

## Students comments on rubrics: HIST 2700

Request to students:

Compose a thoughtful paragraph or two and let me know if you have found the "learning outcomes rubric" helpful or not.

-Rather than simply saying the rubric is "good" or "bad," please EXPLAIN why the device has (*or has not*) provided some guidance, clarification, and direction for your work.

-Is there anything about the form that should be changed or revised (*or eliminated*)?

-Might there be a better way to help students understand the standards that govern written exercises in the class?

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The learning rubric given in this class is a very fair and great grading tool. I feel that it helps students to understand better what is expected in these essays and assignments. Rather than using phrases like "I think", or "in my opinion", students learn that they need to write the facts and explain them instead of just writing their opinion about the subject. The rubric is a great tool, telling you exactly what is required in the writing. It obviously needs to make sense and events should be in order chronologically, but in an essay I think that goes without saying. All in all it is a very good tool and should continue to use it.

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The Learning Outcomes Rubric is a good standard for evaluating student's abilities to master historical knowledge, historical thinking, and historical skills, with the most weight placed on historical thinking (40%). Because most weight is placed on historical thinking, this requires students to understand more fully the the reasoning of why historical events took place by placing themselves in the context of the time period. The rubric does of good job of outlining how students should construct a correct, thorough, and full explanation of history in an organizational and straightforward manner. Thus, indicating to the instructor an accurate reflection of how much of the students understand the material. Also, the rubric, places students in the position to better exercise their communication skills in writing, such as, formulating an accurate answer to a question through a process of creating a thesis, an outline, and backing up information with examples. Overall the rubric does a good job of grading all the areas of an academic essay. The rubric has been helpful to me in planning how to study and construct an academic essay. I do not think anything should be added to or taken away from this rubric.

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I really like the Learning Outcomes Rubric. It is very helpful to know the differences in the different masteries. I really like that it is broken into three sections, Historical Knowledge, Historical Thinking, and Historical Skills then it goes into more details about each section and what is to be expected in each argument. The Learning Outcomes Rubric is very helpful to know what one has to work on and how much each learning outcome contributes to the final grade. When graded it is easy to understand why you got the score you got because it is set up in a way that is very easy to read and simple

understand. The Learning Outcome Rubric is very helpful for future essays because now one know what is to be expected in the essay to get a good grade.

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The learning outcome rubric for the essay exams have helped me recognize the specific areas in which I can improve my writing on the essay exams. On the first exam, I got a B+; on the second I got an A-. I believe the reason I did better on the second exam was because the rubric pointed out the areas I wasn't focusing enough attention on when writing the essays. This type of rubric is especially helpful in such a large class where it isn't always possible to speak with the professor personally.

The rubric has been very helpful to me, but I think there are ways to make it more student-friendly. It would be helpful to get a copy of the rubric before the first exam to know how the exams are going to be graded when studying. I have noticed in my time as a student that I pay more attention to comments that are written directly on my essay than to points on a rubric. The rubric is wordy and a more concise rubric would encourage more students to go over the rubric after getting back an exam. Overall, I think the rubric is extremely helpful and has helped me improve my writing.

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I believe the reading rubric is completely fine. I feel that the point distribution is also in line. The majority of the points are in the historical thinking (as it should be since this is a history class). It is also important to have the other areas though since a poorly written essay is not only hard to understand but it severely detracts from the main arguments raised. The historical knowledge section is also important since a clear understanding of when the events transpired influences not only the way in which an argument is raised but helps to answer how or why something transpired.

My biggest problem with the rubric, in fact, has nothing to do with it. Sometimes I don't see any pointed out areas in which I was "docked" points. Usually I am okay with this since I know when I have weak points but I am not sure if these are the areas in which I actually lost points. For example, on the last test I received a 474 out of 500 and lost the majority of these points on the mechanics of the argument (spelling, punctuation, etc...). When looking over my essay (which mind you I thought was much weaker than the first two I wrote wherein I did receive a better grade) I didn't really see any markings showing where the mechanics of my argument were weak. In fact the only mark that I found saying anything to do with spelling and grammar were a quick sentence saying avoid contractions and the end where it says watch grammar and spelling. I'm not saying that everything needs to be shown but I think it would help if students had a better idea where they are marked down (so it could be avoided in the future). The rubric however, of itself, is well created and if people follow it their essays should be very good. Oh, I never really looked over the rubric in great detail to "study" it, but since I am a senior and have written a lot in my college career I know what makes a good paper so I didn't really need to study it. The biggest sign that this rubric is working correctly is that I can write what I consider a "good" argument without study the rubric and receive a good score. So, I believe it doesn't really have a weakness and nothing needs to be drastically changed.

