Grading

Papers must be answerable to the "so what" question. That is, why should your audience care about your ideas. Excellent papers deal with significant issues and demonstrate critical thinking. They attempt to go beyond the obvious and explore implications.

Grades for each essay will consist of two components--content/organization and grammar/mechanics. For each grammar/mechanics error in your paper, 5 points will be deducted from that portion of your grade. The grammar/mechanics grade will then be averaged with the content/organization portion of your grade which is determined based upon the following criteria.

An "A" paper is characterized by the following:
- The strengths of a "B" paper
- An insight that goes beyond the obvious
- Evidences an ability to analyze and to assess ideas
- Thesis and evidence are specific and intriguing, not dull and predictable
- Sophisticated paragraph development
- Professional presentation

A "B" paper is characterized by the following:
- Coherent, well-unified paragraphs that have clear topic sentences and/or purpose
- A structure, organization, that works but that is not exceptional
- Fairly detailed evidence and support
- A sense that the writer knows what s/he is doing and is addressing real people
- A sharp, almost professional appearance
- Has been proof-read
- A memorable introduction and conclusion
- Effective use of transitions between major ideas, paragraphs, and sentences

A "C" paper is characterized by the following:
- A sense of organization and focus, yet thesis needs to be narrowed
- Writer has not adequately stated his/her point
- Paper lacks sufficient detail and evidence
- Sentence structure is monotonous
- Sometimes a weak introduction or conclusion
- Paragraph development is sketchy
- Has fulfilled the major components of the assignment satisfactorily

A "Z" paper is characterized by the following:
- Attempts to satisfy the requirements of the assignment
- Is turned in on time
- Numerous mechanical errors
- Lacks a thesis and organization
- Paragraphs lack coherence and unity
- Thought appears governed by cliches or commonplace opinions

A "F" paper is characterized by the following:
- Fails to address particular assignment
- Turned in two or more days late
- Has obviously not been proof-read