1. *Research abilities.* Do the papers evidence students’ ability to conduct independent research? Is a wide range of sources consulted? Do students demonstrate erudition in their chosen field(s)?

2. *Quality of conceptualization.* How robust is the conceptual framework these students are deploying? Are students able to use key concepts precisely and consistently? With what other fields are students in conversation?

3. *Originality.* Are students capable of framing novel questions and elaborating unusual arguments? How fresh and original are their theses?

4. *Quality of writing.* Are the papers lucid and well organized? Can students cogently synthesize a substantial body of information? Are their theses written in a way that makes the work interesting – at least to fellow specialists, if not to general readers?

5. *Capacity for critical reflection.* Do papers demonstrate an awareness of fundamental dilemmas raised by all social inquiry? For example, objectivity; the reliability of evidence; the limits to knowledge in different research settings. Have students demonstrated an ability to be responsive to constructive criticism?