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| Performance  Dimension | Exceeds Standards  A+ A A- | Meets Standards  B+ B | Fails to Meet Standards  B- C D F |
| CONTENT  Introduction (10%) | Introduction captures the reader’s attention and presents a hard-hitting and very clear and concise thesis that directly answers the essay prompt; very clearly establishes the paper’s structure by previewing main points and organization of the paper (essay map). | Introduction presents a mostly clear and concise thesis that answers the essay prompt. A discernable essay map adequately previews main points and organization of the paper. | Position is vague. Organization of argument is missing, vague, or not consistently maintained. |
| CONTENT  Argument/ Assessment (30%) | Fully answers all aspects of the question asked, presenting a complete and credible argument/assessment. Supporting evidence is highly relevant to the argument, terms/evaluation criteria are defined, and evidence is presented accurately and completely. Main points clearly support the thesis and are accurately described using an ASA format. Analysis reflects critical thinking, ties supporting evidence to assertions, and makes a persuasive argument. Competing ideas or divergent views are acknowledged. | Sufficiently answers the question asked to achieve learning outcomes, presenting a recognizable argument/assessment. Supporting evidence is relevant to the argument, terms/evaluation criteria are defined, and evidence is presented accurately. Main points support the thesis and are adequately described. Some ASA elements may not be present or are unclear. Connection to the overall argument/assessment is mostly clear and complete or may have minor errors. Analysis supports assertions and reflects critical thinking and synthesis of course topics. | Does not answer the question asked, nor achieve learning outcomes. Supporting evidence is not relevant to the argument or only relevant for some aspects; terms/evaluation criteria are not defined, and evidence is inaccurate. Supporting points are not clearly articulated and/or have incorrect or incomplete ASA elements. The argument/assessment, and relationship between thesis and supporting points, is unclear or inaccurate, major errors in the logic are present. |
| CONTENT  Conclusion (10%) | Conclusion is clearly stated and consistent with the thesis, briefly summarizes key arguments and provides key takeaways (why it matters) for strategic leaders. | Conclusion is stated and mostly consistent with the thesis, briefly summarizes key arguments and provides key takeaways (why it matters) for strategic leaders. | Conclusion may not be clear and the connections to the thesis and research are incorrect or unclear or just a repetition of the findings without explanation. Underlying logic has major flaws; connection to position is not clear. |
| ORGANIZATION (25%) | Paper is coherently organized, and the logic is very easy to follow (ASA). Effective organization maximizes argument development, message impact and reader understanding; introduction sets up the argument, main body presents evidence and analysis that flows from the thesis and essay map to clear topic sentences, and transitions between key points; argument is bookended with a conclusion that drives home importance for current and future thought. | The paper is generally well organized and most of the argument is easy to follow (ASA). Organization supports argument development, message impact and reader understanding; introduction sets up the argument, main body presents evidence and analysis that flows from the thesis and essay map to clear topic sentences; main body is bookended with a conclusion that drives home importance for current and future thought. | Paper is poorly organized and difficult to read – does not flow logically from one part to another (lack of ASA). |
| STYLE (25%) | There are no spelling or grammatical errors and terminology is clearly defined. Writing reflects an exemplary professional academic tone, is clear, concise, and persuasive. Writing is tight and primarily active, reflecting excellent paraphrasing and very judicious use of quotes. Formatting and citations are consistent with essay instructions and conform to CAD standards and the Turabian or Chicago Manual of Style. | There are only a few minor spelling or grammatical errors, or terms that are not clearly defined. Writing reflects professional academic tone with minimal use of jargon and acronyms; mostly clear but may lack conciseness. Writing is primarily active and reflects good paraphrasing without overuse of direct quotes. Formatting and citations are generally consistent with essay instructions and generally conform to CAD standards and the Turabian or Chicago Manual of Style. | There are numerous spelling and/or grammatical errors; technical terms may not be defined or are poorly defined. Writing is too informal, lacks clarity and conciseness, with poor paraphrasing and/or overuse of direct quotations. Formatting is not consistent with essay instructions, citations are missing, and neither reflect CAD standards and the Turabian or Chicago Manual of Style. Word count does not fall within the +/- 10%.  An F is awarded for academic misconduct and plagiarism. |