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I personally think that having a rubric helps. It helps me to know that is wanted on a paper or in the class. When writing papers I find it very helpful because I can go over over my paper and see if there I put everything that needed to be in it. I also like rubric grading for when I get test and papers back. It lets me know what I did well and what I need to work on more. I think that there is more of an advantage to having them then not having them. I think if a teacher knows how to make a really detailed rubric and are able to work really well with it are better teachers then the ones that don't have them, just from my own personal experience I have done better in the classes that do have them. I don't see how there would be a better way to tell students what the teacher is looking for in a paper, I don't think that it would be as ingrained in kid's minds.

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One of the hardest things as a college student is to figure out exactly what the teacher wants and expects of you in an assignment. The Learning Outcomes Rubric is very explicit and outlines every area of the assignment that will be looked at. You know what areas your teacher wants you to focus on and where points can be lost. This helps to guide and direct a student throughout the course. On the other hand there are important areas of a paper that are lost with the Rubric. The individualism of a paper can be lost and a writer starts to write with the teachers' restrictions rather than how he/she truly feels.

Dividing the Rubric up into three major and five minor areas, gives the student the exact areas to focus on and include in their papers. The student can easily identify where the majority of the points will be given and can proportion his/her time accordingly. The student can be organized and guided to accomplish what the instructor is looking for. When the student receives a paper and rubric back, they know exactly where to look for areas of improvement in the papers, because they are individually marked.

A problem that I have found is that a student is given a two page assignment to write a comparative essay and then they also have a two page rubric that they have to be focused on as well. You have a total of four complete pages of instruction that you need to take into affect when writing the paper. I enjoy it more when a student receives a simple and concise assignment that they can enjoy rather than studying the four pages. It is a lot of information to focus on and try to incorporate into an assignment. The topics are justified, but less can be more when it comes to instructions.

True enjoyment in writing comes when the writer can express themselves in the way that they want and get the message across that they feel is necessary without constant worry of following explicit instructions. With the Rubric I have felt a little restricted. I recognize that this is not an English class, but I still enjoy to free write and tell what I have to offer a specific topic. With all of the information that the Rubric is offering, I have lost myself in the writing and focused more on the instructions than how I truly feel.

It is expected for teachers to be looking in a specific direction, but with too much instruction and guidance it turns into the student writing as the teacher rather than for themselves. Overall the areas on the rubric are very reasonable and I have no doubt what areas you will be grading, but I would prefer less instruction and more just focusing on covering the material.

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I found the rubric to very helpful. Especially before I had taken one of your test and I wasn't sure what format you were looking for, I read the rubric and had a much better idea. I liked how the structure was defined in expectations. It showed what could and should be done and not what not to do.

What could be improved is having examples of well written paragraphs that have elements you are looking for.

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When our first essay exam was approaching, I got extremely nervous because I wasn't so sure how it was graded and what was needed to receive a good grade. When we asked you, you referred us to the rubric and I was thinking, "oh great! Now I will never know what he wants." So, from the very first I didn't feel like it was a good resource. I did look at the rubric and my opinion changed. I saw what you wanted and what was needed to be included. I felt that it was beneficial to my studying as well. Furthermore, I felt like when I got my grade back, I saw which areas I needed to work on.

Obviously a lot of the grading is based off what the grader feels the paper deserves, and there have been some grades where I felt like I deserved a higher grade than I received, but that is how essay scoring goes and although I was disappointed, instead of complaining about my grade I tried to understand my score through the rubric. I think one thing that might make the rubric more effective is to give examples of an A paper verses an A- or B. I also feel that if there were examples of very well written papers following the essay exam, it would be beneficial to see how my paper compares.

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The "learning outcomes rubrics" is quite helpful. I especially like how each section is broke down to even more sections. For example "Historical Knowledge" has two subdivisions -"Historical Soundness of the argument" and "Pertinence of the argument" then from there you go into detail of the information you want from us for each subdivision, fully defining what you want us to put for "Historical Knowledge". It shows to me what you do and don't want on the test. The grading scale is great too, but I would change it to 10.0 - 9.0 for excellent mastery, 8.9-8.0 for good mastery and so on. For so many certain details of the certain information you want on the essay exam, 5.0-4.5 there is not enough room for error. The other suggestion I would make would be to put an area under each section for notes to put little suggestion to what we did wrong, or what we did good. That would help us to know what we can improve on. If we don't know what we have done wrong specifically to our paper how are we going to progress.

