

Transparent Grading

English 110 Fall 2023¹

What is transparent grading?

- Transparent grading is a method of giving grades based on participation, attendance, and completion of homework, assignments, and revisions.
- This is different from the more common method of grading based on the teacher's subjective evaluation of student assignments in comparison to their peers. Research has shown this method to be racially biased and ineffective at improving student writing.
- My grading system is based on the "grading contract" developed by scholars like Dr. Peter Elbow and Dr. Asao Inoue and adapted by Dr. Missy Watson, Dr. Nicole Howell, and Dr. Kate Navickas.

Why transparent grading?

- Helps you take risks and explore different ways of writing, which is better for writing development than trying to write whatever you think the teacher wants to see
- Gives a clear and concrete understanding of your grade at all times throughout the semester (see page 2)
- Gives all students a chance to earn high grades, regardless of different English language writing backgrounds and experiences.
- Values and rewards the time, effort and, labor you decide to commit to the class

Are classes with transparent grading easy? Nope!

This class is demanding, with the expectation that you will make efforts to improve your writing and editing skills. While transparent grading is based on *quantifiable* outcomes (attendance, participation, completed work), *quality* matters too, and quality writing comes from a multi-step process:

- Each major essay and project will be substantially revised based on the feedback you receive. (You'll see in the class calendar that there is time provided for revisions.)
- You will be graded not only on your own work but the thoughtful feedback you provide on the writings of your classmates

¹ Credit to prof. Missy Watson for creating this document, and prof. Danny Katch for adapting it. This semester, we'll learn how to properly cite and give that credit.

Grade Breakdown Guidelines

	# of Absences	# of Late Assigns.	# of Make-up Assigns.	# of Ignored Assigns.	# of Extra Assigns.
A	3 or fewer	3	1	0	2
B	4	4	2	0	0
C	5	5	3	1	0
D	6	6	4	2	0
F	7	6 or more	5 or more	3 or more	0

*Note: These numbers are the maximums allowed for that grade. In other words, if you have 3 absences but 4 late assignments, your grade is a B. If you have 1 make-up assignment but 1 ignored assignment, your grade is a C. (There are definitions of these terms on page 3.)

“B” Grades

- Four or fewer absences, four or fewer late assignments, no more than two make-up assignment, and no ignored assignments.
- “B” is the default grade, earned by completing the required work in a satisfactory fashion.

“A” Grades

- Absent three times or less, three or fewer late assignments, and no make-up or ignored assignments.
- “A” is earned by increasing your writing practice by completing 2 extra assignments:
 - **Extended Phase 2 Essay:** Rather than creating and then analyzing *one* rhetorical text for Phase 2, you will use *two* rhetorical texts.
 - **Extended Phase 3 Essay:** Your Phase 3 essay will be extended by two pages and include a peer-reviewed research article as one of seven sources.

Grades Lower Than “B”

- Miss more than four classes, turn in more than four late assignments, turn in more than one make-up assignment, or have any ignored assignments
- The way to avoid sliding to a C, D, or F is to attend classes and submit assignments!

Definition of Terms

Assignments

A Completed Assignment achieves all of the goals of the assignment as discussed in class or explained on handouts. If an assignment is not completed fully, it may be marked as “ignored”. If I find that a given project is not “complete,” I will contact you about redoing it and how this will affect your final grade. If you face extenuating circumstances, please email me ahead of time.

An On-Time Assignment is completed fully and submitted before the deadline.

Note *If you're absent, you are still responsible for submitting on time any work that's due.*

A Late Assignment is turned in after its initial deadline, but submitted within two days (48 hours).

Note *Drafts of major essays cannot be submitted late. If drafts are submitted late, they will be marked like make up assignments.*

A Make-up Assignment is turned in at some point in the semester but after the 48-hour window.

An Ignored Assignment is not done at all. It will prevent you from earning a B or higher.

Attendance and Lateness

You are required to attend required classes and to be on time. Being a few minutes late a few times in a semester is understandable, but we may need to talk if lateness becomes a problem. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from attending class, do not hesitate to contact me so that we can determine how to proceed.

Participation and Collaboration

This class requires your active participation and willingness to work with your peers. While it's understood that everyone has good days and bad, this class requires your participation (by actively listening, taking notes, asking questions, offering comments, etc.). It is also expected that you will work cooperatively and collegially in groups, to share your writing, to listen supportively to the writing of others, and, when called for, to give full and thoughtful assessments that help your colleagues consider ways to revise.

Exceptions

(yes, there are exceptions!)

Waiver Requests

Life isn't perfect and each semester does not always go according to our plans, so you get **one chance during the semester** to ask for a late or missed assignment to be removed from your record.

- There must be a special or extenuating circumstance that warrants the request. I won't give you a waiver just because you want a better grade.
- For a waiver to be granted, you may be asked to complete an extra assignment, such as researching and writing about a course-related topic or meeting with a consultant at the Writing Center.

Accommodations/Inclusivity

The goal of Transparent Grading is to support your literacy growth, and to ensure you have the opportunity to work in a just environment that adapts to their needs and equally supports each student's learning. **I will work with individuals on a case-by-case basis to determine how best to accommodate your needs as a learner and the course's learning outcomes.**

+/- Grades

+/- grades will be assigned at my discretion. They will be used in cases when:

- Your work and participation suggest you labored above and beyond expectations (+)
- The quality and completeness of your work and participation is somehow lacking (-)
- In the case that a waiver is granted and/or we determine special accommodations are in order (see above). You will be notified if your final grade will have a + or –

University and Military Obligations

Any absence due to a university-sponsored group activity (e.g., sporting event, performance, band, etc.) will not count against you, as stipulated by university policy, as long as you FIRST provide written documentation within the first two weeks of the semester of all absences. This same policy applies if you have mandatory military-related absences (e.g., deployment, work, duty, etc.). This will allow us to determine ahead of time how you will meet assignments and our contract, despite being absent.