

Grading Scheme for Philosophy Papers

When I grade your philosophy papers I am judging your performance under five main categories, as follows:

- *articulation of thesis* —how coherently your thesis is stated and developed; how well your argument is structured, how logical its connections.
- *evidential support* —how well you marshal evidence in support of your argument; what sources you find and how well you use them. This includes accuracy of quotations, and thoroughness of citation and bibliographic referencing.
- *strength of thesis* —comprehension of issues; depth of understanding of the subject matter and of its connection to related issues; how well you understand your sources, primary and secondary.
- *clarity of exposition* —how clearly you explain your points; fluidity of your prose; absence of distracting stylistic and grammatical errors (and Antirule violations!).
- *creative spark* —originality of theme, arguments, and/or mode of presentation; flair.

The way I use these criteria to help me arrive at a fair grade is as follows. You begin with a base mark of 40%: this represents expected minimal competence. Then I grade your performance in each of the above 5 categories out of 12, and add them up to get a percentage. (If this way of arriving at a percentage seems rather idiosyncratic or even perverse, think of it this way: each category carries 20%, the normal minimum in each being 8%. This amounts to the same thing.)

The resulting percentages are then converted to letter grades according to the following table:

Gr	%	/12	/20
A+	90-100	10-12	18-20
A	85-89	9	17
A-	80-84	8	16
B+	77-79	7.5	15.5
B	73-76	7	15
B-	70-72	6	14
C+	67-69	5.5	13.5
C	63-66	5	13
C-	60-62	4	12
D+	57-59	3.5	11.5
D	53-56	3	11
D-	50-52	2	10
F	00-49	0-1	0-9

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