WRTG 3020—WHAT’S A WORLDVIEW?
The Values that Shape Contemporary Life

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Course Description

Welcome! “What’s a Worldview?” is a rhetorically based upper-division seminar that explores the role of worldview in shaping contemporary society. Since worldviews—both our own and those that seem radically different—can be difficult to grasp, the study of rhetoric is well suited to help us gain greater clarity about how political, economic, scientific, religious, aesthetic, and other values construct our identities, our communities, and our sense of purpose in the world. Although it sometimes gets a bad rap in the popular press, Rhetoric simply asks us to step back and reconsider the myriad ways that worldview-values are communicated to different audiences under differing circumstances and contexts. In a course such as this a flood of curious questions naturally arises: How are worldviews constructed and communicated? How do reason and emotion interact to structure worldview-values? Are these values disguised or otherwise camouflaged in contemporary media? Are personal or national worldviews held consistently or inconsistently? Rationally or irrationally? How might an evolutionary approach to consciousness and basic human needs reveal worldview? What factors might limit the likelihood of meaningful dialogue between opposing worldviews? Can empathy be learned? How can we create the communities that we most cherish in a changing world? By examining a range of complex cultural artifacts in a range of different media and analyzing their worldview values, students will be empowered to understand their personal position amidst the global clash of worldviews, and to shape the marketplace of ideas with great persuasive skill.

Why is this Class a “Core Course”?

This 3000-level Program for Writing & Rhetoric seminar satisfies upper-division core requirements in various CU-Boulder schools and colleges because it extends rhetorical knowledge and writing skills through theoretical perspectives and by addressing specialized disciplinary communities. In doing so, this course also meets the State of Colorado “Guaranteed Transfer” goals for an Advanced Writing Course (GT-CO3):

Extended Rhetorical Knowledge. Readings from the course handbook will introduce a range of rhetorical texts that give students a greater awareness of rhetorical strategy and how it informs their own persuasive goals. Theorists such as Stephen Toulmin, George Lakoff, Susan Sontag, John Gage, George Orwell, Richard Rorty, and Aristotle, will guide our discussions, offering the critical basis for the interpretation of cultural artifacts that is the foundation of the course. These texts have the advantage of introducing both specific rhetorical disciplines—such as philosophy, rhetoric, literature, and comp studies—as well as opening the student analysis to unique interdisciplinary modes, including history, geography, and religion. A close reading of Strunk and White’s The Elements of Style will help students realize how technical issues such as voice, tone, and structure are crucial to successful persuasion. Furthermore, since the study of worldview cannot be limited only to word-artifacts, the course naturally considers the role of rhetorical knowledge implicit in other media. Drawing from artifacts as wide-ranging as You Tube, film, newsprint, text books, music, comics, television culture, literature, the visual arts, psychology, advertising, political ads, emerging technologies, and the global geo-scape, students will understand that “worldview implies argument” and that they must be ready to synthesize, to interpret, and to respond.

Writing processes. In order to realize their best work, writers take it to heart that critical writing is an ongoing process, extending over multiple drafts. In this class, each assignment has been designed to give students a range of strategies for drafting, revising, and editing their work. This expertise will allow us to approach the draft process—not with the usual dread and foreboding—but with a sense of it as both beneficial and pragmatic. A serious investigation as to the actual procedures of library research, using both specialized and cross-discipline approaches, will aid students in learning to evaluate sources for accuracy, relevance, and bias. Since the workshop structure of the course aligns critical reading with improved critical writing, students will come to see themselves as an important part of a community of writers who offer sophisticated criticism, editing, and macro analysis in a respectful and cooperative environment. This discourse community will contrast with the wide range of audiences addressed in the various student projects. Instructor feedback will further compliment small group observations.
Through these expanded communities, some enduring beyond the course itself, students will come to see the art and craft of writing as a highly beneficial way to map out the values underlying a wide range of worldviews and the persuasive structures that serve as their foundation.

