

Essay Assignment Response

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	Excellent	V. Good	Good	Needs Work	Absent
<b>Thesis:</b> Essay has a clearly defined thesis. Thesis is a well-focused approach to the essay question and is part of a carefully composed introductory paragraph that clearly indicates how you intend to prove that thesis.					
<b>Argument:</b> Thesis is argued clearly and effectively. Argument is well supported with specific examples from text and an adequate number and variety of quotations. Argument goes beyond describing relevant aspects of the text and instead focuses on analyzing <i>why</i> these aspects of the text are significant. Content is original and contains no unnecessary summarizing or paraphrasing of the text(s) being discussed.					
<b>Organization:</b> Points are clearly and logically ordered. All points contribute to the overall idea and argument.					
<b>Quality of writing:</b> Essay is clearly written and language is effective and precise. Paper is free of grammatical, typographical, and spelling errors, demonstrating that you have taken time to revise and edit your work.					
<b>MLA format:</b> Citations are used and follow MLA style. Works Cited list is present and correctly formatted.					

N.B. While each of the above categories do not count equally towards determining your grade, it is only the essays that succeed on all of these levels that merit an A.

**Letter grade:**

**Comments:**

### Marking guidelines

Marks in this course are not scaled and follow the usual UVM grading system.

A+	4.0	
A	4.0	Excellent
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	
B	3.0	Good
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	
C	2.0	Satisfactory
C-	1.67	
D+	1.33	Poor
D	1.0	Minimum pass
F	0-49%	Unsatisfactory

### Grading Criteria

#### A

- An excellent essay in nearly every respect with nearly no deficiencies in grammar, structure, or style.
- Clear development of a specific and challenging thesis, with proper paragraphing
- Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex), with full range of punctuation
- Graceful style, neither pompous nor breezy, with few errors
- Uses interesting and appropriate evidence effectively to support the thesis. Detailed reference to appropriate texts, with evidence of individual response
- Quotations well integrated into text, with proper documentation
- Ability not only to expound subject but to see around it-- subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

#### B

- A very good essay that fully answers the question but which falls somewhat short in at least one area
- Clear development of a specific thesis, with proper paragraphing
- Sentence structure correct, with reasonable range of sentence types and full range of punctuation
- Style not too wordy, with errors relatively few and minor
- Adequately detailed reference to texts
- Quotations well integrated into text, with proper documentation
- Ability to expound reasonably sophisticated ideas with clarity

**C**

- A good essay that answers the question but with less insight and completeness than an A or B essay
- Reasonably clear development of a thesis, with proper paragraphing
- Sentence structure correct, but perhaps overly simple, with tendency to avoid punctuation besides period and comma
- Errors relatively few, but occasionally serious, with evident misunderstanding of some point of elementary grammar (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)
- Effort to support points with references to the text, with reasonable effort at documentation
- Basic ability to expound ideas

**D**

Inadequacy at one of the following levels:

- Difficulty with paragraphing or consecutive thought
- Errors of grammar or diction frequent enough to interfere with understanding
- The roots of some fairly good ideas, but clouded by weak expression
- Overgeneralization with inadequate support, or with examples that run to lengthy and irrelevant paraphrase

**F**

- Inadequacy on several levels at once
- Ideas too simple for level of course
- Content largely "borrowed" from sources with no individual distillation, but no apparent attempt to deceive
- Plagiarism with intent to deceive

(I have compiled and adapted these grading criteria from a number of institutions where I have taught over the years. Many of these words are not my own, but the original sources for them are missing and thus not cited. They reflect commonly agreed upon distinctions between the various grades and not merely my own perspective on what each letter grade should signify.)