

# **2019 Syllabus Part 2**

## **GRADES v1 (Jan 8)**

*The contents of this document are valid for all classes I am teaching Spring 2019*

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## ***Table of Contents***

2019 Syllabus Part 2	1
GRADES v1 (Jan 8)	1
Table of Contents	2
ASSESSMENT (GRADING)	4
1. Core term: "active learning"	4
2. Core term: "analysis"	4
3. The course Knowledge-Skill-Engagement portfolio	4
4. bCourse grading scheme setups and changes	7
4.1. About bCourse statistics and point summaries	7
4.2. Grade scales	7
4.2.1. "High-A" scale, keyed to a percentage grade scale	7
4.2.2 "Completion" scale, keyed to a percentage grade scale	8
4.2.3. The "Outstanding-Accomplished-Sufficient" feedback (FB) scale	8
4.2.4. Session-Engagement Notes	9
5. "Finish line" grades	9
6. Feedback	9
6.1. Importance of reading feedback	9
6.2. The grade as feedback	10
6.3. The "FB" grade scale	10
6.4. Group feedback	11
6.5. Individual feedback	11
6.6. Positive feedback vs other feedback, and feedback volume	11
6.7. Assignment titles	12
6.8. Grading with student names hidden	12
6.9. Midterm grade estimate reports for students who request them	13
7. Calculating the final course grade	13
8. Pass-No pass option	14
9. Extra Credit	14

9.1. Assignment-specific extra credit	14
9.2. "General" extra credit	15
9.3. "Major" extra credit	15
10. The A+ course grade	15
11. Fairness	15
12. Accommodations for disabilities	16
13. Devices	16
14. English as a second language	16
<b>SCORING WELL IN MY COURSES</b>	<b>16</b>
15. Grade-related suggestions and cautions	16
15.1. Things that work well	16
15.2. Things to look out for	17
<b>DISCUSSING GRADES AND ESTIMATING THE COURSE GRADE</b>	<b>18</b>
16. "Where are my grades for this class?"	18
17. "Grade estimator"	18
18. Discussing individual grades and the course grade	19
<b>COURSE RULES THAT AFFECT GRADES</b>	<b>19</b>
19. Academic honesty	19
20. Deadlines	19
21. Late penalties	20
22. Missed assignments	20
23. When missing a class in full or in part	20
23.1. General comment	20
23.2. Partial attendance score	21
23.3. Reporting reasons for partial or missed attendance	21
23.4. Early departure or late arrival due to midterms in other classes	22
23.5. Travel plans	22
23.6. Job interviews	22
24. Timing of the final exam	23
25. Incompletes	23
<b>GRADE TABLE</b>	<b>23</b>
26. Use this to convert my grade scale to the one I will use for the University	23

# ASSESSMENT (GRADING)

## **1. Core term: "active learning"**

"Active learning" in my courses means both a proactive/forward-leaning posture by the student in course content acquisition and engagement in opportunities to work with course content and the active production of new knowledge production. The traditional instructor-delivers / student-receives & proves-receipt-via-tests model is rarely used. Please read with care my full statement elsewhere on my website about active learning and the key role it has in my courses and grading schemes. A complete understanding of this is necessary for all of my courses.

## **2. Core term: "analysis"**

Your ability to perform analysis is an important aspect of active learning in my courses and a fundamental component of course grades. Without learning to perform the analytic skills introduced in the course you will not be able to pass, even with the P/NP option. Read elsewhere on my website what I mean by "analysis."

## **3. The course Knowledge-Skill-Engagement portfolio**

Course grades are decided based on an overall grade in these three areas: knowledge acquired, skills acquired, and overall engagement. These can be described as what you will know by the end of the course, what you will be able to do, and your level of involvement in the course overall. Another way to think of this is that knowledge will be acquired and produced by the student over the course of the term while towards the end to student's ability to use that knowledge to produce analysis becomes increasingly important, with off of this happening within the envelope of active engagement.

