Assessment guidelines for take-home exam in ENG4116 Second Language Acquisition

The following are the specifications of the learning outcomes in this course.
After completing the course, students will have:
- gained insight into the characteristics of second language acquisition and into different theoretical approaches to explaining these characteristics.
- learned to analyse and evaluate learner data and to judge what methods are appropriate to use in order to study various aspects of the acquisition process.

Since this is a master's level course assessed through a take-home exam, the students are asked questions that cannot be answered simply by quoting from the syllabus, but require that they relate the relevant theory and concepts to actual data or studies. For this purpose, they are given a published research article to relate to at the exam. They may also be asked to compare different theories or accounts of the same phenomena. In this way, the students should demonstrate understanding of the theory. It is also important that they argue well when asked to discuss or give reasons for their answers.

Evaluating the relevance of the answers to the questions is an important part of the assessment. Students do not get credit for writing about irrelevant matters, even if these are described adequately. The relevance for the questions should also influence the space allocated to different sub-topics.

Students should demonstrate that they know the literature on the syllabus by using the relevant sources in their answers. It is a plus if they, in addition, refer to some extra sources.

The students are given a choice between two options. Each option has three to four parts, which carry equal weight. If a part is not answered, the mark is thus pulled down substantially. Each part may also contain sub-questions, which should all be covered for the paper to receive one of the higher marks. The answer should be well structured with appropriate use of paragraphs. The language should be precise and correct, and the referencing should follow the Chicago author–date system.