

Grading Agreement

English 110 | City College of New York

For this course, we will use a **grading agreement**, a system of grades that are based primarily on your *labors* and *efforts*. That means that your final course letter grade will be the result of your participation, attendance, and completion of homework, assignments, and revisions.

Grading agreements are valuable for a number of reasons, including the fact that they:



- Invite you to determine for yourself how you will invest the time, energy, and effort into your learning.



- Assign credit based on presence, practice, and effort.
- Provide you with a clear and concrete understanding of your grade at all times throughout the semester (grades are simple and easy to calculate).
- Offer you the opportunity to be experimental in your writing—to take risks—rather than only produce writing that is thought to be “correct” or “what the teacher wants”.



- Do not involve instructors assigning grades based on their own subjective assessments and/or comparing your writing to the writing of your peers.
- Do not unfairly penalize or reward you for how much experience with writing and language you have prior to entering our class (all students have the same potential to earn an A).

While grading agreements focus on *quantifiable* outcomes (attendance, participation, completed work), *quality* matters too: you are expected to carefully write **and substantially revise** your writing assignments to meet stated learning goals and criteria. Grading agreements function on the belief that quality writing is the result of one’s efforts at drafting, getting and understanding feedback from others, and revising, not merely meeting standardized norms.

This agreement outlines the terms for successfully completing this course earning grades.

You can pass this course with “D” if you meet ALL of these conditions*:

1. Successfully complete **all major assignments** (see syllabus for list of major assignments)
2. Successfully complete **at least one substantial revision** of all major assignments based on feedback (either from peer review, a Writing Center tutor, or your instructor)
3. **Have no more than 8 absences** (with 3 “tardies” counting as 1 absence)

*If any of the three conditions are **not** met, you will **not** be eligible to pass the course. Period.

You can SIGNIFICANTLY raise your grade by doing any or all of the following:

1. **Rarely miss class and regularly arrive on time.** Our goal is to build a community of writers, and that can only happen if we all show up. **Your grade drops to a “B” at your 4th absence, and keep in mind that 3 “tardies” counts as 1 absence.**
2. **Submit drafts of major assignments on time and participate in peer review.**
 - o Drafts **cannot** be submitted late (they’ll be marked as missed). But you can and should still come to class and participate in peer review even if you do not have a draft ready. **Every draft and peer review completed boosts your grade by ~3%.**
 - o **Up to 2** missed peer reviews **can** be made up by **scheduling** and meeting 1on1 with a tutor at the **CCNY Writing Center within 1 week of the missed peer review**. Ask your tutor for proof of your visit and provide this to your instructor.
3. **Submit homework (HW) assignments and regularly submit them on time.** This is the best way to achieve a higher grade. **Every HW submitted on time boosts your grade by ~3%.** Plus, doing the HW will help prepare you to complete the major writing assignments, and it will ensure that you receive feedback (from your instructor/peers), so do strive for that.



NOTE:

If you are absent, you are still responsible for submitting any work that’s due.

- o HW must be completed fully and according to assignment requirements. HW that is incomplete or that doesn’t follow guidelines will be marked as late/missing.

- o Some HW assignments *can* be turned in late but should be accompanied by a note from you explaining why it’s late. There are 3 phases in this course. **HW assigned in one phase must be submitted *before the start of the next phase* or it will be marked as “missed.”**



Fuller Breakdown of Grade Guidelines

	# of Missed Major Assignment s	# of Missed Drafts (15 total)	# of Missed Peer Reviews (10 total)	# of Missed Homework Assignments	# of Missed Classes (Absences)
A+	0	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-1
A	0	2	2	2	2
A-	0	3	3	3	3
B+/ B	0	4	4	4/5	4
B-	0	5	5	6	5
C+/C	0	6	6	7/8	6
C	0	7	7	9	7
D	0	8	8	10-12	8
F	1 +	9 +	9 +	13 +	9 +



*Notes:

1. You only need 1 categorical item/column to dip for the entire grade to dip. For example, having 3 absences but 4 missing HW assignments puts your grade at a B+.
2. If you have "freshman standing," a final grade of "F" assigned will automatically change to "NC" (no credit) on your transcript and will NOT count against your GPA.

Additional Expectations

To succeed in this course, you are also expected to:

1. **Participate in Class.** Please participate in ways that best fit you and support the goals of the lesson (by actively listening, taking notes, asking questions, offering comments, etc.).
2. **Collaborate with Peers.** Please work collegially in class. Share your writing, respond supportively to peers' writing, and provide thoughtful feedback to help them revise.
3. **Communicate Regularly with Your Instructor.** Please check daily for instructor messages, reply promptly, and contact your instructor if you experience any delays or concerns.



Exceptions

Accommodations/Inclusivity. The goal of the Grading Agreement is to meet you where you are in your reading and writing experience and to support you in growing as a critical thinker, reader, writer, communicator, and collaborator. Additionally, the purpose is to ensure students are having the opportunity to work in a just environment that adapts to their needs and equally supports each student's learning. Thus, **your instructor will work with individuals on a case-by-case basis** to determine how to adapt this agreement to accommodate your individualized needs. Reach out to meet with your instructor to discuss options should you find this grading agreement feels unmanageable. The goal of any accommodations will be to make reasonable arrangements, ones that will be fair and equitable to all in the class while still meeting the university's regulations on attendance.

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 grading agreement, despite being absent.

Grading contracts in the field of rhetoric and composition originate from researchers like Dr. Peter Elbow and Dr. Asao Inoue who have sought more equitable and just grading practices. This grading agreement has been adapted from their work, as well as from the contracts of Dr. Missy Watson, Dr. Nicole Howell, and Dr. Kate Navickas.

***By staying in our course, you agree to all of the above terms, and your instructor agrees to keep track of the above details responsibly and enforce them democratically.**