**"Knowledge"** means learning well the course content facts and concepts.

- Reading comprehension is part of this category. All reading assignments are to be read with "some thought and care" to understand and critically evaluate the concepts, themes, messages or other "meta" aspects of the assignment.
- **Acquiring** facts, concepts, and analytic positions encountered through lecture, assigned readings, further research by the student, and discussions. This could be called "hard" knowledge: facts as they are on the page, for example, the name of the first haiku movement.
- **Understanding** the significance of facts, concepts, and analytic positions is derived, high-order knowledge that results from the student's thinking.

- Finally, important in all my classes and the primary reason I emphasize group work is **capturing** "emergent" knowledge: the "something" that comes from the interaction of others in dialog on a topic. It is neither your opinion nor the other's opinion but rather how these interact with one another.

**"Skills"** usually means the ability to use a specific method for the analysis of various objects, usually texts, or other purposes. While the above emphasized knowing and understanding, the emphasis here is on doing.

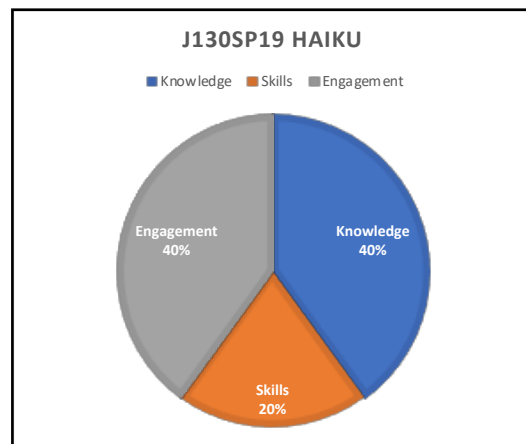
- The ability to critically evaluate secondary sources, use them effectively, and document them using Chicago Manual of Style—Notes and Bibliography is usually a component of my course.
- The ability to analyze literary passages according to methods specifically taught is also usually a component.

**"Engagement"** means how consistently attentive and active the students has been in relation to the various learning opportunities. Most learning in a course is never assessed; it happens simply from being involved in the course. Also, because of the active learning environment, I view students as part of a group, not a room full of individuals. This also means, though, that **students bear responsibility for the learning environment in a more comprehensive way, not simply for their own benefit—**thus my emphasis on preparation and interaction once in the room, on-time arrival, understanding instructions, and so forth. Here are some of the qualities I consider when determining the engagement grade:

- good preparation,
- on-time attendance and staying in the room once there,
- attentiveness in class (including avoiding all multitasking),
- intellectual curiosity,
- enthusiasm,
- taking responsibility for one's learning,
- informed contributions to the learning environment,
- listening to others (not just the instructor),
- facilitating the expression of the opinions of others,
- critically careful reading,
- self-initiated research in areas where the students feels she or he needs to know more,
- consistent, on-time submission of assignments, and
- time-investment in the completion of assignments.

When I begin to design a class (and this is done in a new way for every class so what you might hear from previous students might not be relevant) I begin with these above three as having an equal influence in the grade. As I settle the final plan, I adjust these and each class will have a statement of their relative weight. Understanding this final level of grade calculation is your best information for performing in ways that lead to a strong grade result.

For example, here is a class I am developing on haiku. Students will read haiku in the original, read secondary material on the history and techniques of haiku, discuss their interpretations in class, and compose their own poems in Japanese. In this class, I emphasize engagement over skill because I think being in class, sharing one's opinion and hearing the analysis of others is the best way to developing a complex and accurate understanding of the poems. I also feel knowing the basic history and details of haiku masters is important. While I want them to be able to analyze poems, this can be very difficult to achieve within just one semester so I have eased off on the skill expectations. The mix looks like this:



This means that preparation and attendance will be central to the course grade. The "knowledge" portion will not be difficult: there will be readings followed by tests on the readings. This area is straight-forward. The skills portion might be challenging but the grade scale will be soft and the overall percent in terms of the final grade is smaller than the others. This leaves the determination of the final grade more or less in the area of whether the student will prepare consistently, attend consistently, and be fully engaged when in the class.

