

# **Grades, course policies, academic integrity, and accommodations**

*The contents of this document are valid for all classes I am teaching Fall 2018*

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Updates:

8/29/2018: I added to the “Feedback” section.

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# 1. Expectation of time investment

The University has defined how many hours per week a student is expected to work per credit unit.

The value of a course in units shall be reckoned at the rate of one unit for three hours' work per week per term on the part of a student, or the equivalent.' COCI defines 'work' to include class contact time as well as time spent outside of class studying and doing research or homework. Thus, a three-unit course offered during fall or spring requires a minimum of nine hours of total work per week. ([COCI Handbook](#)).

This means that a student enrolled in this 4-credit course, after spending 3 hours in the regular sessions and 1 hour in discussion section per week can be expected to devote 8 hours of time outside the classroom for work related to the course. I assign reading as well as other materials and exercises with this time budget in mind, and with an assumption that the student can read onscreen at 200 words per minute.

If your preparation time is exceeding this, please contact me.

I also grade with considerable attention as to whether the submission gives the impression of being rushed or not. Take time with your work and submit a final product that communicates to me the time you put into it.

## 2. "Where are my grades for this class?"

The official grades are on my laptop. Many grades are also on bCourse but they are not official. In particular, if I make a grade change for you, it might not bother to put the change into bCourse. I do NOT use bCourse grades as the basis for the final grade.

## 3. Interpreting bCourse grades

### 3.1. bCourse statistics, grade totals, etc.

While I have disabled nearly all the grade reporting and statistical information that bCourse can generate, you may still see some summary numbers. NONE of this information is anywhere close to accurate—it can be as much as two letter grades away. from the actual grade. It most definitely cannot be used as a tool for deciding. whether to switch to pass / no pass. Ignore it, always. Contact me directly about discussing grades or use the grade estimator, if available.

## 3.2. bCourse assignment point values and grading schemes

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### 3.2.1. The “High-A” grade

I don't think in percents when I grade, I think more qualitatively in terms of letter grades. These are indeed converted to points by bCourse or my Excel sheet but I evaluate work with letters, not numbers in my head. Over the years I have discovered that, in my mind, there are really four A-level grades: truly outstanding and surprising work, or perfect work, is an “A+,” really top-level work, but just not quite A+ work is a “High-A,” then my “A” and “A-minus” are, I think, similar to what everyone else thinks of those two levels.

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### 3.2.2. Point values

When I set up an assignment, I just give it the point value of 10, or 20 when it is a particularly difficult assignment, or 100 when it is a major test of some sort. These are symbolic, so that I can think of the type of assignment it is. When I grade I often change these point values if they would help the student understand the feedback. (For example, an assignment with six prompts might be changed to 6 points or 12 points, etc.) So, keep in mind: **the initial point value might change**. Additionally, when I calculate final grades, I often select out key assignments rather than use all the assignments to help calculate a grade. For these reasons, bCourse point totals aren't meaningful for the way I use bCourse.

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### 3.2.3. Grading schemes

When I set up an exercise, I give it a grade scheme designation (points, complete/incomplete, letter grade, etc.). However, **I might switch the grading scheme** later at the time of grading. I select the scheme best suited for providing feedback, or reflecting the grade value of the work in terms of the larger scheme of things, or both. I also sometimes drop assignments after the fact.

## 4. "Grade estimator"

Sometimes, after class has begun, I upload an excel sheet which can be used to input various scenarios as a way of obtaining an ESTIMATE of your final grade. I encourage you to talk with me when you have grade concerns. I will not discuss grades via email. Please make an appointment.

## 5. Travel plans, interviews, and such

**Travel plans:** Students or their parents sometimes schedule travel plans very close to class sessions. I do not consider inexpensive tickets or other absences due to planned travel as excusable. I also don't consider delayed flights as excusable if the arrival time was the same day as class. Overnight trouble is different. Try contacting me.

**Leaving early or arriving late because of tests** in other classes: I do not consider this a valid reason for missing part of the class.

**Job interviews:** I am ambivalent about job interviews. If you seem otherwise to be fully engaged in the class, I will probably consider missing class as inevitable but I will regret that you have missed the material. You should make extra effort to participate in the sessions you are able to attend. When the student seems otherwise relatively uninvolved in the class, I do sometimes wonder if the interviews might have been able to be scheduled at a better time.

**The final exam period is when the exam will be given.** Please do not ask to take an exam early because you have travel or moving plans. (This is a general statement—some of my classes do not use the final exam period.)

