

University of Sussex, American Studies Marking Criteria

	0-39 (fail)	40-49 (3rd)	50-59 (2.2)	60-69 (2.1)	70-79 (1st)	80+ (high 1st)
1. Knowledge & Understanding	Significant elements of the topic are neglected. Little or no understanding of course material.	Basic understanding of topic but lacks appreciation of subtlety and complexity of issues.	Reasonable understanding of material; there may be some mild confusion about some issues.	Good understanding of the material based on a range of reading. No significant errors of understanding or interpretation.	Student shows thorough understanding and appreciation of material.	As 70-79 but a particularly high degree of interpretative originality and conceptual sophistication. Only awarded in rare cases.
2. Research	Little or no evidence of research.	Little or no research beyond required reading.	Evidence of research beyond required reading.	Student has researched beyond required reading in a thorough and conscientious manner.	Student has read widely around the topic, showing a scholarly approach to the field and using appropriate academic sources.	
3. Creative and Critical Thinking	No clear line of argument/argument lacks supporting evidence.	Descriptive answer without clear argument <i>or</i> argument lacks organisation and evidence.	Competent argument but lacks originality <i>or</i> distinctive argument that lacks thorough grounding in material. At the lower end of the band, argument may show insufficient interest in question.	Good argument showing student has thought critically about the topic and engaged intellectually with the question. At the lower end of the band, quality of argument may be uneven.	Evidence of original and critical thought. Student may have taken a risk to challenge an accepted position, as long as this is supported by evidence.	

<p>4. Presentation and communication</p>	<p>Excessively short or jumbled</p> <p>Poor expression, spelling and grammar</p> <p>No citation or poor citation</p>	<p>Correctly referenced, possibly with some errors</p> <p>Reasonable structure, spelling and grammar but distinct lapses in organisation and expression</p>	<p>Correctly referenced</p> <p>Reasonably well structured and presented; good spelling and grammar</p>	<p>Correctly referenced</p> <p>Well structured, clearly written and well presented. Good standard of spelling and grammar.</p>	<p>Correctly referenced.</p> <p>Clear structure and presentation. Correct academic English with no spelling or grammar errors.</p> <p>Assignment is engaging to read, showing flair, maturity and confidence.</p>	
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Last revised: 30 August 2022, Dr. Katharina Rietzler