My classes usually have attendance records, numerous exercises, numerous quizzes or reading checks to determine if the assigned material was read with "some thought and care," a few major assessments (midterm/final), and often a term essay. The grade results of these assessments might be used more than once, or in multiple ways, to determine the knowledge, skill, and engagement portfolio grades. Alternatively, a test might have two parts, one testing knowledge and one assessing skill or a single test might be viewed in two different ways, from the perspective of knowledge acquired and from the perspective of course skills deployed.

For example, an exercise designed just to practice a skill will usually simply be tracked as to whether it was done on-time and in full or not, and thereby used as evidence for determining the engagement grade. However, if, at the end of the term, it is hard to determine with clarity how completely a skill has been learned, I might look back at these assignments to see whether they indicate an understanding of the skill or not. This can raise or lower the portfolio grade. In the grade book, this exercise might appear twice, on the "engagement" page and on the "skills" page.

## **4. bCourse grading scheme setups and changes**

### **4.1. About bCourse statistics and point summaries**

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. I do NOT use bCourse grades as the basis for the final grade and the points showing on bCourse cannot predict your grade.

### **4.2. Grade scales**

All my bCourse assignments are set up with 10 points as the full "score." This does not mean that all assignments are of equal value. **I do not try to indicate relative final course grade value of assignments on bCourse.**

I often determine a grading scheme AFTER an assignment is done (except for major test, of course). Sometimes I need to see how students have responded before I know what type of feedback will be in their best interest. Sometimes I change this scheme as the semester develops, to harmonize with other assignments in the same group. Students can see prose changes in the grade book, but the point value will not change, of course.

The 10 points are plotted against a grade scale in most cases. However, in one case the "points" are truly meaningless and are being used only to generate a work—they have nothing to do with percents.

The only default grade scheme I use on bCourse is their simple "Complete/Incomplete" scale. When feedback does not need to be very specific or when I am in a hurry or when I feel the assignment was not all that successful and I won't use it for grades later, I use this one. Otherwise I use one of the below:

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#### **4.2.1. "High-A" scale, keyed to a percentage grade scale**

This is a standard letter grade scale with one modification: the "High-A" grade not only signals to the student that the assignment was nearly perfect but also increases the likelihood of the student staying within the "A" grade band when multiple assignments are average.

#### 4.2.2 "Completion" scale, keyed to a percentage grade scale

10.00	Complete	On-time completion (completion = all portions are complete)
7.00	Late	A fully completed assignment submitted late, and accepted (might not show on bCourse)
5.00	Incomplete	A reasonable amount of the assignment was submitted but it is either not complete or not sufficient. The student might be able to resubmit if arrangements are made. The score will be 7 and there will be no feedback. The grade change might not be done until the end of the term.
0.00	Missing	Missing

#### 4.2.3. The "Outstanding-Accomplished-Sufficient" feedback (FB) scale

Not keyed to a typical grade percent standard. Instead, steps are evenly distributed from 10 to 0. This scale is designed so multiple assignment averages will better reflect a position on the descriptive spectrum (from Outstanding to Missing).

This scale is designated by the letters **FB** so the student will not misunderstand and think a "2" means "20% (F)."

10.00	FB-Outstanding	A+ (beyond expectations or markedly better than the large majority of submissions)
8.00	FB-Accomplished	High-A to A- (excellent work, just keep doing this)
6.00	FB-Sufficient	B+ to C+ (this isn't the best work but it is good enough, you can continue like this or seek to improve)
4.00	FB-Marginal	C to C- (this sort of result will probably be good enough to pass the class on a P/NP basis but there are some serious errors that should be corrected)
2.00	FB-Insufficient	D+ to F (it seems that the fundamental points of the assignment have not been understood yet—considered contacting me or making an office hour appointment)
0.00	FB-Missing	No points earned (missed assignment have considerable impact on the grade, although one or two for a student who is otherwise fully engaged will probably not have an effect except to remove that student from consideration of an A+, probably)
EX	FB-Late	Considered separately (these are kept out of the averages mathematically and will be considered from an overall basis; late submissions are a grade negative)



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#### 4.2.4. Session-Engagement Notes

I also have a scale I sometimes use to record a student's engagement for a particular day. I don't report this to bCourse, but I can share it with you during office hours.

