

**Term Paper Grading Rubric**  
**Spring 2007 Qualitative Research Methods**  
**University of Pittsburgh • Dr. Stuart Shulman**

	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>Content</b>	All the major components of a graduate research paper (theory, evidence, and argument) accomplished	Most of the components of a graduate research paper present	Significant omissions	Few or none of the major components present
<b>Research</b>	Exhaustive literature review, data collection, and documentation	Strong and balanced literature review, data collection, and documentation	Failure in one of these areas	Failure in multiple areas
<b>Organization</b>	Paragraph structure and overall paper architecture cohere, the paper's thesis is clearly linked to its overall design and reiterated along the way	Paragraph structure and overall paper architecture cohere, but the paper's thesis is not clearly linked to its overall design	Problems with either the organization of paragraphs or the overall architecture	Little or no organization; stream of consciousness writing.
<b>Grammar</b>	Perfect grammar and careful proof-reading	A few minor grammatical and/or spelling errors	Significant and regular grammatical and spelling errors	Multiple errors on every page
<b>Style</b>	"Stunk and White"- style <sup>1</sup> simple and direct prose , producing an easy and enjoyable read	Solid style with a mix of short and intermediate length sentences	Verbose, overblown rhetoric, cliché phrases, run-on sentences	Inappropriate (ex., sarcasm) or inadequate prose for research papers at the graduate level

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<sup>1</sup> *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr., and E.B. White should be on the bedside reading table of every serious writer. They note:

*"Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts."*

