

The Grading Contract

Any student in this class is capable of earning the grade they want. Students will automatically begin with a B, and any student can earn an A either by doing extra work or through assessment of the quality of writing. So long as a student upholds the grading contract (details below), they maintain a B and can be considered for an A. Students can also earn C, D, and F grades if they choose to adhere to some but not all aspects of the grading contract. Details of how to earn each grade are spelled out in this contract. I encourage you to decide at the beginning of the semester which grade you would like to earn and to then perform the work required.

My reason for using a grading contract is based on a philosophy of learning that I feel is most appropriate for college-level work. Grades can be problematic, especially in a college writing class, where learning should be a process of discovery, curiosity, experimentation, and creativity. When we follow our curiosity and engage in the creative process, we are bound to make mistakes - mistakes are a necessary part of learning! However, the fear of grades can make us cautious, following what we “know works” rather than engaging in the messy process of learning. This is why, rather than traditional grades, we will use a grading contract in this course.

I hope you will see many advantages to a grading contract. The grading contract allows me to give you authentic feedback on your writing rather than to focus my comments on justifying a grade. It also allows you to rely on a wider audience for your writing than your instructor, including your self- assessment of your own writing, feedback from peers, etc. Further, the contract rewards your engagement with the course rather than your mastery of the course. We will discuss and sign the grading contract during the first week of class.

“A” Grades

Any student in this class is capable of earning an A grade. Students can be awarded A grades in the course if they fulfill all contract requirements and 1) completes additional labor (must complete three of the four items below) 2) and/or demonstrates A level writing in the course.

Extra Labor. In addition to the labor outlined in the assignment commitments and classroom commitments (those include discussion boards and peer responses), students who wish to earn an A in the class may do so by completing extra labor. Students can combine extra labor items or complete the same item three times:

1. **Writing Center:** Visit the writing center (online) and revise your paper using the tutor’s feedback. To get credit for this labor, you must ask the writing tutor to send confirmation of the appointment to your instructor.

2. **Peer Review:** Give additional peer feedback on their writing. To get credit for this labor, please send me the feedback you sent to your peer. The peer may be a member of our class or a member of another class.
3. **Conference:** Attend a video or in-person conference with your instructor.
4. **Revise and Resubmit:** Revise and resubmit a major project. To get credit for this labor, you must revise and resubmit a project within 7 days of receiving feedback from your instructor. You must submit with it a reflective cover letter that outlines the changes you made to the new draft and how these changes have improved your writing/you as a writer.
5. **Friend/Family Paper Review:** Ask a friend or family member to give you feedback on your writing. To get credit for this labor, ask your friend/family to use Track Changes in Word or the Suggesting Mode in Google Documents, and to send their feedback to both you and your instructor from their own email address (mvetter@iup.edu).

A-Level Writing. To assess A-level writing, I will evaluate the student's growth throughout the semester. For each assignment, you'll receive a complete or incomplete grade, as well as my feedback. At the end of the semester, I will carefully and thoughtfully reread each student's work in this course. As I read, I will ask three questions:

1. Did the student demonstrate a pattern of openness to feedback?
2. Has the student consistently applied feedback to improve their writing?
3. Does the student's writing typically demonstrate a strong grasp of the writing assignments and rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, context) and genre expectations?

"B" Grades

Students who fulfill the course contract are guaranteed at least a "B." If you do all that is asked of you in the manner and spirit of the grading contract, you will earn a "B" in the course. B grades are not based on an assessment of your writing, although I do expect that you will commit to composing the highest quality work you're capable of.

"C" Grades

C grades will be appointed to students who have 1) not fulfilled 1 assignment commitment or 2) not fulfilled 4-7 classroom commitments (discussion boards and peer reviews included). Any student who has a C grade can improve their grade by at least a full letter for every three extra labor credits earned and/or through the students' assessment of the writing quality.

"D" Grades

D grades will be appointed to students who have 1) not fulfilled 1 assignment commitment AND 4-7 classroom commitments, 2) not fulfilled 2 assignment commitments, or 3) not

fulfilled 8-11 classroom commitments. Any student who has a D grade can improve their grade by at least a full letter for every three extra labor credits earned and/or through the students' assessment of the writing quality.

"F" Grades

Failing grades will be appointed to students who have 1) not fulfilled 2 assignment commitments AND 8-11 classroom commitments, 2) not fulfilled 3 assignment commitments, or 3) not fulfilled 12+ classroom commitments. Students who earn an F are eligible for extra labor credit but not for a higher grade through the quality of their writing.

