**DVM undergraduate grading framework for years 3 and 4 uO SIDGS, July 2020**

**Grading criteria**

At the undergraduate level in DVM, professors and teaching assistants often use the following criteria to assess students’ assignments (exams, papers, oral presentations, etc.):

1. **Relevance:** To what extent does the work demonstrate an understanding of the question, of policy and/or theoretical debates, as well as of evidence central to the question?
2. **Accuracy and sophistication of the conceptual analysis:** To what extent does the assignment deftly present and analyze relevant concepts and/or theories?
3. **Accuracy and sophistication of the evidence:** To what extent does the assignment present and rigorously analyze sufficient and relevant evidence (quantitative data, cases, testimonies, comparisons, etc.)?
4. **Substantive coherence and originality:** To what extent does the assignment coherently integrate theory and evidence? Does it offer original insights at one or both levels?
5. **Form**: Is the assignment clear, organized and the right length? Does it use appropriate wording, syntax and grammar? Is it supported by complete bibliographic references or is it plagiarized? Is its (written or oral) presentation creative?

The weight assigned to each criterion depends on the learning objectives and other expectations detailed in each syllabus and for each assignment. For example, theory courses often place more emphasis on the analysis and use of concepts or theoretical frames; quantitative research or project management courses place more emphasis on the explanation and use of appropriate quantitative methods or project management tools. Most of these criteria also apply to novel assignments (blogs, podcasts or videos, community service reports, etc.). When other aspects such as collaboration or reflexivity are graded, professors should provide clear guidance on expectations.

The grading framework shows how the five criteria are usually employed to assess components of DVM assignments at the third- and fourth-year levels. The final grade reflects an overall academic judgment and is not just a mechanical sum of marks received in each category. In the Annex, you will find rubrics that professors use to communicate specific expectations for different types of assignments.

**The grading framework**

1. **to A+ (excellent / exemplary): 80-100%**

* The introduction succinctly restates the question and/or key debates; it also previews or outlines the assignment in an engaging manner.
* The assignment elaborates on relevant policy and/or theoretical debates, and presents the concepts and/or the framework used to guide the argument (where relevant, depending on the course) with precision. An A+ reflects a very sophisticated analysis – including organizing the literature into recognized schools of thought.
* The assignment accurately presents and analyses a range of relevant evidence (quantitative, historical, cases, comparisons, etc.). A+ reflects original methodological and/or empirical insights.
* The conclusions synthesize key arguments (theoretical and/or empirical, depending on the course) in an assured, compelling and original manner, avoiding a simple binary (good/bad) approach.
* The assignment is exemplary in its organization, length, in its use of language including diction and syntax, and in its complete bibliographic references.

**B to B+ (competent / job well done): 70-79%**

* The introduction restates the question and/or key debates in a competent manner; it also previews argument or outlines the assignment, though in a less compelling way.
* The assignment elaborates on relevant policy and/or theoretical debates, though it misrepresents key ideas in the literature. It explains some concepts used to guide the argument, but it misses key distinctions and/or connections.
* The assignment presents and analyzes relevant evidence, but it misses or misinterprets some methodological, empirical or comparative subtleties.
* The conclusions pull together some arguments in a competent manner, though without offering original insights. The main argument(s) of the assignment may not be clear.
* The assignment is somewhat organized but too long or short. Its language and bibliographic references contain errors. The form of the presentation lacks creativity.

**C to C+ (developing / a good start): 60-69%**

* The introduction offers a general outline but it misses important elements of the assignment, does not engage the reader, or does not explain its wider relevance.
* Relevant concepts and theories are presented, but the student does not demonstrate a clear understanding of their significance and does not explain the conceptual frame guiding (or not guiding) the assignment.
* The assignment contains some relevant data, but it misses or misinterprets core methodological and/or empirical considerations (e.g., the methods or evidence are inappropriate).
* The conclusions just restate the limited evidence and analysis in the assignment, and/or are tenuously- connected to the substantive analysis.
* The assignment contains many technical errors, particularly in wording and syntax. It also displays limited competence in organization and referencing.

**D to D+ (needs much more work): 50-59%**

* The introduction provides a minimal quantity of relevant information on the issues raised by the question or in the guidelines for the assignment.
* The assignment presents an incomplete and fragmented explanation of relevant concepts and theories. It contains many errors of interpretation and only presents a few elements of a framework that could have guided key arguments in the assignment.
* The assignment offers little in the way of relevant evidence or misuses the evidence, for example by falling into logical traps (e.g., confusing temporal connectedness with causality).
* The conclusions are incoherent or do not flow logically from the rest of the text.
* The assignment achieves minimal communication given its poor organization, inadequate length, numerous errors or omissions in its wording, spelling and bibliographic references. Poor quality of language impairs the reader’s understanding of the student’s work.

**E (needs much more work): 40-49%**

* Similar to the indicators noted above for D to D+, but even weaker. The assignment contains major inconsistencies or contradictions. The poor quality of language seriously impairs the reader’s understanding of the student’s arguments. The work may also contain plagiarism, though appears to be accidental; see the FSS Guidelines for plagiarism revised in 2020.

**F or EIN (bigger problems need to be addressed): Under 40%**

* The assignment is extremely deficient with regard to most of the criteria enumerated in section one.
* An assignment wholly or in large part based on text plagiarized from other authors, without proper attribution, warrants filing an accusation of plagiarism with the Vice-Dean of Undergrad Studies.
* Students who do not submit an assignment will receive an incomplete (EIN) for said assignment and possibly for the course.

