

THE COLLEGE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS  
Holistic Paper Rubric

There are six cornerstones of a superior paper:

1. It establishes the relevant question clearly;
2. It answers the question in a highly analytical manner;
3. It proposes a well-defined thesis, stated early on;
4. It presents evidence to support that thesis;
5. It addresses, explicitly or implicitly, opposing arguments or weaknesses in the thesis and supporting evidence (this constitutes a counterargument); and,
6. It accomplishes the above in a clear and well-organized fashion.

Standards for assessing student papers are as follows:

**A (93-100):** Work of superior quality; contains original thought.

**A- (90-92):** Work of high quality that demonstrates original thought.

**B+ (87-89):** A sound effort which meets all six cornerstones above.

**B (83-86):** A solid essay which is, on the whole, a successful consideration of the topic.

**B- (80-82):** An essay that addresses the question and has a clearly-stated thesis, but which fails to support the thesis fully and either does not address counterarguments thoroughly, has serious structural flaws, or does not develop conclusions fully.

**C (70-79):** Expresses a reasonable argument but makes inadequate use of evidence, has little coherent structure, is critically unclear, or lacks the quality of insight deemed sufficient to explore the issue at hand.

**F (69 and below):** The submission does not merit graduate credit. Students may be asked to resubmit the essay.

**Faculty Comments:**

**Faculty Upload:**

No file attached

**Faculty: If you have any supporting documents to enhance your feedback, you may upload it to Tk20 here.**

**Final Grade**

**A whole numeric grade value must be entered as a final grade. Please enter the final grade in the "Grade" box below, not the "Total Score" box.**

**Please use the scale below to determine the final grade:**

**A:93-100 A-:90-92 B+:87-89 B:83-86 B-:80-82 C:70-79 F:69-0**