

**GS/NURS 5110**  
**3.0**



Image description: “The helpful teacher” by Vincent Van Gough

**Course Outline – Summer**  
**2018**

**Course Professor: Iris Epstein**

Sections N

**Calendar (Short) Course Description**

This course focuses on the processes by which the major schools of thought frame interpretation in teaching, learning and inquiry. We will present three ((a)traditional teaching-learning (teacher centred approach); (b) Complex pedagogy and (c) Relational inquiry )lenses on teaching and learning however, students are supported to develop their own critical questions thru exploring, analyzing, and critiquing the ways in which these different traditions influence the what, why and how of nursing education practices. Thus, the overall purpose of the course is to prepare students for advanced research-based teaching-learning nursing praxis and an academic career or senior clinical education roles. The course is a prerequisite for educational placement in Nursing Scholarship Practicum.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. Students demonstrate a deep and self-reflective understanding of their own teaching-learning experiences.
2. Articulate the relationship between teaching-learning philosophies and theories from nursing education and higher education to nursing praxis
3. Articulate a personal philosophy of teaching-learning
4. Develop teaching-learning activities and evaluation processes congruent with the philosophy and theory that underpins their teaching-learning praxis
5. Identify research question(s) that contribute to a science of nursing education

**Course Perspectives:**

To help organize the ideas to be explored in the course discussions, we have grouped the course content into four broad thematic areas called *perspectives*:

- Humans as interpreting beings
- Paradigms/ontologies & interpretations of reality
- Knowledge, context & values

### **Critical Questions:**

The following critical questions relating to the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of nursing as a science and discipline have been posed in order to stimulate reflection and exploration.

1. What is reflexivity and why is it important to nursing education and praxis?
2. What is hermeneutics lens in nursing education and praxis?
3. What is a critical lens in nursing education and praxis?
4. What is a teaching philosophy?
5. How does teaching philosophy connect with theoretical perspectives?

### **Suggested Readings**

Some core readings and resources will be provided as a place to start engaging, questioning, and reflecting. You are also encouraged to contribute resources that are meaningful to you and that you believe may be helpful for others to read, see, or consider. Once the course starts you can visit the Daagu site and explore the discussions and resources there for GS/NURS 5110.

- Aase, K., Friberg, F., & Haraldseid, C. (2015). Nursing students' perceptions of factors influencing their learning environment in a clinical skills laboratory: A qualitative study. *Nurse Education Today*, 35(9):e1-6.
- Abbaszade, A., Borhani, F., Sabzevari, S. (2013). Nursing teachers' perception of the challenges of clinical education and solutions: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Qualitative Research Health Science*, 2(2) 134-45.
- Abedi, H.A., Alavi, M., Irajpour, A. R., & Nasiri, A. (2009). Barriers to clinical education: Student nurses' Experiences. *Scientific Quarterly of British journal and Nursing and Midwifery Faculty*. 6(1), 5-11.
- Al-Qatawneh, K. (2009). Concept-Based Instruction and Teacher Planning and Student Achievement in Persuasive Writing. *International Journal of Education in Science* 1(1), 45-51
- Doane, G. A. H. (2002). Beyond behavioral skills to human-involved processes: Relational nursing practice and interpretive pedagogy. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 41(9), 400-404. Retrieved from <http://www.journalofnursingeducation.com/showAbst.asp?thing=35358>
- Doane, G. A. H & Varcoe, C. (2007). Relational Practice and Nursing Obligations Advances in Nursing Science 30 (3) 192-205. *Advances in Nursing Science*: doi: 10.1097/01.ANS.0000286619.31398.fc
- Friere, P. PAULO FREIRE AND THE ROLE OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY- BLOG SITE Retrieved <http://daily-struggles.tumblr.com/post/18785753110/paulo-freire-and-the-role-of-critical-pedagogy>
- Giddens, J., Brady, D., Brown, P., Wright, D., Smith, D., Harris, J. (2008). A New Curriculum and a NEW ERA of Nursing Education. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 29, (4), 200-204.