10.00	Well-prepared and fully present	Well-prepared, present and engaged
9.00	Basically prepared and engaged	Some slight concern about preparation and/or participation
7.00	Prepared but not fully engaged	Submitted PreC but multitasking or left the room
5.00	Did half of the two	Not prepared but present, or present but not prepared
3.00	Not prepared, present but not engaged	Not prepared and basically just in the room
0.00	Neither prepared nor present	Not prepared and absent or multitasking

### 5. "Finish line" grades

Some course content needs to be mastered as we move through the semester. Some content however, only needs to be mastered by the end of the semester. This second type is graded by what I call a "finish line" approach — only the final result counts towards the grade and it doesn't matter whether it take a little bit or a lot of time to gain that content. It only matters that the student has by the "finish line" whatever that date might be. Knowledge and engagement assessment results tend to be treated more or less equally across the term. Skill assessment results tend to be finish line grades. There is some variation to this. For example, final exams might ask for a higher level of integration of the various things a student has learned during the semester and the grade value of this exam might be higher than others.

## 6. Feedback

### 6.1. Importance of reading feedback

Student who attend to feedback score best in my classes. I recommend you watch for it as an efficient way to understand how to learn and score well in my classes.

Because of the large amount of assignments that active learning generates, and because I usually teach three classes each term, I have had to look for ways to make feedback efficient. (Even so, some assignments are late in being scored and some may never be scored.)

## 6.2. The grade as feedback

I consider the grade itself to be the first line of feedback. If you scored high, even if I write nothing else, I am definitely saying, "that was excellent, keep doing that." If your score is low and there has been no explanation, consider office hours so we can have a mutual understanding of the assessment.

## 6.3. The "FB" grade scale

While I have created a number of special bCourse grade scales to help you understand how I view your submission, I would like to point to one in particular: the FB scale. Those letters mean "totally ignore the point value on this assignment, it is simply a number I use to generate the prose evaluation." Attend to this table instead:

FB-Outstanding
FB-Accomplished
FB-Sufficient
FB-Marginal
FB-Insufficient
FB-Missing
FB-Late

Because, in the case of this scale, the numbers are distributed evenly, I can see an overall characterization on my gradebook that isn't possible if the "missing" score is zero and the "fail" score is 5.5. On the regular grade scale, the missed assignment has too great an impact on the overall average to be descriptively accurate. For example, two "A"s and one "Missing" would average about a "C" as a grade result for the average when, in truth the better description is "this student knows very well how to complete the work in the class but something happened on one day to prevent a submission." The FB scale would result in "mostly accomplished" result which, as a grade factor, is much more supporting (and accurate) towards the final course grade. What I see on my gradebook when I average multiple assignments that have used the FB scale is:

Overall, missing
Overall, insufficient
Overall, marginal

Overall, sufficient
Overall, accomplished
Overall, outstanding

## 6.4. Group feedback

It is more likely that you will receive group feedback rather than individual feedback. Either a document will be distributed or I will make comments in class. One of the reasons it is important to be in class is that this feedback, if given in the room, will be nowhere else and will not be repeated. I like group feedback because you can see advice for a variety of scenarios, not just what might have come up on your own submission.

## 6.5. Individual feedback

Normally this will be in the comments box on bCourse. Now and then there are other methods.

## 6.6. Positive feedback vs other feedback, and feedback volume

I tend to budget my grading time to helping the students who are struggling rather than praising the students who are succeeding. If you are doing well, you might not hear from me. I regret this but when forced between the two choices I feel some sense that I should try to correct errors that I think are correctable.

If I have written feedback, there is a reason. I don't have time to write unnecessary comments. If something is there, there is a reason.

I do not put much energy into writing feedback for students who do not put much energy into the class.

