

## **Graduate Student Grading Rubric**

### **Department of Political Science**

In response to Dalhousie's "Fairness in Evaluation: A White Paper", the Department of Political Science Graduate Committee has recommended the following grading model for evaluating graduate student essays, presentations and participation performance.<sup>1</sup> Of course, you should check with your specific instructors regarding more specific methods of grading and weighting in their courses.

### **Graduate Student Essays**

**A+** Papers that earn the highest grade are usually somewhat rare; they are original and innovative, and add to the scholarly discussion on the topic(s) at hand. They also show considerable command of critical and other secondary material. Depending on the type of assignment, these papers could, with no or minor revisions, be considered publishable in academic journals specific to the field.

**A** These essays constitute excellent graduate work. They are original and strongly written, and show considerable command of critical and other secondary material, but would need significant revision before being considered publishable.

**A-** These essays are very good graduate level work, and are well written and researched, offering a good understanding of the primary material and the scholarly discussion thereof.

**B+** Essays in the B+ range may be considered good graduate work, but show weaknesses in terms of research, argumentation or writing.

**B** These essays are satisfactory graduate work, but with substantial flaws in one or more areas of research, argumentation or writing. They may indicate difficulty in moving beyond undergraduate-level work.

**B-** Essays in this range are minimally passable graduate work, showing considerable weaknesses or errors in research, argumentation, and writing. These essays demonstrate difficulty in moving beyond undergraduate-level work.

### **Participation Grades**

**F** Absent.

**A** Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed case exceptionally well, relating it to readings and other material (e.g., readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.); offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of case material, e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further; contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc.; demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.

**A-** Demonstrates good preparation: knows case or reading facts well, has thought through implications of them; offers interpretations and analysis of case material (more than just facts) to class; contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way; responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way; offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion; demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.

**B+** Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic case or reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them; offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the case or reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class); does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on; demonstrates sporadic involvement.

**B** Present, not disruptive; tries to respond when called on but does not offer much; demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.

### Seminar Presentation Grades

<b>Seminar Component</b>	<b>5 Points</b>	<b>4 Points</b>	<b>3 Points</b>	<b>2 Points</b>	<b>1 Point</b>	<b>0 Points</b>	<b>Maximum Points</b>
<b>Lecture</b>	Content is complete, relevant & accurate. An exceptional command & depth of the material is presented in a logical & organized manner. More than one aspect of the content shows good critical thinking or an original perspective. Outstanding oral presentation skills and engagement of class.	Content is complete, relevant & accurate. A few minor pieces of information may be missing, but command & depth of the material is presented in a logical & organized manner. Some aspect of the content shows good critical thinking or an original perspective. Very good oral presentation skills and engagement of class.	Content is appropriate. Although some pieces of information may be missing, or irrelevant material included, adequate command of the material is demonstrated. The content may not be demonstrated in a way that maintains focus and may be disorganized. The content shows that the person thought about the information. Adequate oral presentation skills and engagement of class.	Some content is inappropriate. Marginally adequate command of the material is demonstrated. Important pieces of information are missing, or irrelevant material included. The content is disorganized and is not presented in a way that maintains focus. Weak oral presentation skills and engagement of class.	Content is weak because material is omitted, inaccurate or marginally relevant, demonstrating limited understanding of the material and/or limited ability to apply the material. Organization is a problem. Major deficiencies in oral presentation skills. Class is not engaged.	Lecture component absent.	5
<b>Facilitation of Class Discussion</b>	Preparation, understanding of content, discussion / debate methods, and communication skills are outstanding.	Preparation, understanding of content, discussion / debate methods, and communication skills are very good.	Preparation, understanding of content, discussion / debate methods, and communication skills are adequate.	Preparation, understanding of content, discussion / debate methods, and communication skills are weak.	Preparation, understanding of content, discussion / debate methods, and communication skills have major deficiencies.	Class discussion component absent.	5

<sup>1</sup> This model was originally developed by the English Department at UBC.

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## PRESENTATION EVALUATION SHEET – 2012

PRESENTER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM	Score /10	Comments
1. Seminar content		
2. Presentation		
3. Apparent quality of reference material		
4. Balanced and critical engagement with research material		
5. Overall coherence and sense of quality		
6. The two things I really liked about this presentation were....		
7. The areas where I thought it could be improved were...		

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### **Additional Information for Graduate Students**

As this is a cross-listed class, the requirements for graduate students are somewhat different from those for undergraduates. The number of and types of assignments are the same, but the expectations for these assignments are considerably higher:

1. In all assignments, graduate students are expected to evince a deeper analytical ability when evaluating readings; to show familiarity with a wider variety of sources; and to articulate a greater complexity of thought, in both verbal and written forms.
2. The writing style for graduate students should illustrate greater sophistication, both in the construction of the argument and in the clarity and lucidity of the writing.
3. Graduate students are expected to be prepared for each seminar; and to read beyond the minimal expectations set out for undergraduates (ie, more than one primary reading, secondary text, one online/PDF article, one student paper). Attendance is crucial. Graduate students should be willing to participate actively in the discussions, rather than waiting to be called upon to speak.
4. At the graduate level, students should show an understanding of the nuances of criticism (ie, how to accomplish an intellectually incisive criticism in a respectful and constructive manner).
5. Research papers for graduate students are generally longer (around 20 pages). They should show evidence of good research skills; of the capacity for revision; and of the analytical capability noted in (1) above. Graduate students may choose to tailor their research papers to their thesis work; but please discuss this with me in advance.
6. Graduate students should enjoy their work more thoroughly.