

Reintroduction to Writing

Grade Agreement

Throughout your career as a student, you've likely grown accustomed to making class goals that involve test scores or numerical grades with little thought of what content you're actually mastering in class. This perspective is embedded deep within the education system of the United States and, even when we realize we are a part of it, it can be difficult to leave it behind. I can tell you that you should work for a content mastery instead of a grade, but ultimately if the system is organized in a manner that prioritizes numerical grades, you'll still be working for *just* that.

Therefore, in this class we are working with a very different grading system: the grade agreement. The agreement puts into play a system that asks you to master content and put effort into the class... to work for yourself and what you are interested in... to grow as a writer, thinker, student, and citizen. There is no "F" in the agreement because, quite frankly, every single one of you has the capability to make at least a "B" in this class. However, this does not mean that you cannot get below a "B"; if you do not check off everything in the "B" category of the agreement, you will receive an automatic "F." I realize that is scary. If you try and put in effort, that is not likely to happen.

The agreement below is completely transparent and will allow you to set yourself up for success at the start of the semester. Take a look, see where you want to fall, and we will have individual discussions during the semester to help you stay on that path. The only grade you will receive is the one on your transcript at the end of the semester; everything else is about growth, feedback, and revision. **Please keep in mind that what you see in Canvas is not an accurate description of your grade.**

"In short, grades get students focused on how well they are doing based on extrinsic measures rather than being focused on what they are learning and knowing themselves how that work is going, where they are strong, and where they need to focus. A grade focus in the classroom leads to students choosing the easiest possible path to grade because students are unlikely to take the risks involved in real learning. A grade focus results in surface-level thinking and decreased student interest in what is going on in the classroom." -Dr. Sarah Zerwin

General Guidelines

Major Assignments

You will have **three major assignments** over the course of the semester. There are actually *four* major assignments, but only three that have the time for revision: the Book Chat, the Manifesto, and the Postcard Analysis. The Acquisition Proposal, because it is submitted on April 28 (last day of class) will have substantial feedback from me *before* submission – hence why I feel comfortable taking away the revision option.

When you submit or complete the assignments, I will return them to you with feedback based on the qualifications of the assignment and the quality and ethic of your work. You must submit all exercises as satisfactory (**following the Canvas codes below**) to pass the class.

At the end of the semester, the reflection assignment will ask you to defend the grade you believe you earned based on the qualifications of this agreement.

Revisions

Many of you will likely see your work marked as “In Need of Revision” -- this does not mean that you failed. Instead, it just means that you have an opportunity to grow. Writing is not a linear process. It is iterative. Learning is not a linear process. With this, you’ll be allowed to revise your projects to meet the standard of “Satisfactory.”

Here are the guidelines for revising a major assignment:

- Must be submitted by May 3; the deadline for P1 Manifesto revisions is March 10.
- Must include a **250(ish) word letter** (to me, Dr. H) on the first page of the document that addresses a reflection of your growth from previous feedback, what changes you made, and why you feel those changes have improved your draft.
- In this letter, must include reference to *The Business Writer* Ch. 1, which contains tips for revision. This reading will be posted in PDF to Canvas.
- Must make **SUBSTANTIAL** changes to content and expression (either writing or oral)
- Must send Dr. H the revised doc, original doc, & letter in an email

Canvas Codes

These codes display how each item will translate within Canvas. These are NOT grade letters.

Classwork to Canvas Translation	
Meaning	Canvas Code
<p>No submission or past submission deadline Either an assignment that is never submitted, or is submitted one week following the deadline of the assignment (without an approved extension)</p> <p>Because I am willing to work with students on deadline extensions, I will not accept a project that is over a week late. This does not apply to one-on-one extensions.</p>	0
<p>Incomplete An assignment that meets one or more of the following: is submitted but did not meet the length requirement; is missing a required component (yes, this even counts for formatting or works cited pages); demonstrates little engagement with the assignment criteria for evaluation; contains excessive semantic/syntax errors that prevent me from understanding your ideas; does not display a competent level of performance.</p> <p>An incomplete project may be revised.</p>	50
<p>In need of revision You’ll likely receive this, especially on the short essay or the annotated bibliography, because initial drafts are almost always in need of revision. This means that you met</p>	75

some, if not most, of the evaluation criteria but a revision is needed to be satisfactory.	
<p>Satisfactory (or Complete if related to class/homework)</p> <p>For smaller assignments, 100 means that the assignment is complete for full credit.</p> <p>For major assignments “Satisfactory” means that you have met all of the criteria points for evaluation.</p>	100