I don't write feedback on late assignments. I need to work within a grading window on an assignment. It is too time efficient to go back, review the rubric, remember what others have done and so on just for a single student.

Office hours are designed for sharing feedback. Use them.

If you have, sincerely, something of particular concern or interest ("I am not sure I did X right" or "I tried doing Y, what do you think?") tell me. I will always be happy you care about improving, and I will definitely try to respond, and usually do.

## 6.7. Assignment titles

Another problem that results from a flexible active learning approach that generates a lot of assignments, some last minute and some that are later dropped is that a simple sequential numbering system (Exercise 1, Exercise 2, etc.) isn't workable. So, I use the below system. It tells the student the type of assignment, the session day for which it is relevant, and where the assessment took place.

Assignment type	Session date	"Location"
<p><b>Low-risk assessments (where usually just completing the assignment in good faith is sufficient, and which are important for the engagement component of the portfolio)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EX</b> (Exercises that generate discussion, explore content, or practice skills)</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium-risk assessments (some impact on all three components of the portfolio)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RC</b> (Reading checks = quizzes that check whether assigned reading has been done with some "care and thought")</li> <li>• <b>Q</b> (Quizzes that assess knowledge acquisition or, sometimes, skill deployment)</li> <li>• <b>READ</b> (Analysis of assigned readings to check high-order understanding and analytic skill)</li> <li>• <b>###</b> — there are sometimes other titles, specific to a certain class</li> </ul> <p><b>Major assessments (that usually are the key elements of the knowledge and skill components of the portfolio)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MT</b> (Midterm)</li> <li>• <b>FINAL</b> (If instead I call this a "Capping Assignment (CAP)" then probably it is a very large element in the grade scheme)</li> </ul>	yymmdd	<p><b>InC</b> (In-class)</p> <p>or</p> <p><b>PreC</b> (Pre-class, a preparation assignment for a specific session)</p> <p>or</p> <p><b>PostC</b> (Post-class, a follow-up consolidation or completion of a topic or assignment initiated in a specific session)</p>

Here is an example of how this works: "EX181205 InC Active Learning" means "an exercise done on December 5, 2018, in class, and which was about active learning."

## 6.8. Grading with student names hidden

Sometimes I decide to grade an assignment without knowing the names of the students at the time of grading. I do this for fairness reasons, and to sharpen, review, or adjust my developing

opinion of where a student is in terms of learning course content. I will call this as grading "in the blind" and you will know at the time the grades are reported.

## 6.9. Midterm grade estimate reports for students who request them

Because my grading scheme is such that it is difficult for a student to have a sense of where they are in terms of a course grade, at certain points in the term, I can deliver a report to bCourse for them if they request it. The default is NOT to generate a report. The student needs to opt in via a bCourse assignment page for each of the three portfolio components: knowledge, skill, engagement. Of these, it is likely that the engagement grade will be the most accurate since major tests may not have yet happened and because skill is usually a "finish line" grade.

- Early Assessment Report (during Week 4, before drop deadline)
- Midterm grades (Week 8, only for students who might be at risk *at that point* in a course grade "D" or "F")
- 10th-Week Assessment Report (during Week 10, before P/NP deadline)

## 7. Calculating the final course grade

The final course grade is calculated during and after finals week. Grades, once reported to the University, will never be changed by me except in the case of error. In the last 20 years, I have changed a student's grade due to an error only twice. I have never changed a grade because the student asked me to reconsider. Remember that bCourse points have no value in estimating the course grade.

To determine the final course grade, here is my typical workflow:

- I regularize the attendance record which includes checking it against the "missed classes" Google form.
- I check all assignment grades, including missing grades, and make changes as necessary.
- I re-read all emails that have "gradeissue" in the subject line, and make further changes or notes as necessary.
- I download the bCourse grade data.

This completes the bCourse work and all other work happens on the master gradebook. If there are further changes, they do not appear necessarily on bCourse.

