<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fails Completely</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis</strong></td>
<td>No identifiable thesis or thesis shows lack of effort or comprehension of assignment.</td>
<td>Difficult to identify, inconsistently maintained, or provides little around which to structure paper.</td>
<td>Unclear, buried, poorly articulated, lacking in insight and originality.</td>
<td>Promising, but may be unclear or lacking insight or originality.</td>
<td>Easily identifiable, interesting, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure and style</strong></td>
<td>No evident structure or organization. No transitions between major points.</td>
<td>Unclear, unfocused, disorganized, lacking in unity, transitions abrupt or confusing, context unclear.</td>
<td>Generally unclear, unfocused, often wanders or jumps around. Few or weak transitions. Does not provide sufficient information, explanation, and context for readers.</td>
<td>Generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. May have some unclear transitions or lack of coherence. Does not fully appreciate reader’s need for information, explanation, and context.</td>
<td>Evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis. Essay is focused and unified. Excellent transitions between points. Anticipates reader’s need for information, explanation, and context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of sources (when applicable)</strong></td>
<td>No attempt made to incorporate information from primary and secondary sources.</td>
<td>Very little information from sources. Poor handling of sources.</td>
<td>Moderate amount of source information incorporated. Some key points supported by sources. Quotations may be poorly integrated into paragraphs. Some possible problems with source citations.</td>
<td>Draws upon sources to support most points. Some evidence may not support thesis or may appear where inappropriate. Quotations integrated well into paragraphs. Sources cited correctly.</td>
<td>Draws upon primary and secondary source information in useful and illuminating ways to support key points. Excellent integration of quoted material into paragraphs. Sources cited correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Logic and argumentation</strong></td>
<td>No effort made to construct a logical argument. Failure to support thesis.</td>
<td>Little attempt to offer support for key claims or to relate evidence to thesis. Reasons offered may be irrelevant. Little to no effort to address alternative views.</td>
<td>Arguments of poor quality. Weak, undeveloped reasons offered in support of key claims. Counter-arguments mentioned without rebuttal.</td>
<td>Argument is clear and usually flows logically and makes sense. Some counter-arguments acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed fully.</td>
<td>Arguments are identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Clear reasons are offered in support of key claims. Author anticipates and successfully grapples with counter-arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>Difficult to understand because of significant problems with sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.</td>
<td>Several problems with sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.</td>
<td>Some problems with sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.</td>
<td>Sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling strong despite occasional lapses.</td>
<td>Correct sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

University at Buffalo
Department of Philosophy
Grading Rubric for Writing Assignments