

COURSE RUBRICS:

| | Capstone 4 | Milestones | | Benchmark 1 |
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| Writing mechanics | The thesis actually organizes the whole paper—meaning the structure and coherence of the paper is clear throughout and transitions elegantly made; the reader is not left to make abstractions or guess at the relevance of any passage | A strong thesis is articulated, not only identifying the purpose of the essay, but also alluding to the student’s reasons or arguments. A version or variation of the thesis is also clear at the end, tying the essay together | An organizing thesis is clear and easily identifiable. All necessary citations (and bibliography) are given, including page numbers when relevant | Essay is free from distracting grammatical and other typographical errors; standard writing conventions are used |
| Explicating Arguments | In a similar manner, the overall relevance of the argument is made clear, including its connection to the author’s main thesis and themes; if relevant the argument is contextualized within the overall historical dialogue | Additionally, key assumptions or enthymematic premises are made explicit, and a nuanced reading of the importance and plausibility of the various premises is given | Additionally, the overall logic or connections are made; premises are identified <i>as</i> premises, and how these work to support the conclusion is made explicit | A significant passage of text containing an argument is identified; key quotes are highlighted and explanations are attempted |
| Media Analysis | Additionally, from these an argument is (re-)constructed that not only serves as a plausible interpretation of the conceptual work of the artifact, but is insightful for evaluating the plausibility of the artifact’s overall message | Additionally, relevant contextual information is given, including a discussion of necessary contextual features and relevant opposing ideas | Additionally, less obvious assumptions or claims are identified and shown to be at work in the artifact, leading to an overall interpretation of what’s really going on in the artifact | An artifact of public media is identified and conspicuous philosophical assumptions and claims are indicated |
| Synthesis/Evaluation | Additionally, makes use of that conceptual framework to insightfully evaluate the media artifact, revealing its | Accurately interprets specific passages, clearly laying out a conceptual framework that makes | Makes connections between specific passages of one or more of the readings and the artifact in | Makes general connections between the media artifact and one or more of the readings |

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| | overall strengths and criticizing its overall weaknesses or inadequacies | sense of and reveals insights concerning the media artifact; in doing so, manifests a clear grasp of the complexities involved in both framework and artifact | question | |
| Writing a philosophical argument | In doing so, manifests a nuanced grasp of what's at stake in the argument; the argument is polished and compelling; complexity and limits of position are acknowledged; considers substantive and direct objections and offers plausible responses that further develop the argument | Additionally, makes assumptions explicit, recognizes weak or controversial premises or ambiguities, and works to support these; likewise considers and responds to objections | Additionally, offers reasons as premises, laying them out in a manner that highlights the logical connections between reasons in a manner that clearly supports the conclusion | Not only urges a reader to accept a given position or claim, but offers substantive reasons for doing so; position and reasons remain basic or simplistic |
| Reflection assignments | Additionally, offers an insightful, two-way reflection, so that the concrete elements of life directly inform the student's philosophical thinking on the concepts in question, revealing a meaningful, two-way synthesis | Integrates multiple aspects of one's life with relevant course concepts or themes in a coherent manner; uses this reflection as an opportunity to explore substantive or difficult questions, uncertainties, complexities, etc. | Draws on specific texts and themes from the class in order to illuminate substantive aspects of the student's life; additionally indicates things such as similarities, differences, and alternative perspectives/possibilities | Reflects on a specific, concrete aspect of the student's life, relating it to themes addressed in the course |