**Writing Conventions.** Another crucial aspect of a rhetorical study of worldview is to grapple with writing conventions. Fine writers develop a sense of the specific audience conventions and use them—either by acceptance or resistance—to further develop their persuasive endeavor. Using a range of texts, cultural artifacts, and our class essays, students will learn to write both “with” and “against” specific genres and conventions, to use specialized language, and to be aware of a range of formats and documentation styles. Our ongoing concern with issues of writing technique—syntax, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and style—will always be grounded in the sense that it contributes to (or subtracts from) our concern for meeting the expectations of particular writing conventions. Slang, outright errors, humor, or a markedly simple style are not in and of themselves problematic—but may create (or erase) problems of authorial ethos for particular audiences. Online peer feedback, instructor criticism, power point presentations, video, and in-class workshops will compliment our understanding of writing conventions and empower students to make well-reasoned decisions regarding the structure, style, and content of their work.

**Content Comprehension & Composition (Effective Application).** A course in critical writing based on the rhetorical understanding of worldview would have little traction if it did not demand at its foundation a comprehensive content knowledge of the particular artifacts under consideration. Essays by Prose, Lakoff, Weston, Haidt, Cobb, Woerlee, Comte-Sponville, and others will ground us, for example, in the specific content of the interface between Religion and Science. The incremental progression of the assignments has been designed to heighten the awareness of the relationship between specialized content and various audiences. The wide range of texts and the equally broad range of media under consideration will allow students to adapt their projects to the needs and expectations within specific disciplines. Many of the assignments are focused on real-world audiences—including local communities, academic audiences in the humanities and social sciences, the body politic, religious communities, and those in the arts. This approach will allow us to write in a disciplinary or specialized rhetorical situation, as well as to make our work available to secondary audiences.

**Writing Workshops**

The writing workshop is an exciting way to develop writing skills. By carefully reading and commenting on each other’s work—in an open forum that invites frank discussion—we will develop the critical and stylistic skills we need to succeed as writers. Student drafts will regularly be work-shopped in class and will serve as primary texts. Therefore, each of us must take it as a personal responsibility to come prepared with careful critical feedback on a regular basis. **Please have drafts ready for and online circulation 24-48 hours prior to class discussion.** Drafts are mandatory but only final drafts will be graded. Please type all drafts. Your participation grade in the course (as well as the quality of your work) will likely plummet if you do not submit your workshop drafts on time. I cannot accept final papers that have not been reviewed in small group workshops during the assignment—“First draft” final essays are unacceptable and will receive a failing grade. There are deadlines in “real life” and there are deadlines in this class—deadlines which can potentially enhance both our creativity and our commitment to doing our best work—hence late papers cannot be accepted. As per University of Colorado guidelines for a T/Th course, we will have an average of 3 hours of homework per class.

**Attendance, Participation, & Classroom Behavior**

Because we are committed to developing a community of conscientious writers, attendance and active participation are important responsibilities. Please e-mail or call if you cannot attend class. Get notes from a classmate, THEN discuss with me what you do not understand. If you miss a class you will be expected to be fully prepared for the next class. Look ahead in the syllabus schedule and be prepared. Class attendance is critical because I will explain assignments in class and because class discussions will help us to develop successful writing projects. One or no absences will be rewarded with extra credit for your final grade. For two or three misses there will be no extra credit and no penalty. For each absence over three, a one-grade-for-each-absence penalty will be instituted—(B−=C+ for four misses; B−=C for five). There will be no penalty for being over the limit only if all absences are due to medical or religious reasons, and you have presented me with an official excuse for each of them. Use these un-penalized absences for a time when you will really need them—a late illness, falling in (or out) of love, a night of icy genius on the moon-slick Colorado slopes. Eight absences—even when excused—may
prevent you from passing the course. I will make every attempt to deal fairly with students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance if they provide me with written documentation. As it constitutes a disruption of our work, lateness will not be tolerated. Three late arrivals will be counted as one missed class. If you are late you will be marked absent and it will be your responsibility to have me strike that absence from the record.

More generally, we will follow normal rules of etiquette in being respectful of each other’s opinions and values. Please don’t hold conversations while others are speaking. Learning is interactive—we must interact during the class discussions in order to benefit. As lap top computers are a great temptation to dally in the eternal ether of internet bliss, I ask that you shut them for the entire class period—unless needed for internet assignments, etc... It follows that there should be no cell phones, no newspaper reading, no texting, no e-mail, no noisy food. As much as we love animals, please do not bring them to class—they are an inevitable disruption. Keep in mind that students and faculty have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. For more information about what the university has to say about unacceptable classroom behavior, please go to the web at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicalaffairs/code.html3studetn_code

Required Texts

Andras Szantos’s (Ed) What Orwell Didn’t Know; Strunk and White’s, The Elements of Style; David Ferry’s, Gilgamesh; and the course packet for this class. Online sources will include two nationally recognized rhetoric and composition websites: The Purdue University Owl http://owl.emglish.purdue.edu/owl/ & Silva Rhetoricae  http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/Silva.htm.