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Overall I like the idea and use of rubrics. I have had rubrics in other classes and I think they are useful. Foremost the rubric lets me as a student know what is expected. The rubric for our 2700 class I feel is a bit long. When I look at a rubric I want to know the requirements needed to receive a good grade in as few words as possible. The 2700

rubric does explain what an "A" essay should contain but also spends a lot of space explaining in the other levels of mastery how not to get an A. Simpler explanations of levels of mastery may be a good idea.

The rubrics are good. I Generally have found that whenever one is used I have a better understanding of what is expected of me. That part I do like. I think the only problem is is that sometimes they can make it feel like it is impossible to get an A because of the language that is used. I think those putting them together need to remember that they are generally not for people getting there Ph. D, but for under grad classes. So maybe just look at your audience and write it so they feel like a gen. ed. course is a gen. ed. course and not a 4000 level course. I understand this can be difficult to strike the proper balance, and would take extra time to write more than one rubric. To that I have no answer except that I think it would be appreciated by students. Thanks for the opportunity to let me add my .02 cents in.

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The rubric is very useful, because it informs the student exactly what is required of them, in order to receive a good grade. Not only that, but it's useful in illustrating to students how to write a good historical essays, i.e. how to explain historical events, how to show historical thinking. It shows to students that writing mechanics, spelling, and grammar are important. Overall, the rubric works well, and illustrates to students exactly what is expected of them.

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I thought that the rubric was simple and straightforward and efficiently portrayed the expectations of the exams. They were presented in a concise manner that allowed me to ensure that I covered all pertinent information. Whether it was historical information or the presentation and mechanics of the paper I knew what was expected to receive an "A" grade.

The rubric was divided into sections that evaluated our knowledge, critical thinking abilities, and historical organization skills. It was, and has been stated, that the combining of such elements is an essential talent of successful university students and critical thinkers in general. A rubric test is definitely a different and more engaging experience than taking a multiple choice test.

The only drawback that I found is that I feel that often times the grader is not completely objective in the grading and the "rubric guidelines" are open to interpretation which does not guarantee complete fairness to everyone.

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When I first looked at the rubric in the syllabus it was overwhelming because there was so much information written down. There was so much for each of the sections that I

almost did not even want to look over it to start with. I think if we could have gone over it in class and had a little bit of a class discussion showing what was considered to be an excellent and good and so forth. I know as college students we should know by now, but it is so different for each teacher. I think that if we would have discussed more what was good and what was expected: such as no contractions, then it could have helped a little more. But the outline was very good to have in the syllabus but a discussion would have added to the descriptions better so I could have better understood what was wanted by the graders. However, I did like that the grading was split up and tried to explain in pretty good detail what was considered excellent, good, fair, and so forth. I think I would have liked to have a couple of examples of good, fair, and bad papers attached so we can get a better idea because for me I am more of a visual learner and that would have helped me. Sorry I know it sounds childish but that is just a few of my thoughts.

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I believe that the rubric for the essay exams in the class is very straightforward. I think they tell exactly what the grader is looking for. I like the fact that there is a letter grade given alongside the score. This makes the grade easier to interpret. I do think however along with having the listings of what elements are contained in each section (such as 3.5-3.9) that there should be made a comment section so that the grader can give specific examples of where the student made mistakes. Often times I see some elements that relate to me but others that I don't think do at all. If the grader could write down where they were my grade would often be easier to understand. Even if there were more writing on the actual essay that would help. I often see where I may have made a mistake with a contraction but not with the actual content of the writing.

I also think when there are two separate essays that the student is writing there should be two separate rubrics. That way if one of the essays is very well done but the other may have been rushed or not as clear they can both be taken into account in two separate scores averaged together.

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I know that this is much later than you asked for it, and I am not even aware if this will be of any use now, but as I was studying for the final exam, I was again reminded of some points I really liked and disliked about the rubric, and I thought that I should share them, even if it is a bit tardy in coming.

