

STUDENT NAME:

Essay Rubric

Category	Above Standards	Meets Standards	Approaching Standards	Below Standards	Failing	Score
Prose Clarity: Sentences	22	18	14	11	8	
Structural Clarity: Paragraphs & Essay	18	15	12	10	8	
Accuracy of your Interpretation	20	18	16	14	12	
Persuasiveness of your Arguments	20	18	16	14	12	
Relevance to the Assignment	20	18	16	14	12	
					TOTAL:	

Prose Clarity: Sentences Do all sentences in your essay make sense? Are they easy to understand, and free of extraneous words? Do they suffer from vagueness, spelling errors, typos, grammatical errors, mistakes in word choice, or awkward phrases? **Notice that the numerical values in this row drop further and more quickly than in other rows. This means lower scores in this category damage your overall grade more than lower scores in any other category.**

Structural Clarity: Paragraphs & Essay Can your reader easily understand, for any given sentence (and paragraph) in your paper, why that sentence (or paragraph) follows its predecessor, and precedes its successor? Does the essay have a clear thesis statement? Do the paragraphs have topic sentences? Are there clear transitions between paragraphs and sections? Does the essay as a whole hang together? **Notice that the numerical values in this row drop further and more quickly than in any other row except Prose Clarity.**

Accuracy of your Interpretation Virtually all good philosophy papers involve characterizing others' views somewhere along the line. Are your characterizations accurate? Do you document your interpretive claims? (E.g., "Descartes holds that everything he clearly and distinctly conceives is true (Descartes, p. 53).") Are your interpretations charitable—in other words, is it really plausible to think that the people you discuss actually hold the views you ascribe to them?

Persuasiveness of your Arguments Are the arguments you use to defend your thesis logically sound? Are all controversial premises themselves well supported? Do you attempt to answer potential objections to your position and (for historical papers) to your reading of other philosophers?

Relevance to the Assignment How well have you addressed the assignment? Have you merely recapitulated ideas from class, or have you tried to offer an original analysis of your own?