I basically never give incompletes in a class.

## 6. Discussing grades

Neither I nor the GSI (if there is one) will discuss the details of grades via email. Please come to office hours or arrange a meeting by appointment.

## 7. Pass-No pass option

A number of students take this class to satisfy a breadth or other requirement, or are simply interested in learning something about Japanese literature or culture but have an otherwise busy schedule. While it is not necessary to consult with me when choosing the pass-fail option, I encourage students to do so. Since I know well the overall architecture of the course as well as what portions of it are time-consuming and what my bottom-line expectations are, we can sort out together where to put effort, what can be dropped, and so on. Some students find this helpful. It certainly helps me understand why a student seems only partly involved which can be a grade-plus for the student, in the long run.

## 8. The A+ grade

I sometimes use the A+ grade for the top one or two students in a course. It is not a mathematical decision, even if your bCourse grade shows 100% or higher and so indicates an A+. I will consider everyone in the top tier and consider their total involvement in the class and select among those candidates, if I feel the grade is warranted.

## 9. Extra Credit

### ***Assignment-specific extra credit***

This is the type of extra credit that students frequently encounter—the opportunity on assignments or tests to answer more challenging questions or include information beyond the

usual expectations of the assignment. This type of extra credit influences directly the grade on the quiz or test.

### ***General extra credit***

These are little things that you do that indicate an enthusiasm for the class, or more than the usual attentiveness to assignments, or acts that help the teaching environment. This might be Web links you find that are of special value, or an extended comment you send by email about something that interested you, or finding an error in my website or other instructions. I acknowledge these things. This type of extra credit is grade-relevant only if, on the whole, you seem to be participating very well in the class. It cannot replace assignments. Indeed, it might work against you if I conclude that you are only interested in your grade and believe the extra credit can substitute for work on the regular assignments. This is an opportunity to show enthusiasm and share ideas and help others, not polish your grade although, indirectly, it does have that effect sometimes.

### ***Major extra credit***

Some of my classes have additional assignments that are quite challenging. I offer these as optional, for "Major Extra Credit." Completing Major Extra Credit assignments when completed in good form can, collectively, alter a final course grade one to two steps ("A-" to "A" or "C-" to "C+" for example). How much the grade will change, if at all, depends on a number of factors including the quality of the work submitted, the grade average of the student (how close to a cut-off line the grade is) and the overall engagement in the course. In other words, extra credit assignments NEVER substitute for other work. They are relevant only when the student has been well involved in the class throughout.

## **10. Feedback**

Feedback is often just in the form of a letter grade. However, you should check the "comments" box of a bCourse assignment and, rarely, there are times when comments are typed directly into the submission itself. Further, it is possible that I have given feedback to the group as a whole during a class period. You should check with your classmates. (Please do not ask me to repeat what was already said in class except where there is great concern about something.)

It is difficult for me to grade, with or without feedback, at the speed necessary to keep up with the incoming flow of assignments. I prioritize my grading workflow across all of my classes, not just this class. The prioritizing question is: "How much might it negatively influence the student's ability to score well on an upcoming assignment that matters, in case feedback is slow?" I will be sure to give important feedback on time; otherwise I will cancel the upcoming assignment or adjust its content appropriately.

If you want feedback, please by all means feel free to ask by email (not message).

## 11. Grade tables (grade cutoffs)

University Pass / No-Pass option	University Letter Grade	bCourse grade	Cut-off
P	A+ or A	A+	100.00%
P	A	High-A	98.90%
P	A	A	96.00%
P	A-	A-	92.00%
P	B+	B+	88.00%
P	B	B	85.00%
P	B-	B-	81.00%
P	C+	C+	78.00%
P	C	C	75.00%
P	C-	C-	71.00%
NP	D+	D+	68.00%
NP	D	D	64.00%
NP	D-	D-	61.00%

## 12. Deadlines and late penalties

My deadlines are bright lines, that is, they are specific moments in time without a grace period. Late submissions will almost always have a severe penalty, usually do not receive feedback, and may not be accepted at all. Very few of my assignments or assessments can be made up.

Assignments submitted through bCourse will use the assignment lock feature in most cases. Allow extra time to submit through the bCourse since it is not reliable. Remember that if bCourse displays the deadline as "2AM," the submission portal locks at exactly 2:00AM, not 2:00:01AM. If the submission was through a Google form, it will be time-stamped and assignments with past due time-stamps are ignored and usually just deleted.