Miscellaneous

Grading. Writing Projects:  Unit I: Political Video Ad Analysis (4-5 pages) 15%  Unit II: Gilgamesh Analysis (4-5 pgs; 15%) & Contemp Piece (2-3 pgs 5%)  Unit III: Rhetorical Essay for Science and Spirit (7-10 pages) 25%  Unit IV: Personal Worldview Narrative (4-6 pages) 15%  Conference of World Affairs Essay: 5%  Quizzes, Peer Reviews, Exercises, and Worksheets: 10%.  Class Participation and Preparation: 10%.

CU Learn. As I will frequently contact the class via e-mail--you will be expected to have a viable e-mail address, and to check CU learn for updates and revised assignments.

Honor Code. All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. Plagiarism will not be tolerated; the paper will receive an automatic F, and your case will be reported to the Honor Code Council. (honor@colorado.edu; 303 725-2273). Students found to be in violation will be subject to both sanctions from me and from the University of Colorado. Further information can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html & at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode

Sexual Harassment. The University of Colorado Policy on Sexual Harassment applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been sexually harassed should contact the Office of Sexual Harassment (OSH) at 303-492-2127, or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information is available at http://www.colorado.edu/odh.

Students with Disabilities. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services sometime during the first three weeks so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, or www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices
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Unit One: Writing the Body Politic—How Do the Persuaders Persuade?

Week One
Rhetorical Focus: What’s a worldview?—Individual and Social Values

T  1/13    Intro: The Rhetoric of Worldview; small group analysis using W. Sire’s definition.

TH 1/15    **Personal Worldview Statement, 1-1.5 pages**, to be read aloud in class. How are values communicated to others through personal writing? Empathy, audience and argument.

Week Two
Rhetorical Focus: Making and Breaking Critical Claims

T  1/20      Please read the George Orwell essay, “Politics and the English Language” (page 205-222 in Andras Szantos’ *What Orwell Didn’t Know*). Before you begin the Orwell, however, please start with pages 57-59 in the essay, “Sloppiness and the English Language” by novelist Francine Prose. Finish up her essay (pgs. 60-63) when you are finished with the Orwell. Finally, read Patricia Williams’ six examples of poor contemporary language from the section of her essay on pages 40-48. **Type a page Opinion Piece trying to convince us of the correctness of your positive or negative response to these authorial views.**

TH 1/22    Based on your close reading, use Toulmin’s pattern 1) CLAIM 2) DATA 3) INTERP to analyze what you consider to be a particularly troubling (i.e. misleading/confusing) example of contemporary critical writing. You can apply either Orwell’s or Williams’ terms as the basis for your analysis, or you can make up your own criteria. In either case, you must quote at least 3 passages from the writing sample—as the DATA step of your analysis. Your CLAIM will make a strong assertion about what is offensive with the passage in question; the INTERP (or WARRANT) will make the necessary connections. We’ll share these examples of impoverished writing—with your concise explications—in both small and large groups. Hopefully, we will not always agree with each other’s opinion. Class Handout: Logical Fallacies.

Week Three
Rhetorical Focus: Pathos, Logos, and Ethos in Contemporary Political Ads

T  1/27    Read Drew Weston’s essay, “The New Frontier: The Instruments of Emotion” (page 75-86). View the 1984 Reagan ad, “It’s Morning Again in America” and the 1988 Bush Senior “Willie Horton” on You Tube and be prepared to discuss them in great detail. Type a one-page analysis that presents your detailed interpretation. Use Toulmin as a model. In class we’ll study the dramatic interplay between LOGOS, ETHOS, and PATHOS so prevalent in many persuasive communications. Elements of Style—chapter 1, “Elementary rules of usage”.

