

PLO4: rubric for evaluating student research paper, inter-religious course. (MDIV)

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations	Problematic
Thesis/argument	Excellent. This is an ambitious, perceptive project that grapples with complex ideas. The thesis is clearly stated and contextualized in the introduction. The essay presents more than a summary of existing ideas, and is not simply repeating what the student has read or learned in	The project reaches high and achieves its aim. The thesis is stated clearly but perhaps with less contextualization. The author does more than summarize existing ideas, but some areas may require more depth or the essay includes stray, irrelevant ideas.	The project has conceptual problems. The thesis may be unclear or poorly stated. The essay lacks an argument but is merely a summary of existing ideas or a personal reaction to the topic (i.e., mere opinion).	The project is incoherent or is extremely problematic in any of the areas mentioned.
Organization	The essay is clearly and explicitly organized. The introduction lays out the structure of the essay, and essay sections include transitions and summaries of ideas. The conclusion both summarizes the essay's argument and points toward potential research vistas.	The essay is well organized, the introduction states the essays structure and intent. Some connections may still need to be made, especially in regards to transitions between sections. The conclusion summarizes the essay's argument.	The essay is poorly organized; the introduction does not state what the author is going to do; there are no transitions or summaries of ideas.	The essay is not organized in any logical fashion.
Evidence	The author employs appropriate and relevant primary and/or secondary sources as appropriate to the topic and for a scholarly paper. Evidence is both contextualized and related explicitly to the thesis or argument.	The author employs appropriate and relevant primary and/or secondary sources as appropriate to the topic and for a scholarly paper. Evidence is contextualized; however, there may not be enough evidence or it is not thoroughly	Evidence provided is irrelevant or culled from inappropriate or unreliable sources. What (good) evidence is supplied is not engaged, contextualized, explained or related to the thesis/ argument.	Evidence is either not presented or is wholly irrelevant and unreliable.
Writing/style	Language is clean, precise, elegant, and jargon-free. Ideas and terms are introduced and explained appropriately. The author uses the correct citation format, and typos and other errors are at a minimum (or	Language is adequate and clear, and the author has used the correct citation format. Vernacular language is avoided, and typos and grammatical errors are minimal.	Language and word choice is unclear; sentences are awkward, illogical, or contradictory; punctuation, grammar, etc., are problematic. There is an over-reliance on vernacular language. Correct citation format is	The essay contains an overabundance of grammatical and stylistic errors, or inappropriate language.
Inter-religious engagement	The essay's subject is clearly inter-religious in nature, demonstrating sophisticated analysis and admirable care and concern with a religious tradition outside the one the student is most familiar with, and how one or more aspects of it relate to their own religious tradition. Judicious, nuanced, critical analysis is applied to both traditions, with each appropriately contextualized to highlight both	The essay is appropriately inter-religious in nature, with significant levels of analysis, care, and concern demonstrated in a fair and sensitive manner for another religious tradition as well as one's own. Each tradition is evaluated in its own right and in relation to each other to a satisfactory degree.	Inter-religious concerns are addressed, but one or more religious traditions are not discussed with sufficient contextualization or level of analysis. The paper may include irrelevant information and over-generalizations.	The essay is not inter-religious in subject matter and/or is clearly a polemic for or attack against a religious tradition.

** Note: non-native English speakers are strongly encouraged to seek help when writing papers to check for errors. Please contact the Dean's Office for additional resources.*