The baseline grade for a paper in this class is a B/B-. This means that papers will be graded higher or lower than B/B- depending according to the criteria that follow.

A B/B- grade is given to competent but not exceptional work. A B/B- paper addresses all parts of the paper topic, offers a clear argument, is well-written and well-organized, and demonstrates a good understanding of the readings/arguments.

Papers in the D+/C-/C/C+ contain significant errors, omissions, and misunderstandings; they fail to meet most or all of the above criteria to varying degrees.

A paper in the A-/A range meets all of the above criteria, but does so in an exceptional way.

Grades of D/D-/F will generally be reserved for failure to put forth a serious effort, cheating, etc.