ENG1506 – American History and Society: An Introduction

Autumn 2025

Final Exam Assessment Criteria

Excellent

This level of answer is convincingly argued and is a perceptive response to the question, based on a wide and critical reading of course materials.

- Answers the question directly and effectively.
- Uses both primary and secondary materials from the course reading and can discuss these in specific terms.
- Uses a range of examples to support the argument and weighs up and evaluates different specific arguments, distinguishing between them and identifies key issues.
- Has a very high standard of writing and structure, with few, if any, technical errors.

Good

Work in this category provides a clearly focused answer and is well argued and supported by a sound and relevant knowledge base and understanding of the subject. Yet, it may be missing a few critical pieces of content or have an argument that is not fully thought out or otherwise vague.

- Is based on a good range of reading.
  Some discussion of primary and/or secondary materials from the course reading.
- Is written in clear, accurate prose, but may have some errors.
- Is well structured and makes effective use of examples to support the argument.

Average

Answers in this range show a partial answering of the question, with a solid, but limited, engagement with the subject, and may be rather mechanical in approach (for example, a reliance on description as a substitute for analysis).

- May have a good level of general competency and knowledge, with some use of relevant examples and a limited appreciation of different arguments and interpretations.
- Tends not to rely as much on course reading.

- Might also attempt to present an argument, but may offer a blunt analysis and/or show elements of repetition or an overly descriptive approach.
- May include problems with writing, grammar, and structure.

Poor

Answers in this category have a poorly developed argument, based on limited reading and little preparation and study, with an over-reliance on basic source materials, and with a superficial grasp of concepts.

- May lack focus, and be prone to sweeping unsubstantiated assertions, revealing confusion and errors of fact or interpretation.
- Possibly does not include specific engagement with the course reading.
- Might also have bad structure, multiple spelling errors, and other writing issues.
- May only partially answer the question or miss the bigger picture.

Unacceptable

Work in this range may feature inadequate knowledge, characterized by:

- Failure to address the question set including the absence of analysis, insufficient research and evidence, no use of course reading, bad
- organization and structure, frequent grammatical, spelling errors, etc.
- May also reflect: insignificant or no argument; superficial response; often irrelevant or tangential discussion.
- It could be inadequately informed; erroneous in matters of fact and interpretation; and/or poorly organized.

Please note: If only one essay question is answered, the absolute best the student could achieve is a 50% grade.