

Undergraduate Thesis Assessment Rubric

Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia

Thesis Author: Ivana Švehlová
 Title: Spiritual Life of Americans
 Length: 36pp
 Text Length: 30pp.

Assessment Criteria	Scale	Comments
1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the examined issue. It presents and overview of the thesis.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
2. The thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter through the background/review of literature. The author presents information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources are included (if appropriate).	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	The student covered a wide range of material and consulted many works in the writing of it.
3. The author carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. Ideas are richly supported with accurate details that develop the main point. The author's voice is evident.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The author uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	There are many spelling mistakes throughout, but in general I wish to praise the workmanlike and lucid style in which it is written.

7. The language use is precise. The student makes proficient use of language in a way that is appropriate for the discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
8. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	Formatting of many long quotations is incorrect.

Final Comments & Questions

The main criticism I have of this thesis is its range and balance. First, the theme is too large for such a work, necessitating a generalising overview and preventing any analysis of the data adduced. Second, balance. While the student states that almost 80% of the population of the United States identifies itself as Christian, that religion receives no description as detailed as that devoted to marginal movements and therapies (such as Spiritualism, Grof, etc).

The generalising tendency, once launched, spreads. What is "Native American spirituality"? The student shows no awareness of there being *no* unified Native American spirituality. The spirituality and practice of the Navajos is not identical to that of the Delawares, and so on.

On the subject of Native Americans, the student (on p. 11) contrasts Natives vs. Modern People's Point of View, ignoring the fact that Native Americans are also Modern People, and have adopted their ceremonies and spiritual beliefs to the modern world. Relying only on this thesis, the reader would think that these are two distinct groups, when they are not.

The student correctly identifies a religious awakening in the nineteenth century, but because she wants to make the eighteenth century the Age of Enlightenment, she overlooks the First Great Awakening in the middle of the eighteenth century, lead by Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield.

The comparison section (pp. 28-29) was disappointing, and this is best illustrated by two of the sub-headings: "Atheists vs. Believers" and "Advantages and Disadvantages of Faith". The first section bears no relation to the American context and merely states the obvious point that atheists don't believe in God and believers do. The second section seems to be edging towards a personal recommendation, rather than critical analysis, with the student generously concluding that it is up to each individual whether they wish to believe or not (p. 30). This is true, but that does not mean that it is an appropriate conclusion.

I recommend the grade of 3 (**dobfe**).

Supervisor/Reviewer: doc. Justin Quinn Ph.D.

Date: 20 July 2012

Signature:

