

PHIL 450 Program Assessment Rubric

	Excellent (10)	Good/Adequate (8)	Poor/Unsatisfactory (6)
Mechanics	No serious errors in punctuation, grammar, or usage. Only a very picky editor will notice any errors.	Only a few significant mechanical errors (fewer than 1/page).	Repeated, glaring mechanical errors (more than 1/page or greater).
Research and citations	Student identified at least two journal articles (beyond assigned texts) that bear directly on the topic; in-text citations and bibliography are in a standard format; all quotations are properly documented. Author provides clear and detailed exposition of key ideas from these sources.	Student identified at least two relevant articles (beyond assigned texts); in-text citations and bibliography are in a standard format (though there may be minor inconsistencies in citation format); all quotations are properly documented. The main lines of reasoning in these papers are clearly summarized, but some details may remain unclear.	The student does not show adequate familiarity with the philosophical literature (i.e., does not cite relevant sources, does not explain the significance of these arguments clearly, or fails to document these sources correctly).
Clearly explains the thesis	The author provides a lucid exposition of the relevant background; the thesis is clearly stated and the significance of the thesis (relative to the background) is clear.	The author states a clear thesis and explains some of the relevant background but the "good" paper does not motivate the thesis or explain the significance of the thesis as well as the "excellent" paper.	Fails to meet the good standard; the thesis and its significance are not adequately clear.
Depth and Cogency	The student digs deeply into a well-defined topic. The argument is detailed and persuasive. The author anticipates potential objections to the thesis and provides sensible replies.	The topic is significant, but often less well-defined than the "excellent" paper. The student accurately presents at least two competing perspectives on the topic, and provides a reasonable (though not fully persuasive) defense of the thesis.	Fails to meet the "good" standard (e.g., the topic is not well-defined, the author does not show adequate command of sources cited, or does not offer significant reasons to support the thesis).

The purpose of this rubric is to assess senior seminar papers as part of our Program Assessment. For the purposes of program assessment, the rubric addresses only those elements listed in our program goals. The instructor's grade on the paper (and in the course) may be influenced by many factors not reflected in this instrument.

Our program-level learning goal is to have students compose clear, cogent, and well-crafted essays. More specifically, we specify the following learning outcomes: students will ...

- a. compose grammatically correct, fluent, and properly cited academic prose,
- b. clearly explain philosophical theses,
- c. provide a substantive and cogent assessment of philosophical claims in light of alternative positions,
- d. compose a substantial (8+ page) research paper. The student will use appropriate databases to identify relevant contributions in the secondary literature; students will read that literature independently and incorporate it into the argument of the essay.

Rubric based on 40 points (unless we weight some categories more heavily).

If a student is rated as "good" in each category, they will score 32/40