

Psychology 3120G & 3177F
Grading Criteria for Essay Questions

Relevance. How directed is the answer to the question that has been asked? Is the answer focussed on answering the question? Credit is given only for material that is relevant to the question but marks can be lost for confusion about the question that is to be answered.

Comprehensiveness. The comprehensiveness of the answer is the main factor in evaluation. Has the author demonstrated an understanding of the material that forms the basis for the answer? How deep, broad, and precise is that understanding? Has the author revealed nuances and problems with the material that may not be readily apparent? Are the arguments well-supported with evidence? Did the author appear to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of her arguments and the evidence used to support them?

Integration and Insight. Has the author added any ideas of her own to the material? Has there been any critical evaluation of the material? Has she found a way of integrating material from different parts of the course, from different parts of psychology, and from different parts of the scientific and scholarly traditions? Has she incisively analysed her own experiences or those of others? Has she found ways of thinking about the material that were not apparent in the readings, lectures, or class discussions?

Logical Coherence. Is the answer logically coherent? Any apparent contradictions must be explicitly resolved and all premises must have some evidential basis or be acknowledged as being speculative. The arguments must be well-reasoned and clear.

Organization. The answer needs to be well-organized with a clear introduction, good flow through the body of the answer, and a strong conclusion. All parts of the answer need to be clear so that the reader knows what points are being made and the arguments need to be clearly written out so as to facilitate following them. Arguments should be succinct rather than repetitive. Is the answer well-organized?

Style. Words should be carefully chosen so as to convey as accurately as possible the intended meanings. Grammar, spelling, punctuation, and APA conventions must be used correctly. The answer needs to be well-edited and proofread so that it is free of careless errors. How well-written is the answer?