Contract Commitments

Below is the contract that spells out the two kinds of commitments for this course: assignment commitments and classroom commitments. I hope that all students will choose to keep the contract commitments; A- and B-level students must adhere to the contract **in full**.

As a member of the ENGL 101 course community in the Fall of 2020, I agree to:

Assignment Commitments:

1. **Assignments:** Complete **all** major assignments with commitment and engagement according to the criteria on the relevant assignment sheet, turn in all related parts of major assignments, which should also demonstrate commitment and engagement, and do so by the assigned due dates;
 1. For an assignment to be marked "complete," the student must complete a draft, peer review, revision, and reflective cover letter. The guidelines below must be followed.
 2. Students may miss one draft or one peer review on an assignment this semester without resulting in an incomplete grade.
 3. Follow the correct format: correct font size, citation guide, etc. Align your work correctly: make it presentable on the page. Use paragraph breaks. Double spaced. 1" margins.
 4. Submit work on time to fulfill your contract responsibilities. The instructor will grant extensions when there is a legitimate and compelling excuse and the request is made *prior* to the original due date. Late work does not fulfill the contract.
 5. Assignments may be completed using either APA or MLA format. If a student would like to use another style guide, please talk to the instructor. Write your style guide choice on each paper.
2. **Peer Review:** Write helpful, thoughtful, and clear responses to peer drafts according to the directions for individual projects, and by the assigned due dates;

1. All required peer reviews will take place during class time. If peer review or group meetings are required outside of class, class will be cancelled to accommodate.
 2. An outside class member can review your paper for extra labor.
 3. Peer review responses should use correct punctuation, readable font and alignment, and legible handwriting.
 4. Give the writer feedback on what could be improved in their paper: react like a reader to your peer's writing.
 5. Make suggestions for corrections to grammar and punctuation, but don't feel obligated to "correct" grammar. You're a reader, not an editor.
 6. Return feedback to peers in a timely manner (before the due date).
 7. Respond to your peer's texts/emails/etc. to coordinate peer review.
3. **Drafts:** Turn in drafts for Workshops/Peer Review for **all** Major Projects by the assigned due dates.
1. Use Microsoft Word, Times New Roman, 12-point font, double spaced. PDFs and pages documents don't allow the instructor to provide written feedback in the document.
 2. A complete draft is required because complete drafts give students the opportunity for more thorough feedback on their writing from peers and the instructor.
 3. Drafts should be a good faith effort -- they should be clear and understandable and should attend to the purpose and audience for the assignment.

Classroom Commitments

1. **Participation** in this class is crucial and will take a variety of forms: online learning activities in D2L, student-instructor conferences, and small group meetings.
2. **Meeting Attendance:** Be on-time for and attend any appointments, whether with peers or the instructor, online or face-to-face;
 1. When meeting with peers for projects bring everything, you need and show up ready to get work done.
 2. Ask questions.
 3. Take notes during meetings.
 4. Give your peers feedback and be a good group member; don't just benefit from the group.
 5. Groups may determine how they'd like to meet: face-to-face, using video, using Google hangouts, using email, etc.
3. **Readings:** Complete all reading assignments and be prepared to discuss them in class, bringing all texts, articles, and other materials relevant to the reading (when applicable);
 1. Read the assigned texts before class.

2. Take notes on readings.
3. Annotate your readings by writing comments, questions, and unfamiliar vocabulary in the margins.
4. Bring either a digital or print version of the reading, with your annotations/notes, to class.
5. If you didn't get to the reading, say so.
4. **Discussion Board and Peer Response:** In total, you have to submit 10 discussion boards on D2L due assigned date, as well as one peer response to your classmate. Discussion Board requirements are posted above.
5. **Ethics:** Maintain high ethical standards of courteous and civil behavior toward all members of the class, including actively listening to others, asking questions, and using technology in ways that support the learning environment.
 1. Pay attention during class.
 2. Put technology away.
 - Students may tell the instructor (discreetly) if other students' technology use is a distraction; the instructor will intervene.
 - If a phone call or text is a necessity, excuse yourself from the classroom and then return upon completion.
 - Students may read/access assignments on their laptops, phones, or tablets.
 3. Treat others the way you want to be treated.
 4. Be respectful when participating in class discussions: Hand raising isn't required; you can call out your response. However, don't jump ahead or call out in front of someone else. The instructor will monitor this and make sure we are all taking turns without interrupting.
 5. Do talk during class discussions. It's one way to set a positive environment.
 6. Be respectful when addressing the instructor. Use "Professor Vetter" or "Dr. Vetter."

