GRADING CRITERIA FOR ESSAYS & RESPONSE PAPERS:

An “A” Essay or Paper – SUPERIOR
1. Will demonstrate excellence in Critical Thinking, responding effectively, insightfully, and originally to the assignment, fulfilling or exceeding the length, consistently, thoughtfully, and thoroughly analyzing the text, and demonstrating keen understanding of it (and the literary criticism).
2. Will have excellent Focus, presenting a clear, specific, unified claim (thesis) and aptly focused reasons (points) in support of it.
3. Will provide excellent support and development, offering an abundance of relevant, specific reasons (support points), evidence (examples & details from or about the text), warrants, and backing (explanation and discussion of the meaning of the evidence).
4. Will have logical and effective Organization.
5. Will have correct, sophisticated, and effective Integration of Sources, with correct presentation and effective use of quotations, paraphrase, and summary, and correct MLA in-text citation, according to genre.
6. Will have clear, specific, and expressive Writing, effectively communicating the ideas.

A “B” Essay or Paper – STRONG
1. Will demonstrate good Critical Thinking, responding effectively and originally to the assignment, fulfilling the length, consistently and thoughtfully analyzing the text, and demonstrating good understanding of it (and the literary criticism).
2. Will have good Focus, presenting a clear, specific claim (thesis) and focused reasons (points) in support of it.
3. Will provide good support and development, offering sufficient relevant, specific reasons (support points), evidence (examples & details from or about the text), warrants, and backing (explanation and discussion of the meaning of the evidence).
4. Will have effective Organization.
5. Will have correct and effective Integration of Sources, with correct presentation and effective use of quotations, paraphrase, and summary, and correct MLA in-text citation.
6. Will have clear and specific Writing, effectively communicating the ideas with occasional awkwardness or minor errors that do not detract from the ideas.

A “C” Essay or Paper – ADEQUATE
1. Will demonstrate adequate Critical Thinking, responding adequately to the assignment, fulfilling the length, demonstrating adequate understanding of the text (and the literary criticism), and presenting some analysis of the text with occasional slips into (plot) summary, (character) description, judgment, or personal experience that do not derail from the overall analytical purpose.
2. Will have adequate Focus, presenting a vague or general claim and reasons.
3. Will provide adequate Support and Development, offering minimal, vague, or general evidence, warrants, and backing.
4. Will demonstrate adequate Organization, so that the reader can follow the argument despite occasional lapses.
5. Will have adequate Integration of Sources, clearly distinguishing between the student’s ideas and ideas from the text though presentation or use of quotations, paraphrase, summary, and parenthetical in-text citation may be inconsistent or incorrect.
6. Will have Writing that communicates the ideas but has some serious errors as well as considerable awkwardness, vagueness, and minor errors.

A “D” Essay or Paper – WEAK
1. Will demonstrate minimal Critical Thinking, responding incompletely or inconsistently to the assignment, falling short of fulfilling the length, failing to stay focused on analysis but instead often summarizing or judging the text or its contents or discussing irrelevant material, or demonstrating an oversimplified or incomplete understanding of the text (and/or literary criticism).
2. Will be poorly Focused, having an unclear, unfocused claim and reasons.
3. Will have minimal Support/Development, mostly relying on generalizations without explanation of them or vaguely or minimally supported opinions.
4. Will be poorly Organized, lacking transitions or clear sense of division or progression of ideas.
5. Will have sloppy Integration of Sources, attempting to distinguish others’ ideas from one’s own but often lacking correct or clear attribution and/or citation.
6. Will have poor Writing due to frequent and/or serious errors so that the reader has to work and sometimes guess at the meaning.

An “F” Essay or Paper – INADEQUATE
1. Will lack Critical Thinking, failing to respond to the assignment, failing to fulfill the length, failing to analyze but instead summarizing or judging the text or its contents or discussing material not in the text, or failing to understand the text (and/or literary criticism).
2. Will lack Focus, having no claim.
3. Will lack Support/Development, listing facts from the text without explanation of them and/or listing opinions without supporting them.
4. Will lack any sense of Organization.
5. Will be plagiarized or contain plagiarism unintentional or intentional.
6. Will have unclear Writing due to numerous and often serious errors that prevent the ideas from being communicated.