To assist you with your term paper writing, I have outlined the categories I use to grade course papers.

When grading papers, I look for:

1. Understanding of the topic you have chosen to address
2. Thoroughness of your research (use of sufficient and relevant library materials and materials related to your community; quality of analysis of these materials)
3. Analysis of the issue you are addressing, including clarity and originality
4. The quality of your writing, including organization, clarity, grammar and usage.

An “A” paper typically has all of the following virtues, although in exceptional cases a paper with only 5 of the following 6 might merit an “A.”

1. It has a well-defined thesis and a logical organization.
2. It shows good sense, intellectual honesty, and struggle. It attempts to defend a defensible thesis and takes seriously objections to that thesis.
3. It is well-informed. If there are passages in the other assigned readings for the course that are under discussion in the paper, these are cited and discussed. The paper shows an awareness of conceptual distinctions and clarifications developed in the course.
4. It is intelligent, logical, and careful. The argument is carefully articulated and developed. Obvious difficulties are anticipated and answered, and gaps are closed.
5. It is significant. The issues discussed are of some importance, and their importance is made clear within the paper.
6. The paper is written in a lucid and grammatical style.

A “B” paper has the following virtues.

1. As above.
2. As above.
3. As above, though to a lesser degree than an A paper.
4. It is logical and not careless. The argument is well articulated.
5. It is not trivial. The paper provides some motivation for its topic.
6. The paper is grammatical.

A “C” paper has at least the following virtues.

1. It is orderly and has some focus.
2. It shows some serious concern with the issues it deals with.
3. It is not uninformed. Where relevant, it shows awareness of the content of the course.
4. There are some definite and cogent arguments in the paper.
5. The paper has some point.
6. The paper is readable and minimally grammatical.

A “D” paper

1. Has some intelligible organization.
2. Shows some concern with the issues it deals with.
3. Shows minimal awareness of the content of the course.
4. Makes some relevant and sensible argument.
5. Has some point.
6. Is comprehensible.