

Assessment Rubric for Pre-Course Assignment in LUMES, Lund University
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	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Weak
<p>1. Claim & Ideas: The central argument, question, or issue addressed by the paper, leading to the significance of the contribution.</p>	<p>The major claim of the paper is stated clearly at the outset of the paper, and is complex, insightful, interesting, and original, while being specific enough to be answerable. The claim advances our understanding, rather than repeating what others have found. The claim responds to a real and important question, tension or problem. The introduction provides meaningful real-world importance for the author's claims, which are developed throughout the paper. The rationale, research question, and method of analysis are stated clearly in the introduction, and developed and explained throughout the paper.</p>	<p>Either the major claim is clear, arguable, and complex but misses opportunities for nuance or subtlety, or else it sets out to explore an ambitious idea whose complexity leads to minor errors in articulation. The introduction suggests some context or stakes for the argument but does not offer strong rationale, or a convincing motive is gestured at but remains implicit.</p>	<p>Either the major claim is clear and arguable but lacks complexity, or else sets out to explore an intriguing idea that has not developed into a specific claim. The introduction either unsuccessfully motivates an unexpected claim or weakly and artificially motivates a claim that does not constitute a significant revision of the status quo.</p>	<p>The major claim is logical and would require some evidence to support, but the stakes are not as high as they should be. The paper's major claims are somewhat unclear, unspecific or uninteresting. The introduction lacks a clear motive or contains an unspecific or weak motive.</p>	<p>The major claim of the paper is weak—vague, simple, or obvious. The paper does not respond to a true question, tension, or problem. The introduction usually has no motive.</p>
<p>2. Evidence & Analysis: The empirical evidence presented (qualitative or quantitative) and analysis conducted to support the thesis, including the quality of the sources used and the effectiveness with which they are used.</p>	<p>The best available evidence, including recent findings from major research, is introduced to support, and sometimes to challenge or complicate, the claims and stakes of the paper. Evidence is drawn from solid, well-respected places, and its nuances are insightfully explored. The argument is sufficiently complex to require an explanation of how the evidence supports the paper's claims, which is done fairly, and evidence is used to develop new claims. All claims are clearly attributed to their sources. Illustrations are well-integrated with the text and support the claims. Quotations are used appropriately, and good judgment is shown in terms of when material is quoted as opposed to paraphrased.</p>	<p>All claims are supported with evidence that is integral to the development of the argument, but in a few places the link between claim and evidence may be unconvincing or insufficiently explained. Evidence is consistently attributed to its source. Illustrations compliment the text. The analysis demonstrates several moments of keen insight but also includes arguments that lack subtlety or are insufficiently explained elsewhere in the paper.</p>	<p>Most ideas are supported with well-chosen evidence that is sometimes explored in an insightful way, although nuances are often neglected. The evidence is often integral to the development of the argument, although there may be gaps in the explanation of how the evidence supports the paper's claims, or proper attribution of evidence. Illustrations support the argument.</p>	<p>Evidence is usually relevant, but the paper often does not consider the most important evidence, or will present multiple examples to demonstrate the same idea. The paper makes some effort to explore the subtleties of the evidence and may be occasionally insightful, but it rarely uses evidence to support the argument and develop new claims, instead focusing more on describing or reporting evidence with little interpretation. Illustrations are used ineffectively.</p>	<p>Evidence may be lacking or irrelevant. Instead of using evidence to develop the argument, examples remain undigested and unexplored. The author may simply summarize and simplify evidence, or present it in a confusing or unhelpful way. Illustrations are not used, or used inappropriately.</p>



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	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Weak
3. Structure: The logic, flow, and organization of the paper.	Ideas develop over the course of the paper so that the foundations established early on push the argument toward a more complex conclusion. The structure is both logical and engaging. The title is descriptive and engaging. Section headings are used effectively to guide the reader through the development of the argument. Paragraphs are used effectively to articulate and develop one core idea, which is clearly stated in a topic sentence at the beginning of the paragraph. Sentences are complete, logical, and easy to read. Transitions are smooth.	The argument follows a clear logical arc, but small gaps, digressions, or a lack of transitional language interrupt the flow of ideas in a few places. The title is descriptive. Section headings and paragraphs are used to organize ideas in a way that helps guide the reader.	The argument is interesting and logical, but the structure of the paper is, at times, confusing. The paper's claims, while complex, are executed in a confusing sequence, or they seem related to the thesis but have a confusing relationship to one another. Transitional language may be present but is unsuccessful or inconsistent. Section headings and paragraphs may organize some ideas, but not consistently.	The argument mostly makes logical sense, but the structure of the paper is confusing—jumping around, missing transitions, or taking on too many ideas at once. Or, the argument itself may be presented simplistically, leading to a predictable structure and unnecessary transitional language. Paragraphs are not used effectively to organize ideas, and are either far too short (1-2 sentences), too long (more than half a page), or contain too many apparently unrelated ideas.	The argument may be too simple and so does not develop over the course of the paper. Or the argument may be incoherent or too broad, without any clear organization or transitions. The title is not an accurate or coherent reflection of the paper's content. Headings and paragraph structure do not assist the reader in following the logic of the paper.
4. Style: The use of language, including clarity, formatting, and creativity.	The writing is clear and concise, yet sophisticated, demonstrating sentence variety and appropriate vocabulary without unnecessary jargon. Illustrations are carefully designed and presented in an aesthetically pleasing way. The voice of the author is appropriate for the context of the paper. The formatting of the paper on the page helps guide the reader and contains no errors. In-text citations and the reference list are appropriately formatted using APA style. The English expression is natural and grammatical. The paper is a pleasure to read.	The writing is mostly clear, but may contain a few confusing sentences or mechanical problems, including minor English errors. Illustrations are clearly designed. Formatting is used effectively, although a few typos or formatting errors may be present. In-text citations and the reference list are consistently formatted. It is mostly engaging.	The writing is straightforward, mostly clear, and often engaging, but it contains occasional mechanical problems, confusing sentences, or moments of vagueness. Illustrations are adequately designed. References may be inconsistently formatted, and overall formatting does not consistently aid the reader.	Though the writing generally makes sense and there may be moments where the word choice is appropriate and elegant, it is weak enough in places to obscure the author's ideas, often as a result of vagueness, verbosity, awkwardness, or a recurrent mechanical problem. Illustrations are difficult to read or interpret. Formatting of the paper or the references is problematic.	The writing is generally confusing, awkward, or too verbose, and probably exhibits numerous mechanical problems. Its word choice or use may be inappropriate. Illustrations are poorly designed. The paper formatting is sloppy or unhelpful, and references are not properly formatted.

Not pass: A paper will not pass if it does not address the assignment, falls substantially short of the minimum word requirement, is excessively sloppy, or fails to appropriately cite sources including plagiarism, or otherwise lacks academic integrity. This rubric was developed based on resources from the [Brandeis University Writing Program](#), using rubrics from Prof. Jim Morris, Profs. Kryder and Cunningham, Prof. Lamb, Prof. Watson, and Prof. Brettler. Thanks to input from Anne Jernick and Barry Ness from LUCSUS. Rubric may be freely distributed and adapted for teaching purposes.



Comments and suggestions welcome to Kimberly.nicholas.academic@gmail.com. Thanks!