# Advanced Composition Grading Contract

This course emphasizes that composing 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, compose, 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 composing 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 can become better writers/composers 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 miss class, are late or 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

* Attend class regularly and arrive to class and to conferences on time.
* Read and carefully respond to assigned course reading.
* Meet completion criteria for all assignments in the course.
* Work to stay on pace with the work of the class by meeting due dates\*.
* Participate in in-class activities, including class discussion.
* 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.
* Submit your final reflection to me at the end of the term.

\*NOTE: I accept late work, and I grant extensions. Due dates are to help us all work at a manageable pace. But again: I accept late work, and I grant extensions. Please come talk to me if you're falling behind.

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, attend class as stipulated by your syllabus, and submit a final portfolio 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 composing you do and the amount of revision you do, you’re going to be writing/composing more in this course than perhaps in any other writing course you’ve taken. However, if you do all the work requested, you can safely assume you’ll get an “A.” I want you to focus on writing/composing often, revising thoughtfully, and taking the long way to assignment completion. This is not a course you will succeed in by drafting projects the night before they are due. That is simply not an option in this course. I want you to feel comfortable in your own writing process and build the ability to write and revise a major project over time, an essential skill you’ll need in any future workplace.

This is not a course that has shortcuts. If you fail to complete major assignments or weekly assignments, you’ll find yourself getting a grade lower than an “A.” See the table further down the contract 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 class regularly, not having more than 6 unexcused absences for a MWF section in a semester or 4 absences for a TR section;
* meet due dates (this could include, however, up to 5 late components/drafts of the major assignments as described below);
* meet writing criteria for all major projects/assignments;
* attempt clear, substantial revision on each draft of all major assignments;
* give thoughtful peer feedback during class workshops;
* write a cover letter to accompany the final portfolio version of your major assignments;
* attend mandatory conferences with the instructor to discuss drafts; and
* submit a complete, cohesive, and organized final writing portfolio.

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

* You have 7 unexcused absences for a MWF section or 5 absences for a TR section;
* You have 6 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 have 8 unexcused absences for a MWF section or 6 absences for a TR section;
* You have 7 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 have 9 unexcused absences for a MWF section or 7 absences for a TR section;
* You have 8 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 10 or more unexcused absences for a MWF sections or 8 or more absences for a TR section;
* You have 9 or more late components/drafts of the major assignments;

## Assignment Submission Categories

Assignments that are submitted after the deadline without an approved extension will count towards your total allowable late assignment total. You may have 5 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, so you have these 5 default late submissions as a cushion.

If you have 6 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.

The degrees of lateness are defined below in greater detail and then aligned on a table for each possible course grade:

1. **On-Time Assignments:** This is an assignment that is submitted on time. Your paper is submitted before the deadline has passed. An assignment is also on time if you request and receive an extension before the deadline has passed.
2. **Late components/drafts of the major assignments**: Late components/drafts of the major assignments are submitted after the deadline without a request for an extension. Assignments are not considered late if you request and receive an extension on the assignment before the submission deadline. Remember, I grant extensions; please come talk to me if you need additional time to complete something.
3. **Incomplete Assignments**: Assignment that is submitted but is missing one or more significant components. (Please see assignment instructions for each major project for the list of the project’s completion requirements.) I will reach out if you submit an incomplete assignment. Incomplete assignments that are not completed in a timely manner will not receive full credit. If you do not submit something in Blackboard for a given assignment, you will receive a 0 on that assignment.

| Course Grade | Late\* Assignments Allowed | Absences Allowed |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A | 5 | 4(6) or fewer |
| B | 6 | 5(7) |
| C | 7 | 6(8) |
| D | 8 | 7(9) |
| F | 9 or more | 8(10) |

\*Assignments are not considered late if you request and receive an extension on the assignment.

## Extensions

As I said above, everyone has scheduling challenges and bad weeks. For that reason, I also grant extensions on major assignments and drafts of major assignments. If you need an extension, on or before the assignment's original due date, please send me an email that includes your name, the name of the assignment, and your new proposed due date (try to keep it within 2-3 days of the original due date, if possible). I won’t grant extensions for peer review drafts, but all other drafts of major assignments are eligible for extensions.