TH 1/29    Based on our study of the 1984 Reagan ad, “It’s Morning Again in America” and the 1988 Bush Senior “Willie Horton” ad, select a political film/video advertisement (You Tube is a great source) and give a careful analysis of both its ultimate message, and the persuasive techniques it uses to achieve that end. For today, type a three paragraph analysis, stating the thesis in the opening paragraph and presenting Toulmin-like analysis in the second and third. This will be the basis for your 4-5 page Political Ad analysis due 2/10. You may borrow analytical criteria from Orwell, Williams, Prose, Weston, Lakoff (67-68; 162-163), or Soros (pg. 201). You will need to choose an ad (or ads) with enough complexity to warrant sustained analysis. Use the Toulmin formula of 1) CLAIM 2) DATA 3) INTERP to make a convincing rational argument as to what specific values are being presented in the ad and how they are marketed to the intended audience. We’ll be breaking into groups of three and helping each other analyze our chosen political video ads. See the assignment handout for further details. [[3 volunteers needed to send out their FULL drafts 24-48 hours in advance of Tuesday’s class.]]
**Week Four**  
*Rhetorical Focus: Listening to Cultural Critic: The art of giving and receiving meaningful feedback*

**T 2/3 Using the Critical Rubric, prepare your typed paragraph responses to the 3 e-mailed drafts.** Have copies of the drafts available in class with your annotations either by hand or in “track changes”. Comments should be specific and intended to help these writers improve their critical analysis. I will ask to view your 3 sets of written comments in class! See the Critical Rubric. Large group workshop. We’ll work out paper structure and content on the blackboard.

**TH 2/5 Bring a FULL 4-5 page draft of your Political Ad Analysis to class.** We’ll workshop these in small groups of 3 using the critical rubric. Be prepared to offer evidence for your critical positions based on the Toulmin model.

**Week Five**  
*Rhetorical Focus: History, Propaganda and the Immortality of the Written Word:*

**T 2/10 Due in class: FULL 4-5 page Political Ad Analysis.** You may borrow analytical criteria from Orwell, Williams, Prose, Weston, Lakoff (67-68; 162-163), or Soros (pg. 201). You will need to choose an ad with enough complexity to warrant sustained analysis. See the full assignment handout distributed in class. Use the Toulmin formula of 1) CLAIM 2) DATA 3) INTERP to make a convincing rational argument as to what specific values are being presented in the ad and how they are marketed to the intended audience.

**Bring your Copies of The Elements of Style and Gilgamesh to class!** We’ll spend the hour studying the principles of concise communication in Elements and make some headway into Sumerian values in 3000BCE.

**Unit Two: History, Propaganda and the Immortality of the Written Word:**

**TH 2/12 Clashing Worldviews in Ancient Literature: The Epic of Gilgamesh.** Please read the first 11 tablets of Gilgamesh, (pgs 3-82) the oldest piece of world literature, IN THE TRANSLATION BY DAVID FERRY. Then type three paragraphs of fluid prose, using the Toulmin formula of 1) CLAIM 2) DATA 3) INTERP to make a convincing argument as to what 3 different text examples mean. If you are having trouble developing an assertion, it might be helpful to switch Toulmin’s pattern to: 1) Data (a sample of the Gilgamesh text ); 2) interp; 3) and do the Claim last—as it is hardest. Then flip the claim above to the top to put the Toulmin pattern back in its place.

**Week Six**  
*Rhetorical Focus: Academic Thesi and Critical Narrative*

**T 2/17 Gilgamesh discussion on thesis construction.** Type up three separate thesi—each with 3 or 4 proofs and bring them to class. Proofs (or Projected Organization) are the reasons you present to establish evidence for the thesis—in the order they will occur. Please bring Gilgamesh text to class. Consider the following questions or ignore them and work from your own interests: 1) How do they view death/immortality as related of their entire worldview? 2) Does technology enter into this view? 3) How would the preceding Goddess culture of that region have interpreted this text? 4) What is the meaning of Polytheism in this worldview? 5) Despite superficial similarities, how is the worldview different from the Old or New Testament? Other topics: war/dreams/friendship (love?) etc. [[3 NEW volunteers to send out their 2-3 page drafts 24 hrs. in advance of Thursday’s class.]]

We’ll get your ideas up on the blackboard for discussion of their merits as viable thesi. I think we understand now that first and second “drafts” are often fuzzy. Working through that fuzzy, confusing stage is often necessary to arrive at an original analytical position.