- Ironside, P. M. (2005). Working together, creating excellence: The experiences of nursing teachers, students, and clinicians. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 26(2), 78-85. doi: 10.1043/1536-5026(2005)026<0078 %3AWTCETE>2.0.CO%3B2
- Ironside, P. M. (2001). Creating a research base for nursing education: An interpretive review of conventional, critical, feminist, postmodern, and phenomenologic pedagogies. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 23(3), 72-87. Retrieved from <http://journals.lww.com/advancesinnursingscience/pages/default.aspx>
- Letcher, D., & Yancey, N. (2004). Witnessing change with aspiring nurses: A human becoming teaching-learning process in nursing education. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 17(1), 36-41. doi: 10.1177/0894318403260550
- Marchese, K. (2006). Using Peplau's theory of interpersonal relations to guide the education of patients undergoing urinary diversion. *Urologic Nursing*, 26(5), 363-370. Retrieved from [http://www.sun.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/SUNAMain.woa/1/wa/viewSection?s\\_id=1073743840&ss\\_id=536872962](http://www.sun.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/SUNAMain.woa/1/wa/viewSection?s_id=1073743840&ss_id=536872962)
- Mitchell, G.J., Pilkington, F.B., Daiski, I., & Cross, N. (2017). Complexity-based pedagogy for e-learning: description of emergence in a graduate nursing program. *Open Journal of Nursing*, 7, 222-241. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojn.2017.72019>.
- Mitchell, G.J., Cross, N., George, O., Hynie, M., Kumar, K., Owston, R., Sinclair, D., & Wickens, R. (2016). Complexity Pedagogy and e-Learning: Emergence in Relational Networks. *International Research in Higher Education*, 1(1). <http://www.sciedupress.com/journal/index.php/irhe/article/view/9136>.
- Mitchell, G. J., Pilkington, B., Jonas-Simpson, C. M., Daiski, I., Cross, N. L., Johnston, N., ... & Tang, S. Y. (2016). Nursing education and complexity pedagogy: Faculty experiences with an e-learning platform. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 6(5), p60. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/jnep.v6n5p60>.
- Mikol, C. (2005). Teaching nursing without lecturing: Critical pedagogy as communicative dialogue. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 26(2), 86-89. doi: 10.1043/1536-5026(2005)026<008%3ATNWLCP>2.0.CO %3B2
- Rodrigue, V. (2012) The Teaching Brain and the end of the empty vessel , *International mind, brain and Education society* 6, 4 retrieved [https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/vanessarodriguez/files/vrodriguez\\_publishedmbe-article\\_11-16-12.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/vanessarodriguez/files/vrodriguez_publishedmbe-article_11-16-12.pdf)
- Sowers, J., & Smith, M.R. (2002). Disability as a difference. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 41, 331-332.
- Weyenberg, D. (1998). The construction of feminist pedagogy in nursing education: A preliminary critique. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 37(8), 345-353. Retrieved from <http://www.journalofnursingeducation.com/>
- Zorn, D. (2010). *Enactive approach to education* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto: Toronto, Canada. Manuscript in preparation.

### Required Text

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

## Resources

Obtaining required articles online through York Library:

Go to <http://www.library.yorku.ca/ccm/jsp/homepage.jsp>

- Under “Library Resources,” type in the name of the journal (e.g., *Nursing Science Quarterly*), click “Find,” and then scroll down and **click to access this resource**
- You will then need to sign in (Passport York or library number)
- Click on the desired year, e.g., 2014
- Click on the required volume and issue, e.g., 27(1)
- Scroll down to find authors’ names and click on PDF version; you can then download and save or print the article

