

## STANDARDS FOR GRADING PAPERS IN PHYS 1111-05

The following statement describes the grading standards that will be used in this course. It is freely adapted from a rubric used in the Department of English at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill). You can use it to critique and evaluate your own writing, are encouraged to do so!

The **F** paper treats its subject only superficially. It lacks discernible organization; its prose is garbled or stylistically primitive. Mechanical errors are frequent. An **F** paper is one in which ideas, organization and style fall far below the level of acceptable college writing.

The **D** paper shows a rudimentary development of the subject and some signs of organization, but it is neither clear nor effective. Many sentences are awkward, ambiguous, or marred by serious mechanical errors. The paper appears not to have been proofed; indeed, it gives the impression that it was conceived in haste and written without great care.

The **C** paper is generally competent. It meets the principal terms of the assignment, has few mechanical errors, and is reasonably well organized and developed. The actual information it delivers is thin and commonplace. The ideas are phrased in vague generalities, so that the reader constantly asks “In every case?” “Just how large?” “Why?” “But how many?” Stylistically, the **C** paper is unattractive. The opening paragraph fails to draw the reader into the body of the work; the conclusion offers only a perfunctory wrap-up. Transitions between thoughts are often awkward, the sentences choppy, and the diction marred by repetitions, redundancies and imprecision. The **C** paper gets the job done, but lacks both imagination and intellectual rigor. The reader puts it down with relief and does not pick it up again.

The **B** paper is much more than merely competent. It is not only virtually free of mechanical errors, but also delivers substantial information – information that is substantial both in quantity and in value. The major points of the **B** paper are logically ordered, carefully developed, and unified around an organizing principle that is apparent from the structure and the text of the paper. The opening paragraph entices the reader to continue; a clear thematic thread leads from beginning to end, and the conclusion is clearly derived from the opening threads of the paper and ties these threads of thought together. Transitions between paragraphs are, for the most part, smooth. Sentence structure is pleasantly variegated. The diction of the **B** paper is both more concise and more precise than that of the **C** paper. Occasionally, it even shows finesse and memorable choice of wording. On the whole, the **B** paper offers substantial information with few stylistic irritations, and provides the reader with a pleasurable experience.

The most distinctive feature of the **A** paper is its rich content. Some people might describe that content as “meaty,” others as “dense.” The information delivered is rich in detail, and one feels significantly taught by the author, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph. The **A** paper is also distinguished by stylistic finesse: the title and opening paragraph are engaging; the transitions are artful; the phrasing is tight, fresh, and specific; the rhythms and cadence of the sentences are varied; the tone enhances the purposes of the paper. Finally, the **A** paper, by virtue of its careful organization and development, exhibits thematic integrity and unusual clarity. Not surprisingly, it leaves the reader feeling thoroughly satisfied, possibly even eager to reread the piece.