

Grading Contract for a B

This course uses a form of grading called **labor-based contract grading**. **There are no points or letter grades in this course, aside from the final letter grade you earn at the end.** The premise of contract grading is that if you do the work/labor required to earn a B, you will see *enormous* gains in your learning. Traditional grading systems encourage you to work for “points,” as if learning were a game whose goal was to get a certain grade. Contract grading redirects your focus on the **process of learning**. Contract grading provides you with the reassurance that if you complete all of the assigned work (the labor), you will earn a B. This can free you up to focus on your learning, not your grade.

If you have never worked with contracted grading in the past (or even if you have), I recommend that you read the **preamble** by Prof. Asao B. Inoue which outlines why contracted grades lead to a more equitable course.

Our Grading Contract for a B

Adapted from Asao B. Inoue (2019)

You are guaranteed a course grade of “B” if you meet all of the following conditions.

- **Participation.** You agree to fully participate in our scheduled class sessions and their activities and assignments, which means you will need to be present in class as often as you can. Most activities will be used during class, so coming to class without them done means they won't be of value to you. If you are absent, you have notified the Professor beforehand (when possible) and worked out a plan for continuation (required).
- **Lateness.** You agree to come on time or early to our Virtual Google Class Discussion at 9:35am CST. “Walking” into class late 1-2 times in a quarter is understandable, but even in a digital space, it is highly disruptive.
- **Sharing and Collaboration.** You agree to work cooperatively and collegially in groups when asked. Give thoughtful peer feedback in our Google Classroom (and track that feedback in the comment log) and work faithfully with your group/partner on other collaborative tasks if they arise.
- **Revisions.** When the job is to revise your thinking and work, you will reshape, extend, complicate, or substantially clarify your ideas—or relate your ideas to new things. You

won't just correct or touch up. Revisions must somehow respond to or consider seriously your colleagues' or the professor's assessments in order to be revisions.

- **Copy Editing.** When the job is for the final submission of a draft, your work must be well copy-edited—that is, you must spend significant time in your labor process to look just at spelling and grammar. It's fine to get help in copy editing.

All work/labor will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- **Complete and On-Time Work.** You agree to turn in on time and in the appropriate manner complete essays, writing, or other labor assigned that meet all of our agreed-upon expectations. This means you'll be honest about completing labor instructions for each assignment, including those that ask you to honor particular time commitments (for example, "write for 10 minutes," etc.) and meet all minimums.
- **Late/Incomplete Work.** During the semester, you may, however, turn in a few assignments late. The exact number of those late assignments is stipulated in the table on the last section of this contract.

Late or incomplete work is defined as any work or document due that is turned in AFTER the due date/time but by Sunday on the week it was assigned. For example, if some work (say a daily response) was due on Monday, September 7 at 9:35am CST, then that piece must be turned in by 11:59 pm on Sunday the 13th. If you miss something on Wednesday, September 9th at 9:35am CST, that piece must also be turned in by 11:59 pm on Sunday the 13th. Once it becomes Monday, this "resets" and any submitted work becomes "Missed."

- **Missed Work.** If you turn in late work AFTER Sunday on the week it was due, then it will be considered "missed work," which is a more serious mark against your grading contract. This is due to the fact that all assignments are used in class soon after they are due, so turning in something beyond this period means it is assured to be less useful, and its absence has the potential to hurt your colleagues in class.
- **Ignored Work.** You agree not to ignore any work expected of you. Ignored work is any work unaccounted for in the semester—that is, I have no record of you doing it or turning it in. Ignoring the work that is so crucial to one's development as a learner in our community is bad and unacceptable, so accumulating any "ignored work" will keep you

from meeting our contract expectations (see the table in Final Assessment Breakdown Section).

To Earn Higher than a B

You will earn higher than a B in the class (B+, A-, A) if you do all of what is required for a B *and* put in extra work/labor that benefits you *and the whole class*. Your peers are your primary audience for this work. By the end of our course, you can complete three of the following according to the specifications and labor requirements of that assignment. Each one is worth a 1/3 of a letter grade (completing one = a B to a B+; two = B to an A-; three = B to an A).

If you are aiming for an A, the professor recommends that you complete your first two assignments *prior* to the end of the first half of the course to make things easier later on.