## Web-Based Resources

- 1) Use the Internet to search for relevant articles, videos, images, texts, etc. Students are required to reference all material in keeping with copyright law: see <http://copyright.info.yorku.ca/>
- 2) The Daagu system prompts you to enter URLs (links) to materials that you would like others to see or share.
- 3) An excellent resource website about nursing theory, including links to websites about multiple theorists, is based at the Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science. Available at: <http://www.sandiego.edu/academics/nursing/theory/>

## Evaluation

The course teaching-learning activities are designed: 1) to engage you in exploring, discovering, and clarifying how your ideas connect with nursing science and nursing scholarship through reading, writing, and discussing; and 2) to enable you to achieve the program objectives and course learning outcomes. As you will see, this course requires collaborative learning. We are all teachers and learners. Please bring your different views and experiences.

1. Students identify a nursing teaching learning issue/phenomenon of interest and complete a self-reflective series of questions.
2. Students connect different interpretive of teaching learning approaches.

## Evaluation of Learning: Due Dates & Weighting

Evaluation Activity	Due Date (Midnight)	Weighting
<b>I. <u>Ongoing Participation</u> for 12 weeks from wk1-11</b>	<b>Self-evaluation of participation due week 12</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>II. A creative Teaching-</b>	<b>Technology based teaching</b>	<b>10% (peer) +</b>

<b>Learning Presentation in pairs and Critique presented online adobe connect</b>	<b>&amp; learning- starting week 7-10</b>	<b>30%(faculty)=40%</b>
<b>III. Peer evaluation of students creative teaching presentations</b>	<b>Written feedback one week post students presentation</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>IV. Critical Reflection and Synthesis of Learning and Teaching-Learning Philosophy</b>	<b>A critical final paper</b>	<b>30%</b>

### **Dates for Summer Term-TA**

#### **Assignments Descriptions:**

#### **Ongoing Participation and self evaluation**

Discussion about topics/ideas and questions will take place within the Daagu platform. You are expected to be contributing to the discussions at least three times each week. (For more ideas about what this entails, please review the complexity pedagogy concepts and the evaluation rubric below.

#### **The teaching philosophy that will guide ongoing discussions assignments**

\*This assignment , complexity pedagogy and the Dagu discussion platform was created and developed at York and was led by Dr. Gail Mitchel – a nursing professor at York University.

Course teaching-learning activities are informed by complexity pedagogy. Complexity pedagogy proposes that all persons in a community of inquiry learn together. Teachers and students come together to engage, share, and question in order to develop personal understandings. Diverse views and different perspectives enable deep learning, and so, in many ways we are all responsible for contributing—not only to our own understanding and growth, but to that of our colleagues and classmates. There are no right and wrong answers in complexity learning. We all have different views and understandings, because our understanding is contextual, historical, and experiential. We are all coming together from a different place to spend time together in a shared quest for insights and emergent learning.

#### **Complexity Pedagogy: Terms and Definitions**

*Daagu* was chosen to name the new e-learning platform that is being used in this course to support complexity-based teaching-learning. It was inspired by *Dagu*, a tradition of the pastoral Afar people of Ethiopia, also referred to as a process, method, or communication system (Westley, Zimmerman, & Patton, 2007). In *Getting to Maybe*, Westley et al. (2007) describe *Dagu* in light of complexity theory in order to help readers imagine a different kind of change and transformation—one that is emergent, non-linear, paradoxical, and patterned. Others have noted the potential of *Dagu* for communicating/exchanging important information (e.g, see, [http://www.academia.edu/361586/The\\_potential\\_of\\_Dagu\\_communication\\_in\\_north-](http://www.academia.edu/361586/The_potential_of_Dagu_communication_in_north-)

[eastern Ethiopia](#)). The version of the Dagu story that inspired our eLearning project goes something like the following.

