

Pioneer Research Institute Evaluation Form

Scholar Information

Scholar's Full Name:	Cheng, Minqi (James)
Scholar's Research Concentration:	Intersectional Lives: Literary and Sociological Approaches
Title of Scholar's Research Paper:	Gendered Reforms: The Impacts of the 1990s Economic Reforms on Gender Roles of Southern Jiangsu, China

Grading and Academic Oversight Section

Grade conferred by professor: A+

**Full grading rubric approved by Pioneer Academics and Oberlin College*

The Pioneer Research Institute's college accreditation and academic oversight are conducted collaboratively with Oberlin College:

Listing on Common Application:	"Summer Program, Credit Awarded Directly by Oberlin College"
Course Title on Coalition Application:	"099" "Pioneer Research Course"
College Course ID on UC Application:	"INST 099" "Pioneer Research Course"

Comprehensive Evaluation Section

Evaluator Name & Full Title:	Elizabeth Covington, Principal Senior Lecturer in English and Gender and Sexuality Studies; Associate Chair of Gender and Sexuality Studies
College/University & Department:	Vanderbilt University, Dept. of English
Full Educational Background of Evaluator:	B.A. in Religious Studies and minor in Chemistry, The University of Iowa M.A.R. in Religious Ethics, Yale Divinity School M.A. in English, Vanderbilt University Ph.D. in English, Vanderbilt University

Please briefly explain the nature and requirements of the research paper and your interaction with the scholar:

For this program, the students are required to write a 15-20-page research paper on a subject related to gender, sexuality, identity, or human relationships. The student was required to produce original research, i.e. research that addresses a knowledge gap in their chosen field. Each student produced a research proposal and a state of the field on their way to completing the research paper, and I held five one-on-one meetings with each student. My expectations for the research paper were that it would be clearly written, persuasively argued, thoroughly researched, and effectively organized.

James was consistently polite, professional, and passionately engaged with the texts and concepts for this institute. From the very first group session, he was going above and beyond to learn, making excellent connections between texts and concepts and articulating his thoughts beautifully to me and his peers. As we shifted into the individual sessions, he only became more invested in the work he was doing. It was always a pleasure to meet with him--he was always prompt, prepared, and excited to be doing his work. He was a delight to work with!

Please rate the scholar in the following areas:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor
Ability to form original ideas and concepts	X				
Ability to communicate thoughts in an effective and articulate manner	X				
Ability to synthesize and organize information from disparate sources	X				
Level of scholar's curiosity, aptitude, and industriousness	X				

Based on the scholar's performance throughout Pioneer, how would you rate this scholar's potential for undergraduate-level academic work at a top college/university, relative to other undergraduate students whose academic work you have mentored?

One of the best I have encountered, top 5% X	Excellent, top 10%
Very Good, top 25%	Good, top 50%
Below Average	

Describe some of the scholar's strengths:

James produced an exquisite research paper, and this was only possible due to his research skills, his writing and communication skills, and his very hard work. I have seldom had the pleasure of working with such a skilled researcher. James did meticulous background work on his paper, and it shows in the final product. His writing skills are equally impressive. He produced clear, concise, beautiful prose throughout his paper. These language skills also made it possible for him to conduct the unstructured interviews for his paper and to transform them into such compelling evidence for his argument. Finally, James just did an amazing amount of very hard work to produce this paper. He isn't afraid to get his hands dirty and get the job done!

Describe some areas in which the scholar can improve:


James is an extraordinary student and writer, but he could work on a tendency to over-explain in his writing. In his admirable quest to be clear, he sometimes repeats himself or provides more information than necessary to make his points. Some of this information could be moved to the footnotes or removed altogether. I have noted those moments in my comments on his paper.

While the second half of the research work was one-to-one with the professor, the first half involved a small research cohort of 3-6 scholars. Describe the contribution that the scholar made to the research group discussion and learning:

James was a spectacular contributor to group discussion. Always alert and prepared, his comments and questions furthered class discussion and helped his peers engage deeply with the material. The group sessions would not have been nearly as interesting or complex without him!

Would you recommend this scholar to a college admissions officer at a top college or university? Why or why not?

I would very strongly recommend James to a college admissions officer at a top college or university. James is a superb student with the analytical skills, communication skills, work ethic, and intellectual curiosity needed to succeed in an elite academic institution. But I believe that James would do more than just succeed--I think he would flourish in an intense, challenging academic environment. He is a brilliant young thinker with an aptitude for research who performs well under pressure. He would excel in an elite academic institution.

Evaluator's Signature:	
Evaluator's Printed Name:	Elizabeth Covington
Date of Evaluation:	07/18/2025
Evaluator's Email:	Elizabeth.covington@vanderbilt.edu

Pioneer Academics affirms that the scholar whose research paper is attached has followed Pioneer Academics' protocols for developing original research and that their paper has met Pioneer Academics' standards for authenticity. The grading and evaluation have met the standards collaboratively defined by Pioneer Academics and Oberlin College & Conservatory. If there are any questions regarding the work's academic integrity, please contact us at academic.integrity@pioneeracademics.com or by calling (855) 572-8863. We will conduct an immediate review and respond to your questions promptly.