Grade Agreement Checklist

Why are F, C-, C, and B- not on here? **Because you all have the ability to achieve at least a B** in this class as long as you put in the effort. You are allowed unlimited revisions within the time frame of our class calendar, so you will have many opportunities to receive “satisfactory.”

You are **guaranteed a B** in the class if you:

- Submit all assignments (major *and* minor) with at least a mark of “In Need of Revision” (75 in Canvas)
- Miss no more than four homework or classwork assignments due in Canvas
- Participate as a productive, respectful, and critical member of our class through attending class meetings, discussions, chats, and activities, both synchronous and asynchronous¹

To work towards a B+, A-, A, or A+ you must put in extra work for the class:

You will receive a **B+** if you check off everything for a B and...:

- You receive “Satisfactory” on your all three Major Assignments
- You receive “Satisfactory” on your Acquisition Proposal
- You receive “Satisfactory” on your annotated bibliography as part of P3

You will receive a A- if you check off everything for B and...:

- You receive “Satisfactory” on your all three Major Assignments
- You receive “Satisfactory” on your Acquisition Proposal
- You receive “Satisfactory” on your annotated bibliography as part of P3
- You perform and complete one of the “Level-Up” projects below

You will receive a A if you check off everything for B and...:

- You receive “Satisfactory” on your all three Major Assignments
- You receive “Satisfactory” on your Acquisition Proposal
- You receive “Satisfactory” on your annotated bibliography as part of P3
- You perform and complete two of the “Level-Up” projects below

You will receive an A+ if you check off everything for a B and...:

- You receive “Satisfactory” on your all three Major Assignments

¹ See the engaged participation section for more elaboration.

- You receive “Satisfactory” on your Acquisition Proposal
- You receive “Satisfactory” on your annotated bibliography as part of P3
- You perform and complete three of the “Level-Up” options below

Level-Up Projects:

These are projects that will up your game into the “A” range of the course. To receive an A- you must select one. To go for that A you must select two. For the A+ -- the highest possible grade – you must complete three.

In order to complete a project, you must contact me about the project you’d like to do and receive my approval. In that communication we will also go over the specifications for the project ideas.

Project Ideas:

- Listen to a podcast episode or watch a documentary relevant to the class’s subject matter and write a review of it
- Investigate propaganda posters from the Progressive Era and write a visual analysis of one of the images.
- Write a memoir-style piece about a moment in the course material that caught your attention or surprised you.
- Go for a walk (in a safe and not crowded area because of Covid precautions) and just observe your surroundings, taking field notes as you go. What did you notice? Think about how you might convey the physical environment in a “letter home”. Write that letter.
- Find a recent op-ed about education, literacy, language learning, or book banning. Analyze the op-ed using rhetorical tools.
- Attend one of the virtual Zoom talks on offer at Johns Hopkins or in person that is related to the course and write a summary and review of that talk. (I will occasionally forward events to the class that I think are relevant, but you can also find your own)
- Create a virtual time capsule with four items from the COVID-19 pandemic to be opened when you are 70 years old. In a document, include images of these items with a description for context.
- Level Up 2/3 only: reflect on how your understanding of your arguments from your manifesto has changed (if it has!) over the course of the semester.
- Propose and do your own project!

Important Grade Agreement Due Dates:

- **February 16:** one level-up project must be received. I will not accept three level-up projects after Feb. 16.
- **March 10:** If you’re going to revise the Manifesto, it must be turned in by March 10 at 11.59...*unless* you ask for an extension from me.
- **April 7:** second level-up project must be received. I will not accept two level up projects after April 7.
- **May 3:** All revisions of major assignments are emailed to Dr. H by 11.59pm if you want to earn credit.
- **May 6:** Third level-up project must be received.