

Assessment Rubric for Senior Thesis in American Studies

This rubric investigates how well the papers of seniors majoring in American Studies demonstrate the achievement of several of the goals for American Studies majors identified by the faculty.

Categories and Scoring

Each of these items has been constructed to identify five critical aspects of student learning within each item. In most cases, the aspects of leaning build upon each other, demonstrating cumulative knowledge. In some cases, students may demonstrate some higher-level knowledge without achieving lower level foundational components. Nonetheless, for each item, instructors should provide an overall assessment of the category on a scale of 1 to 4. Then indicate whether the student has demonstrated competence in each component.

Student Name: _____
 Reader Name: _____
 Term: _____

Learning Outcomes					Excellent	Very Good	Competent	Inadequate
1. Builds an argument effectively. Comments:					4	3	2	1
		Yes	No	N/A				
(1)	Proposed an appropriate thesis at the beginning of the paper							
(2)	Structured a progression through argument by effectively sequencing of paragraphs							
(3)	Introduced steps in argument with good topic sentences for paragraphs or other devices							
(4)	Built a strong conclusion							
(5)	Made an original argument							
2. Uses primary sources effectively. Comments:					4	3	2	1
		Yes	No	N/A				
(1)	Present in paper							
(2)	Correctly identified (not confused with secondary sources),							
(3)	Interpreted well and appropriately (not misread or used out of context),							
(4)	Used and cited appropriately (footnotes, endnotes, etc.),							
(5)	Appropriate selection of sources (sources actually support author's points, move argument of paper forward)							

Learning Outcomes						Excellent	Very Good	Competent	Inadequate
3. Uses secondary sources effectively. Comments:						4	3	2	1
		Yes	No	N/A					
(1)	Appropriately identified and interpreted content and significance of secondary source								
(2)	Used secondary sources to shape argument/thesis								
(3)	Cited secondary sources appropriately (footnotes, endnotes, etc.)								
(4)	Compared and contrasted interpretations								
(5)	Used secondary sources in construction of original argument								
4. Demonstrates awareness of methodological issues. Comments:						4	3	2	1
		Yes	No	N/A					
(1)	Recognized at least one historical method								
(2)	Used appropriate method linked to appropriate evidence								
(3)	Demonstrated self-consciousness about strengths, weaknesses, implications of major method(s) explored in paper								
(4)	Considered alternative methods (including other types of evidence) and their implications								
5. Students are able to demonstrate effective and appropriate writing skills in communicating the histories and cultures of the United States. Comments:						4	3	2	1
		Yes	No	N/A					
(1)	Used appropriate verb tenses, sentence structures								
(2)	Vocabulary is appropriate and varied; free of jargon								
(3)	Paper is free of unnecessary errors that would have been corrected in process of regular proofreading								
(4)	Used appropriate citations (footnotes, endnotes, bibliography, etc.)								
(5)	Demonstrated advanced skill in writing, with attention to flow and elegance								