**TH 2/19 Large group workshop modeling effective critical reading and on-line commentary.** We’ll work out paper structure and content on the blackboard. Elements of Style—chapter 2, “Principles of composition”.
**Week Seven**  
*Rhetorical Focus: How Critics Read and Respond*

T 2/24 Small group workshops. Bring a full draft of your 4-5 page critical analysis of *Gilgamesh* to class. We will break up into groups of three and give careful critical feedback based on the critical rubric. This will be the basis for your peer review.

**Unit Three: Science and Spirit—the Convergence of Individual & Cultural Belief**

TH 2/26 **DUE IN CLASS: 4-5 page analysis of Gilgamesh, a peer review, and your 2-3 page Contemporary Parallel Piece.** Please bring *Elements of Style* to class. Discussion of syntax, subject and the grammar of persuasion. Introduction to the Science and Spirit Rhetorical Essay. Clarifying the distinction between Theory and Artifact.

**Week Eight**  
*Rhetorical Focus: Scientism and the Quest for Universal Value*

T 3/3 **Reading from the Handbook: Jon Marks.** “Science, Religion, and Worldview” Bring in an example of published writing and type a paragraph as to why you think it embodies Scientism. Class discussion concerning the methods of science and their basis for worldview. *Elements of Style*—chapters 3 & 4, “A Few Matters of Form”.

TH 3/5 **Readings from Handbook: Woerlee, Kubler-Ross.** “Oxygen Starvation” & “Life after Death” Type a one-page personal response that discusses at least one other example of “afterlife” studies—on-line, film, sports, whatever—and analyze both worldview content and the rhetorical methods used. Discuss Citation methods in class.  
**Draft #1: Bring in three possible topics for your 7-10 page Rhetorical Essay.**

**Week Nine**  
*Rhetorical Focus: Religions Reason and the Rhetoric of Faith*

T 3/10 **Readings from Handbook: Cobb,** “Cosmic Evolution” Type a one-page personal response that explains why the Theory of Evolution is, or is not important to your worldview. We’ll read some of these in class. **Draft #2: Bring in a full typed outline of your Original Rhetorical**

TH 3/12 **Readings from Handbook: Comte-Sponville.** “Can there be an Atheist Spirituality?” Type a one-page personal response that discusses your experience with atheism or atheists. We’ll read these in class. [[Reading from Elements of Style, Chapter 3]] Building successful evidence. **Draft #3: Please bring 2 or 3 analytical body paragraphs from your developing essay.** We’ll work out paper structure and content on the blackboard. Make sure you are doing analysis of real cultural artifacts.

**Week Ten**  
*Rhetorical Focus: The Deep Body: Worldview in Human Consciousness*

T 3/17 **Readings from Handbook: Jon Haidt.** Give two examples as to how you might apply the numerous theories in Haidt to the analysis of a complex cultural artifact. **Draft #4: Further analysis of student essays on the blackboard.** [[3 NEW volunteers needed to send out their 2-3 page drafts 24 hrs. in advance of Tuesday’s class.]]
TH 3/19 Large group workshops of the three student drafts. We’ll work out paper structure and content on the blackboard.  *Elements of Style* chapter 5, “An Approach to Style”.

**SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES**

**Week Eleven**  
*Rhetorical Focus: Selecting the Cultural Artifact—Original Analysis or Book Report?*

T 3/31 **Draft #5: ORAL PRESENTATIONS**: In a five minute presentation give us a clear sense of the analysis you are doing of a specific cultural artifact. Use feedback gained from your oral presentation to further your draft process. Remember, we are not looking for sophisticated book reports, but clear concise analysis using Toulmin-like Claim/Data/Interp. 10% of the whole Rhetorical Essay grade.

TH 4/2 Small group workshops using the advanced critical rubric. Be sure to address a counterargument as a narrative climax. BRING 2 COPIES OF YOUR FULL DRAFT OF THE 7-10 PAGE RHETORICAL ESSAY TO CLASS.

**Week Twelve**  
*Rhetorical Focus: An Assembly of Scholars: Worldview Persuasion for the Masses*

MONDAY April 6th: NOTE: Please seek out office hours for your Rhetorical Essay before this date, as I will be unable to hold supplementary office hours on Monday, April 6th.

T 4/7 **DUE IN CLASS**: Final draft of 7-10 page rhetorical essay, your 1-page peer review, and your 1-page personal reflection on the drafting process.