**Annex: Examples of DVM grading rubrics, years 3 and 4**

**Photovoice assignment**

Dr. Furqan Asif

Photovoice is a participatory research method tool that helps in identifying, representing and enhancing production of knowledge by enabling people to reflect and document their observations and realities from their own perspective. In this way, knowledge is participant-led and participant-generated with the method promoting reflection and dialogue through discussion of photographs.

For the assignment, students will work around a chosen topic/theme (e.g. sustainability) related to the course. Keeping that theme in mind as you go about your life, you are encouraged to use observations of your surroundings and take pictures (using your smartphones/digital cameras) that speak to the topic/theme. You can take as many photos as you want but you will have to choose four photos. Each photo must be accompanied by a brief written description (250 – 300 words maximum) describing a) why/what made you chose to take the photo; b) what it represents, and c) how it speaks to the topic. Please use PowerPoint (one picture per slide) with description text in the ‘notes’ section of each slide.

Students will deliver a brief (5-7 mins maximum) presentation on their photos. The presentation/photos and descriptions are to be uploaded to Brightspace in advance of your presentation. Note: your presentation does not have to be you reading out your descriptions verbatim; you can tell the story behind the photo, or however you wish. Grading criteria for this assignment are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Component | Criteria |
| Photos (10%) | **0 – 5:** It is difficult to see how the photo relates to the theme of focus or does not illustrate the concept effectively; the photo is limited in creativity **6 – 8:** The photo is related to the theme and illustrates it to a certain degree (low to moderate); the photo is somewhat creative **9 – 10:** The photo captures the theme well and in an engaging and effective way; the photo is very original and creative or uses a unique perspective |
| Photo descriptions (10%) | **0 – 5:** The descriptions make vague or indirect connections between the photo and the theme; significant grammatical/spelling errors present **6 – 8:** descriptions analyze and explain the photo, relating well to the thematic focus; few grammatical/spelling errors **9 – 10:** descriptions analyze and explain in-depth connection of photo to thematic focus with significant cross-links made to broader and related themes; no grammatical/spelling errors |
| Presentation (10%) | **0 – 5:** poor presentation – virtually no eye contact with audience; low voice; little to no intonation of speech; direct reading off paper **6 – 8:** good presentation – some eye contact with audience; good voice; some intonation of speech; moderate reading off written material **9 – 10:** excellent presentation – abundant eye contact with audience; loud voice projection; effective and liberal intonation of speech; little to no reading off written material |

**Research Paper Assignment**

Professors Nadia Abu-Zahra & Susan Spronk

**Introduction**

*Background /2* Provide context; briefly and precisely define any terms or elements in your question.

*Question/Thesis /3* Your question or thesis should be original. It should also be clear, direct and focused. The question should be relevant to course themes and conceptual frameworks.

*Theoretical or conceptual framework / 3* The theoretical or conceptual framework should be able to generate an analysis that responds to the research question. It should also be compatible with the kind of empirical (quantitative or qualitative) data used in the assignment. It should be clearly explained.

*Structure (overview) /2* You should be able to outline the direction of your analysis and then be able to follow the outline of your structure. (Did you actually do in your paper what you said you would?)

**Sections and paragraphs**

*Topic sentences /3* Each section should be on a clear topic (you can include sub-headings if you wish). Within each section, paragraphs should begin with clear topic sentences.

*Closing sentences /3* Each paragraph should have a closing sentence linking to the topic sentence. Each section should have a clear end or transition.

*Paragraph length; one topic per paragraph /2* Each paragraph should be of appropriate length (e.g. 150-250 words). The contents of each paragraph should be encompassed by its topic.

**Content**

*At least 10 supporting points; answering the question /10* This will be marked on how well you structure your analysis. Aim to answer your question in the paper’s development (or ‘body’), i.e. before the conclusion.

*Relevance of the supporting evidence/5* The evidence offered should be appropriate to the research question and conceptual framework (e.g. sources, type (qualitative/quantitative), scope and scale)

*In-text citations /3* The in-text citations may be in any style. Be consistent in the format chosen. Include page numbers in your citations (except where the source is not numbered, e.g. a website).

*Distribution and variation of sources (“scattered” citations) /3* Try to demonstrate a clear comprehension of the sources by grouping them together according to their arguments (i.e. identify different groupings within the literature). Avoid frequently citing a single reference consecutively for a lengthy section. You should be able to illustrate (or counter) the points of various sources.

*Analysis/5* Your analysis should be based on the conceptual framework as well as evidence presented in the paper. It should answer the research question. Analyses which are particularly original (i.e. not repeating common arguments in course readings or wider literature) will get higher grades.

**Conclusion**

*Summary of findings of each section /3* The answer(s) to your question will already have been explored in the development of the paper. The conclusion, therefore, a summary of each and all sections in the development. If recommendations are offered, they should flow logically from your analysis.

**References**

*Reference List /3* You should have a minimum of ten sources, and they should be referenced in a consistent style (APA preferable but not imperative). At least six of the sources must be academic sources (peer-reviewed, i.e. books or journal articles).

**Language Quality**

Up to 7.5 marks may be deducted, based on overall ability to use proper diction.

**TOTAL MARK /50**

**Top of Form**