**Grading Rubric for THEO 200 papers**

Note: Intermediate grades (A-, B+ etc.) indicate paper qualities from two or more different grade ranges.

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| A (excellent) | B (very good) | C (acceptable) | D (poor but passing) | F (not passing) |
| **Ideas**  Clear, creative, complex or subtle thesis  Brief, accurate & relevant description of chosen item  Nuanced analysis – addresses ambiguous aspects of item or class texts  Mastery of course resources, used frequently & appropriately  Accurate source citations | Clear & defensible thesis, less in-depth or “safer” than “A” work.  Describes chosen item accurately; may include unnecessary detail.  Reasoned argument for thesis is present. Recognizes ambiguities without addressing them.  Good grasp of course resources, less skillful than “A” work. Uses readings appropriately & almost as frequently. Source citations are accurate. | Thesis exists, but is less clear. May be too obvious, OR too hard to defend. Thesis lacks depth.  Chosen item described way too much, or way too little.  Ignores ambiguities in texts. May make unwarranted assumptions or jump to conclusions.  Some knowledge of course readings, but with mistakes or misunderstandings. May not use the best source(s) to illustrate an idea. May “stretch” a concept to fit argument.  Missing or inaccurate citations of sources. | Unclear what the thesis is.  Unclear description of chosen text, missing significant details, OR description of chosen text consumes the entire paper, without any analysis.  Weak and inaccurate use of course texts, suggesting unfamiliarity with their content & meaning, OR no direct reference to course texts at all.  Few or no citations. | Failure to turn in assignment,  Or paper does not address the requested assignment,  Or paper is so garbled that it makes no sense at all. |
| **Organization**  Smooth opening ¶, without overgeneralizations or abruptness.  Logically connected paragraphs leading reader through analysis.  Paragraphs have internal coherence, contribute to main thesis  Closing ¶ suggests a final insight or avenue for further reflection | Opening ¶ exists with clearly identifiable main thesis. May contain minor overgeneralizations or hurry to the thesis without sufficient introduction.  Paragraphs mostly logically organized, with some minor lapses.  Some paragraphs may be loose in structure or support the main thesis only tangentially.  Closing ¶ exists; it may be repetitive or offer no new insight. | Opening ¶ makes sweeping generalizations, or abruptly start thesis with no introduction, or uses a trite device to start paper (ex: dictionary definition).  Choppy organization, skipping back & forth between ideas, or making abrupt switches.  Body of the paper may not address everything thesis says it will.  Some paragraphs do not add support to main thesis.  ¶s may lack focus or main idea.  Closing ¶, if it exists, may not wrap up the topic. | Disorganized, no apparent move from one idea to another. If paragraphs exist, they do not support the thesis.  Missing opening or closing paragraph. |  |
| **Writing mechanics & style**  Written in standard English (no slang). Clear, vigorous, even eloquent language.  Virtually no mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation or syntax.  References to self are minimal and appropriate – focus is on subject matter. | Written in standard English (no slang). Clear, but not eloquent.  Only a few errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation or syntax.  References to self are usually appropriate. May be more frequent than necessary. | Choppy writing may partly obscure meaning.  May contain slang or colloquial English.  Many errors of spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax.  Too many references to self & thought process, rather than focusing on the topic. | So garbled that it is difficult to understand meaning.  Excessive errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax.  Rambling, focus on own thoughts/feelings without reference to chosen topic. |  |