Assessment guidelines in

ENG4340 Nineteenth-Century American Literature

Part I: Introduction

For the course content and learning outcomes, please see the course description here: https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/ilos/ENG4340/index.html.

The current syllabus is to be found in Leganto.

- Teaching is in the form of 13 double seminars.
- The student's grade is based 100% on a 10-page term paper. Students choose the topic for their term paper either from a list of suggestions or by themselves in dialogue with their seminar teacher.
- Students have been encouraged to contact their teacher about their term paper topics via e-mail, in class, or one-on-one during a conference period set off for this purpose. More importantly, students are given the opportunity to submit a draft of their term paper by a given deadline and are given written feedback on both the form and content of their draft.

Part II: General assessment criteria

Length: We are looking for term papers of at least 8 pages and no longer than 12 pages in Times New Roman 12 point and 1½-spacing (not including the title page and works cited list).

Structure: The term papers are expected to have the form of an academic essay with a clear "introduction—body of argument—and conclusion" structure.

Language: Students are expected to write clearly, concisely, and in an appropriately academic style, i.e. avoiding slang and informal/unconventional English. Common language errors relate to subject-verb concord, verb tense, prepositions, comma usage, genitives, idioms, spelling, and incomplete sentences with no finite verb. You need to ask if these errors are so numerous and serious that they impair the student's ability to communicate. Language counts as part of a total assessment and is not given any specific percentage of the final grade.

Scholarly documentation: The citation of sources and the construction of the works cited list is to be in accordance with the guidelines of the Modern Language Association (MLA). The students have received guidance in this style of scholarly referencing.

Secondary reading: Students are expected to engage with previous scholarship and criticism on the primary text(s) they have chosen.

Criteria relating to content (formulated as questions to ask in your assessment):

- Does the term paper have a topic with a viable scope and academic validity?
- Does the student have a clearly formulated thesis? Is there a central point the student wants to prove in the term paper in response to the topic he or she has chosen?
- Does the term paper contain interesting or original ideas and arguments supported by relevant examples from the primary text(s)?
- Does the student demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the primary text(s)?
- If literary theory or theory from other fields is introduced is it well integrated in the ongoing discussion and literary analysis? Does the student demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical concepts he or she is using and are they integral to the analysis he or she is conducting?
- If the student employs a methodology beyond close reading or comparison and contrast is the methodology relevant and productive in exploring the topic he or she has chosen?
- Does the style of writing, grammar, and spelling, the use of secondary sources, and/or the inclusion of close reading suggest that this is the student's own work or are there passages that are suggestive of a text generated by AI/Chat GPT?

Part III: Criteria for various levels of achievement

Strong

A very good performance. The candidate demonstrates sound judgment and a large degree of independent thinking.

- The student is able to conduct a sophisticated and interesting discussion of their chosen topic by using relevant analytical terms and supporting his/her argument with pertinent examples that demonstrate a very good understanding both of the topic and the primary text(s).
- There are only a few language errors and the student demonstrates a very good command of written English.

Satisfactory

A satisfactory performance, but with some clear shortcomings. The candidate demonstrates an average degree of judgment and independent thinking.

- The student is able to conduct a satisfactory discussion of their chosen topic, which involves using relevant analytical terms and supporting his/her argument with some examples that demonstrate a satisfactory understanding both of the topic and the primary text(s).
- There are several language errors, but they don't impede communication. Overall the student demonstrates a fair command of written English.

Weak

A performance that meets the minimum criteria, but no more. The candidate demonstrates only a limited degree of judgment and independent thinking.

- The student only responds minimally to their chosen topic *and/or* demonstrates only a basic understanding of the primary text(s).

- There are many language errors relating to syntax, punctuation, subject-verb concord, verb tense, vocabulary, idioms, and/or spelling, but these errors do not fundamentally impair the student's ability to communicate in English.

Failure

A performance that does not meet the minimum academic criteria. The candidate demonstrates an absence of both judgment and independent thinking.

- The student fails to respond adequately to their chosen topic *and/or* demonstrates little or no understanding of the primary text(s) *and/or* the term paper is too short (see length requirements above).
- There are numerous and serious language errors relating to syntax, punctuation, subject-verb concord, verb tense, vocabulary, idioms, and/or spelling, which fundamentally affect the student's ability to communicate in English.
- A term paper may fail on the basis of poor content or poor language or a combination of the two.