English 100: Research Essay Grading Criteria
Here are a few questions that you may want to ask yourself as you work through your essay/essay revisions!

CONTENT & EXPRESSION	**Introduction & Argument** • Does the introduction provide the context/background/definitions necessary for the reader to understand the topic? • Is the thesis present in the introductory paragraph and – based on the phrasing used in the introduction – easily identifiable? • Does the thesis offer a clear, specific, well-defined *argument* about the topic? • Does the introduction accurately reflect both the content and organization of the essay (that is, does it map out the organization of the essay body for the reader)? • Is the argument clear, consistent, and appropriately developed throughout the body of the essay? **Sources** • Are the sources relevant and credible? • Are the sources used effectively to help develop/inform the argument? • When necessary, is context for the sources provided (for instance, name, profession, and/or relationship to the topic)? • Are quotations carefully selected/distinctive? • Are quotations set-up/unpacked effectively? • Is paraphrasing done accurately and effectively? • Is it consistently clear to the reader when the writer is using information from the sources and when they are making their own points? **Organization/Essay Structure** • Introduction: Is there an introduction present at the beginning of the essay? (see above for more on intros) • Logical structure: Is the essay structured thoughtfully and effectively? • Conclusion: Does the essay provide a conclusion that readdresses the thesis in light of the evidence provided in the essay body? Does the conclusion maintain the established tone of the essay? **Paragraphs** • Do all body paragraphs work towards proving the thesis? Is all the material in each paragraph necessary for proving the thesis (that is, is it all relevant?)? • Does each paragraph contain a topic sentence? • Are the paragraphs developed, coherent, united, and focused? • Are there adequate transitions between paragraphs?

MECHANICS	**Diction** • Does the essay avoid the use of imprecise/vague phrasing? Is the language appropriate given the subject and the argument? **Sentence Structure** • Are the ideas within each sentence effectively expressed and connected? Is there a comfortable variation in the length and structure of sentences throughout the essay? Are the sentences easy to follow/understand (that is, do they flow smoothly, as in a conversation, rather than shifting abruptly from one idea to the next)? **Grammar, spelling, and punctuation** • Are grammatical errors (for example, comma splices, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, etc) present? Are these errors confusing or obscuring communication? Are typos and spelling errors virtually non-existent (because they should be!)? Does the essay demonstrate an understanding of how to properly use periods, commas, colons, semi-colons, quotations marks, italics, and other punctuation?
FORMAT	**MLA format** • Does the essay as a whole follow the formatting guidelines outlined by the MLA style guide (including a title and identifying information)? **Documentation** • Does the essay properly acknowledge each quotation/paraphrase/original idea taken from a source? • Is the Works Cited present at the end of the essay? Does it include all the relevant information for every source cited in the paper? Is this information organized according to MLA guidelines?

An important note on revisions:
If your essay submission is a revised version of an earlier essay that you and I met to discuss, then it is very important that you provide me with an explanation of how you have revised the essay. You can either do this at the end of the essay (after the Works Cited) OR in the comment box on Moodle. If you do not tell me how you've revised the essay, then I will not mark your revision and the quality grade you received for your initial submission will be your overall grade for the essay.