From the beginning the scoring system has been somewhat confusing to me. Having the percents on the side, and then the 5.0-4.5, etc markings along the top, and then scoring the paper out of 500 seems a really round about way of conveying the scoring system. A more simple scoring, such as the exact number of points out of 500 that each category is worth would make the rubric that much easier.

However, I have found it to be a highly effective rubric. It is very beneficial to know the expectations of the paper, and particularly to have them included in the syllabus. I really have appreciated knowing where the points come from, and understanding exactly what my relative strengths and weaknesses are. Having the break of up points from the first

essay exam really helped me with the next one, as well as my papers in other classes by pointing out where there was room for improvement. My roommate and I have discussed our various college papers and have agreed that feedback is one of the most valuable and encouraging items to be included with a grade. Because there are a large number of students, and writing out detailed comments for each one can be tedious and time consuming, the rubric's detailed categories and expectations allow all the students to receive helpful and encouraging feedback.

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In regard to the grading rubric that you have provided for the class, I have found it extremely helpful in preparing for the exams. The complete and thorough explanation of the points from 'excellent mastery-no mastery' and what is involved with earning those specific points in the respected categories (historical knowledge, historical thinking, etc.) is what has helped me the most in writing the essays. After I have received the grading rubric back from your TA's I looked over my essay and saw where I could have improved upon or where I performed well on. The grading rubric not only helps me understand what is expected of me, it is also very clear and concise as to how the essay is to be graded. I can think of no ways in which the rubric can be improved upon. Thank you.

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I believe the "learning outcomes rubric" is helpful because it explains what type of essay you should be trying to write. I like seeing how each part is divided into different sections of skills, thinking, and knowledge of the material, but especially the grade system "No mastery" to "Excellent mastery." It makes it easier to see where my essay fit into the grading system and makes me reflect on how I need to master the material better. It is wonderful to have the descriptions in each section. Without these, I would have no clue what the difference would be between "minimal mastery" and "some mastery." It gives me an idea of how much more detail I need in my essay and how much stronger I should make my argument. The rubric points me in the direction I need to follow to make a well written essay.

I am not exactly for sure why the Historical Thinking section is worth more than every other section, but other than that, the rubric explains the grading system pretty plainly. To help students understand the rubric better, I believe it would be nice to give the class a copy of the rubric before their first test and have the professor explain why they use the rubric. That way, they know better what they are getting themselves into.

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I feel that the grading rubric is a good tool in helping to determine the grades of our essays. On both of the essay exams that we have taken, I have been able to almost predict what my grade would be based on what the rubric defines as the grading requirements. Both times my prediction and my actual score have only differed in 3-4 points.

I personally think that the knowledge of the topic that we are writing about should be worth more points than the layout or organization of our argument. Many people argue this because they think that they should be graded on the topic knowledge and not the

actual layout and grammar of the argument, because they feel that is unimportant. My reason for thinking this though, is that we are Historians and Historians write, alot, and so we should be able to formulate complete sentences that follow proper grammar rules. In the last two tests I have had a very basic, if even basic, understanding of the topics that we are discussing. Having been a debater in high school, I learned how to create and layout an argument in an effective way. My last two test scores have been grades that I was happy with, but felt that I didn't deserved because of my lack of understanding about the topics, but because I was able to create an effective outline I was able to obtain a decent grade.

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I feel that the rubric really helps me understand where and why I missed the points I did. In my English 2010 class it is just a score. If I miss points I am left to wonder as to why. If I venture to ask the teacher she just informs me that it could be structure, grammar, etc. That isn't helpful for improvement because it is way to broad to know. It could be any part of the paper. In this rubric it breaks it down into sections like Historical Knowledge, Historical Thinking, etc. and gives a score out of 5 on each. Now I know if I was not specific enough in my knowledge of the subject, if my grammar was bad, my argument wasn't logical etc. The breakdown of the scores from 5.0-4., 4.4-4.0, etc. really help in giving that understanding. If i received a 5 on Historical soundness of argument I know that it wasn't the problem. So with a 4.4 score I can realize that I missed some key informing factors or maybe that while I had sufficient range of themes, I didn't reflect on larger themes involving specific events. This is much less broad than "you might have missed some on structure, grammar, or logic of argument."