- Using the bCourse grade data, I group assignments, create grading weights and such, in order to generate the three portfolio grades.
- I check general extra credit and major extra credit, which is probably within the engagement component, but if it is not it goes to the top-level page of grade calculations, to be reread before the final grade is submitted.
- I look at what course grades result and decide whether this is a fair reflection of the class or individuals in the class. When something seems systemically off, I rethink things. When something seems wrong for a certain student, I dig more deeply into that student's portfolio until I am satisfied.
- I let grades sit for a day when possible and repeat the above one more time.
- I submit to the University. Sometimes I announce this, often I don't. You will anyway be checking.

I rarely finish this process before the last possible day available to me, which is usually 5 days after the last day of Finals week.

## ***8. 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.

## ***9. Extra Credit***

### **9.1. 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 specific assessment where it was located.

## 9.2. "General" extra credit

These are little things that you do that indicate 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 affect sometimes.

If you have sent me something by email, I might not reply directly to you, but I will push the email over into my Wunderlist to do list, to remind me to review this at the time of the final grade. Your helpfulness has not gone unnoticed.

## 9.3. "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. The A+ course grade

I often report to the University 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.

## 11. Fairness

I make considerable effort towards treating all students equally regardless of what I think of the positions they take in their analyses, their attitude towards Japan or whatever, their personalities, politics, or any other such thing. The nature of our student-teacher relationship is also irrelevant although when I know a student better, I understand that student's efforts better and can often notice success that I might otherwise miss.

## ***12. Accommodations for disabilities***

Please see the statement on this elsewhere on this website.

## ***13. Devices***

The use of devices is not allowed in any of my courses. For the reasoning behind this, please see the statement elsewhere on this website.

## ***14. English as a second language***

Students whose native language is not English can find my class to be challenging in multiple ways. Please see the statement on this elsewhere on this website. In that statement I encourage you to discuss this with me, and I indicate that you must not use others to edit your written submissions to improve them and that to do so is defined as academically dishonest in my courses. There is an option, however. Please read about it there.

# SCORING WELL IN MY COURSES

## ***15. Grade-related suggestions and cautions***

In brief, a student's best strategy is to do his or her best in terms of learning course content, learning the skills being introduced, adjusting as necessary based on feedback, and be consistently engaged from beginning to end as defined by me via my comments elsewhere on active learning. Just being a student with motivation and curiosity is very likely to lead to a high score.

Based on watching how students perform in my classes over the years, here is one possible list of what works best then another list with some of the more frequent student behaviors that can reduce a grade.

### **15.1. Things that work well**

Be curious about course content and convey that to me. Have your own well-considered opinion. Attend class regularly and on-time. Submit material on time. Invest time in those submissions. Attend to feedback and come visit me in office hours, even if you don't really have an issue but just want to chat about course content. The better I know you, the more likely it is I will understand your communication style and see that you are showing me that you understand whatever topic is at hand. Never forget that many of my assessments will be about



process not product so avoid shortcutting to finish the work. "Active learning," "analysis," "process over product," and "content-rich" are all very important to grades. Knowing what I mean by these is very helpful.

## 15.2. Things to look out for

All Berkeley students already know how to be great students. However, in the case of my classes, their instincts might be slightly off target here and there since my approach might sometimes not be what their past experience would predict.

The below bullet list is just about those types of things, not one's already polished learning style. Please use that, too. I've listed them in the order that, based on my experience, seems to have the most frequent (not necessarily largest) grade influence for better and worse.