TH 4/9 **CU CONFERENCE OF WORLD AFFAIRS**: NO CLASS. For this assignment you must attend at least two panel sessions during the week, study the overall structure of the event and its speakers, and type a 3-4 page essay based on your sense of the effectiveness of the week’s events. You might question funding, topic or speaker bias. You might analyze the minute details of particular presentations, etc.

**Unit Four: Personal Worldview and the Public Sphere**

**Week Thirteen**  
*Rhetorical Focus: Ethos, Pathos and the Personal Narrative*

T 4/14 **Conference of World Affairs essay due in Class—2-3 pages.** Student critiques of examples of the personal narrative using the Narrative Rubric.

TH 4/16 **Handbook readings from Allison.** Large group discussion of the Personal Worldview Narrative. [[3 NEW volunteers needed to send out their 2-3 page drafts 24 hrs. in advance of Thursday’s class.]]

**Week Fourteen**  
*Rhetorical Focus: Suspense as Persuasion: How to Kill Adjectives and Make your Reader Turn the Page*

T 4/21 Large group workshop of the Peer Personal Worldview Narratives. Please come to class with copies of the three narratives and your concise written feedback.

TH 4/23 **Handbook reading** “Worldview & Empathy”. Small group discussions of the Personal Worldview Narrative. Please bring at least 2 pages of your narrative to class. We’ll work out paper structure and content on the blackboard. Topic: Student examples of writing fine dialogue.
Week Fifteen
*Rhetorical Focus: Wrapping it Up—Agents of Worldview in the Real World*

T  4/28   Small group workshops using the narrative rubric. Bring a full typed draft of your personal narrative to class for feedback. Be prepared to give careful criticism based on the rubric. Topic: The merging of action and description.

TH 4/30 Final Personal Worldview Narrative due in class—4-6 pgs. Please include your peer review and your one-page personal reflection.

**Grading Policies and Guidelines**

**Grading Policy:** This upper division writing class will hold you to high standards. The grading will be rigorous, but it will also be fair. Although improved critical writing is our goal, we cannot grade exclusively on the category of “improvement shown”—although we can weigh your better papers somewhat more heavily to the extent that it reflects what you have learned. The course syllabus specifies when final drafts are due. As you revise your work in preparation for submission, your instructor will prod, coach, advise, exhort, and encourage. Once you turn in your final draft, your instructor will judge the paper against the same standards that motivated the instructor’s comments during its preparation. If for any reason the instructor is uncertain, he or she may seek a reading from another PWR instructor. Although the instructors may consult with each other about grading, your own instructor is responsible for determining your grade. Should you feel that the grade you receive is unfair, you are always welcome to submit an unmarked original copy of your paper to your instructor, with the request that it be graded by yet another instructor in the PWR. The grade for your paper may be adjusted in light of the comments given by the additional reader.

**Grading Guidelines:** The program provides grades based on the final version of the essay you submitted. Pluses and minuses attached to grades reflect shades of difference, as do occasional split grades (e.g. A-/B+)

A  A paper that is excellent in content, form and style: original, substantive, insightful, persuasive, well-organized, and written in a clear, graceful, error-free style. Although not necessarily perfect, an “A” paper rewards its reader with genuine insight, gracefully expressed. It offers a nuanced claim and compelling evidence. By offering context for its ideas the paper could be read by someone outside of the class.

B  A clearly written, well-developed, interesting paper that shows above average thought and writing craft. The essay reaches high and meets many, though not all, of its aims. The thinking and writing are solid but may reveal unresolved problems in argument and style, thin spots in content, or some tangents that don’t fit. **OR**
A paper that is far less ambitious than an “A” paper, but reaches all of its aims—a clean, well-organized essay whose reasoning and argument may be somewhat routine or self-evident.

C  A paper that shows a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. It may be somewhat readable, organized on the surface level, and make a claim, but it will have real unresolved problems in one or more key areas: conception, claim quality, line of reasoning, use of evidence, and language style or grammar. The paper may fill the basic requirements, but say little of genuine significance. **OR** A competently written essay that is largely descriptive.

D  The paper is seriously underdeveloped in content, form, style or mechanics. It may be disorganized, illogical, confusing, unfocused. It does not come close to meeting the basic expectations of the assignment.

F  A paper that is incoherent, disastrously flawed, unacceptably late, plagiarized, or non-existent.