Student: _____________________________________________
Teacher: ____________________________________________
Assignment: __________________________________________

Note: These guidelines for first-year English composition at Georgia Perimeter College reflect the writing standards currently followed by other major institutions in the University System of Georgia. An individual instructor’s criteria for a particular assignment may be more detailed or extensive.

**COMPETENT ESSAY:** All papers must meet these basic competency standards. A competent paper earns a C (70-79%).

1. **Clarity and Organization of Central Purpose**
   - The essay has a clear and controlling purpose—a well-considered thesis—around which the paper revolves.
   - The essay flows smoothly from the introduction through the body paragraphs to the conclusion, transitioning from one supporting idea to the next without digressing from the central purpose.

2. **Developing Details, Analysis, and Explanation**
   - The essay presents appropriate and relevant details, examples, and evidence.
   - Specific details and concrete evidence are used in support of claims rather than general opinions or vague commentary. The essay avoids factual inaccuracies and major logical fallacies.
   - The writer clearly distinguishes his or her ideas from outside source material, and correctly cites all outside source material in MLA style (or assigned standard bibliographic form).

3. **Presentation and Audience Reception**
   - The writer is aware of his or her audience and uses appropriate language and diction.
   - The essay is relatively free of errors in Standard English grammar, punctuation, usage, and documentation.
   - The essay meets the instructor’s stated requirements for length and/or format.

**BEYOND COMPETENT:** A skillfully crafted paper exceeds all competency requirements by demonstrating insightful understanding of key concepts, a strong and distinctive voice, and careful consideration of opposing viewpoints. An essay that goes beyond competency will earn a grade of B (80-89%).

4. **Fluency & Coherence**
   - The writer expresses clear understanding of the major premises of the thesis.
   - The writer varies sentence structure and length to hold readers’ interest and to create emphasis.
   - The essay examines the topic from a fresh perspective, and, when necessary, integrates direct quotes, summaries, and paraphrases from outside source materials.

5. **Forceful and Stimulating Writing**
   - The writer demonstrates audience awareness by addressing the rhetorical appeals to logos, ethos, and pathos.
   - The essay is forceful without being dogmatic, provocative without being inflammatory, and stimulating without being glib, patronizing, or contrived.

**EXCEPTIONAL:** An exceptional paper exhibits all the above qualities and in addition demonstrates mastery of several characteristics of superior writing. An exceptional paper earns the grade of A (90-100%).

6. **Superior Writing:** The essay exhibits more than one of the following characteristics:
   - original and insightful analysis
   - clear and refined discussion of complex ideas
   - sophisticated rhetorical stance
   - unique and compelling voice
   - fresh, innovative, and textured style

**UNSUCCESSFUL:** An unsuccessful essay has several minor problems with **Clarity and Organization of Central Purpose; Developing Details, Analysis, and Explanation; and Presentation and Audience Reception;** or it has major problems in one of these areas. The unsuccessful essay will earn a grade of D (60-69%) or F (<60%). The writer should schedule a conference with his or her instructor immediately.