Grading guideline JAP3000 spring 2026

Below is the outline of the guidance I have given to the students on writing an academic paper.

You can find the full version on Canvas.

How to write an academic paper

Method: Clarify from the very outstart which question you will discuss and why this question is interesting and worthy of discussion today. Next, introduce very briefly the content of your discussion. In case you will be discussing more than one topic related to your question (not more than three topics!), also introduce the order of these topics. Make sure that in the discussion you do not merely give us so-called 'facts' and data. At an academic level the major part of your paper should consist of an analysis of opinions related to your subject by specialists and opinion leaders. Introduce, analyze and compare the major opinions (try to use an average of three different opinions for each topic). Do not forget to conclude your paper with a conclusion which gives (or at least tries to give) an answer to the question you posed at the outset.

In short:

Theme (general), research question (limited) + justification (may include short overview of previous research)
Introduction of structure of your paper + justification

Topic 1 (analysis, discussion, comparison) => CONCLUSION 1
Topic 2 (analysis, discussion, comparison) => CONCLUSION 2

---------- +
Conclusion = OVERALL CONCLUSION

Sources: Try to use varied sources (books, journals, newspapers, internet) and make sure to specify your sources. When using direct quotations use quotation marks and by means of footnotes or endnotes supply the details of the source (author, title, name of

journal or newspaper, name of internet site and web-address, publisher, date of publication, page(s) from which you cited). As for indirect quotations, please specify at least for every paragraph the sources you used for that part by means of footnotes, endnotes or in brackets. Moreover, add a list of all the sources you used for your paper.

You can find more detailed guidelines how to specify and list sources at HF's page regarding Sources and referencing.

In my evaluation of the students' papers I do not expect an academic paper that lives up to all elements mentioned in this outline, but I do expect the basics. Each academic paper should have a valid research question, an intelligible structure and content, and a conclusion. Moreover, the information in the text should be backed up by notes telling us exactly where the related information can be found. A paper that lacks most or all of these basics qualifies for F. A paper that completely or almost completely lacks notes also qualifies for F. A paper where considerable parts of the paper are presented as the student's own views (no notes, no quotation marks) but appear to be the view of someone else also qualifies for F or worse.

On the other hand, a paper that includes most or all of these basics may easily qualify for E or even D. To the extent that the paper also includes a structured presentation and analysis of the academic (and or social) debate related to the research question, the mark may go further up to C or even B.

For the BA thesis the use of a Japanese language resource is required. Only papers that make sufficient use of the Japanese language source can qualify for A. Another qualification for B or A is that the best available (most prominent and/or most recent) academic sources have been used.