

Course Designs

The first course we examine is a graduate nursing course, Leadership in Healthcare Systems, developed and taught by Janet Craig, MSN, MBA, DHA, to prepare nurses for healthcare system administration (personal communication, November 7, 2011). At this level, the only passing grades are an A or a B, and she has a long list of outcomes on which she assesses all her students, whichever grade they pursue. A couple of them ask students to describe theories, frameworks, models, and the local healthcare system, but most are very high level: applying; analyzing; problem solving; developing strategies and recommendations; evaluating programs, departments, and organizations; synthesizing multiple resources; resolving ethical issues; and communicating effectively. Whether vying for an A or a B, all students must do the following:

1. Demonstrate preparation for and active participation in class discussions and activities.
2. Demonstrate presentation and writing skills consistent with graduate student work.
3. Conduct a scholarly multidisciplinary literature review of one self-selected organizational or leadership theory (guide provided). . . . Submit your plan and keywords for prior approval by the third week of the course.

Then for a B, students must also meet these requirements:

1. Write a group paper and make a class presentation demonstrating a comprehensive organizational, department, or program assessment with formulation of strategic objectives, alternatives, and recommendations customized to the community context; the organization's identified mission, vision, and values; and the health issues of the community's population. . . .
2. Demonstrate application of course content combined with critical thinking through preparations and presentation of one of the assigned healthcare cases in the textbook. . . . You may work with one of your class colleagues to benefit from peer review.
3. Pass all quizzes with a minimum average score of 75 and the final exam with a minimum score of 80. (You may eliminate one quiz score of your choice to raise your average score if necessary.)

For an A, students do an organizational, department, or program assessment with a different emphasis and somewhat more work in the form of a second case analysis and a summary of a book:

1. Write a group paper and make a class presentation demonstrating a comprehensive organizational, department, or program assessment applying course content and synthesizing external and internal assessments to arrive

at a SWOT analysis, critical success factors, recommended posture and positioning strategies, strategic goals, and recommendations for key value chain initiatives. . . .

2. Demonstrate application of course content combined with critical thinking through preparations and presentation of one of the assigned healthcare cases in the textbook, and do a written analysis of a *second* case. . . . (May be done with a class colleague.)
3. Select one of the books listed under “Selected Reading” on p. 7 of this syllabus and write an executive summary (2–4 pages) to share with the class. (May be done with a class colleague.)
4. Pass all quizzes with a minimum average score of 80 and the final exam with a minimum score of 85. (You may eliminate one quiz score of your choice to raise your average score if necessary.)

The additional work adds to the student’s content mastery and provides more application practice.

We glimpsed at one aspect of this second course, June Pilcher’s *Health Psychology*, in chapter 5 when we addressed how to set specs (personal communication, May 3, 2008). Here we examine her broader grading structure. For her students, their grades depend on the amount of work they complete, which reflects their content mastery. But their grades also take into consideration their class attendance and the timeliness of their submission of assignments. Their attendance is important because discussion is integral to every class meeting. Pilcher’s syllabus sets out the following terms:

Assignments in this course will not be graded in the typical “point” fashion. Instead, each assignment will be graded pass/fail. The number of assignments that you pass will determine your course grade:

- Minimum requirements for an A:
 1. May miss up to two classes. Be on time and prepared for all other classes.
 2. Complete and hand in all bi-weekly reflection papers. (Students write 250–300 word reflections on what they are learning in the course and how they are applying it in everyday life). May hand in one paper late.
 3. Complete and hand in all summaries of assigned readings from *You and Health Psychology*. May hand in two sets of summaries late. (Students read the assigned chapter from *You* and write a 300–350 word summary of the two most important points of the chapter and relate the information to their life and experiences. Students also read one of the two articles assigned from *Health Psychology* and write a 300–350 word summary of the main point of the article and relate the information to their life and experiences.)

4. Complete the health behaviors project. Must attend April 30 presentations. (Students to apply the course material to their personal health-related choices by altering a health-related behavior in themselves.)
 5. Read, summarize, and discuss *Optimal Human Being*. Must turn in summary and reflection no later than March 15. (Students write a 1,400–1,500 word summary and reflection relating the information in the book to their life and their expectations for the future.) Must attend class on March 29 to discuss the book with the other students who have decided to earn an A in the course.
- Minimum requirements for a B:
 1. May miss up to three classes. Be on time and prepared for all other classes.
 2. Complete and hand in all bi-weekly reflection papers. May hand in two papers late.
 3. Complete and hand in all summaries of assigned readings from *You and Health Psychology*. May hand in three sets of summaries late.
 4. Complete the health behaviors project. Must attend April 30 presentations.
 - Minimum requirements for a C:
 1. May miss up to four classes. Be on time and prepared for all other classes.
 2. Complete and hand in all bi-weekly reflection papers. May hand in three papers late.
 3. Complete and hand in all summaries of assigned readings from *You and Health Psychology*. May hand in four sets of summaries late.
 - Minimum requirements for a D:
 1. May miss up to six classes. Be on time and prepared for all other classes.
 2. Complete and hand in all bi-weekly reflection papers. May hand in four papers late.
 3. Complete and hand in all summaries of assigned readings from *You and Health Psychology*. May hand in six sets of summaries late.

Students must meet all requirements for each grade category to earn that grade. For example, if you miss one class, complete the health requirements project, read and discuss the *Optimal Human Being* book, complete all reflection papers on time, but turn in three sets of summaries from *You and Health Psychology* late, you will earn a B in the course. This may seem “picky” but I have to define clear criteria for each grade category and then hold to those criteria for this grading system to work.

The grading schema of the third course example, Dr. Janis L. Miller’s undergraduate International Business Management course, also includes class attendance, but it is quite different from Craig’s and Pilcher’s. It combines a point system that applies to the exams and extra credit with additional

+ All assignments (higher hurdles) are tied to course learning outcomes.

Grading Structure: Computer Science 201 (Higher Hurdles)

Grade	
A	Working solutions to at least 10 problems from the most challenging list. Pass on three exams.
B	Working solutions to at least 10 problems from the intermediate list. Pass on three exams.
C	Working solutions to at least 10 problems from the regular list. Pass on three exams.
D	Working solutions to 7-9 regular assignments. Pass on two exams.
Notes	Number of problems <u>required</u> for any grade increases by 2 if a solution is submitted up to 2 days late, and by 4 if 4 days late.

*Rewards more advanced learning.