

ELON UNIVERSITY ECONOMICS THESIS GRADING RUBRIC 2009-10

INITIAL CLAIM: *the introduction of the thesis, its relevance and a brief indication of how you are planning to proceed in answering the questions.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
No clear thesis	Clear, well-focused thesis Some basic idea of why the question is interesting and why it is topic appropriate for economic analysis.	Clear well-focused thesis Convinces the reader of the economic importance of the issue Clearly demonstrates the originality of the work and places it within the context of the economic literature

BACKING: *the recognition and understanding of previous, relevant work in the area.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
<i>Little or no</i> reference to articles in professional journals. References are not used as an integral part of the argument, or inappropriate references are used.	<i>Some</i> reference to articles in professional journals. References are used to strengthen and focus the argument.	Numerous references are made to articles in professional journals and/or other original sources. Effectively appeals to the literature at ALL stages of the argument

THEORY: *the use of economic reasoning as the basis for the argument.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
States but does not clearly explain how the theory is used to analyze the issue at hand; the espoused theory is not central to the argument. Given the context of the argument, someone else's theory is <i>improperly</i> applied.	Given the context of the argument, someone else's theory is <i>correctly</i> applied. Economic reasoning is clearly and logically explained. Where possible, some use of mathematical symbolism or graphs to explain theory.	Consistently uses economic concepts and terms when explaining reasoning. Extensive and effective use of symbolism and graphs to illuminate theory where appropriate. <i>Creates a useful</i> extension to someone else's theory, and <i>correctly</i> applies it, given the context of the argument or combines multiple (existing) theories in an original and enlightening way. Considers and addresses specific assumptions of the argument.

EMPIRICAL EVALUATION: *“Empirical” simply refers to evidence that comes from experience or experiments. Data can be thought of as any bit of evidence (e.g., historical, textual, national statistics, experimental results, computer-generated simulations, etc...). These data (loosely defined) must be used to evaluate the argument in a convincing, appropriate way.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
<p>Use either no evidence or only anecdotal evidence to evaluate the thesis.</p> <p>Uses data only for descriptive purposes.</p>	<p>Uses data or other historical evidence to evaluate the thesis.</p> <p>Makes explicit use of numerical estimates (mean, median, standard deviation), graphical analysis (scatter plots, line graphs, and box plots), or computer simulations where appropriate.</p> <p>If the data is numerical, inferential statistics (hypothesis testing, confidence intervals, regressions, etc...) are used, but in a very simple or superficial way.</p> <p>Reference to historical evidence is used for evaluation, but it is simplistic.</p>	<p>If the data are numerical, the use of appropriate inferential statistics or computer simulations to evaluate the thesis.</p> <p>Demonstrate that the empirical evaluation is linked directly to the theory.</p> <p>Demonstrates serious reflection on the process by investigating multiple alternative tests or model specifications in order to determine the robustness of the results (an attempt is made to evaluate the evaluation).</p> <p>Extensive appeals to historical evidence are evident and are applied in a sophisticated and creative manner.</p>

REVISED CLAIM and SUMMARY: *the understanding of one’s results and reflection on the implications thereof.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
<p>A <i>vague</i> and/or <i>ambiguous</i> summary of the argument’s conclusion.</p> <p>This conclusion has a <i>weak</i> connection to the argument’s theory and data.</p>	<p>A <i>well-stated</i> summary of the argument’s conclusion.</p> <p>This conclusion is <i>explicitly</i> and <i>strongly</i> connected to the argument’s theory and data.</p> <p>Some reflection on the implications of the results and possible unexplored issues.</p>	<p>A well-stated summary of the argument’s conclusion, strongly connected with the theory and data work.</p> <p>Provocative reflection upon the implications of the conclusion with interesting new questions to be explored.</p> <p>Clearly understands the relationship between the paper’s conclusions and previous work.</p> <p>Places results into the broader context of the literature or policy-making process.</p>

OVERALL QUALITY OF WRITING: *the overall quality of the paper's organization, style, and grammar.*

Poor	Competent	Excellent
Poorly organized; the argument is difficult to follow.	Clear organization; the argument is easy to follow.	Well-organized and easy to follow.
Fails to maintain focus throughout the argument.	Good job maintaining focus throughout.	"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."
Unacceptable grammar, spelling and punctuation.	Acceptable grammar, spelling and punctuation.	

Final Grading:

According to my (Steve's) notes from our last meeting, we are each scoring the 6 components on a 1.0 to 5.0 scale, using increments of 0.5 only (e.g.1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, etc.). When you tally up your total score, you will report your score and grade to your grading chair using the following:

A27 and above

A- 25-26

B+ 23-24

B21-22

B-19-20

C+17-18

C15-16

C-13-14

D+11-12

D..... 9-10

F..... 0-8

If the grading committee is within 6 points there is consistency. If there is consistency, the scores are averaged to get the final grade. If the average number grade is not a whole number, round up if it is .5 or higher. For example, a 22.5 would be a B+.