The following are the criteria that the TAs and I use to evaluate student essay exams and outlines. For each item, allocate a score of 1 to 10 points. To score “10” on any item indicates that you performed perfectly in that endeavor. Essay breakdown by content should approximate the following: 1/3 reading, 1/3 lecture and lab work, and 1/3 original thinking and analysis.

I urge students to keep in mind that there is usually more than one right answer to the essay questions. This does not mean, however, that there are no wrong answers. Additionally, there is more than one way to effectively organize an essay and argument, but there is also such a thing as poor organization.

The three to four weeks available for preparation are very helpful when used wisely. Treat audio-visual material presented in class as having the same value as reading assignments.

In reviewing your essay preparation, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Did I answer the question, all of the question, and all that was implied by the question?

2. Did I present a solid thesis, a reasonable progression of ideas, and an appropriate conclusion?

3. Did I allocate my time and presentation appropriately, developing all parts of the question in balance?

4. Did I include the best examples and illustrations to demonstrate the validity of my ideas?

5. Did I use the most effective presentation techniques – are maps, tables, and special features of the readings used most effectively?

6. Did I include and cite specific examples from the appropriate reading material?

7. Did I include the most significant and appropriate ideas from class sessions?

8. Did I include my own original ideas?

9. Are there factual inaccuracies in my presentation?

10. Could/should my essay be used as a positive example for teaching others?

Think of each dimension in the following way and then assign each dimension a score.

1 —— 2 —— 3 —— 4 —— 5 —— 6 —— 7 —— 8 —— 9 —— 10