The rubric also gives you exactly what the professor is looking for. This is beyond helpful for the next exams because each professor is different. I now know that contractions aren't a good idea to use (with Prof. McInerney) while with my English teacher it is ok. Now I don't have a specific reason I got, say, a 4/5 on mechanics of the paper. It is because of my use of conjunctions and a few other grammar mistakes that are clearly marked by the rubric.

When I first took a look at the grading rubric I thought it looked like most that I had seen for tests, and also papers that I have written for English classes. I was a little scared about the rubric because this class was the first for an essay exam without multiple choice, after recieving my first test and reading what I had scored on each section in the rubric I understood why I had recieved the score I had. For the next test I studied the rubric more and took into consideration what I didn't do correctly on the first exam that I could easily fix for the second exam. I like the rubric as for the reason it can tell you what the teacher is asking of you and what you will be graded on and where you fall with the points. I



think the rubric helped me and excessive amount from exam one to exam two, my scores went up a lot. Essay exams can be very scary, since there is so much that you have to remember and not knowing what exactly the teacher is wanting, but with the rubric you can see what you need to know about the test and where your answers will fall into; if you do not put in enough information and if you are not using your grammar correctly.

Rubrics at first can look very scary, but once putting them to use they help you in so many ways.

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At the beginning of the course I found the rubric to be overwhelming. It seemed to be overwhelmed with too much information for the beginning of the semester and did not relate to anything at the time. As the semester moved forward I have realized that the rubric is the most helpful piece of information you could provide. It helped to learn from my mistakes from the first essay exam and to improve my writing for the next. The rubric is long but overall helpful in knowing what you are "looking" for and what to work towards. I will admit I didn't read over the rubric as much as I should for the first exam and I know if I had, I could have done better. My writing skills could be better but the rubric helped to "hide" my writing flaws but writing towards what you were expecting.

Overall I believe the rubric is a helpful piece of information. Students may not think that at the beginning of the semester but they will soon realize it's useful and necessary to get a good grade on exams throughout the semester.

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I truly believe in the use of a rubric. I feel that having a rubric sets clear guidelines for what is expected. I also believe that it makes studying for exams much more helpful. I feel that the rubric, in general, is useful to students and professors. Professors end up having to answer fewer questions. Students know what is expected on exams from day one of class. My specific example in the class goes as follows. I took this class last spring from another professor who did not use a rubric. Needless to say I got a D in the class. My grades in this class are much higher and I credit the use of the rubric with my much improved success! Thank you!

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To be honest i have not found the rubrics to be helpful at all. I looked at the rubrics and tried to study according to what they say would qualify the best grade, but after i take the test there is no real feedback about my paper. I don't know what i did good or bad. Therefore i don't know if i did it according to the rubric, rendering it useless. i had no idea how to study for the next test because i didn't know what to improve on. It is also useless because the person who writes the rubric and the person who grades the papers are different people.

I would suggest having the person who wrote the rubric grade the papers. I would also suggest that there be sufficient feedback on the papers so they students know how their paper is different from the outlines in the rubric.

The rubric would be effective i believe if in reality it were possible to follow them.

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Although the rubric appears to be fleshed out greatly, its looks are deceiving. Yes, it clearly states criteria but they are... very vague criteria. The rubrics, when used for grading, are poorly utilized when the grader just goes down the rows putting the same number which, upon examination, gives no direct meaning for improvement. The rubric is good, but could be approved on more by being less vague, or at least when used, the deductions of points should be explained or else the rubric really isn't much help, is it? This would greatly help students like myself and others who do well on the essays, but not well enough to achieve a pure A and are left wondering what they did wrong exactly, what should be improved, or if the grader even took the time to really examine the criteria and apply it to the essay -- instead of just writing the same number down the rows out of laziness or apathy.

For the rubric, either shrink it or make it less vague. If the reasons for point deduction will not be stated, the rubric should be scaled down so that real writing improvement can be performed. Right now, although clear in its format and intent, the rubric becomes a confusing mess when actually in use. They are nice guidelines but fall through in application, in my opinion. However I do not see anything else wrong with it.

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Overall, I have found the Rubric for this class to be very helpful and clear most of the time. I like the way the points or percentages are split up and especially like the fact that "Mechanics of the argument" category is worth as much as the others as I think that things such as spelling, grammar and complete sentences are very important to writing well (even under a time limit). I also like the current categories and the in-depth explanation of what is expected in these categories on most.

There are a few aspects, however, that I would change or clarify. The first is that I think I would like a more detailed description of the "Pertinence of the argument" category.

