

Grade contract for INFM 600

Informatics Program Faculty

We will use a contract for grading in this course. The first reason for this is that the senior project itself *places a strong emphasis on process over final product*. Fulfilling the contract ensures that you will have followed the process laid out for success for your senior project. The second reason for using a grading contract is to *give students more control over their final grade*. By emphasizing the concrete activities that students need to complete, the contract positions students to assume greater responsibility for the outcomes of the course.

Indeed, it is possible and may be likely for a project to not work out as planned, and the informatics faculty prefers that students are not disincentivized from aiming high for their projects. With this grading contract, your learning will be assessed on the process you engage with, not just how the final product turned out. The final reason is to *change the motivation for working on assignments*. Rather than doing assignments for a grade, the contract emphasizes doing the assignments for their own sake. With a grading contract, you can do assignments as a way to learn rather than as a means to earn a particular grade.

The default grade for this course is a "B." Students who do all that's asked of them in the manner and spirit it is asked, work through the processes established during the semester, and complete assigned work according to course deadlines will earn a "B."

Why a "B" and not an "A"? Because excellence is worthy of recognition. In order to get an "A," students have to make their time and effort pay off by creating written and spoken works of genuine, recognizable excellence. Excellence results from effort, but not all effort produces excellence. Students will be afforded the opportunity at various points in the senior project process to demonstrate that their performance throughout the course is worthy of being deemed excellent.

To earn a B for this course, you must:

1. *Meet regularly with your Senior Project Readers:* You will discuss with your senior project reader about the frequency and format of meetings during the INFM 610, and follow the plan throughout the semester.
2. *Do all assignments:* You must thoughtfully complete all assignments according to the *Senior Project Guidelines* and in consultation with your readers.
 - a. Senior Project Proposal
 - b. Oral Proposal Defense
 - c. Progress Portfolio
3. *Meet deadlines:* You meet due dates and criteria for all assignments.
 - a. Senior Project Proposal
 - b. Oral Proposal Defense

c. Progress Portfolio

4. *Revise and copy-edit your writing and your project deliverable(s)*: Revision means substantially clarifying your ideas, reorganizing your argument, rethinking your claims, strengthening your evidence, deepening your research, adjusting your style, and/or reimagining your relationship to your audience. Proofread final drafts to eliminate distracting surface errors and typos. Final drafts do not have to be perfect, but they should demonstrate significant effort to polish your work.

Breaking the contract:

1. *Minor Breeches*: You will be allowed **three** minor missteps over the course of the semester. These are your three mulligans. Minor missteps include, but are not limited to: missing a planned meeting with your comp reader(s), submitting an assignment (e.g., a comp chapter draft) late but within one week of the deadline, or a drop in the quality of your work. Each additional minor breach (i.e., starting with the fourth minor breach) will lower your grade by $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade. Thus your fourth breach would lower your grade to a B-, a fifth breach would lower it to a C+. Grades lowered by minor breeches can still be improved with an exceptionally strong portfolio. However, you cannot earn an A in the course if you have >3 minor breeches.
2. *Intermediate Breeches*: There are no mulligans for intermediate breeches. Each intermediate breach will automatically lower your final grade by $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade. Intermediate breeches include: failing to revise a chapter of your manuscript, missing more than 2 planned meetings with your comp reader(s), handing in an assignment (e.g., a comp chapter draft) more than one week after the deadline but less than 2 weeks after the deadline, or handing in assignments that don't show signs of sustain effort or investment. Grades lowered by intermediate breeches can still be improved with an exceptionally strong portfolio. However, you cannot earn an A in the course if you have an intermediate breach.
3. *Major Breeches*: Like intermediate breeches, there are no mulligans for major breeches. A major breach will automatically lower your final grade by a full letter grade. Major breeches include: failing to submit an assignment, failing to make progress on your project deliverables, missing 4 or more planned meetings with your reader(s), or plagiarism. You cannot earn a B in the course if you have a major breach. If any of the three major assignments are not submitted, your grade will be an F.

Getting an A:

1. You meet all the requirements for the B grade as listed above;
2. You did not have an intermediate or major breach;
3. You produced major assignments that are of exceptionally high quality or originality.

By signing below, I indicate that I have read and understood the syllabus, course policies and grading contract requirements for INFM 600. I agree to abide by these policies and requirements.

I understand that, out of fairness to all other students in this course, I should not request exemptions to course policies except under extraordinary circumstances. If I am having trouble with the material, I will speak to the instructor early on in the semester. I also understand that I will not be awarded a grade that I did not earn.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____