

Senior Seminar – Essay Checklist

I. Introduction

1. Is my introduction concise? Yes __ No __
2. Does it contain a clear statement of my main thesis? Yes __ No __
3. Does it indicate very briefly my main line of argument? Yes __ No __
4. Does it explain the overall structure of my essay? Yes __ No __

II. Logical and Perspicuous Structure

1. Is my essay organized into sections in a logical fashion? Yes __ No __
2. Are the sections divided into appropriate subsections? Yes __ No __
3. Have I made the overall structure of my essay clear by using informative headings for sections and subsections? Yes __ No __

IIIA. Overall Structure for Essays Focusing upon an Argument

1. Have I formulated the relevant argument in a careful and explicit fashion? Yes __ No __
2. If I am criticizing the argument, have I made it clear exactly what step in the argument my criticism is directed against? Yes __ No __
3. Have I set out the most important objections that might be raised to the view that I am defending? Yes __ No __
4. Have I offered careful and detailed responses to those objections? Yes __ No __

IIIB. Overall Structure for Essays Focusing upon a Thesis

1. Have I stated the thesis clearly? Yes __ No __
2. Have I formulated the relevant argument (or arguments) in a careful and explicit fashion? Yes __ No __
3. Have I set out the most important objections that might be offered? Yes __ No __
4. Have I responded in a careful and detailed way to those objections? Yes __ No __

IV. Exposition of Arguments

1. Are arguments carefully set out, so that both all of the assumptions, and the reasoning, are clear? Yes __ No __
2. Have I, at any point, set out more than one argument in a single paragraph? Yes __ No __
3. Are objections and responses set out in separate paragraphs? Yes __ No __

V. Consideration of Possible Responses to your own Arguments

1. Have I explicitly indicated to the reader which of the assumptions in my arguments are philosophically controversial, and why? Yes __ No __
2. Have I then offered reasons for thinking that those assumptions are nevertheless plausible? Yes __ No __
3. Have I considered, and responded to, counterarguments directed against the conclusions of my arguments? Yes __ No __

VI. Overall Clarity and Conciseness

1. Is my writing clear and straightforward? Yes __ No __
2. Is my writing concise? Yes __ No __