Though the current description is fine, I find it to be just a little vague and am not exactly sure what you mean by "fully covers" and "the central issues." Does this mean that students are expected to tie all of their ideas back to one main thesis or are there just supposed to be several ideas relating to one another without one thesis tying them all together? In addition, I also feel that the descriptions in the "Historical soundness of the argument" category and the "Explanation of the argument" category sometimes overlap as I get the sense that they are both generally speaking of analyzing the essay and going beyond "surface level."

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Overall, I find the learning outcomes rubric very helpful. It has helped me study for the essay tests in class because I know what to expect and then I know what to work on in preparation to a test. The one criticism I have for the grading rubric is that I think two sections on the rubric are a bit repetitive. Those sections would be "historical soundness

of the argument" and "organization of the argument." To me, these concepts are almost the same because the argument has to be done in order and so do the historical arguments which I think should go hand-in-hand. I would combine these two sections and make the explanation longer as to what is expected. The mastery points of each section were another thing I found helpful. This way, I knew what I needed to put into an essay and how much was expected to fulfill the requirements. But, as I have stated before, overall I found this rubric very helpful for the type of history class that this is. It does not expect too much out of a survey class and I believe it gives a base to know what to prepare for.

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The rubric that is provided for us by the history department is very instrumental to a good grade on tests. The rubric gives you an idea on what the professor is looking for when you are providing your answers for the essay questions given to you on the test. I think that it helps your grade when you know exactly what knowledge the professor is looking for when they are grading your test. The rubric also helps you to improve your test grades because what you didn't think about studying on the last test you will study for after seeing what the rubric is looking for.

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I find the rubrics helpful. The thing I like about them most is that they break your grade down into the different categories that we are graded on. This helps because it helps me see what aspects of my paper were good and what parts I need to work on, instead of just getting a letter grade on the top of my paper. It also helps me see more clearly all the components I am going to be graded on and how they work together to make up my grade. I also like when I can see the rubric beforehand because it helps me be more familiar with how I will be graded and what to expect from the test and helps me know what to focus on when I study. The thing I would add to the rubric is a place for comments. Some rubrics I have had in the past have come back with comments and I really like that. It makes it more personal because I can hear their advice and feedback instead of just how I scored.

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The rubric that you use for the course HIST 2700 is very helpful in my opinion. The points that you give us to understand, are very clear to me. I like how you compare a subject that has happened in the past with what is happening now in the country, that gives me and I am sure other students a better view of how things worked back then and how our country has changed over time. Comparisons also help me understand how the government from our country works and how it came to be. I also like how you provide us with documents from the past, for example the "To Be Sold" advertisement that states the sale of 250 slaves aboard a ship. The overall rubric is very interesting to me.

I've learned a lot of things I did not know before coming to this class. The device has given me guidance not only to do well in this class but in my other classes as well. The written exercises are a good tool to help students learn to write their papers correctly and

learn how to structure an essay. It also helps students to look more deeply into the subject so that they can have more to write about. I don't think that the rubric should be changed because I enjoy how it is taught and I have learned from it.

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I have really appreciated the learning outcome rubric during this course. It not only gives me a way to expect how my essay will be graded, but it has aided my studying as well. I can look to the rubric to make sure my argument will be strong and will include everything it needs. I actually think it is the right way to grade a course like History 2700. The grades are based on writing, so knowing the rubric is very convenient and definitely takes a lot of stress away.

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My experience in this class with the rubric has somewhat bitter sweet. As i was looking over it to think about how to best answer your questions about it, i think that the outline of it is good. I think that the topics that it specifically grades on are relevant and should be aspects that students are graded on. As i've looked at the grades that i have received, and points i have gotten in those certain areas, i have found that its not very clear in WHY i got the points and grades that i did. As i student, if i get a grade that i am not content with, i would like criticism about the way that i am writing and doing my work. I want direction and comments so that the next time i take the test i can be doing the small or large things that i need to do to improve my grade. I would say that i like the rubric, but the one thing that i personally would change about it would be places for the grader to make comments on each of the sections that we are graded on. I think that the grader should give comments to inform the student of things that they did not do well and ways to improve or change that.

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I had an AP class in high school that used the same format for exams and I have found that this has helped immensely. I have even seen it help in this course in taking my exam score from an 87 up to a 94. This type of testing helps me to get familiar with not only the professor, but also the material and shows me what I have been able to comprehend and what I may have missed.

