

## **Grade Contract and Reassessments**

- **Grade contract due Friday, September 3**
- **First contract reassessment due Friday, October 8**
- **Second contract reassessment due Friday, November 5**
- **Turn in via Blackboard**

### **Grade Contract: Due Friday, September 3**

You will determine the grade you will receive in this course by fulfilling a contract you will turn in on Friday, September 3. I will read your contract and either confirm acceptance or, if needed, suggest adjustments and stipulations.

There are no specific length or formatting requirements for this assignment; you can structure your contract however you would like. It should include the following:

1. The requirements you will meet in order to receive the grade for which you've contracted, including lists of the specific reading responses and keyword analyses you plan to complete. You can change your mind about which specific assignments you complete if the need arises as the semester goes on; as long as you complete the required work, you will receive the grade you contracted for. This is just an initial plan.
2. A brief discussion of your attendance and participation goals for the semester (no more than ~1-2 paragraphs). How many absences are reasonable and acceptable, given the grade you want to earn in this class and your schedule and other commitments this semester? How do you plan to fulfill the requirement to, as listed below, "participate actively in class activities and discussions"? For some examples of what constitutes active participation in class, see the "Participation" section of the course syllabus. You should seek to challenge yourself but also remain realistic with these goals. For instance, if you often don't speak in class, you could make it your goal to contribute something to class discussion at least once per week, and/or to come to office hours at least three times during the semester to discuss course material with me one-on-one. Conversely, if you tend to contribute a lot to class discussion, you could make a goal to wait to make your second or third contribution in each class until others who haven't yet spoken have had a chance to speak. If you find that your class attendance tends to trail off halfway through the semester, make it a goal to miss only 1 class each month, etc.
3. Any adjustments you already know you would like to make to assignment deadlines. If, in looking at your schedule for other classes and thinking about how you will balance your commitments this semester, you already know that you would like to take an extension on an assignment's due date (or several assignments' due dates), this is the place to indicate that. Please state the assignment and your suggested due date. In general, you should aim to submit assignments within a week of their listed due dates. Again, you can also request deadline extensions throughout the semester; this is just an initial plan. See the "Late Work" section of the course syllabus for more information on late work.

### **Contract Details**

To fulfill any grade contract, you must do the following, which should nonetheless be specified in the contract you submit to me on September 3. When writing your self-assessment at the end of the semester, you should describe how you have met these requirements (especially #1) in addition to the grade-specific requirements:

1. Come to class having completed and prepared to discuss any assigned readings, films, or other media. Participate actively in class activities and discussions, making observations and asking questions that help the class think together.
2. Complete reading response #9 (this response is required for everyone).
3. Revise contractual assignments as necessary until both you and I consider them “Satisfactory.”
4. Complete a final self-assessment demonstrating that your work has met the agreed requirements, submitting it to me along with your final project.

### **“A” Contract**

To contract for an “A” in this course, you agree to:

1. Attend class extremely consistently (missing no more than 3 or so classes, barring illness or emergencies, is a good goal).
2. Complete at least 8 “Satisfactory” reading responses over the course of the semester, including response #9 (required for everyone).
3. Complete two “Satisfactory” keyword analyses.
4. Complete a “Satisfactory” final project.

### **“B” Contract**

To contract for an “B” in this course, you agree to:

1. Attend class consistently (missing no more than 4 or so classes, barring illness or emergencies, is a good goal).
2. Complete at least 7 “Satisfactory” reading responses over the course of the semester, including response #9 (required for everyone).
3. Complete one “Satisfactory” keyword analysis.
4. Complete a “Satisfactory” final project.

### **“C” Contract**

To contract for an “C” in this course, you agree to:

1. Attend class consistently (missing no more than 5 or so classes, barring illness or emergencies, is a good goal).
2. Complete at least 4 “Satisfactory” reading responses over the course of the semester, including response #9 (required for everyone).
3. Complete one “Satisfactory” keyword analysis.
4. Complete a “Satisfactory” final project.

## **“D” and “F” Grades**

You can earn a “D” or “F” grade if you fail to meet your contractual obligations in a systematic way. A “D” grade denotes some minimal fulfilling of the contract. An “F” is absence of enough “Satisfactory” work to warrant passing of the course.

## **Contract Reassessments: Due Friday, October 8 and Friday, November 5**

Twice during the semester, you will evaluate your work so far and compare it against what you agreed in your grade contract. In these moments you can also take the opportunity to request an adjustment to your contract in either direction. If you find that you will be unable to meet the obligations of your contract, you may decide to move to the next lowest grade and its requirements. On the other hand, if you find that you’ve been performing above the obligations of your contract, you may decide to fulfill the requirements for the next higher grade. You can also use this moment to suggest alternative ways of fulfilling your contracted grade. Your contract reassessments will also allow both you and me to make sure that we are each keeping track of the course work you have completed so far accurately.

As with the grade contract itself, there are no specific length or formatting requirements for this assignment; you can structure it however you would like. But each contract reassessment should include:

1. A list of the class days you have missed. I am asking you to include this as a way to help you stay on track with the class. You do not need to offer excuses or explanations for missed days, but again, you should talk to me if you find yourself in a situation that will require extended absences from class.
2. A list of all assignments you have completed so far and the assignments you plan to complete throughout the rest of the semester (this can differ from the assignments you originally contracted to complete, but even if it’s the same, you should nevertheless include them here again).
3. If you want to request a contract adjustment either up or down: An indication that you are requesting an adjustment to your contract and a brief explanation of why you would like to make this adjustment (1-2 sentences, you can be pretty general here).
4. If you want to suggest alternative ways of fulfilling your contract: The assignment(s) you want to complete as alternative ways to fulfill the requirements of a contracted grade. You should give this assignment a name, describe it and its requirements in some detail (including a prompt, if necessary), and provide a suggested due date (~1-2 paragraphs). See the following paragraphs for more info on this option.

You can suggest alternative ways of fulfilling your contract if the following 2 conditions are met: a) it is too late in the semester to complete existing course assignments to fulfill the requirements of a particular contracted grade (i.e., you have already missed too many classes or failed to complete too many reading responses); and b) there is enough time remaining in the semester to complete the assignment you describe while also finishing already existing course requirements (and, ideally, enough time for me to give you feedback on this assignment).

If you suggest an alternative assignment, the assignment you suggest should be roughly equivalent to the course assignment(s) it is replacing. For instance, let’s say that you originally contracted for a “B” in the course. But by Nov 5 (when you will submit your second contract reassessment), you have decided that you want to go for an “A.” You have completed 5 reading responses so far, but an “A”

requires 9 reading responses, and there are only 3 reading responses left in the semester. Since it's no longer possible for you to fulfill that portion of the requirements, you can suggest an alternative additional reading response, the prompt for which you will devise, to complete by the end of the semester. Or, if you want to "make up" 2 reading responses and 3 class absences, let's say, you can devise a longer, more substantial assignment that covers these bases. As always, I am happy to discuss your ideas for alternative assignments with you, and if you have questions about what an "equivalent" assignment would look like, I strongly recommend you talk to me.