

## **Research Paper Rubric**

HSTR 371 Summer 2023

### **85-100 A/A+**

The thesis statement clearly, concisely, and memorably states the paper's purpose and argument. The thesis may be one or several sentences, but it is engaging and thought-provoking. The writer has left no doubt as to what the argument is and how the writer will prove their argument. The introduction is engaging and forecasts or previews the structure of the paper. The paper follows appropriate formatting guidelines for research papers in the Department of History. There may be more than the required number of sources, and all sources used are extremely well-chosen, relevant, authoritative, and incorporated. The writer is always in control of their sources. Claims are developed in ways that will convince the reader to agree with the author's overall argument. There are no or very few noticeable errors at the sentence level. The writer demonstrates logical and subtle sequencing of ideas achieved through well-developed paragraphs and excellent transitions. All sources are correctly cited in Chicago (notes-bibliography). There is an element of surprise and delight with this paper and it may even suggest an innovative way of approaching the material and topic. As sentence-level, structure, argument, and evidence issues add up, the grade will be reduced.

### **80-84 A-**

This paper demonstrates aspects of the above description, but there may be more errors in language use, structure, evidence, argument, and mechanics. The sources are relevant, and there may be more than the required number, but not every quotation or paraphrase is well-integrated into the argument (with lapses limited to one or two instances). Claims are developed and supported in ways that will persuade the intended audience to acknowledge or even agree with the author's overall argument. There may be some issues with the development and sequencing of ideas, but these problems are neither distracting, nor do they impede reading. Rather, these are small problems that simply bar a strong paper from achieving a higher level in the "A" category. The paper follows appropriate formatting guidelines for research papers in the Department of History. All sources are correctly cited in Chicago (notes-bibliography). As sentence-level, structure, argument, and evidence issues add up, the grade will be reduced. This is still an excellent paper that is argued, written, and supported impressively well.

### **73-79 B/B+**

This paper demonstrates aspects of an A- paper, but there are enough errors in language use and mechanics to distract the reader from what is being communicated. The sources are relevant and there may be more than required, but not every quotation or paraphrase is well-integrated into the argument (with lapses limited to two or three instances). There may be an inappropriate reliance on direct quotation rather than other strategies for presenting information from sources (such as paraphrasing and short quotation). There may be some issues with the development and sequencing of ideas, but these problems are neither distracting, nor do they impede reading. Claims are supported with evidence and handled in ways that will convince the intended audience to acknowledge the author's overall argument is

reasonable. This is still a very good paper that is argued, written, and supported well. The style of writing is almost always appropriately formal for a piece of academic writing although there may be the occasional lapse. The paper follows appropriate formatting guidelines for research papers in the Department of History. All sources are correctly cited in Chicago (notes-bibliography) although there may be one or two small errors. As sentence-level, structure, argument, and evidence issues add up, the grade will be reduced.

#### **70-72 B-**

The idea presented in the thesis statement is clear, but expression may be wordy or unfocused. The introduction provides insight into the paper's direction but may have errors in language usage, organization, argument, and mechanics. The writer has included the required number sources but may not exhibit control over the sources or may not integrate the sources effectively. There is very likely inappropriate overreliance on direct quotations. The writer demonstrates a sensible sequencing of ideas, but there may be lapses in logic or at least gaps that aren't filled by transitions or effective paragraph and idea development. Claims are not always handled in ways that will convince the intended audience to acknowledge the writer's overall argument is reasonable, or they may not be explained fully. The expression is more than competent. The style of writing is mostly appropriate for a piece of academic writing, but there are notable lapses. The paper follows appropriate formatting guidelines for research papers in the Department of History. All sources are correctly cited in Chicago (notes-bibliography) but there may be two or more small errors that require attention. As sentence-level, structure, argument, and evidence issues add up, the grade will be reduced.

#### **60-69 C/C+**

The thesis is unfocused but shows promise. Similarly, the entire paper shows promise either in the organization or expression of ideas and argument, but the claims may be undeveloped and insufficiently supported, or the argument might not be relevant or convincing. While a minimum number of sources are cited, the paper may not use relevant sources, or the sources are not integrated effectively into the argument. A 69 indicates the writer has achieved a satisfactory result, but as the errors in development or logic or written expression add up, and overwhelm the reader, the overall grade may be reduced to a C level grade. Sentence-level writing is generally correct and competent, but the style is uninteresting or somewhat inappropriate. The paper does not always follow appropriate formatting guidelines for research papers in the Department of History. A citation style is attempted but numerous errors exist or the required citation standard is not followed. As sentence-level, structure, argument, and evidence issues add up, the grade will be reduced.

#### **50-59 D**

The thesis is unfocused and confusing. The introduction provides insufficient contextualization for the argument. The ideas in the paper are not relevant or may be inaccurate. The claims may be problematically underdeveloped (lacking supporting evidence) or inappropriately overdeveloped (excessively redundant). The writer does not use relevant sources or the required

number of sources. There are numerous errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The style is inappropriate to the reader or topic. Some or all of these problems may result in a D level grade. The paper does not follow appropriate formatting guidelines for research papers in the Department of History. Sources are not cited accurately or citations do not follow the standards that are set. As sentence-level, structure, argument, and evidence issues add up, the grade will be reduced.

**Fail:**

The paper does not offer a thesis. It might merely report on research or simply fails to present a coherent, centralized argument. Little or no evidence is offered to support the argument being presented. If sources are used in this paper, many are inappropriate, unauthoritative, or inaccurate. The writer sometimes profoundly misunderstands or misrepresents material from sources. The organization seems to a significant degree haphazard or arbitrary. Numerous and consistent errors of grammar, citations, spelling, punctuation, diction, or syntax hinder clarity or communication. Some sentences are incomprehensible. The paper fails to follow appropriate formatting guidelines for research papers in the Department of History and citations are either largely incorrect or non-existent.

*Inspired by Source: University of Victoria, ATWP 135 Research Paper Rubric*