

Appendix A7: Sample First-Year Seminar Rubric

Criteria for Grading the Critical Paper

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Developing	Inadequate
Thesis	The paper clearly expresses a thesis, or defensible answer to the question explored. The thesis reflects careful thought about the question and takes into account the complexities of the issue, showing awareness of alternative viewpoints and responding to these effectively.	The paper has an evident thesis (possibly not clearly stated) and shows some awareness of complexity, perhaps acknowledging other viewpoints but not responding to them effectively.	A position on the issue is evident, but it may be somewhat unclear, simplistic or inconsistent, or alternate viewpoints are not recognized and responded to.	A thesis is difficult to discern.
Evidence	The thesis is fully and logically supported with evidence from the text (books and/or movies), which is explained/discussed to make its relevance to the question clear. Consistently accurate information and understanding of the significance of details.	There is appropriate evidence given and explained. Generally accurate; may make small errors or miss the significance of some details.	Some points lack support, some evidence is included without explanation of its relevance, or some explanations are logically weak. There may be significant or recurrent errors of fact or comprehension of the text.	Generally weak or lacking in support and explanation, or only information (no points) included.
Use of outside information	Information from source(s) is relevant, useful, and effectively integrated into the discussion of the issue. Source use is acknowledged.	Relevant information is included. Connections between source information and the writer's thinking may sometimes be unclear or awkward. Source use is acknowledged.	Source information may not have obvious relevance to the question at hand or may overwhelm the writer's ideas. Source use is acknowledged.	No outside information included, or source use is not acknowledged.
Organization	Clear, appropriate organization with effective transitions; an effective introduction, conclusion, and title.	Ideas are in a reasonable order and appropriately paragraphed; introduction, conclusion, and title are present.	Some evidence of appropriate organization, perhaps not consistent; introduction, conclusion, or title may be missing.	Poor paragraph structure or no logical order to the points.
Clarity and correctness	Few or no errors; effective sentence structure and word choice.	Generally correct and clear, perhaps not as effective as 'A' in sentence structures or word choice.	Errors are present, enough to distract but not prevent understanding.	Errors are frequent or severe enough to interfere with communicating ideas.