The only thing that I have had trouble understanding is the conversions of the grades from a 50 pt scale up to the other scale.

Overall, I would recommend continuing the use of this type of testing and test scoring.

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I have found the learning outcomes rubric very helpful. I liked that it was included in the syllabus, so I knew how to study for the exams and how my essay would be graded. In previous classes, a vague rubric has been handed out as a study tool, but a detailed rubric is used to grade the test; I think this is unfair to students. Most essay rubrics I have had in my classes aren't nearly as detailed or informative. I have liked this rubric because I

know exactly what to say in the essay in order to achieve the grade I want. The rubric includes very clear definitions of the information needed for a good essay answer, and I think it is broken down into "mastery" skills very fairly. The rubric has been very helpful to me, and I don't think changes are necessary.

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I personally feel that, for this class, the grading rubric was a very helpful tool in my testing preparations. I have used these in other course and find that having the expectations clearly laid out in a rubric format is helpful in knowing exactly what is expect on the given exercise (test in this case) and that having clear expectations helps me to prepare more effectively for that exercise and also helps at the point of execution. The test for this class require good preparation and a specific form in order to earn a good grade. I followed the rubric for the first test and received a 87%, which I was pleased with. In preparation for the second exam I again looked a the rubric, this time making comparisons with the results from the first exam to see what I needed to improved on. On the second exam I managed an 98%, which not only was a full letter grade improvement, but to me a big deal. So after seeing the results I am very pleased with the rubric you are using, and I don't see that there is any need for any changes. Perhaps the rubric just meshes well with my thought processes, but I think that it is probably the best means for running your written exercises in this class. I hope this was helpful to you.

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Learning rubrics are a huge asset and should be used in all college classrooms. At the beginning of a new semester it is difficult to judge what each professor expects from their students and a rubric gives students a clear description of what they will need to master to be successful in the class. Looking at the rubric for this class I instantly knew that writing a clear and concise essay was something of huge importance to this class. Not only does this include punctuation and spelling but it means that the material can not just be regurgitated. The materials for this class must be thought through and put into historical context using some outside information. From the rubric I knew that I would have to be critical and thoughtful in my essays so I would go over them in my head before writing them to ensure that the message I wanted would be clear in my writing.

The one critique I have of this rubric is I believe that part of the pertinence of the argument is how the essay is organized and explained. If you have the points but they are all over the place they will not be clear and the argument will be of less significance. To fix this I think the organization should be worth about 5%, the pertinence 20%, and the explanation 20%. This just eliminates some of the repetitiveness and would help a student who was not strong at organization to only be docked points in 1 category instead of 3.

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I have found the rubric to be very advantageous in directing the nature and the flow of the Essay Exams. The point system shows the student particular areas in which that student needs to improve, thus advancing the students historical and grammatical knowledge. My major qualm with the rubric and the Essay exam system is that it is dependent on the

bias and moods of any particular Teachers Assistant. While in the course I am taking right now is lucky enough to have good Teacher Assistants, I am afraid that such luck would not be possible if implemented in every class.

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In my personal opinion, I don't believe that a rubric is helpful. When it is included in assignments or syllabi, I overlook it. Most teachers use the same grading principles, so I think it is excessive for every teacher to provide you with one. I believe that most students in this day and age know what is acceptable work and what is not. It has become common knowledge of what will get you the best grade. Students should all strive for the best grade possible, and there doesn't need to be outlines for that. Perhaps a better idea would be for the school to have a general rubric, that way the work you do in each class will be graded using the same standards.

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I think that a learning outcomes rubric is helpful for students for several reasons. First, a rubric makes the grading seem more fair and less subjective, even though grading is subjective. It seems fair because the grade must be added up based upon specific guidelines, instead of the grader assigning the paper a grade that they "feel" it deserves. Second, rubrics also give students standards to which they can aspire. If they don't make the grade for which they hoped for, they are able to see what areas they need to improve in. I find that all of the sections of the rubric for this course are viable and are important skills. An addition to the rubric could be to explain why that historical skill is a historical skill and necessary to what a historian does. Although it is not part of Dr. McNerney's teaching responsibilities, I do believe that the section on Historical Skills about mechanics and organization are important but a disadvantage to students who have not had experience with scholarly essays. Students who have had little experience with essays, were taught poorly in high school, or struggle with essays are hurt by this grading component. There is a difference between not studying and performing poorly on an essay exam and being penalized for it and preparing well and have poor writing skills through no fault of one's own.