*The Afar people travel the harsh lands of Ethiopia to live their lives and care for their families, communities, and animals. In living off the land, the Afar developed a deep appreciation for the experiences that each person and each familial or tribal group have in their respective journeys. The Afar know that the nuances and particulars of different personal experiences inform the collective for making sense of what has been seen, heard, and felt while travelling the land, and for understanding what is possible for the next journey. Understanding that patterns of the whole emerge in community, Dagu is the first priority for conversation when Afar people meet. One can imagine the Afar turning to each other and asking: What experiences did you have? What have you noticed? What did you see? What did you hear? As each person shares and listens, the meanings emerge in the spaces of their shared experiences. Making sense in the larger collective is underpinned by the belief that it takes different perspectives, different experiences, for understanding the bigger picture of the landscape and life, and for figuring out how best to proceed, prepare, or know in complex realities. The Afar attend to the emergent meanings of the Dagu process with a commitment to shared discovery. They know their lives are interconnected through the differences they experience in their travels, and it is the differences that inform the way forward. Dagu is a promising metaphor for informing our collaborative teaching and learning and our shared commitment for finding new ways or learning, for emergent understanding of larger patterns or complex happenings.*

The Dagu story informed the processes and work patterns over several years of developing a complexity pedagogy approach within an eLearning technology that could enable a collaborative *Daagu* process among students and teachers. Here are some definitions of ideas (informed by the authors cited earlier) that describe learners' experiences as part of a community of inquiry:

**Reflection:** A process of contemplation about one's thinking and actions in specific situations in order to better understand the pros and cons of different ways of thinking and acting.

**Recursion:** An iterative process of revisiting what one knows in order to see with new eyes, or looping back with the intent to discover again.

**Emergent Learning:** As students and teachers inter-relate, offering different views and posing different questions, new learning emerges in the shifts of understandings and perspectives. All students and teachers can create teachable moments by introducing different ways of thinking about and acting in various situations.

**Perturbations:** Disruptions of the status quo created by challenging assumptions, providing alternative views, and asking different questions that expand understandings. Perturbations may point out paradox, ambiguity, and critical aspects of familiar ways of knowing.

**Diversity:** Difference is needed for deep thinking and critical understanding. Seeing only one way misses the complexities of life and learning. When diverse views are shared, new

insights often surface and propel thinking and problem-solving in new ways as difference is considered and conversed about.

Non-linearity: Life, living systems, thinking, and responding are all evolving historically, experientially, reflectively, and non-reflectively, in stops and starts, transformative leaps, and sometimes with unexplainable emergence. Change in living systems and processes cannot be controlled in simple formulas or directives. Living systems are continuously evolving in unpredictable ways.

Relationality: This concept indicates the ways people, things, ideas, preferences, and patterns connect and interrelate. An idea can link with many different experiences, an event might link with many memories, and a concept can connect with particular ideas across multiple contexts in a web of relationality.

Emotional Awareness: Human beings, as embodied, thinking-feeling beings, often sense or feel things before interpreting and understanding come into play. As embodied beings, we are always in relation to other humans and our environments. There are patterns to these relationships, there is an awareness and knowing in our bodies and feelings that is not typically explored in health sciences. It is important to reflect on these felt and emotional experiences in life and health care and how they connect with ideas and different ways of thinking and knowing in order to more fully develop intelligence and openness.

**Please remember to upload links (URLs) for published resources rather than the actual resource, in conformance with copyright law**

**Links to Creative Commons, Open Access and Public Domain materials can be found here: <http://copyright.info.yorku.ca/online-resources-for-content/>**

To reiterate: Participation in the online discussion is critical to your learning and the learning of your colleagues. Therefore, students are asked to be responsive and generous with ideas, feelings, and different views. Since there are no right or wrong answers or preferred pathways for learning, we all contribute to the layers of understanding and the breadth of possible ways of thinking. To enhance learning, focus on asking questions, posing other ways of thinking, challenging your own assumptions, and questioning issues of power, structures, and politics. We all have different perspectives and we will have points of agreement, uncertainty, and disagreement on many issues and ideas during the course. Attending to these foci and questions is the work we will do together. We will also consider various consequences of thinking in light of our professional responsibilities, relational ethics, and social justice mandate as nurses.

