ISU Essay Rubric

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|  | Level 1 (20%) | Level 2 (40%) | Level 3 (60%) | Level 4 (80%) | Level 5 (100%) |
| Format –title, title page, page numbers, font, margins  /5 marks | Attempted, but major parts missing (e.g. title page) | Attempted, but minor parts missing (e.g. page numbers) | All formatting completed but minor errors or perfect but wrong format. | Formatting is perfect and according to instructions. | Perfect formatting and according to instructions. Title interests the reader. |
| Grammar and punctuation /10 marks | Readable but many obvious and major errors | Several major errors or many minor errors | A major error or several minor errors | A few minor errors | Perfect |
| Structure /10 marks | Major errors in both sentence and paragraph structure but readable | Major errors in either sentence or paragraph structure – distracts from readability. | Minor errors in either sentence or paragraph structure and/or lacks unity. | No errors in structure. Has unity throughout the essay but it’s awkward or obvious. | Perfect structure and unity that adds to the essay and is both subtle and strong. |
| Essay structure  /10 marks | Thesis or main arguments are not clearly laid out or do not match the proof | Thesis or main arguments require major rewording to make them clearer or stronger. | Thesis or a main argument require minor rewording or reorganization to make them clearer or stronger. | Thesis and main arguments are clearly laid out in both the intro and the conclusion. Extension is attempted. | Thesis and main arguments are clearly laid out and strongly worded and structured to add to argument. Subtle but powerful extension. |
| Referencing /10 marks | Major errors in formatting or either in-text citation or works cited page is absent | Minor errors in formatting and/or citations placed incorrectly. | Perfect format but too few in-text citations or wrong format used perfectly. | Perfect format but too many in-text citations. | Perfect. |
| Sources (note: separate pages on the same website do not count as separate sources unless the authors are different). /10 marks | 5-10 sources used. Most sources are from 1 type/location. Sources include unreliable, dated, or obviously unreliable material. Most sources are not used/cannot be used to support the thesis. | 10-15 sources used and most are reliable and/or respected. Very heavy reliance on one type, some sources that are dated/unreliable. There are some sources that are not/cannot be used to support the thesis. | 15-20 sources used, most are reliable and /or respected. Heavier reliance on one type of source, some dated or unreliable sources used. Most sources can be used to support the thesis. | 20-25 reliable sources used, stakeholders are all addressed. Sources selected for reliability and verifying the thesis. | Over 25 sources used, all types used fairly equally, most reliable sources used, balance of sources used from stakeholders. Sources are thoughtfully selected for reliability and verifying thesis. |
| Thesis (Difficulty)  /10 marks | Thesis is a clear opinion but very limited opposition. | Thesis takes a side in an established debate. | Thesis takes a side in a newer or more obscure debate. | Thesis challenges the mainstream argument. | Thesis explores new territory. |
| Argument (reasons why your thesis is correct – must be centred around a legal argument)  /50 marks | The argument is somewhat clear, follows 1 main angle of thought, mistakes in logic and obvious holes in the logic of the argument OR good argument that is not law based. | The argument is generally clear but either rambles or lacks enough detail that it is unclear in places, argument has only a few angles, a few mistakes in logic, a few holes in the logic of the argument OR exceptional argument not law based. | The argument is clear but either too wordy or lacking detail, limited original thought, argument takes a few angles and contrary arguments addressed but not handled | The argument is clear and balanced between conciseness and thoroughness, insights with limited original thought, argument takes several angles and somewhat handles contrary arguments | The argument is clear and perfectly balanced between conciseness and thoroughness. Insights demonstrate original thought, thorough argument that takes several angles and takes contrary arguments into account |
| Proof (how well the proof is gathered, used, and analysed)  /20 marks | Very limited support for your argument due to lack or misuse of proof. Your proof obviously contradicts your argument in places or is totally irrelevant in many spots. | Heavy reliance on just one source or type of source. There are noticeable holes in the way the proof is used (or not used) to support the argument. A few obvious minor errors in proof usage. | Limited variety of sources are used with reliance on 1 source or type of source. While proof supports the argument it lacks analysis and stronger proof was available in spots. | Good variety of sources used that mostly support each other and are somewhat analysed. Convincing proof obviously supports the argument throughout the essay. | Wide variety of reliable sources are used to support each other and the argument plus they are thoughtfully analysed. Most convincing proof is woven into the essay. |
| Decision making chart  /20 marks | Only a few of the important or known solutions are present. Criteria, judging, and weighing show little logic and/or effort/thought. Decision does not make sense. | A few of the important solutions are missing. Some criteria are missing or lack logic for this problem. Obvious logic problems with the weighing and the judging. | Chart identifies the most important or known solutions. Most of the important criteria are present. A few minor logic problems with the weighing and the judging. | Chart identifies the best solutions and criteria and weighs and judges them, subject to possible debate over a few choices. | Chart masterfully identifies the best solutions and criteria and faultlessly weighs and judges them. |

Note: Marks under 20% will be given. If there is nothing (e.g. no works cited and no in-text citation) then the mark is obviously zero for that category.