## 13. Laptops and other devices PROHIBITED

Use of laptops, tablets, phones and other electronic devices are prohibited.

Laptops and all other devices should be silenced and put away during class unless I say otherwise. Feel free to have devices in use until class begins. (At that time, please put away devices even if I forget to mention this.)

Devices are often used during group work. Do not message or otherwise multitask during group work, even a little bit.

If you are a DSP student who has given me an accommodation letter, or if you are a note-taker for a DSP student, please let me know. You will be allowed to use your device, for the purposes of the class. There may be other possible exceptions. Please contact me.

**Multitasking, whether by device or paper, is never looked upon favorably in my classes, at any point or in any way.**

## 14. Device required for active learning

Since I often use bCourse for spontaneous in-class exercises and quizzes, all students are expected to bring to class **for every session** a device that ...

- can connect to the room's smart panel and project content
- can log on to bCourses

Please note that there are apps available for bCourse for mobile devices. Search "Canvas" on your app store.

## 15. Academic integrity: UC Berkeley honor code

**“AS A MEMBER OF THE UC BERKELEY COMMUNITY, I ACT WITH HONESTY, INTEGRITY, AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS.”**

I fully endorse this statement and I know that, as students, you are required to endorse it as well. I will conduct my classes in this spirit and expect my students to do likewise. For more information go to: <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/berkeley-honor-code>

I have pulled from the Berkeley Law Web site the following. Although this was written for a sub-community of our campus, it is a very exact statement of my sentiments on the issue of academic honesty and I want to quote a paragraph of it here:

Primary responsibility for respecting the appropriate rules rests with each individual student and with the student body as a whole. Students, faculty and staff are urged to bring apparent violations to the attention of the instructor and/or the dean. The Honor Code can be successful only to the extent that it has the overwhelming support of

student and faculty opinion and is taken seriously by everyone. (<https://www.law.berkeley.edu/academics/registrar/academic-rules/academic-honor-code/>)

## 16. Academic integrity: Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty

I have an extensive, public-access web page on plagiarism, when to footnote, creating clarity between one's ideas and those of another, and a variety of other things. It has an index with hyper-links, and a bunch of graphics. If you feel unsure about what you think I think plagiarism is, or when and where to put a citation marker, or other matters, please take a look at it: [Wallace's Page on Academic Honesty](#) or [http://www.sonic.net/~tabine/crosscourse/AcademicDishonesty/acadis\\_frameset.html](http://www.sonic.net/~tabine/crosscourse/AcademicDishonesty/acadis_frameset.html).

Students have a good sense of what academic honesty is in terms of taking quizzes, or doing work at home, or writing essays. This page isn't about that. I will simply say that all my courses have penalties for such activity and apologies, while welcome, will not change the penalties. I penalize students for serious acts of dishonesty on the first occasion, not the second. I suggest you don't test the boundaries.

Please think of this page as my show of respect for you—I tell you what my boundaries are, and you can choose to stay within them or not. I will not try to "catch" students by not declaring my boundaries and then try claiming after the fact someone stepped over them. **The ten minutes it will take to read this page can be ten minutes very well spent.**

I know that below comments create stress for the some of the most honest of my students who worry that my definitions are too strict and that they will be thought of, or treated as, or penalized as having been dishonest when they certainly did not mean to be that way or think of their actions that way. I strongly encourage you to bring your concerns to me.

Below are the activities that you might not consider as dishonest or not dishonest enough to incur penalties, but I do.

Group work, when individual work is expected.

If an assignment, and that includes essays, is to be completed only by you then that really means only by you, in all its aspects. My written assignments are nearly always premised on "What can this student, entirely on his or her own, do with this prompt?" I do a lot of group work and I think learning how to help make a group successful is one of the core skills that we are to teach at the university. But the essay, for me, is not part of that. It is an "on your own" moment. (In the real world, I would want you to run you ideas by others and so forth, yes. But in the specialized space of the class, this is not the case.)

Looking at the work of others during quizzes and tests.

Most students are very curious how others have answered questions. I understand that and I would like to believe that about 90% of the looking about in the room is that type of thing. However, from my perspective of trying to keep control of the room and limit cheating, that looking around gives cover for other who *are* trying to pick up answers from an exam. Please refrain from this.

Reuse of work done in other classes.

