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|  | Philosophical Content | Clarity of Explanation | Organization/Writing |
| A | -Explores topic thoughtfully throughout the paper  -Shows substantial depth, fullness and complexity of thought | -Expresses ideas clearly and commands the reader’s attention  -Explains reasoning clearly and commands the reader’s attention  -Is fully developed and detailed with well-chosen examples | -Includes all and only relevant details  -Has clear, unified and coherent structure |
| A-/B+ | -Explores topic competently  -Shows some depth and complexity of thought | -Expresses ideas clearly and in an interesting manner  -Explains reasoning clearly and in an interesting manner  -Is well developed with clarifying supporting details and appropriate examples | - Includes most relevant details, lacks irrelevant details  -Is clearly structured |
| B/B- | -Explores topic satisfactorily  -Shows clarity of thought, but may treat topic simplistically, repetitively or be poorly focused | -Clearly communicates ideas but not fully developed  -Clearly explains reasoning but not fully developed  -Is developed with sufficient details and appropriate examples for most of the ideas | -Is adequately structured  -Includes some irrelevant material and/or leaves out some relevant details |
| C+/C/C- | -Exploration of topic shows confusion and/or limited knowledge of topic  -Lacks focus or demonstrates confused or simplistic thinking | -May not always communicate ideas clearly  -May not always explain reasoning clearly  -May not provide adequate details or appropriate examples | -Is ineffectively structured  -Includes much irrelevant material and/or lacks much relevant detail |

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| D/D- | -Shows very confused or little understanding of topic  -Fails to meet some requirements  of the assignment | -Communication of ideas is frequently confused and/or unfocused  - Communication of reasoning is frequently confused and/or unfocused  -Has very little development of ideas: does not provide adequate details or appropriate examples for key concepts | -Has very weak structure  -Fails to include many relevant materials and details  -Has an ineffective style (monotonous or fragmented sentence structure, no transitions, simplistic or inaccurate diction) |
| F | -Shows very little or no understanding of topic  -May be deliberately off-topic  -Fails to meet requirements of the assignment | -Does not communicate ideas/explain reasoning clearly  -Shows incomplete or inappropriate development of ideas | -Lacks coherent organization  -Does not engage appropriate textbooks or other course materials  -Has an incoherent style (difficulties with sentence structure, no transition, inaccurate diction) |
| 0 | Is plagiarized or uses source material without proper citation | | |

Note: Overall essay grade will be weighted toward the lowest grade applicable. Two or more characteristics within the A through C range, or one or more characteristics within the D-F range, suffice to reduce paper grade. In other words, a paper with mostly A characteristics will still get a C if it has two C range characteristics (or a D if it has one D range characteristic).

Grade translation: A=Excellent

A/B+=Very good

B/B-=Good/Okay

C+/C/C-=Satisfactory

D/D-=Poor

F=Unsatisfactory