The online discussion will be in the form of a dialogue or conversation that is informal and spontaneous. Of course, you should include references for ideas and images when you bring in content that can further the thinking and understanding that is emerging in the discussion. Use resources only to build on, or disagree with, what others are thinking. For instance, you might say the following in a posting:

Smith (2015) proposes that nursing must prioritize technical skills in acute practice settings, but I disagree. I believe technical skills are important but the relational

aspects of nursing practice have equal importance and serious consequence if ignored.

Ref:

Smith, G. (2015). Technical and relational responsibilities in nursing, *Journal of Relational Care*, 4, 4-5. (Fictional Reference!)

### Evaluation of Participation in Online Discussion

**Please note:** To receive an **A grade** for participation, you must participate at least three times a week and your posting must be **substantive and provocative**—by posing questions, challenging assumptions, providing different views, offering practice examples, describing ideas in a different context, etc.

Criteria	Exceeds Standard (A- to A+)	Meets Standard (B to B+)	Below Standard (C or less)
<b>Engagement</b>  <b>Weight 50%</b>	Contributes at least 3 X weekly to discussions, suggests different viewpoints, connections, and possibilities. Posts insightful comments on personal understandings and questions that prompt further discussion by others. Contributes descriptions of Aha moments and feelings linked with content.	Contributes 2x weekly to opportunities for discussion and poses questions and personal views.	Poses questions and personal views once a week but does not participate in sharing and questioning. Repeats what has been said or what is found in the literature.
<b>Exploration of Content</b> <b>Weight 20%</b>	Exploration of readings and resources are incorporated into the discussions in order to show shifts in understanding and meaningful connections. Offers new and different interpretations of ideas, issues, resources. Creative use of metaphor & art to extend ideas being discussed. Adds new resource links to new literature and videos.	Explorations of readings and resources are incorporated into discussions. Personal views are expressed.	Discussion contains minimal references to exploration of resources. Short perfunctory postings.
<b>Emergence</b> <b>Weight 20%</b>	Postings demonstrate how thinking is changing in relation to others' thoughts and ideas and in relation to engagement with resources.	Postings demonstrate how thinking is changing; notes	Postings do not demonstrate awareness of emergence in



	Contributes to the emergent learning of others by offering perturbations. Points out when new ideas emerge in conversations.	distinctions and similarities with others' ideas.	personal thinking or community conversation.
<b>Reflection &amp; Recursion 10%</b>	Postings include many examples of reflection, recursion, questioning, and perturbations and how these processes change thinking and acting in practice. Shares various "aha" moments and feelings with colleagues.	Postings have a couple examples of reflection and recursion. Shares at least one "aha" moment with colleagues.	Postings do not include examples of reflection or recursion.

### **I. Self Evaluation of Online Participation (submit week 12)**

The purpose of the online discussion is to create a learning community where students can share ideas, experiences, knowledge, and resources, thereby contributing to and supporting each other's deep and durable learning. Leadership for the online discussion will be shared between the course professor and students. For instance, students will be required to seek out literature and resources that further their **understanding** of a concept under discussion and beyond the course readings. The course readings are to be used as a springboard for further learning. The student chooses the concepts he or she wishes to further explore. The student will then share the resources and learning about that concept with classmates in order to deepen the group discussion and the learning. Contributions to the online discussion are expected to be substantive; demonstrating analysis, synthesis and critical reflection. Students are also expected to engage with the ideas under discussion by responding to and critiquing others' work. A **critique** involves expressing personal judgement and thoughts about the ideas being considered.

Students are expected to complete a self-evaluation of participation using the criteria specified in the evaluation rubric. Evidence (e.g., flag examples of your own postings) supporting the evaluation must be provided in two paragraphs and by using at least five (5) postings from the online content and discussions.

