

# TENTATIVE GRADING POLICY FOR PAPERS

## STEP 1: HOW TO GET A PASSING GRADE

The paper will get a passing grade (in other words, a grade other than F) if—and only if—it does all of the following:

1. It formulates clearly an *acceptable* thesis. (Consult your instructor on what counts as an "acceptable" thesis.)
2. It defends the thesis by means of at least one argument *different* from every argument formulated in class or in the required readings.
3. It formulates at least one objection and provides a reply.
4. It addresses explicitly (at any stage in the argumentation) at least one point made in the required readings (or in a philosophy journal article, in case the topic of the paper is not covered by the required readings).

Steps 2 and 3 below presuppose that the paper will get a passing grade.

## STEP 2: ARGUMENTATION SCORE

1. Each argument in the paper (in other words: Argument for the thesis, Objection 1, Reply 1, etc.) will get a score—an integer from 0 to 5—according to the following table:

		Justification		
		Unacceptable	Average	Proficient
Reasoning	Unacceptable	0	1	2
	Average	1	3	4
	Proficient	2	4	5

For example: if the reasoning of Reply 1 is average and the justification is proficient, then Reply 1 will get a score of 4. (See the *Rubric for argumentative philosophy papers* on what counts as "unacceptable", "average", and "proficient" reasoning and justification.)

2. The *argumentation score*—a number from 0 to 5, not necessarily an integer—will be the *average* of the scores of all arguments in the paper (assuming that the paper includes *at least* the nine required arguments, namely Argument for the thesis, Objection 1, Reply 1, Rejoinder 1, Response 1, Objection 2, Reply 2, Rejoinder 2, and Response 2; if some of these required arguments are absent, they will count as present but with a score of 0 for the purpose of computing the average).

## STEP 3: PAPER GRADE

1. Each of the remaining five dimensions on which the paper will be evaluated (namely: Organization, Originality, Clarity, Conciseness, and Precision/language) will get a score of 0 (unacceptable), 0.5 (average), or 1 (proficient). (See the *Rubric for argumentative philosophy papers* on what counts as "unacceptable", "average", and "proficient" organization, originality, etc.)
2. The sum of the above five scores plus the argumentation score will be a number from 0 to 10, not necessarily an integer. This number will be rounded up or down to the nearest integer (it will be rounded *down* if it ends in .5), yielding the *paper score*, which will be converted to the *paper grade* according to the following table:

Paper score	0-1	2	3-4	5	6-7	8-10
Paper grade	D	C	BC	B	AB	A

3. *The paper grade will be D if clarity is unacceptable*: if the paper is unintelligible, how can it be evaluated? (Show a draft to your instructor if in doubt as to whether the clarity of your writing is acceptable.)