UNDERGRADUATE GRADING CRITERIA

A + (90 and up)
1) Forceful development of a distinctive and fresh thesis
2) Exceptional depth of insight, while offering a clear, compelling argument
3) Careful attention to subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language—evidence of intellectual risk-taking
4) Paragraph breaks reflect meaningful and effective shifts in topic and argumentation
5) Persuasive, thought-provoking, persistent use of textual evidence to support one’s argument
6) Close engagement with primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; carefully distinguishes the author’s argument from those of sources. Quotations seamlessly integrated into text, with proper documentation
7) Sentence structure/grammar correct, with a deft use of style, rhetorically impressive and few, if any, errors

A (85 to 89)
1) Clear development of a specific and challenging thesis
2) Depth of insight, while offering a clear, focused argument
3) Ability not only to explore a subject, but also to see around it–subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language, ability to anticipate possible objections or criticisms, etc. Some intellectual risk-taking.
4) Paragraph breaks reflect meaningful and effective shifts in topic and argumentation
5) Persuasive, persistent use of textual evidence to support one’s argument
6) Close engagement with primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; carefully distinguishes the author’s argument from those of sources. Quotations seamlessly integrated into text, with proper documentation
7) Sentence structure/grammar correct, with a deft use of style, rhetorically impressive and few, if any, errors

A- (80 to 84)
1) Clear development of a specific and interesting thesis
2) Insightful, while offering a clear, focused argument
3) Ability not only to explore a subject, but also to see around it–subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language, ability to anticipate possible objections or criticisms, etc.
4) Paragraph breaks reflect meaningful and effective shifts in topic and argumentation
5) Persuasive use of textual evidence to support one’s argument
6) Close, engaged reference to primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; carefully distinguishes the author’s argument from those of sources. Quotations seamlessly integrated into text, with proper documentation
7) Sentence structure/grammar largely correct, with a strong sense of style, rhetorically impressive, with few errors

B+ (75 to 79)
1) Clear development of a specific thesis
2) Offers a clear, focused argument
3) Evidence of ability to explore a subject, with some ability to recognize subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language
4) Paragraph breaks reflect meaningful shifts in topic and argumentation
5) Persuasive use of textual evidence to support one’s argument
6) Close reference to primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; largely distinguishes the author’s argument from those of sources. Quotations integrated into text, with proper documentation
7) Sentence structure/grammar correct, with some sense of style, rhetorically interesting, but with some errors

**B (70 to 74)**
1) Clear development of a specific thesis
2) Offers a focused argument
3) Some evidence of ability to explore a subject, displays only occasionally the ability to recognize subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language
4) Paragraph breaks reflect meaningful shifts in topic and argumentation
5) Persistent use of textual evidence to support one’s argument
6) References to primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; largely distinguishes the author’s argument from those of sources. Quotations integrated into text, with proper documentation
7) Sentence structure/grammar largely correct, with some sense of style, but with some errors

**C + (65 to 69)**
1) Reasonably clear development of a thesis
2) Offers a relatively focused argument
3) Little evidence of ability to explore a subject in depth, occasionally fails to recognize subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language
4) Some problems with paragraphing (paragraphs may be too long or too short; breaks may not be clearly meaningful)
5) Some use of textual evidence to support one’s argument
6) Occasional references to primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; exhibits some difficulty distinguishing the author’s argument from those of sources. Quotations awkwardly integrated into text, but with reasonable effort at documentation
7) Sentence structure/grammar somewhat correct, but has several errors--evident misunderstanding of some point of elementary grammar/spelling (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, awkwardly integrated quotations)

**C (60-64)**
1) Evidence of an attempt at a thesis
2) Offers a somewhat focused argument; basic ability to expound ideas
3) Little evidence of ability to explore a subject in depth, often fails to recognize subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language
4) Some problems with paragraphing (paragraphs may be too long or too short; breaks may not be clearly meaningful)
5) Some use of textual evidence to support one’s argument
6) Few references to primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; exhibits difficulty distinguishing the author’s argument from those of sources. Quotations, when they occur, awkwardly integrated into text, but with some effort at documentation
7) Sentence structure/grammar somewhat correct, but has several errors--evident misunderstanding of several points of elementary grammar/spelling (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)
D+ (55 to 59)
Inadequacy at several of the following levels:

1) No thesis, but instead simply restates the essay topic
2) Argument has little focus or logical coherence
3) Difficulty with handling or understanding ideas or the ambiguities of language
4) Significant problems with paragraphing (few or no paragraph breaks; paragraph breaks not connected to shifts in topic or meaning)
5) Virtually no use of textual evidence to support one’s argument. Quotations are often misattributed or irrelevant to the point being made, with little effort at documentation
6) Overgeneralization with inadequate support, or with examples that run to lengthy, irrelevant paraphrase or plot summary
7) Errors of grammar or diction frequent enough to interfere with understanding. Persistent misunderstanding of several points of elementary grammar/spelling (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)

D (50 to 54)
Inadequacy at several of the following levels:

1) No thesis, but instead simply restates the essay topic, or fails to state what the essay topic is
2) Argument has little logical coherence
3) Great difficulty with handling or understanding ideas or the ambiguities of language
4) Significant problems with paragraphing (few or no paragraph breaks; paragraph breaks not connected to shifts in topic or meaning)
5) Very little use of textual evidence to support one’s argument. Quotations from primary and secondary texts are rare, often irrelevant to the point being made, with little effort at documentation
6) Overgeneralization with inadequate support, or with examples that run to lengthy, irrelevant paraphrase or plot summary
7) Errors of grammar or diction often interfere with understanding. Persistent misunderstanding of several points of elementary grammar/spelling (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)

F (49 and down)

- Inadequacy on many levels at once (See D above)
- Ideas, language use too simple for level of course
- Content largely “borrowed” from sources with no individual distillation, but no apparent attempt to deceive

0 (Report to Undergraduate Chair)

- Plagiarism
  (See Department’s Plagiarism Prevention and Procedures http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergrad/plagprevent.html)

Note: This grading criteria is for information purposes only and cannot be used as the basis of appeal.

December 2013.