

RYERSON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS and PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

ASSIGNMENT GRADING INFORMATION

The following guidelines apply most directly to term papers, case study reports and essay type take-home exams.

Your essay is evaluated to the format and content of your argument. The format consists of:

- a clear, coherent and systematic presentation;
- correct spelling and a competent writing style which will enable you to express your views and ideas clearly;
- proper citation (footnotes and bibliography or parenthetical notation and reference list).

The content of your paper should fulfil **four criteria**:

- to adequately and fully address all aspects of the essay question;
- to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the topic;
- to explain the issue or the case study (what happened, when, how, and why)
- to analyse the issue or the case study by locating it in the proper context (e.g. historical, theoretical, regional, national) and to discuss the relevant implications, effects or the significance of the problem/issue that you are examining.

In addition to the above factors, having an original argument will be welcomed by your instructors and will result in bonus points.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which results in automatic failure of your essay. The following are examples of plagiarism:

- Using a term paper from another course;
- A paper written by somebody else;
- Using someone else's argument without proper citation
- Taking information verbatim (either word by word or with only slight alterations) from a source without proper citation.

If you are not clear about any of these cases, check with your instructor before you hand in your assignment.

PERFORMANCE FACTORS

If you think of your paper as a construction, it requires planning (outline), careful thinking of concepts, issues, problems, examples or the case study and building of the argument methodically. Usually, it is helpful to state the objectives and the plan of the paper in the opening paragraph (introduction). The introduction should conclude with a concise, coherent summary of the argument to be developed by the paper (thesis statement).

In short papers, you do not need subheadings. Instead, you can use paragraphs as building blocks. To prevent repetition and unsystematic presentation, it is best if you have a well-thought-out framework. Such a framework might be based on chronological order or it might establish the parameters of the argument by first examining the causes, then their effects and significance.

If you are expected to do research, make sure to note full references of your sources [author, title of article and collection or of book, edition, editors, and page numbers of all the reference material. For books, include the year and place of publication; for journals, include the volume and issue numbers]. Consult a style manual (see below) for the appropriate display of this information! To effectively use the sources in your paper, try to identify the main argument of the author and select the examples carefully. Do not use too many long, direct quotations. You can summarise the argument in your own words, but make sure to cite the source of the information.

Politics Department Performance Scale (Undergraduate)

DEFINITION OF PERFORMANCE	LETTER GRADE	PERCENTILE RANGE (%)	RYERSON GPA
<u>Excellent</u> : achieves the four criteria listed above	A +	90 - 100	4.33
	A	85 - 89	4.00
	A -	80 - 84	3.67
	B +	77 - 79	3.33
<u>Good</u> , but internal consistency is weak or more specific elaboration is required	B	73 - 76	3.00
	B -	70 - 72	2.67
	C +	67 - 69	2.33
<u>Satisfactory</u> , but lacks analysis, clarity, or coherence	C	63 - 66	2.00
	C -	60 - 62	1.67
	D +	57 - 59	1.33
<u>Marginal</u> : Does not address the topic. Poor performance	D	53 - 56	1.00
	D -	50 - 52	0.67
<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	F	0 - 49	0.00

Source: - Graded Course Performance Designations from the current Ryerson *Calendar*
- Definition explanations added by the Department of Politics/School of Public Administration

Style Manuals:

APA (American Psychological Association) Style:

- American Psychological Association, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed., second printing (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010).

Chicago Style:

- The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition (2017).
- Kate L. Turabian (revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams and the University of Chicago Press Editorial Staff), *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

MLA (The Modern Language Association of America) Style:

- Modern Language Association of America, *MLA Handbook*, 8th ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2016).