Instructor Commitments

As Instructor, I will do my best to help students meet the outcomes and succeed in the course and to fulfill my own responsibilities as outlined in the syllabus. In addition to my responsibilities outlined in my student evaluation instrument, I will provide thoughtful and constructive feedback for all major work. I will be prepared to course meetings to lead discussion of course readings and to teach course material, and I will speak clearly and audibly during class. I will facilitate student interaction and class discussion to promote learning. I will also be available outside of class to meet with students one-on-one in person or via email, phone, or video chat. I am committed to creating an atmosphere in which all students have an equal opportunity to learn.

Commitment Fulfillment Agreement

If and when the Student has fulfilled all commitments as specified above, the Instructor will submit the Student's grade for the course as no lower than a B. The Instructor may submit a grade higher than a B if the Student's writing and fulfillment of course objectives and outcomes have been of superior quality, as determined by a holistic assessment of the student's work, and/or through the student's extra labor. Superior writing, as assessed by the Instructor, and extra labor, may improve grades by up to one full grade except an F. The Instructor may submit a grade lower than a B if the Student fails to meet the terms of the contract in full. In that case, the Instructor will submit grades according to the following stipulations:

One failure to meet an Assignment Commitment will lower the Student's course grade from a B to a C; or 4-7 failures to meet Classroom Commitments will lower the Student's course grade from a B to a C.

Two failures to meet any Assignment Commitment will lower the grade to a D; or 1 failure to meet an Assignment Commitment and 4-7 failures to meet Classroom Commitments will lower the Student's course grade to a D; or 8-11 failures to meet Classroom Commitments will lower the Student's course grade to a D.

Three failures to meet of any Assignment Commitment will result in an automatic F for the course; or two failures to meet any Assignment Commitment and 8-11 failures to meet Classroom Commitments will lower the Student's course grade to an F; or 12+ failures to meet Classroom Commitments will lower the Student's course grade to an F.

If you are missing classes and behind in work, please stay in touch with me about your chances of passing the course.

English 101 Grading Contract Student Checklist

It's highly recommended that you "check off" all major and minor assignments as you complete them. This will help you make sure you're completing all the requirements of the course and fulfilling the expectations of the contract.

***Note:** Completing all major in addition to consistent attendance and participation, will help you ensure you are maintaining your side of the contract, and the promised "B" grade.

Assignment Commitments

■ **Digital Literacy Narrative**

- Draft
- Peer Review
- Revision
- Cover Letter

■ **Rhetorical Analysis of a Multimodal Text**

- Draft
- Peer Review
- Revision
- Individual Conference
- Cover Letter

■ **Multimodal Advocacy Campaign:**

- Draft
- Group meeting
- Individual Reflection
- Presentation

■ **Reflective Argument Essay**

- Draft
- Revision
- Individual Conference

Grade: _____ (2 unchecked boxes = no change. 3 unchecked boxes = minus one letter, etc.)

Class Commitments:

- Bunn “How to Read Like a Writer”
- One literacy narratives on DALN and one from the provided list in D2L (Muray, Melix, Cisneros, or Villanueva)
- Kamenetz, The Writing Assignment that Changes Lives
- Bedford Ch. 2, Narrative Genres: Literacy Narratives
- LaMott, Shitty First Drafts
- DePeter, How to Write Meaningful Peer Response Praise
- Youtube Video on Rhetorical Analysis
- Understanding Visual Rhetoric by Cohn
- Stedman, Annoying Ways People Use Sources
- Gagich, An Introduction to and Strategies for Multimodal Composing
- “What Are Multimodal Projects?”
- Writer/Designer “How does Rhetoric work in multimodal projects?”
- Student Examples of Reflective Argument Essay

Grade: _____

Discussion Board Posts + Peer Responses

- Discussion Board 1+ Peer Response

- Discussion Board 2+ Peer Response
- Discussion Board 3+ Peer Response
- Discussion Board 4+ Peer Response
- Discussion Board 5+ Peer Response
- Discussion Board 6+ Peer Response
- Discussion Board 7+ Peer Response
- Discussion Board 8+ Peer Response
- Discussion Board 9 + Peer Response
- Discussion Board 10+ Peer Response

Grade: _____

Extra Labor

- Writing Center Tutor Visit
- Peer Review (beyond the required)
- Student-Teacher Conference (beyond the required)
- Revise and resubmit paper (beyond the required)
- Other

Grade:_____ 3 extra labor items = +1 letter grade

Total Grade:

Assignments:_____

Readings:_____

Discussion Posts + Peer Responses: _____

Extra Labor:_____

MIDTERM GRADE:_____

FINAL GRADE:_____