The "university" is premised on the concept that undergraduates are to be exposed to a wide variety of types of knowledge. I extend that to include a wide variety of new topics. You might not agree with this but it is my policy. So, in my classes, recycling work is completely out of the question and will receive an "F" with no chance for redoing the work. Sometimes I also report this to the University. And a student who does so can expect that I am in communication with the relevant faculty member and that the student will probably have to explain the event to both of us.

Plagiarism and other ways of working dishonestly with research materials

This is indeed difficult to define. There are legitimate gray areas, for sure. However, not matter what: **"All paraphrasing must be properly cited."** No wiggle room on this one. This is true plagiarism and will invite harsh penalties.

**"Context is king."** I expect students to tend carefully to this. If I say in a standup comedy routine "90% of 10-year-olds probably could competently drive a car, if necessary, because they have been already racing for years online" well, funny or not, you won't actually think this is real research. But if I put that same claim in an academic article, you would think that I have a basis for that claim. Context. So always ask yourself about the passage you have written, "Given this specific context (whatever it is) will the reader understand the boundary between my ideas and those that are actually in secondary research material?" If that answer is, "Definitely" you're good to go. If the answer is "probably" rewrite so the answer is "definitely". This requires looking at your work with the eyes of the reader, which you should be doing anyway. **I expect some real care put into this issue.** Readers are not telepathic, they work from the words you have put on the page and the context of those words. "I didn't mean it to come across as my thoughts" isn't an excuse. It is your responsibility, to a reasonable extent, to write proactively, and avoid the reading error from occurring in the first place. This isn't, in my opinion, a quality of *good* writing. It is a basic requirement of all academic prose that needs to be satisfied.

**"Over-the-shoulder standard."** This is a standard that the student can fail to uphold either intentionally or unintentionally. If it is intentional, it is academic dishonesty and will be penalized as such. If it is unintentional, it may or may not be considered too sloppy by me and may or may not reduce a score, but it will not be prosecuted as dishonesty. It can, of course, be hard to tell the difference but not as hard as you might think (or hope, if your plan is to be dishonest).

The "over the shoulder standard" means that if the author of a secondary source was able to look over your shoulder when you are quoting or paraphrasing her or him, if she or he can say "Yes, that is a fair and accurate use of my words / ideas" then you have done your job. If not, fix the problem. This is a very common error for students and usually is the result of either a lack of interest in the ideas being quoted or a lack of understanding. If it seems intentional it will be treated as such; if it shows a gross lack of regard for the ideas of the source, it will be penalized heavily but not as an act of dishonesty.

**Citation placement.** The location of a citation marker is one of the strongest signals of the boundaries between your own ideas and those of another. Put some thought into where it should be. It can be tricky. Overuse of such markers is tiresome for the reader, underuse opens up the possibility of plagiarism charges. In the flow of a paragraph, if it is clear you are recapping a scholar's argument or observations over a stretch of sentences, a single note at the end of the paragraph is usually sufficient. However, be sure to separate out your ideas. So, for example, the first paragraph might start, "Lee has argued that ...." and the second paragraph might start, "While there is much to agree with in her claims, I would like to suggest that ..."

In most cases, place citation markers at the end of the sentence after the punctuation:

"Mary had a little lamb." <sup>1</sup>	<i>The note will cite the source of the poem.</i>
In some cases, it is better to put the footnote at the end of the clause:	
"I'm no crook" <sup>1</sup> became a popular tag line in stand-up comedy in the late 1970s.	<i>Give the date and circumstances of Nixon's comment. NOTE: If you put the marker after "1970s" as would normally be the case (because it is the end of the sentence), the placement might suggest to some readers that the second half of the sentence is an authority that you are quoting, not your own opinion. You can avoid that by intelligent marker placement.</i>
Her is another example of when it is better to put it after the term or phrase:	
He was considered a "little lamb" by most of the criminal world.	<i>The note might read: "A phrase meaning a weak-willed person that was used by street gangs in Algeria in the 1940s."</i>
More examples:	
Hitomaro's "brilliance" <sup>11</sup> shines in poem number 273.	<i>Where a source has called Hitomaro brilliant, but did not specifically mention poem 273.</i>
Hitomaro's "brilliance" shines in poem number 273. <sup>1</sup>	<i>Where a source has called Hitomaro's poem 273 an example of his brilliance.</i>