**Note: If the evidence provided does not adequately substantiate or support the self-evaluation, the course professor reserves the right to adjust the participation grade accordingly.**

## **II. Arts-Informed Teaching-Learning Presentation and Critique (In Pairs)**

### **To be presented online starting week 7-10**

The purpose of this assignment is to create and present an arts-informed teaching learning session for a group of students to be taught in the future. The class members will be the group of students in the context of the course. See more details on this assignment in our moodle course week 1. By week 2 students are encouraged to email me their topic and their partner's name.

### **Guidelines for Presentation**

- 1) Present content of your choice in any way that you choose informed by the arts and teaching-learning concepts you have learned throughout the course.
- 2) Use art form in your teaching-learning session by application of activities or an arts-based teaching tool (movie clips, own video, create a website or instruction guide).
- 3) Present a critique of the educational theories, concepts, perspectives or approaches that inform your teaching-learning session or arts-based teaching tool.
- 4) Identify how you would both assess and evaluate the students' learning and identify how the evaluation process is consistent with your teaching philosophy and theoretical approach.
- 5) Identify nursing education research question(s) that you would like to explore and which emerged the work of presentation.
- 6) Engage classmates in dialogue regarding your pedagogical approach and associated research question(s) through reflective lens.
- 7) Provide references (APA format).
- 8) The presentation is to be delivered in a 45-minute timeframe.

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

**Organization** – Presents by identifying information and techniques in an interesting and engaging manner (embedding all aspects of guidelines for presentation).

**Theory and Content** – Demonstrates extensive knowledge of the teaching-learning concepts and theoretical knowledge with explanations and elaboration.

**Visuals** – Audio-visuals are used to enhance the context of the presentation.

**Mechanics** – No spelling and grammatical errors.

**Delivery** – Ability to engage voices and actively participates with the audience.

**Creativity**- a wow factor...think outside the box (those who want an A)

## **III. Peer-Evaluation of Presentations**

A portion of the participation grade will come from your evaluation of three student presentations. An evaluation form will be provided for you to fill out, which you will submit to the professor who will collate the responses for the students being evaluated.

## **IV. Critical Reflection and Synthesis of Learning and Teaching-Learning Philosophy**

The purpose of this paper is to critically reflect upon and synthesize the learning that occurred throughout the course and to create a teaching-learning philosophy for your nursing education praxis. The paper is meant to identify the relationship between your teaching philosophy, theory, research teaching-learning praxis and personal experience the student may approach the paper in a way that is most meaningful to him or her. There are two parts to this paper:

### **1) Critical Reflection and Synthesis of Learning**

Provide a critical reflection and synthesis of your learning throughout the course by identifying the teaching-learning concepts, theories and/or perspectives that resonated with you and may want to begin by asking questions such as;

How have I changed as a teacher or learner?

What concepts led to this change?

Why were these concepts imperative to me?

Why were these concepts meaningful to me?

Have my perspective of teaching learning changed? Why? Why not?

How has the content or concepts that I was exposed to through the course transformed me as a teacher, learner, professional, clinician academic, citizen, person and fellow human

## 2) Teaching-Learning Philosophy

Describe your teaching-learning philosophy using an art form and identify how the concepts that resonated with you throughout the course inform (or will inform) your teaching-learning praxis.

### Guidelines for Writing a Teaching Philosophy:

[http://www.stephenbrookfield.com/Dr. Stephen D. Brookfield/Home.html](http://www.stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Home.html)

### Artistic Expression of your Teaching-Learning Philosophy

Based on your teaching-learning philosophy choose a creative expression or art form (poetry, painting, drawing, photograph, sculpture, movie clips) that reflects your philosophy. You can place your art form in an appendix or in the body of your paper.

### Clarity and Format:

- Written in the subjective ("I" statements)
- Clear, logical flow of ideas
- Clear arguments are supported with examples of teaching-learning praxis now or in future and with substantive integration of education science concepts, theories or perspectives.
- Clear scholarly communication of ideas. All papers are to be APA format, typed, double spaced, using 12 pt Times New Roman font and 1" (2.5 cm) margins on all sides with **only left margin** justification.
- **This paper is not to exceed 6 pages** (excluding title page, references and appendices).