- **Reading assigned material and instructions carefully.** (Students who rush through my instructions rarely score an "A" in the class, I guess.)
- **Managing deadlines.** (Same as above.)
- **Regular, on-time attendance, reasonable preparation, and intelligent engagement.** These enhance or degrade grades in multiple, highly useful ways. (Students who frequently miss class often end up with somewhere in the "C" to "low-B" range, for various reasons. Student who seem not fully engaged score similarly.)
- **Not reading announcements.** (Students are responsible for any additional work requested for a class up to 24 hours before the class. Also, usually when I have finished preparing an exam I'll give hints online, or the test itself, minus the actual prompts. This allows students to read instructions ahead of time. Very helpful for test time.)
- **Insufficient time-investment**—submissions that give the impression of having been rushed. (This usually just softens the grade some but it can also be what allows a grade to pass from "C" to "D" territory.)
- **Multitasking** can poison your grade profile; avoid it at all costs. This is lower on the list because almost all students wisely avoid multitasking. (Multitasking even once will eliminate the possibility of an "A" in my course.)
- I care about **academic integrity**; make an honest effort and that will be recognized and rewarded. Try to game the system and things will not go well. Looking around the room during assessments can have a negative impact. Significant plagiarism and such can trigger an "F" for the course and a report to the University. Lesser events will generate an "F" for the assignment or assessment and will cause me to reevaluate past work and change how future work will need to be completed.

- Asking yourself about the **significance** of information, not just memorizing the information counts for a lot. (All "A" students show some level of understanding of course content beyond an accurate memorization of it and "A+" students will show a very strong understanding in this category.)

## DISCUSSING GRADES AND ESTIMATING THE COURSE GRADE

### **16. "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, not necessarily up-to-date, and sometimes misleading (in terms of predicting a final course grade). In particular, if I make a grade change for you, I might not put the change on bCourse.

### **17. "Grade estimator"**

There is a "grade estimator" on bCourse that you can use to estimate your course grade. However, in order to use it, you need good estimates for the three components of the portfolio: knowledge, skills, and engagement.

Your "knowledge" grade will be primarily based on quizzes, midterms, the final, and a term essay if there is one. Exercises are less relevant.

Your "skills" grade will often include "finish line" assignments so there will be not truly relevant grades until near the end of the term. However, feedback can help you make an educated guess as to how you might do by the end of the term. Completing all exercises in good form supports this grade.

Your "engagement" grade will rely heavily on attendance, attentiveness, timely submission of all assignments, time-investment in assignments, and the avoidance of multitasking. I will also consider the reading checks to see how involved you are in the reading assignments. In-class observations of you, office hours, and chats in the hallway can have an influence on this grade, too.

As stated elsewhere, I will calculate any or all of your portfolio components for you, during the 4th week and again during the 10th week. The default is not to do so; you will need to opt in before the opt-in deadline.

## **18. Discussing individual grades and the course grade**

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.

Any correspondence you have with me must be by email, not message, so I can archive the communication. If you want me to remember the conversation before I submit final grades, be sure to include "**gradeissue**" (as one word, if possible) in the subject line.

It is unlikely I will have time to calculate your course grade with any accuracy except during the 4th and 10th weeks, when I invite anyone to request a report. However, at any point in the semester, I am willing to give you my "sense" of where you stand. Depending on who and when, this can have considerable accuracy or very little accuracy.

## **COURSE RULES THAT AFFECT GRADES**

### **19. Academic honesty**

Academic honesty matters to me.

I want students who plan to maintain honesty to not have to worry about falling behind in grades with students who plan to be dishonest in some way. You will notice a number of procedures I use to inhibit cheating and thus allow honest students to feel supported.

Teaching involves trust, active learning involves trust, and my teaching style in particular relies on trust. I am very protective of my learning environment. Trust and distrust are both contagious within a group. Thus, students who give honest contributions to the class are much appreciated. Conversely, I feel that students who are dishonest put the entire learning environment at risk, not just their own status.

I will assume I can have a trusting relationship with you. Once you begin to try to game the system rather than just learn in more direct, simple way, that trust begins to disappear. If you look around the room during quizzes, this too, reduces my trust of you. If you plagiarize or cheat in some way, our trusting relationship is likely at an end. Sometimes students can recover from this through an office discussion and subsequent very honest behavior.

### **20. Deadlines**

Because assignments fit into a specific moment in the flow of the class, and because I need to manage the receipt and grading of assignments very strictly in order to carry out my teaching duties in the style I do them, and because I believe in treating all students with equal fairness

so all must confront the same deadlines and have the same amount of time to perform what is required, my deadlines are bright lines—they are specific moments in time without a grace period. I do not give extensions.

