# **Course Grading Contract**

This course emphasizes that writing is a process. We practice cycles of thinking, reading, composing, reviewing, soliciting feedback, revising, and then rethinking and rewriting. No project in this course is ever truly finished; there is always more you *could* do, so the goals of this course have less to do with finished products than with the work you do to read, write, rethink, and revise. Being successful in this course means engaging in the process and working to build the skills, approaches, and literacies that will serve you well in a variety of communication situations.

In order to support the work described above, this course uses a grading contract, an approach to grading that attempts to give you a clear picture of what is required to get any particular grade. A grading contract puts the emphasis in the course on your writing process, revision, and reflection rather than on a subjective measurement of the quality of your writing. I will primarily be giving you feedback on how to make your revisions and documents better instead of explaining to you how your paper is a “C” or “B” or “A” effort.

All students in this class, regardless of writing comfort or ability, can become better writers by completing the work of this class. The default grade in this class, then, is an A. If you do what is asked of you, in a timely and thorough manner, come to class, engage with your peers, reflect on and revise your work, and improve your work over the course of the semester, you will earn an A. If you skip assignments, disengage, or fail to reflect upon and revise your work in response to feedback, you will earn a grade lower than an A.

Specifically, to earn an A in this course, you will

* Participate in each class meeting.
* Read and carefully respond to assigned course reading.
* Meet writing criteria for all assignments in the course.
* Work to stay on pace with the work of the class by meeting due dates\*.
* Participate in daily activities, including Discussion Boards and Peer Reviews.
* Complete all daily writing assignments.
* Give thoughtful, substantive feedback to your peers.
* Offer robust drafts at each stage of the process and for each of our projects.
* Make significant, substantive, and responsive revisions based on the feedback you receive from me and from your peers.
* Attend individual and/or small group conferences with me during the semester. These will be held, as much as possible, during our regular class sessions.

\*NOTE: I accept late work, but you should communicate with me when you are falling behind. Due dates are to help us all work at a manageable pace. If at any time you need an extension, I am happy to work with you to set new deadlines that suit your circumstances.

By default, this course is structured around students who do all the assigned work getting an “A” grade. This means that if you complete all assignments as requested, participate in class as stipulated by your syllabus, and submit major assignments as instructed with all components of each document included, you are guaranteed to earn an “A” grade for the course.

Since we’re focusing on the amount of writing you do and the amount of revision you do, you’re going to be writing more in this course than perhaps in any other writing course you’ve taken. However, if you do all the writing requested, you can safely assume you’ll get an “A.” I want you to focus on writing often, revising thoughtfully, and taking the long way to assignment completion. I want you to feel comfortable in your own writing process and build the ability to write and revise a major project, an essential skill you’ll need in any future workplace.

If you fail to complete major assignments or weekly assignments, you’ll find yourself getting a grade lower than an “A.” Read further for more information on how your completion rate aligns with different grades.

## **Criteria for Grades**

This section outlines the specifics on how you can earn your grades.

**You will earn an “A” in this class if you:**

* Attend and participate in class;
* meet due dates;
* meet writing criteria for all major projects/assignments;
* attempt clear, substantial revision on each draft of all major assignments;
* give thoughtful peer feedback during peer review sessions; and
* attend conferences with the instructor to discuss drafts.

**Your grade will drop to a “B,” though, if one of the following are true for you:**

* You have missed more than 3 weekly assignments (unexcused);
* You have 2 late components/drafts of the major assignments;

**Your grade will drop to a “C,” though, if one of the following are true for you:**

* You miss more than two weeks of class sessions (unexcused);
* You have missed more than 5 weekly assignments (unexcused);
* You have 3 late components/drafts of the major assignments;

**Your grade will drop to a “D,” though, if one of the following are true for you:**

* You miss 3 weeks or more of class sessions (unexcused);
* You have missed more than 5 weekly assignments (unexcused);
* You have 4 late components/drafts of the major assignments;

**Your grade will drop to an “F,” though, if one of the following are true for you:**

* You have missed 3 weeks or more of class sessions (unexcused);
* You have missed more than 5 weekly assignments (unexcused);
* You have 5 or more late components/drafts of the major assignments;

## **Assignment Submission Categories**

Assignments that are submitted after the deadline will count towards your total allowable late assignment total. You may have 2 late components/drafts of the major assignments and still get an “A.” I recognize that everyone has the occasional scheduling nightmare or a bad week, but this class runs only 15-16 weeks, and turning in your work late reduces the chances of you completing the course successfully.

If you have 2 or more late components/drafts of the major assignments, your grade will drop to a “B” as the ceiling. This course requires timely submissions to give you the time and space you need to revise.

### **Major vs. Weekly Writing Assignments**

Each week, you’ll have weekly writing assignment(s) that will help you make progress on the project you’re working through at that point in the session. The significantly revised drafts that you’ll submit at the end of each unit are your major writing assignments.

There is a lot of writing in this course. The weekly assignments represent a significant portion of that writing.

### **Extensions**

As I said above, everyone has scheduling challenges and bad days. For that reason, I also grant extensions on major assignments and drafts of major assignments. If you need an extension, [PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW STUDENTS SHOULD ASK FOR AN EXTENSION HERE.] I won’t grant extensions for weekly assignments or peer reviews, but all other drafts of major assignments are eligible for a short extension.