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I liked the rubrics that you gave us for the quizzes and exams. I found them helpful with the quizzes where there were different points to know, but it was never written exactly what about the points were most important. I liked that because it caused me to try to write notes on those points that were on the rubrics or study guide. With the exam rubrics I thought it was helpful how each of the columns had notes on if a person showed this much detail and knowledge of what they were writing they got a certain amount of points. I thought the rubrics were very straight forward, and I appreciated having them. I think without having a paper that stated how much I should prepare myself, I would have done awful.

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I have been overall pleased with the grading rubric which was used in the History 2700 class. I like how it is split into three categories: historical thinking, historical knowledge, and historical skills. In many of my other classes I have found that professors base their grading on only one of these categories rather than rating students' work over several categories. Being graded on the three aspects helped me focus better. It helped me to not simply focus on the facts, but to also pay attention to my writing skills and to write with the historical mindset we discussed in class. The rubric is very clear and easy to understand at a glance. Because of the rubric, students understand what is expected and can use this understanding to be successful in this history course. I do not observe any modifications which are necessary to improve the rubric.

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I believe that the grading rubric is very helpful. I was able to understand exactly how the grading of my exams would be done. It made me want to work harder so I could receive a good grade on my exam. I think giving examples of bad, good, and excellent writing would be helpful. People write so differently, that examples could help to guide the direction of the written exam. I also like that we go over the strong and weak points of each exam. It helped me to look over my first exam and see the problems; and I was able to change my writing and make it better for my second one.

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The rubric that has been used to grade our tests is a good system, but it can always be improved. For the most part I like it but the part I have a problem with is the last part with the mechanics of the argument section. I completely understand the need for it, after all its like you said that if we are not going to use our English 1010 classes why take it, but this section did pose a problem for someone like me that is dyslexic. I have a terrible time spelling words, spell check on a computer is my best friend, and in both of the essay exams I took, it was in this section that I missed the most points. I know what I want to say but putting it down on paper is a little difficult for me, more so than I would say for other students. But for the most part I believe the rubric to be a good way to grade and evaluate these essay exams, it makes it so you have to do the reading and the research. You cannot show up and fudge your way through it, or it will show.

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The Learning Outcomes Rubric that is used by Professor Daniel McInerney in his History 2700, American History to 1877, has a very well structured and in depth grading outline. Upon receiving my exams, after they have been graded, I went through the Rubric and read the comments and inputs on the area needing improvement. Before taking a test, after the first one at least, I found it a help to read through the Learning Outcomes Rubric because it showed what I would be graded on. I tried to memorize the key components of the rubric because I knew if I did that, I would do well. It helped me study more thoroughly for the upcoming exam too, by finding the area I didn't do so well on the previous test and read the key points the professor is looking for, so that on the following exam, I could fix my weak areas in historical writing.

Having the Historical Thinking, Historical Knowledge, and the Historical Skills in mind when writing an essay on a given subject in history helped me nail subject in hand.

If I had not used the Learning Outcomes Rubric to study with, I would not have been able to know too much of what the Professor was looking for exactly. I think that this Learning Outcomes Rubric should be used in other, if not all, History classes. It could also be of great help for students writing on any subject other than history. I hope I will see this in other History classes by this professor. I also hope I will see this rubric being adopted by other history teachers as well because it really is a big help for student and myself.

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I have read through the rubrics sent out in an email a week before each test, and i have found it very useful. I find it very helpful how well the grading procedure is pointed out on this paper. It has helped me understand better what i need to do in order to get a better grade and what i need to study in order to accomplish a good score on the rubric. After the test we receive the rubric scale back with the grade we received, this has helped me know what i need to work on for the next test, whether it be grammar, organization, or composition, this rubric scale lets me know.

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I think the Rubric that we use now is a very detailed and thoughtful one. I as a student work hard but of course I could always work harder and having this rubric, makes me in a way, to work harder and study more. Which of course is positive for learning and a negative factor for time. I understand that history papers need to have spelling and punctuation done correctly but maybe not so strict on it. I do like the essays rather than exams, just not so hot on the idea of worrying about the spelling on the entire essay, when I should be worrying about facts and information, which of course is the main idea of the essays. Regardless I am really enjoying this class.

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