# Labor-Based Grading

Instead of using conventional forms of assessment on projects, I will use labor-based grading in this course. Labor-based grading provides opportunities for students to significantly invest in their writing and researching practices in expansive (more productive) ways and provides opportunities for students to experience writing as process – a cyclical and nonlinear sequence of stages to produce any kind of text. In contrast to traditional forms of assessment which score the final product of a project in a writing-intensive course, students can be successful in this course based upon the amount of labor they complete in the course even if the submitted product of a major project (or even minor assignments) is a work in progress – all writing and researching are works in progress. Most importantly, labor-based grading recognizes, acknowledges, and celebrates all students’ writing journeys, which includes past, current, and future experiences, perspectives, identities, orientations, languages, and dialects.

**Please note that “work in progress” does not equate to “incomplete” projects that overlook critical components of assignment guidelines or projects that completely diverge outside of the assignment guidelines.**

Because this course is a labor-based course, you will determine what grade you plan to aim for in the course – A, B, C, D, F – based upon the criteria which can be found below. I am more than happy to collaborate with students when it comes to establishing professional and personal goals to meet a particular labor-based grade.

## Major Projects:

For this course, you will significantly complete three major projects:

1. Project One (Writing for Audiences): For this project, you will draft a business letter and press release aimed at two different audiences. More information about the major project can be found in its corresponding assignment guidelines.
2. Project Two (Online Marketing Solutions): For this project, you will draft a presentation pitch deck and script to strengthen the online presence of a chosen organization. More information about the major project can be found in its corresponding assignment guidelines.
3. Portfolio – For the final project, you will significantly revise either Project One or Project Two and draft a self-analytical business cover letter that will explore your process of drafting, researching, and revising the chosen project. More information about the portfolio can be found in its corresponding assignment guidelines.

Please note that incomplete (or not completed) major projects will be counted as “missed,” which means that these assignments will not (and cannot) fulfill the labor necessary in your labor-based contract.

## Class Participation:

Although class participation assignments are subject to change, for example, inclement weather, here is a list of some of some of the class participation assignments you will complete in the course:

1. Writing Sample (Self-Analytical) Memo: You will analyze a previous writing document either drafted for school or work. You will draft your analytical findings in the form and style of a business memo.
2. Discussion Boards: You will fully participate in the discussion boards based upon the directions that are provided.
3. Process Memos: You will fully explore your writing and researching processes, including potential use of AI, for each major project. You will draft your exploration in the form and style of a business memo.

Please note that incomplete (or not completed) assignments will be counted as “missed,” which means that these assignments will not (and cannot) fulfill the labor necessary in your labor-based contract.

## Labor Grades:

The default grade for the course is a B (3.1 GPA). If you significantly complete all major projects and fully participate in class participation assignments, only missing two class participation assignments, you will receive a B (3.1) in the course.

To earn an A (4.0) in this course, students will not only have to complete all class participation assignments but also complete additional work:

1. Additional Peer Review Feedback – You will provide feedback to two additional peers for each Peer Review Discussion Board – **total of 4 additional responses**.
2. Audio Recording: For the last major project (Project Two) in the course, you will audio record your presentation pitch deck.
3. Infographic – For the first major project in the course, you will draft an infographic in Canva alongside your two other required documents – business letter, press release, and bibliography.
4. Reflective Analysis – You will watch the Netflix documentary *Crip Camp* and draft a contextual analysis of the documentary.
5. Exemplary Labor – Although this course is a writing-intensive course, labor in a writing-intensive course can come in a myriad of forms. Although not an exhaustive list, here is a brief list of exemplary forms of labor: 1.) Seeing me during virtual office hours during the semester to receive feedback on major projects; 2.) Incorporating additional sources into one’s projects that go beyond the required amount in the assignment guidelines; 3.) Incorporating or integrating rhetorically persuasive visual design elements in a major project; 4.) Copy editing a peer’s draft of a major project; and/or 5.) Creating a video response to a peer in a discussion board assignment.

**If you plan to complete any of the additional labor mentioned above, you must notify me of the additional labor so that I can help ensure that the labor not only meets your goals for the course but does not compromise your ability to do labor elsewhere in the course or in your other courses.** I recommend visiting me during office hours or, at the very least, emailing me so that I am aware of the additional labor. If there are other forms of labor that you would like for us to think through when it comes to possible forms of labor in the course, I encourage you to visit me during virtual office hours.

For every item you complete on the list above, your contracted grade will improve by .3 grade points. If you meet the conditions for a B (3.1), your grade in the course can improve in the following ways:

* 1 item completed = a course grade of 3.4 GPA
* 2 items completed = a course grade of 3.7 GPA
* 3 items completed = a course grade of 4.0 GPA

If you are aiming toward a C- grade (2.1), or lower, the same .3 movement up the grade ladder applies by completing the items found in the A-contract. Thus, your course grade equates to 2.4, 2.7, 3.0, 3.3, etc., based upon the number of items completed.

Below is a table that shows the main components that will shape your fulfillment of your designated contract:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | # Missed Major Projects | # Missed Class Participation Assigns. |
| A (4.0) | 0 | 0 |
| B (3.1) | 0 | 2 |
| C (2.1) | 0 | 4 |
| D (1.1) | 1 | 6 |
| F (0.0) | 2 | 8 |

Although I will record the labor that students complete in the course, students also need to keep track of their labor so that they know exactly where they stand in the course. Students need to take initiative in tracking their own labor in the course to ensure that they are fulfilling the grading contract that they plan to fulfill. In other words, I will not notify you to remind you of projects or assignments that you need to complete to fulfill your labor-based contract or warn you that you may be at risk of not meeting a certain labor-based grading contract. **In short, it is the responsibility of students to manage what they need to complete to fulfill any particularly labor-based grading contract.**

## Late Work

I do not accept late work for class participation assignments. As illustrated in the table above and discussed in the additional forms of labor section (up above), students can still be successful in the course even if they miss minor assignments. Students can complete additional forms of labor in other areas, although I must be notified of your plan to take on additional labor.

For major projects, every student has one free 24-hour pass to extend the due date of one major project. **Students must notify me if they plan to use their one 24-hour pass. *If students do not notify me, the project will be considered late.*** For each day a major project is late, .3 of your labor will be deducted from your labor contract, which means that students who submit projects extremely late may have to complete other forms of additional labor to make up for the loss of labor, to the extent it is feasible within the limited time we have. Finally, university-excused absences will always be honored in this class; however, for university-excused absences to be honored, students must provide documentation from the Office of Dean of Students.