

GUIDELINES FOR MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS

Assuming the exam is to be written in academic closed form prose, to be considered for a “4” or above, the handwritten essay must meet the following requirements:

- 1. Paragraphs must be indented the equivalent of five spaces.*
- 2. Topic sentences must come in the first sentence of paragraphs and must have a specific topic and controlling idea.*
- 3. Paragraphs must have a concluding sentence that summarizes the body, restates the topic sentence and gives a sense of closure.*
- 4. The handwriting must flow left to right with no space breaks or no “quasi-paragraphs” in the essay. In other words, all paragraphs must be uninterrupted and flow left to right across the page until its completion.*
- 5. The essay must have a clear thesis statement closing the introductory paragraph and a clear restatement of that thesis statement in different language to open the concluding paragraph.*

To be considered for a “4.5” or above, the handwritten essay must meet the foregoing criteria as well as the following additional requirements:

- 1. No Sentence Fragments.*
- 2. No sentences starting with coordinating conjunctions.*
- 3. No contractions.*
- 4. No “lonely” punctuation on the left margin.*
- 5. Numbers below “11” must be spelled out in letters.*

To be considered for a “5,” the handwritten essay must meet all the foregoing criteria as well as the following additional requirements:

- 1. All quotations must enclose punctuation—no commas or periods outside quotation marks.*
- 2. No use of vague language like “thing” or its many variations (“something,” “anything,” etc.) or “situation.”*
- 3. No use of pedestrian language, like “get,” “make,” etc.*