

REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL PAPERS

All written assignments for this course **MUST** adhere to these requirements—or be subject to a reduced grade.

Check all of the following before submitting any paper.

Formatting musts

All papers submitted to me must:

- Be typed, double-spaced, in 12 pt. standard font, with one-inch margins.
- Have a cover page with the title, your name, my name, and the date.
- Have page numbers on each page after the cover. The cover should not have a page number.
- Include both citations and a bibliography. (See Evidence musts.)
- Run at least the required length specified in the assignment.
- Have titles of books, films, and plays italicized and capitalized.
- Be submitted via BlackBoard as a Word or compatible file attachment or as a PDF attachment.

Evidence musts

All papers submitted to me must:

- Support all assertions with evidence from your sources.
- Use only primary and secondary sources. Tertiary sources are not allowed, ever.
- Provide a footnote or a parenthetical citation for all direct quotations, descriptions, paraphrases, and ideas from sources.
- Include a bibliography listing all sources used.

Structure musts

All papers submitted to me must:

- Have an introduction paragraph that states the problem or question being addressed; discusses possible opinions on this problem; and ends with a thesis statement—a statement of opinion that someone could disagree with.
- Cover three reasons why your thesis is true. Each should have an assertion (what your reason is), a description of supporting evidence (some moment in your evidence that's an example of your assertion), and a discussion of how your evidence demonstrates the point you're making.
- Have a conclusion that summarizes your three reasons and why they support your thesis.

Tips for Meeting the Requirements

Formatting musts

Use the template. Save the trouble of setting up the cover and page numbers—use the MS Word template file I created.

Page counts. Page counts are for full pages not counting the cover page and bibliography. If the requirement is “3-4 pages”, what I am looking for is at least 3 full pages of text, not counting the cover and not counting the bibliography.

BlackBoard notes. You may only submit via BlackBoard. Do not submit written assignments as submission text—they must be file attachments. If you need help with BlackBoard, go to the Lehman IT BlackBoard support page or call the IT helpdesk at (718) 960-1111.

Evidence musts

You may not use tertiary sources for any assignment. Tertiary sources include textbooks, encyclopedias, study guides, dictionaries, my lectures, and almost everything on the internet except online scholarly journals and transcribed primary sources. If you’re not sure, ask me.

Citing direct quotes is not enough. This common mistake will lose you points. Paraphrases and ideas must also be cited.

Citation styles. You can use Chicago, MLA, or any other citation style. What matters to me is that anything that’s not your analysis must have a footnote or a parenthetical citation that points to an item in your bibliography. See the Elephant Pamphlet for more on citations and bibliographies.

The number of sources you need to use varies from assignment to assignment.

Structure musts

See the Elephant Pamphlet for more on how to do all of this, including thesis statements, essay structure, and citations.

You can submit an optional draft for any paper, no later than one class meeting before the due date. I won’t grade it, but I’ll give you feedback about how well you’re addressing your topic and thesis. To make sure I see it soonest, please email me your optional draft rather than uploading it to BlackBoard.

I will not mark down for grammar, but clarity is important. Please spell-check and, if you’re not sure about your writing, have a friend read it.

See me for guidance. I am available anytime, by email or in office hours, to discuss any aspect of your paper.

Grading Criteria

Each paper will be graded according to the following criteria. A copy of the grading form I use is shown at right and also on the course website on the Essay Musts page.

- **Introduction (20%)** • States a topic and problem within the assignment • Ends with a definite thesis statement (a specific opinion that can be disagreed with) • Thesis gives insight into the assignment prompt
- **Organization (25%)** • Main body organized in 3 sections, each addressing a different aspect of the thesis and building support for it • Each section is driven by a specific, concrete assertion • Each section is self-contained and focused on its topic
- **Analysis (25%)** • Interpretation dominates over description (why over what) • Analysis prefers the specific to the general • Analysis provides insight on the relevant time and culture • Analysis supports the section assertions and overall thesis • Analysis provides in-depth answers to questions in prompt
- **Evidence (15%)** • Evidence used is relevant and well-chosen • Assertions are consistently supported by evidence • Independent voice retained with judicious use of quotes
- **Conclusion (15%)** • Paper ends with an appropriate concluding paragraph • Conclusion draws together the arguments made in each section and reinforces the thesis • Conclusion answers questions from assignment prompt

ESSAY GRADING SHEET

| | Grade | Comments |
|--|-------|----------|
| Introduction (20%) • States a topic and problem within the assignment • Ends with a definite thesis statement (a specific opinion that can be disagreed with) • Thesis gives insight into the assignment prompt | 1/5 | |
| Organization (25%) • Main body organized in 3 sections, each addressing a different aspect of the thesis and building support for it • Each section is driven by a specific, concrete assertion • Each section is self-contained and focused on its topic | 1/5 | |
| Analysis (25%) • Interpretation dominates over description (why over what) • Analysis prefers the specific to the general • Analysis provides insight on the relevant time and culture • Analysis supports the section assertions and overall thesis • Analysis provides in-depth answers to questions in prompt | 1/5 | |
| Evidence (15%) • Evidence used is relevant and well-chosen • Assertions are consistently supported by evidence • Independent voice retained with judicious use of quotes | 1/5 | |
| Conclusion (15%) • Paper ends with an appropriate concluding paragraph • Conclusion draws together the arguments made in each section and reinforces the thesis • Conclusion answers questions from assignment prompt | 1/5 | |
| Base Grade (before deductions) | | |
| Reversible Deductions <input type="checkbox"/> No cover sheet -3 <input type="checkbox"/> No page numbers -2 <input type="checkbox"/> Line spacing, margins, other formatting -5 to -10 <input type="checkbox"/> Work titles not italicized/capitalized -2 <input type="checkbox"/> Missing items in bibliography -2 <input type="checkbox"/> No bibliography -8 <input type="checkbox"/> Citations missing -5 to -10 If you have one of these, you may resubmit your paper with these problems fixed, and I will modify or remove the deductions. Only these deductions can be reversed. | | |
| Nonreversible Deductions <input type="checkbox"/> Paper submitted late -5 to -30 <input type="checkbox"/> Too short -5 to -10 <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer sources than required -10 to -20 <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary sources used/heavily used -10 to -25 <input type="checkbox"/> Plagiarism -100 These deductions reflect problems inherent to the paper as it was submitted. They cannot be reversed. | | |
| Grade | | |

Grading Deductions

There are two kinds of deductions relating to formatting, citations, and other technical requirements (see above for the requirements for all papers). Some deductions are reversible and can be gotten back by resubmitting the assignment with the issues corrected. Other deductions are not reversible.

Reversible deductions. If you have one of these deductions, you may resubmit your paper with these problems fixed, and I will modify or remove the deductions. Only these deductions can be reversed.

| | |
|--|-----|
| No cover sheet | -3 |
| No page numbers | -2 |
| Work titles not italicized/capitalized | -2 |
| Missing items in bibliography | -4 |
| No bibliography | -8 |
| Some citations missing | -5 |
| Many citations missing | -10 |
| All citations missing | -30 |

Nonreversible deductions. These deductions reflect problems inherent to the paper as it was submitted. They cannot be reversed.

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Submitted late (1 meeting) | -10 |
| Submitted late (2 meetings) | -20 |
| Submitted late (3+ meetings) | -30 |
| Too short | -10 |
| Fewer sources than required | -20 |
| Tertiary sources used | -10 |
| Heavy use of tertiary sources | -25 |
| Plagiarism | -100 |