

Updated 4/6/2020

### Should I take P/NP or letter grade?

Simply speaking, you should take the P/NP option unless you have strong enough reasons not doing so.

To help you decide, I am forwarding the following message sent by campus:

“You have enough stress in your lives without worrying about letter grades. Your lives have been turned on their heads. You have been forced to leave campus in the middle of semester. You are living under quarantine. You and your families may be facing job loss and economic hardship. Most important, many of you will fall ill or have people you love fall ill in the weeks ahead. So think twice about adding to all the pressure and complications by taking your classes for a letter grade.”

Besides emotional reasons, here is campus’s rationale for promoting the P/NP option:

“It is a basic principle of this policy that opting for the default P/NP grading option will not carry negative academic consequences for students. By the same token, grades and transcripts for Spring 2020, both on this campus and across the country (and indeed the world), are going to look different, and be treated differently, from those in more normal circumstances.”

“More generally, any letter grades issued this semester will likely be taken with a very large grain of salt by employers or graduate schools. While UC instructors have done an incredible job switching to remote instruction, graduate schools know that learning this semester was complicated in both delivery and reception. They also know that there are issues of academic integrity involved in a rapid transition to exams that can no longer be proctored on campus.”

For more information, see campus’s [Q&A for Students about Grading](#)

### Grading policy, exam, homework, quiz.

Midterm 1 (20) + Homework (20) + Quiz (20) + Final (40) + Bonus (oral exam) (0/20) = 100 pts / 120 pts

### Final exam:

The final exam (available from 5/12, 11:30AM PST to 5/13, 11:30AM PST) will be conducted using the Online Assignments feature of Gradescope

<https://www.gradescope.com/help#help-center-item-online-assignment-outline-edit>

You will get two chances of practice in the form of quizzes (see below).

If you request for P/NP, it will be just like a slightly longer quiz. Final will be worth 40 pts. You do not need to, and cannot take the oral exam test for bonus pts.

If you request a letter grade, you will need to finish more problems for the final exam, and you can choose to take a bonus oral exam which is graded out of 20 points. **The bonus points are optional, but those who opt for a letter grade but choose not to schedule an oral exam will receive a letter grade no higher than B+.** There will be a separate survey to ask who will need the bonus points, and a GSI (likely, but not necessarily your GSI) will schedule an oral exam with you. **The oral exam cannot be rescheduled.** In case you missed the scheduled oral exam, you automatically earn 0 bonus pts. The actual format of this oral exam is TBD, but it will likely 1) be done via zoom 2) be  $\leq 15$  min per person 3) you will be asked questions like: explain why you choose A / what is wrong with B / how to derive this step etc. **The oral exam will not be about new problems / materials, and will be based entirely on the problems in the final exam.** The score is by its definition subjective (like gymnastics in the now postponed Olympics), and the GSI has the complete, full power of deciding the score (even I will not override the decision of the GSI).

If your final score (before adding the bonus) is higher than Midterm 1 after normalization, then the midterm score will be replaced by the final score (before adding the bonus) \* 0.5. For example, if you get 10 pts for Midterm 1, 32 pts for the Final, 18 points for the bonus, then your raw total pts from the exams will be  $(32*0.5)+32+18=66$ . If you have already missed Midterm 1, then your score for Midterm 1 will automatically be your final score (before adding bonus) \* 0.5.

**You cannot miss the final exam (written part). If you miss the written part of the final exam, you will automatically get a NP (not pass) or F (fail).** This is regardless of the performance for your other items for this course.

### Homework:

I have increased the weight for homework to 20 pts to reflect the amount of work you have been doing throughout the semester. You can still drop the lowest two scores for the homework.

### Quiz:

10 pts come from your **highest two** quiz scores before March 1 (each worth 5 pts). For instance, you have done 4 quizzes with 10,6,9,4 pts, and you will earn  $(10+9)/2=9.5$  pts for this part.

10 pts come solely from **the highest score of the remaining two quizzes**. For instance, you have done these two quizzes with 9 and 5 pts, and you will earn 9 pts for this part. One quiz will be conducted on 4/16 (available from 4/16, 8AM PST to 4/17, 8AM PST), the other on 4/30 (available from 4/30, 8AM PST to 5/1, 8AM PST). These two quizzes will be done using the Online Assignments feature of Gradescope.

### Time limited submission:

Both the final exam and the two remaining quizzes are open book exams, and will be time limited (the clock starts when you click the “view submission” button, see below for an example).

#### Test quiz 1

RELEASE DATE (PDT)	DUE DATE (PDT)
Apr 06 at 8:00AM	Apr 07 at 8:00AM

**MAXIMUM TIME PERMITTED**  
120 minutes

This is a timed assignment. You can start the assignment any time until the due date and have at most 120 minutes to finish. You should start by Apr 07 at 6:00AM (PDT) to have the full time available to you. Submissions will not be accepted after the time expires or after the due date.

During the submission period, you can submit any number of times. You will be graded based on your final submission.

Start Assignment

However, due to the wide range of availability of technology etc, this time limit will be very generous: everyone (with DSP accomodation letters or not) will automatically receive 200% of the normal time needed for the final exam / quiz. Tentatively, the time limit for each quiz will be 2 hours, and the time limit for the final exam will be 6 hours (for both P/NP and letter grade, though those opting for P/NP should need **far less time** to finish the exam). It is expected that in normal circumstances, you will need no more than 1 hour for the quiz, and no more than 3 hours for the final exam (for those requesting a letter grade).

**Office hours:**

Due to the observed low attendance rate of virtual office hours throughout the department, in order to improve the efficiency, starting from **April 6**, if no one shows up in the first 15 minutes of the office hour, the virtual office hour will be cancelled automatically. This applies to both the instructor and the GSI. If you plan to attend an office hour but cannot make it at the beginning of their office hour, please let the instructor / GSI know via email.

**If you want to get a practice oral exam, please attend the virtual office hours by a GSI after the first and/or the second quiz. The GSI will ask you to explain your answer in a similar style as in the oral exam. However, this is only for practice purposes and will not contribute to your score.**

**Grade curving**

The scores for homework and quizzes (old and new) will still be normalized within each GSI session. No additional grade curving will be applied. The decision of P/NP / letter grade will be determined based on the raw score (i.e. curved homework + curved quiz + raw midterm 1 + raw final + raw bonus). It is expected that the grade distribution will be more generous than that in normal circumstances. The criterion for deciding the grade distribution will not be determined until the final exam is finished.

**I-grade**

Grades of Incomplete will be granted only for direct medical or personal emergencies that cause you to miss the final, and only if your work up to that point is of passing quality.

Finally, if you have specific (and legitimate) concerns about your ability to do the quizzes or the final online, you should get in touch with your GSI as soon as possible. For instance, if you are taking the exam on your phone with an unstable internet connection, you should let your GSI know, and write down your answers on paper and email their entire exam to your GSI.