

BIOL440 Term Essay Grading Rubric

The term essay is worth 30% of the final grade, but here we will mark it out of 100.

References (15%).

Have the appropriately cited papers in the main text? Are all key points referenced appropriately? Do you have a minimum of 10 references from the **primary literature** (e.g. not textbooks or web sites although these may be included in addition)? Is the reference style consistent across all references? e.g. capitalization consistent for article titles? Issue numbers either included in all references or not? Are journal names consistently spelled out in their entirety or are short-forms used consistently? Italics for Latin names?

Grammar, style and flow (15%).

This is self-evident but we will assess, in general terms, the quality of the writing. This can include the structure of the essay itself (e.g. Did you start broadly and then narrow down to the objectives? Were there run-on or incomplete sentences? Did points logically flow from one to the next? Were all ideas clearly stated and easy to comprehend? Did you bring the essay to a satisfactory close, synthesizing all of the information that went before?)

Creativity/visuals (10%).

Did you make good use of tables, figures or boxes? If deployed, were these well done, clear and clearly illustrative of a major theme in the paper? Were there ideas or concepts in the paper that could have been presented more clearly as a box, table or figure?

Objectives (10%).

Were the objectives clearly stated and did you relate them well to the content of the essay?

Content (50%).

Does the content relate well to the major themes in the course? Is there a clear introduction that provides relevant background? Did you actually address an important issue in speciation and macroevolution? Are your arguments cogent and persuasive? Given the constraints of writing such a short essay, did you cover the major issues well and highlight areas of contentiousness?