and arguments. Gives an accurate and charitable exposition and interpretation of the pertinent philosophical texts and views, providing textual support where appropriate. Fully explains key philosophical terms, concepts, and distinctions in an illuminating way, using the author's own words, examples, and descriptions.						Fails to demonstrate mastery of the pertinent philosophical views, concepts, and arguments. Provides an incomplete, inaccurate, and/or uncharitable exposition and interpretation of the pertinent philosophical texts and views. Fails to provide adequate explanations for key philosophical terms, concepts, or distinctions.

III. Introduction and Conclusion (10%)

An exemplary paper:	.95	.85	.75	.65	.55	An unsatisfactory paper:
Has an introduction that motivates the project and defines a sharp focus by clearly stating its central aim(s), e.g., a thesis or controlling idea relating to the assigned topic.						Has an inadequate introduction, one that fails to motivate the project or establish a clear focus by stating a thesis or controlling idea that relates to the assigned topic.
Has a conclusion that summarizes results clearly, explores implications/limitations of those results, and leaves readers with a sense of the paper's importance.						Has an inadequate conclusion, one that fails either to summarize results or to explain their implications, limitations, and importance.

IV. Organization (10%)

An exemplary paper:	.95	.85	.75	.65	.55	An unsatisfactory paper:
Has a clear and logical organizational plan, wherein the ordering of ideas, sentences, and paragraphs builds naturally toward the achievement of its central aim(s). Provides a user-friendly guide to the organizational plan by using transitional words/phrases/sentences to show how the various ideas, sentences, and paragraphs relate to the paper's central aim(s) and to each other.						Has an illogical or indiscernible organizational plan—the paper is a hodgepodge of ideas. Fails to provide a clear guide to the organizational plan, e.g., by failing to use adequate transitions or jumping from one idea or point to another without establishing any connection between them.

V. Writing (10%)

An exemplary paper:	.95	.85	.75	.65	.55	An unsatisfactory paper:
Exhibits a sophisticated (but unpretentious) writing style as it presents its ideas clearly, concisely, and precisely, such that what's being said is almost never open to misinterpretation and contains almost no unnecessary words, imprecision, or irrelevant content. Employs good diction. Contains virtually no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation, and documents sources properly. Is free of typos.						Has a writing style that significantly detracts from the argument, involving repetitive and simplistic sentence structures, unnecessarily inflated language, imprecise wording, and/or language that is unclear, wordy, repetitious, or contains irrelevant content. Often employs poor diction. Is riddled with grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors and/or fails to acknowledge sources properly. Is riddled with typos.