1. **Execute a creative project that engages with course material.** This can take the form of creative writing, a piece of music, a film, a building design, or a work of art in any medium. Regardless of what you create, you must also produce a brief written rationale about the creative choices that you are willing to share with your peers. This can be done as an expansion of Team Assignment #4. **[Can be completed as a TEAM]**
2. **Produce an oral presentation** on a specific work of architecture modeled after the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *82nd & 5th* project. You are responsible for submitting a recording of your delivery in addition to your slides. Presentations should be 3 minutes in length.
3. **Draft a well-researched annotated bibliography** that explores a subject *beyond* what we have covered as a course that can be provided as a research resource for our class. Entries will need to be in Chicago Manual of Style and annotations should give classmates an indication of the content/argument contained within.
4. **Create a digital humanities project** about an aspect of world architecture. You can choose technology like StoryMap JS or Timeline JS, which are simple to learn for first-time users, or even do a project on Google Maps. Your project will be shared with the rest of the class (and the world through the world-wide-web!) **[Can be completed as a TEAM]**
5. **Craft a detailed study guide** about a topic of architectural history related to what we are covering in class, complete with a well-designed one-page graphic handout that your

peers can print and use for reference. You can design this handout digitally or by-hand (and scan it).

6. **Revise and expand an Individual Core Assignment.** A revision is not simply responding to professor/editorial feedback, but reworking ideas, reorganizing thoughts and pushing yourself to take greater risks in your writing. You should revise and double the length of your paper if you pursue this option, and tailor it to your peers as your primary audience.
7. **Create a virtual tour of an architectural complex.** Use any skills at your disposal to create a virtual tour of an architectural complex. This cannot be just of a single building, but rather, should explore how multiple structures are related to one another. You might think about producing a “follow-along” audio guide or a map as part of your tour. **[Can be completed as a TEAM]**
8. **Building community through commenting.** Much of this virtual class is dependent on peer engagement with each other’s work. This project involves commenting on other students’ higher than a B work with “invested” commenting. Think about these as a series of mini reviews!
9. **Exemplary labor.** This “extra labor” does not actually require anything extra of you. If by our last class, you have no late, missed, or ignored assignments, and do not use a gimme, then you will earn an extra $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade.

In all cases, you should consult with the Professor if you want to pursue these options. Each option needs to be completed fully in order to count and you can only complete one assignment in each category (no repeats). You should review the individual prompt and requirements carefully, and clarify with the Professor if anything is unclear.

Final Assessment Breakdown & Contributing Factors

Below is a table that shows how late/incomplete/missing/or ignored work affects your successful compliance with our contract. The **first table** corresponds to the first “half” of our course and will be used to determine your midterm grade vis-a-vis our contract. The **second table** is the table used to calculate your final grade at the end of the course. It includes your progress from the beginning of the semester.

First Half (Midterm Grade Criteria):

	# of Late/Incomplete Assignments	# of Missed Assignments	# of Ignored Assignments
A	4	1	0
B	4	1	0
C	5	1	0
D	6	2	1
F	7	3	2

Full Semester (Cumulative; Includes Work from Start to End):

	# of Late/Incomplete Assignments	# of Missed Assignments	# of Ignored Assignments
A	6	1	0
B	6	1	0
C	7	2	0
D	8	3	1
F	9	4	2

You will notice that the thresholds for an A and a B are identical and that all assignments regardless of type are weighted the same. The main difference between an A grade and a B grade is the extra labor you put in. If you are aiming for a grade higher than a B, please consult the section “To Earn Higher than a B.”

Extensions. The professor is allowing you to submit a certain number of assignments late/missed in this course if something comes up or should you need more time for any reason. Because of this, please **do not** email with a request for an extension. Simply submit it as soon as you can (preferably before Sunday on the week it is due so it is “late” and not “missed”) and **do not let it become “ignored work.”**

Gimme. You may use a gimme *for any reason* and *at any time*, but only once in the semester before the final exam period. It will allow you to move an assignment from the “late/incomplete” category to the “on-time/complete”; or from the “missed” category to “late” category. Please keep in mind that the grading contract is a public, social contract. For this reason, a gimmie does *not* allow you to **ignore** (not complete) any work that is expected of everyone in the class. It is up to the student to request a gimme and you can do it through this [Google Form](#). The professor will confirm your approval.

Exemplary Labor. If by our last class, you have no late, missed, or ignored assignments, then you will earn an extra $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade (equal to one item in the Section “To Earn Higher than a B”) to your final course grade. This rule is meant to reward those students who engage in all the labor of the course in the fullest spirit asked of them and demonstrate themselves to be exemplary class citizens. You may use your one gimme in the course and still qualify.

By staying in this course and attending class, you accept this contract and agree to abide by it. I (Christina M. Spiker) also agree to abide by the contract and administer it fairly and equitably.