

Rubric Used for Grading an Analytical Essay (Sociology)

(This rubric was developed by Pablo Gaston and relies on the example rubrics presented by the GSI Teaching and Resource Center, UC Berkeley. Developed for the Teagle and Spencer Foundation grant, "Systematic Improvement of Undergraduate Education in Research Universities" Professor Kim Voss, project lead, Department of Sociology, 2011)

	Excellent	Proficient	Fair	Inadequate
Thesis	Thesis is debatable and clearly presented in the opening and concluding sections of the paper.	Thesis is debatable and is evident in the argument, but is not clearly stated.	Thesis is unclear, and it takes work for the reader to fish it out of the text. Or, thesis is self-evident and not debatable.	There is no evident thesis.
Argumentation	Argument is presented clearly and logically. Logical points build directly upon the thesis and prior points. Counter-arguments are addressed, dismantled, and folded into the main argument of the paper.	Argument is presented clearly and logically, but points do not necessarily build on each other. Counter arguments are addressed, but many are left hanging or are dealt with inadequately.	Argument is rambling, and there are contradictions left unaddressed. Counter arguments may be presented, but are left unaddressed.	There is no discernable argument, or no alternative interpretation is presented.
Originality	Argument is original and creative. Goes substantially beyond points raised in lecture and readings. Concepts are related to each other in interesting and creative ways.	Argument is strong and interesting, but plays it safe and does not push boundaries. Concepts are put in conversation with each other.	Argument is expository rather than analytical. Concepts are described, but dealt with separately and not explicitly related to each other.	Argument is boring, weak and incoherent.

Organization and Writing

Clear organization with a natural flow. Includes an introduction, transition sentences to connect major ideas, and conclusion. There are few or no grammar or spelling errors. Minimal passive voice. Ideas and evidence are correctly cited.

Clear organization, with introduction, transitions and conclusion, but writing is not always fluid. There are several grammar or spelling errors. Ideas and evidence are correctly cited.

Organization is unclear or without necessary component parts. Significant grammar or spelling errors (but not both). Ideas and evidence are correctly cited.

Little discernable organization. Significant grammar and spelling errors. Ideas and evidence are not correctly cited, or not cited at all.

Use of Evidence

Each logical point is backed up by one or more examples. Evidence is strong and sufficient to advance the argument. Potential counter-arguments are accounted for and addressed with evidence.

Each logical point is backed up by one or more examples. Evidence advances the argument, but it may not be sufficient. Potential counter-arguments are accounted for, but may not be sufficiently addressed with evidence.

Several points of the argument are left without evidence. Evidence is insufficient.

A few pieces of evidence are thrown in here or there, but not used to defend the main argument.

Application of Readings / Concepts

Demonstrates solid understanding of the major themes of the course, using readings and lectures to define concepts. Argument is placed within the broad discussions outlined in the course.

Concepts are defined, but the author does not demonstrate a solid understanding of the major themes of the course relevant to the argument.

Course readings are used. Concepts are left undefined, or poorly defined. Little broader framework is used.

Paper mentions course readings, but there is little demonstration of how the paper relates to the course.