Hitomaro wrote lyrically, <sup>11</sup> and is well known for his long poems as well.	<i>If the first claim is from your source and the second is your own opinion</i>
But,	
Hitomaro wrote lyrically, and is well known for his long poems as well. <sup>1</sup>	<i>If both the first and second claims are from your source.</i>
<b>SOMETIMES A SENTENCE NEEDS REWRITING</b> to insure a clear boundary between your ideas and those of your source.	
This should be considered part of the oral tradition, since it was composed in the fifth century. <sup>1</sup>	<i>The placement of the marker suggests that you mean to attribute both claims to your source. But what if the first half is your idea? (And, especially, what if the author would not agree with you?) Then you should rewrite as:</i>
Konishi asserts that the best composition date for the work is the fifth century. <sup>1</sup> If that is the case, then it should be considered part of the oral tradition.	<i>Boundary of ideas is clear.</i>

## 17. Academic integrity: Asking others to edit your work

For various reasons, some students are weak in the formal English of academic prose. These students sometimes ask others to help them produce an essay that sounds and reads better. While I believe in the important of collaborative work, written assignments in all my classes, unless I state otherwise, are meant to be your individual opportunity to show your understanding and interpretive abilities. Once someone helps you with editing this lined is blurred and it is difficult for me to be sure that the conceptual aspects of your submission are entirely your own.

All students are required to submit work that **has not been edited by others**.

If you feel I cannot understand your English, then please submit **your original draft PLUS the edited draft as ONE document**. Include, at the top of the first page of the submission (not in a message elsewhere) these details, in specifics not general statements to the extent that you can and please remember that honesty is important at this moment:

- who helped
- when they helped
- in what ways they helped

If you are uncomfortable mentioning names, at least give me an accurate description of the individual. I will grade the original but will refer to the edited version if there is something I cannot understand.

Please note that not following the above will be considered academic dishonesty and will incur severe penalties.

## **18. Academic integrity: Academic responsibility**

"Academic responsibility," among other things, means that, when writing essays and such, you have made due effort to use your sources critically and accurately, and to avoid false argumentation. When I say that an assignment is being graded on its "credibility," this, in part, is what I mean. Double check that your citations point to the exact relevant area of a text, that you have spelled the names of author's and titles correctly, and so on.

## **19. Accommodations: Accommodations for students with designated disabilities**

If you need accommodations for a disability, or if you want me to have emergency medical information, please email (not message) me, or speak to me anytime.

Here is the URL for the main Web page of the Disables Students' Program: <http://dsp.berkeley.edu/>. Their primary contact number is: 510-642-0518. I have had many occasions to work with the DSP and with students who have worked with the DSP. They do excellent work.

If you have a disability that limits mobility, you might consider entering into your "contacts" database the name, number and email of the service that you would contact in case of an emergency where you have difficulty leaving the affected area. Here is the URL for those who might need assistance in evacuating a building during an emergency. I encourage you to make an easy-to-access record of the contact information that is there: <http://access.berkeley.edu/> .

## **20. Accommodations: When you are not a native English speaker/reader ...**

Language comprehension issues: If you are having difficulty with spoken or written English, please discuss this with me promptly. If you do not contact me, I will assume this is not a significant issue for you.

If you are a foreign student with limited skills in or limited experience in composing academic English prose:

First,

Email me (don't message me) saying that you have some concerns about your ability to write English at the speed of your fellow students. Give me details on your English training, your foreign student status, the number of humanities essays you have written in English, and so

on. Without such an email, nothing below this paragraph is relevant to you. We may need to meet to discuss the situation.

Second,

When working on an assignment, be sure to do your own work. Since it is nearly impossible to separate editing for English clarity from editing for clarity of ideas, I would like you to submit your own, un-edited prose.

In the case that you are truly concerned that I will not understand your prose, you may submit two versions on ONE document, not double documents, where the first is your unedited version and the second is an edited version. If you do so, provide details about the editing as much as possible: who helped, what specific help was offered, was the help digital exchange or sitting together, when, and so on.

## **21. Accommodations: Vision**

### **21.1. Vision**

I sometimes project questions or information for quizzes and tests. Although I try to use large font, by all means please let me know before a quiz or test starts that you are having difficulty. This is true for all regular class sessions as well.

### **21.2. Color blindness**

I sometimes use onscreen colors to designate sets of questions to be answered by different students sitting for the same exam. It is not uncommon for some students to be unable to see the difference between colors. I try to be color appropriate but there can be problems. Please feel free to mention immediately any trouble you are having with color differentiation. I will quickly and easily accommodate your need.

## **22. Accommodations: Hearing**

If you have problems hearing, please sit towards the front of the room and share with me any concerns or difficulties you are experiencing.