

MA in History Synthetic Essay Content Rubric

Student: _____

Portfolio Committee Member: _____

	High Pass	Pass	Fail
Sophistication of Argument/Synthesis	The essay advances a clear and convincing thesis, supported by specific and relevant evidence from a range of sources. The essay builds original and substantive connections between courses and historiographies.	The essay articulates a thesis, supported by relevant evidence from a few sources. The essay demonstrates a few connections between courses and historiographies.	The essay either fails to articulate a thesis or does not marshal supporting or relevant evidence. The essay only gestures at the connections between courses and historiographies.
Historiographical Understanding	The essay demonstrates a mastery of the historiography by clearly articulating the interventions of relevant books and articles. With precision, the essay identifies key debates and animating questions, as well as recent trends in the scholarly literature.	The essay demonstrates a strong understanding of the historiography, including relevant books and articles. The author addresses important questions and debates in the scholarly literature. The author may gesture at recent trends in the field.	The essay does not substantively engage the scholarly literature, neglecting to address key authors or animating debates. The essay is mostly unaware of conflicting interpretations.
Mastery of Historical Content	Through specific examples drawn from assigned texts, the essay demonstrates a mastery of the historical content.	Through supporting details, the essay demonstrates a solid understanding of the relevant historical content.	The essay does not demonstrate an MA level knowledge of the historical content, offering no supporting details. Factual errors may be present.
Historical Methodology/Analytical Rigor	The essay demonstrates a mastery of the historian's craft. The essay is keenly aware of change over time, conveys an understanding of the past's complexity, and situates events in context.	The essay demonstrates a solid understanding of the historian's craft. The essay situates events in context and is aware of the past's complexity and change over time.	The essay does not demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the historian's craft. The essay generalizes or lacks the nuance or analytic rigor of MA level work.

Pass: All four indicators must be scored "pass" or "high pass."

High Pass: All four indicators must be scored "high pass."

MA in History Synthetic Essay Writing Rubric

Student: _____

Portfolio Committee Member: _____

	High Pass	Pass	Fail
Organization and Flow	The organization and structure are clear and logical. Strong topic sentences introduce each paragraph. Transitions between paragraphs are effective. The introduction and conclusion are successful.	The organization and structure is mostly clear and logical. Topic sentences introduce each paragraph. Transitions between paragraphs are mostly effective. The introduction and conclusion are sound.	The paper is not well organized. Paragraphs are not consistently introduced by topic sentences. Transitions are not made between paragraphs. The introduction and conclusion are ineffective.
Sentence Structure	There are no errors in sentence structure. The writer uses a variety of sentence patterns and styles. The writer makes appropriate word choices.	There are occasional errors in sentence structure, but none detract from the overall quality of the work. The writer makes mostly appropriate word choices.	There are significant errors in sentence structure. The pattern of errors detracts from the content of the essay.
Grammar	There are no major errors in usage or grammar. The writer avoids the passive voice.	There are a few common errors in usage or grammar, but none of these detract from the overall quality of the work.	There are numerous errors in usage or grammar. The pattern of errors detracts from the content of the essay.
Citations	Citations are full and complete according to the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i> . There are no errors in citation.	Citations are full and complete according to the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i> . There are minimal errors in citation.	Citations are incomplete and/or not in compliance with the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i> .

Pass: All four indicators must be scored “pass” or “high pass.”

High Pass: Three of four indicators must be scored “high pass,” and no indicator is scored “fail.”

MA in History Portfolio Oral Defense Rubric

Student: _____

Portfolio Committee Member: _____

	High Pass	Pass	Fail
Sophistication of Argument	The student addresses the examiner's questions with clear, convincing, and original responses. The student marshals supporting details from a variety of texts.	The student addresses the examiner's questions with relevant evidence from the full range of assigned materials.	The student fails to address the examiner's questions, or does not marshal supporting evidence.
Historiographical Understanding	The student demonstrates a mastery of the secondary literature, articulating with precision the interventions of relevant books and articles; the major debates animating the field; and recent trends in the scholarly literature.	The student demonstrates a strong understanding of the historiography, including relevant books and articles. The student addresses important, recent trends in the scholarly literature.	The student does not engage the scholarly literature, neglecting to address key authors, relevant debates, or recent trends in the scholarly literature.
Historical Understanding	The student demonstrates a mastery of the historical content, as evidenced by specific examples from assigned texts. There are no factual errors in the student's responses.	The student demonstrates a strong knowledge of the historical content, as evidenced by specific examples from assigned texts.	The student fails to evince knowledge of the historical content. The student generalizes or offers few supporting details. The student may commit factual errors.
Oral Presentation	The student delivers clear, convincing, and efficient answers to the questions. Responses are well organized and of professional quality.	The student delivers clear answers to the questions. Responses are mostly well organized. The student's oral presentation is effective.	The student fails to deliver clear, concise, or organized responses to the questions. The oral presentation is not effective.

Pass: All four indicators must be scored "pass" or "high pass."

High Pass: All four indicators must be scored "high pass."