Grading System

In the last year, I've been thinking about how inequitable the standard grading system is. I understand some of you work full time jobs and some of you are juggling a lot of other things outside of being a student. In an effort to address this inequity, this course will use a mix of Labor Based Grading and Specification Based Grading.

Labor Based Grading

Labor Based Grading allows students to get a grade based on the amount of work they have done throughout the course. Students agree to completing a set number of assignments, which determine the grade given at the end of the course.

If a student wants to and can strive for an A, they must do the required work to achieve an A. If a student can only do the work for a B, they will receive a B based on the work submitted. Essentially, the work submitted throughout the semester will decide the final grade for the course following the Grade chart below.

Given there are multiple different quantities for each category, you agree to do the required amount for the grade you are aiming for. We will work off of a minimum standard, where you will achieve the grade based on the minimum quantity you have done. So if you are aiming for an A, but you haven't done all 13 labs and did 12, that qualifies you for an A-. If the numbers are all over the place, then I reserve the right to decide at the end what makes the most sense for your grade. Additionally, there is a weighting to it. The Projects will matter more than the Labs, In class, and Quizzes.

The Midterm and Final Exams will also be graded on a Complete/Incomplete scale. In order to achieve above a C, you must pass at least one of the two. If you fail both, the highest grade you can achieve is a D+.

Specification Based Grading

Specification Based Grading defines a set of specifications per assignment that students can choose what quality of work they want to submit, receiving a grade based on the specification. For example, if an assignment dictates implementing X features would provide a B, then if the student only implements X features, they would receive a B for the assignment. In this course, the qualifications to move up a grade requires the features implemented in the previous grade to be complete too. For example, in order to achieve a B, the features required for a C must be completed, additional to the features required for a B.

Why both?

The idea is students can choose how much effort they want to put in on an individual assignment level and on a course level. The more effort that's put in, the higher grade the student will receive. The more assignments completed with clear effort shown, the better their grade will be. Instead of grading based on a 1-100 scale, the grade is determined by the quality of their work and the amount of effort they choose to put in.

Why is this important?

I imagine some of you may be juggling a lot of things at once. I don't want to add to the stress you may have that comes with being a University student. So, in an effort to give you some choice, you can effectively choose what grade you want to end the course with, based on the amount of effort and work you put in.

How will this work for assignments?

A lot of the labs and in-class assignments will be graded by complete/incomplete. The quizzes, while they do have point associated, will also be a complete/incomplete. If the quiz score is over 70%, it will be considered complete.

Projects will work differently. Projects will use Specification based Grading. The grade breakdown will depend on how the distribution of grades looks for each project. For example, between the three projects, if you receive 1 A and 2 Bs, you will be on track of a B+. Each project will have its own specifications attached to it, defining the requirements for the project. Projects will also have a metacognitive element attached to them, where you will write a brief reflection on the process you took for the project. These will also factor into the grade given for the project.

You will also have a final project. The grade you get on the Final Project will also weigh in on your final grade. The final grade will use Specification Based Grading. Everyone must do the final project and the grade received will impact the final grade. The grade on the final project will impact the grade range you will fall into. For example, if you got a B on the project, that will put you in at least the B- to B+ range. This is also dependent on the other grades though. If you haven't completed enough of the other assignments, then this grade may either bump you into the B range, or not be enough to get you into the B range.

The Midterm and Final Exams will be graded on a Complete/Incomplete scale.

There is also a CS Engagement aspect, requiring you to attend 1 CS event. If you don't attend an event, the highest grade you can fall into becomes a C+.

Lastly, throughout the semester, there will be Extra Credit assignments. Doing these will be the difference between a B range and an A range. Doing two extra credit assignments will put you in the A+ space. Unlike Extra Credit in other courses you may have had with me, these will not be extra features implemented in an assignment, but rather these are entire additional assignments.

Grade Table

Final Grade	Final Exam	MidTerm Exam	Final Project	Projects	Labs	In Class	Quizzes	Engagement	Extra Credit
A+	C	C	A	At least 2 A, 1 A+	14	14	10	1	2
A	C	C	A	3 A	12	12	8	1	1
A-	C	C	A	2 A 1 B	10	10	7	1	1
B+	C	C	B	1 A 2 B	9	9	6	1	0
B	C	C	B	3 B	8	8	6	1	0
B-	C	C	B	2 B 1 C	6	6	6	1	0

Final Grade	Final Exam	MidTerm Exam	Final Project	Projects	Labs	In Class	Quizzes	Engagement	Extra Credit
C+	C	C	C	1 B 2 C	6	6	5	0	0
C	C	C	C	3 C	6	6	5	0	0
C-	IC	C	D	2 C 1 D	6	6	5	0	0
D+	IC	IC	D	1 C 2 D	5	5	4	0	0
D	IC	IC	D	3 D	4	4	4	0	0
D-	IC	IC	D	2 D 1 F/IC	3	3	3	0	0
F	IC	IC	F/IC	> 2 F	< 2	< 2	< 2	0	0