### Grading for Graduate Courses

Grading of papers will be conducted in accordance with the Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations and standards, as below:

A+	(Exceptional)
A	(Excellent)
A-	(High)
B+	(Highly Satisfactory)
B	(Satisfactory)
C	(Conditional)
F	(Failure)
I	(Incomplete)

For further information please see the website <http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/current-students/regulations/>



## EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING LEVELS IN MSCN PROGRAM

NOTE. SOME STUDENTS THINK ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS AND PAPERS AS STARTING AT 100% AND THEN THEY LOSE MARKS FOR VARIOUS REASONS. BUT WE ASK YOU THINK DIFFERENTLY. IN THIS COURSE, YOUR PAPER COMES IN WITH NO SET VALUE AND YOU EARN GRADES ACCORDING TO THE QUALITY OF YOUR WORK

The following description of general expectations related to grading levels will be used in grading in this course. In addition, please consult the evaluation rubric provided for participation.

**A+ (Exceptional):** Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques and exceptional skill and/or originality in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment. ‘Wow factor’ present in several ways.

Outstanding work, of exceptional quality. Content is complete, accurate, and at a high level. Consistently strong in structure, expression, mechanics (grammar, punctuation, and spelling), and presentation. Well organized, linkages evident, and logical conclusions/proposals. Excellent comprehension of the subject; sound critical and analytical thinking; innovative ideas on the subject. Contains original and credible argument or presentation of the assigned topic with attention to many details and perspectives. Excellent use of the literature, and draws on a wide range of current and/or relevant sources that serve as the foundation of arguments/proposals. Evidence of much effort and personal involvement with the topic. Writing style is clear and succinct with correct use of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and referencing format. Errors of expression are infrequent and do not detract from the assignment’s effectiveness.

**A- to A (High to Excellent):** Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with a high degree of skill and/or some elements of originality in satisfying the requirements of an assignment. ‘Wow factor’ present in at least one way.

The principle difference between an ‘A+’ and an ‘A’ or ‘A-’ assignment is that there are no identified areas for improvement in an ‘A+’ assignment. And, the creativity/innovation in A+ paper is evident in more than one way.

**B to B+ (Satisfactory to Highly Satisfactory):** Good to thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with a fairly high degree of skill in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment. Good to very good quality work with no major weaknesses. Well focused on the topic; clear; explicit. Discussion shows more than adequate comprehension of the subject. Some degree of critical and analytical thinking; some use of the literature; most details and perspectives are discussed, but considerations of additional ones would have improved the assignment. Some evidence of personal involvement with the topic. In most cases, writing style is clear and succinct with correct paragraph and sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and correct use of referencing format. Errors of expression are occasional rather than repeated and do not obscure meaning.

The principle difference between an “A-” assignment and a “B+” assignment is in the quality of the discussion. A “B” grade is an assignment of good quality with no major weaknesses; it is similar to a “B+” assignment, but with less evidence of critical and analytical thinking.

**C (Conditional):** Less than satisfactory level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with some skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment. Overall, a less than adequate assignment. Fair comprehension of the subject, but some weaknesses in content and/or structure. Discussion is vague even though on topic; important details or perspectives are left out. Minimal use of the literature; minimal evidence of critical and analytical thinking; transitions may be inconsistent; evidence may be occasionally unconvincing or incomplete. At times lacks clarity and succinctness. Minimal evidence of personal involvement with the topic. Occasional/many errors in paragraph and sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and referencing format, but not so serious or repetitive that they make the assignment difficult or impossible to understand.

The principle difference between a “B” assignment and a “C” assignment is in the quality of the discussion, with the “C” assignment being more unclear than the “B” assignment. Also, a “C” assignment may have more errors in structure etc., than are acceptable.