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.

Assignments submitted through Google Forms will use the submission time stamp.

## ***21. Late penalties***

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.

## ***22. Missed assignments***

It is usually not possible to submit an assignment once the deadline has passed. I do make some exceptions but students should expect this. It is pretty rare. I cannot conduct the class in the style I do when there are numerous assignments outside the timeline. Also, most assignments are graded comparatively and collectively rather than on an outside standard. To grade something after I have finished grading the group requires that I go back and reread the work of others. I won't do this.

## ***23. When missing a class in full or in part***

### **23.1. General comment**

I design my classes in a way that attendance is central to the learning experience, grades on assessments, and the final course grade.

If you are legitimately sick, I will support you in that and try to figure out solutions. If you are contagious you should not come to class.

However, if you are sick, you will need to communicate with me. It is much preferred that you have proof and please remember that you will not be the first student to show me "proof." Don't be dishonest by inventing documents or stories.

These are some of the reasons it is better to be in class for the large majority of class sessions:

- Quizzes, usually given without warning, cannot be made up.
- Exercises cannot be made up.
- Feedback explanations are missed. Feedback is important in my classes because my assignments often ask you to think outside the box and students might not understand the assignment well the first time around.
- Last minute changes to instructions or schedules or explanation of them are sometimes given in class and will not be repeated via email or, probably, during office hours.
- Video material is usually screened only in class and usually is not available online.
- Peer discussions and peer reviews are missed
- Lectures, if given, do not review or summarize material. They will provide focus or interpretation or additional detail that is not available elsewhere.
- Attendance records matter for the course grade.
- Support for your group matters for the course grade.

## 23.2. Partial attendance score

Active learning classrooms need everyone in place ready to go and need full participation to the end.

The default setting for late arrival on bCourse is 80% of full points. I change this to 60% because full readiness and participation is important.

I record the following as "late" on bCourse: later arrival (you are not in the designated seat at the time I call your name), departure during class, early departure from class, observed multitasking even if brief.

## 23.3. Reporting reasons for partial or missed attendance

I adjust attendance records at the end of the term and assignments associated with those sessions. Because I have many classes and many students at the same time, I have found that having everyone report to the same location is the best way for me to be sure that your attendance score is adjusted fairly and accurately.

Submit to the Google Form "Spring 2019 — When you have missed or will miss a class." (<https://goo.gl/forms/ev8oNY6hWcuHvANz2> )

The instructions there look like this:

Use this form for ....

GIVING EARLY NOTICE OF MISSING A CLASS, OR ARRIVING LATE, OR LEAVING EARLY — If you know you are going to be gone for a class session, please explain the reason here. You may or may not be given credit but without this explanation you will definitely not receive credit for the day, even if you have discussed your reason in person with me or written an email or messaged. **None of that is official. Only this form is.**

EXPLAINING LATE ARRIVAL, EARLIER DEPARTURE, AND MISSED CLASSES — Just as above, **this is the only official place to communicate your explanation.** The only really good reasons for missing class are family tragedies and serious or contagious illness. However, please share your reason here if you would like it considered. If it is critical, also email me (but the email is just to get my attention, it doesn't substitute for this form).

Typically I do not review any of this information until the end of the term, when I finalize the attendance record. I do not review emails or messages at that time, only what is recorded on this form.

**Athletes:** Please complete this form even if you have given me a letter and even if you have emailed me of your missing days — both of which are also much appreciated.

**Only you can fill out this form, for yourself.**

**Explanations must be within 48 hours after the event or they will be ignored.**

## **23.4. Early departure or late arrival due to midterms in other classes**

**I do not consider this a valid reason for missing part of the class.**

## **23.5. 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.

## **23.6. 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.

## **24. Timing of the final exam**

The final exam period will be given during its officially designated time slot. Please do not ask to take an exam early because you have travel or moving plans.

## **25. Incompletes**

I basically never give incompletes in a class.

## **GRADE TABLE**

## **26. Use this to convert my grade scale to the one I will use for the University**

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%