

History 2XX

From the syllabus:

Essay assignment

The purpose of the essay is to improve your powers of reasoning and expression. Concentrate on discussing the topic clearly and concisely, and outline a logical pattern of approach to the question. Above all, attempt to develop your own ideas, based on the readings, and draw your own conclusions. If you encounter the opinions of historians with which you agree, assess these opinions. But these arguments in themselves, without proper historical evidence (such as the words of individuals involved in the events, or observers commenting in newspapers, or statistics), do not provide adequate support for your discussion

Bear in mind that the paper asks you to present an argument, supported by proper evidence, in favour of the conclusions that you draw. You are not to submit a simple narrative of information described in the sources. Moreover, you must not forget that there is something to be said in favour of other conclusions, and, therefore, you must weigh these arguments against the main ideas in the paper

Essays should be written in Standard English. This means that concentration on the topic, plus clarity and seriousness of thought should be reflected in clear and concise writing. Ideas and arguments are evaluated in terms of the manner in which they are presented; the policy of the Faculty of Arts requires that “the quality of expression in assessing written work” must be taken into consideration. In this way the written paper should emerge as a clear examination of the subject. Above all, the student should aim at developing distinct arguments and a strong conclusion. This almost certainly means that completed essays are not first drafts or random assessments.

Possible Rubric: History 2xx Essay

Criteria	Excellent		Poor
<p>Development of topic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources cited when needed • Evidence provided to support arguments • Positions of other historians referred to • Ideas clearly informed by readings (links made explicitly to readings) 			
<p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between major sections of the paper included • Organized as argument, not narrative • Conclusions drawn from findings reported in body of essay 			
<p>Quality of Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuttal/Qualifiers/limitations to argument noted • Primary evidence supplied (the words of individuals involved in the events, or observers commenting in newspapers, or statistics) • Logic or argument clearly signaled (thesis, evidence, backing) 			
<p>Quality of expression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard edited English • Clarity • Conciseness 			
<p>Format</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence cited properly 			

Overall comments: