

ENGL 1302 (for Engineers) Grading Contract

Spring 2020

Instructor/Contract Administrator: Michelle Cowan

The grading system in this class might be a bit different from what you are used to. Your work will earn grades based on its timeliness and its completeness rather than by subjective qualities like flow, word choice, or even grammar. My goal for this class is to help you *practice writing* more, so you can experiment and gain familiarity with techniques common to engineering-related writing. You do not have to be a perfect writer to succeed in this class, but you do have to be diligent, hardworking, and willing to participate actively as a member of this class.

This document outlines the specific requirements for receiving any grade in this class. You can refer to it any time to know exactly where you stand. Most of the language centers around what is required to earn a B, but you have numerous options to achieve higher or lower grades if you choose.

We will discuss this contract in class and negotiate the terms as a group. We will review this contract again at mid-term to make sure everyone understands what is required and to adjust anything that is not working as envisioned. Feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions about your grade or the grading contract. My goal is for everyone in the class to be on the same page.

Specific Grade Requirements

To make a B (85) in this class, you must:

1. Turn in all assignments (listed later in this section)
2. Not turn in more than 1 very late assignment (“very late” assignments are turned in more than 48 hours after the deadline but before the end of the semester)
3. Not turn in more than 3 late or incomplete assignments (“late” assignments are turned in after the deadline but within 48 hours of that deadline; incomplete assignments are missing required elements – for instance, the assignment might be missing a section, have too few sources, not meet the word count, not use the correct template, etc. – as defined in the “Completeness of Work” section of this document)
4. Not incur more than 4 insufficient discussion posts or peer responses (initial posts *and* responses must be on time, drafts must be complete – if they are late, they are “insufficient”)
5. Not miss more than 4 classes

Grading Table

I use the following grading table to determine your grade for the class. At the end of the semester, you must come in at or below *all* the numbers in a row to earn that row's grade.

Grade	# of missing assignments	# of very late (>48 hours) assignments	# of incomplete or late (<48 hours) assignments	# of insufficient discussion posts/drafts	# of absences
B (85)	0	1	3	4	4
C (75)	0	2	4	5	5
D (65)	1	3	5	6	6
F (55)	2	4	6	7	7

The highest grade in the table is a B. To earn an A, you must complete additional assignments, which are listed in the “Raising Your Grade – Elective Assignments” section.

Required Assignments

To earn a C or above, you must complete *all* of these required assignments before the end of the semester:

- ☐ Design Analysis
- ☐ Problem Description
- ☐ Elevator Pitch
- ☐ Proposal
- ☐ Benchmarking Reports (3, submitted in discussion forum)
- ☐ Literature Review
- ☐ Formal Progress Report
- ☐ Informal Progress Reports
 - Week 1
 - Week 2
 - Week 3
 - Week 4
- ☐ Final Collaborative Design Report
- ☐ Individual Memo on Collaboration and Report
- ☐ Final Self-Assessment Essay

Raising Your Grade – Elective Assignments

To make an A, you must meet the B-level requirements and complete additional assignments to raise your grade by 5 points. **Any student can earn up to 10 additional grade points by doing elective assignments.** (So even if you have a C or a D according to the grading table, you can complete extra assignments to raise your grade.) Elective assignments must be completed before midnight on our final exam day. (There is no final exam for this class.)

Your options for additional assignments are listed below with their point values.

1. (2 points) Revise and lengthen your design analysis. The final design analysis must be 1500-2000 words long and must reference five sources in APA or IEEE style.
2. (2 points) Give a 5-10 minute presentation to the class on the topic you researched in your design analysis. You must schedule the date of your presentation with me at least a week in advance. In your presentation, you must use some kind of visual presentation aid (Prezi, PPT, Google slides, a video, or a homemade visual).
3. (2 points) Revise your literature review, adding at least three additional sources/designs, sourced from any team in the class or from new material you find yourself.
4. (2 points) Write a 750-1000 word paper on a problem or issue of your choice. You can use some of the readings from class as sources if you desire. The problem you explore could be related to: design thinking vs. engineering thinking, project management, team management, solving design problems, communicating in teams, or something else that interests you. You could write a narrative essay, a researched informational essay, a persuasive argument, a literature review, or anything else that is socially or culturally relevant. Do not write an extended encyclopedia entry; you should bring your own thoughts and analysis to your work. You must discuss your potential topic with me so I can approve it in advance. This paper must reference at least four external sources and can be handed in at any point during the semester.
5. (2 points) Give a 5-10 minute presentation to the class on the topic you wrote about in your extra paper (if you did assignment 4). You must schedule the date of your presentation with me at least a week in advance. In your presentation, you must use some kind of visual presentation aid (Prezi, PPT, Google slides, a video, or a homemade visual).
6. (2 points) Conduct an interview with an engineering professor or a professional engineer to learn more about working as an engineer. Write a 750-1200 word report describing what you learned in the interview. You must ask at least one question about the kinds of communication and writing involved in engineering. Send me your list of questions prior to your interview so we can discuss and refine your plan. (You can do both 6 and 7 on the same interview.)
7. (1.5 points) Conduct an interview with an engineering professor or a professional engineer to learn more about working as an engineer. You must ask at least one question about the kinds of communication and writing involved in engineering. Send me your list of questions prior to your interview so we can discuss and refine your plan. Make a 4-7 minute presentation to the class, using at least one visual aid. You must schedule the date of your presentation with me at least a week in advance. (You can do both 6 and 7 on the same interview.)
8. (1.5 points) Lead a 15-25 minute class discussion on one or more of the readings from the class. To take this option, look at the schedule early and see if any readings or topics stick out to you. You must construct a discussion outline and submit it to me in advance. We will work on it together, and you will lead the discussion that day.
9. (1-3 points) Plan and complete a project of your own invention. If you have an idea for a project that would help the class or would help you further explore some of the ideas in

this class, email me, and we will meet about it to decide on the criteria and point value for this extra project. Example ideas from previous students include: an infographic describing some aspect of a design you researched, a brochure to help engineering students find internships, a visual art/text exhibition exploring different aspects of writing.

10. (0.5 points) Write an extra peer review in the discussion forums (250-500 words). (You can use this option a maximum of 3 times.)

Completeness of Work

For an assignment to be considered “complete,” it must:

- Adhere to the requirements as listed on the assignment description, unless modifications to the assignment description have been agreed upon by the instructor (me, Michelle Cowan) and the class.
 - Word counts must be met. (Exceeding suggested word counts is acceptable.)
 - All required sections or content must be present.
 - If citations are required, some attempt at citation should be present in the body of the document (at the end of sentences or quotations), and a reference list should be included at the end. You must meet the required number of sources. Although your citation formatting does not have to be perfect, it should be clear that you are attempting APA or IEEE style in your citations and reference list. Guidelines for these can be found online and on page 213-220 of our textbook (*Writing in Engineering* by Robert Irish).
 - The correct template/format must be used if so required (often memo format). You may choose your own font styles and sizes, but you must follow the general format provided to you.
 - Even if no format is specified, a name and date should always be present on the first page of any written assignment.
- Be in an accessible file format (preferably .docx). You are responsible for making sure your file can be opened and is not corrupted. If Blackboard causes you problems, you can always email the file to me instead.
- Not be plagiarized from any other source. Plagiarism automatically results in at least a missed assignment and is a violation of university policy (see the syllabus for details).
- Be written in the spirit of the assignment. (For instance, if I ask you to write a 750-word proposal, but the text in your proposal is a 750-word short story you wrote about getting lost in a forest, the assignment is not complete. It will be considered a missed assignment. The text in your document must address the problem as defined in the assignment description. Similarly, if the text is nonsensical gibberish or the same two paragraphs copied over and over, it will be considered a missed assignment.)
- Include any tracked revisions if I request that you track changes between your draft and the final product.

If you worked hard on an assignment but are still worried it may not meet the completeness requirement, include an explanation about what may not be complete and why in the “Comments” textbox when you upload the assignment in Blackboard. If at all possible, email me about such concerns well before the deadline. If contacting me early is not possible, at least include a comment when you turn the assignment in. I will review your comments on a case-by-case basis and cannot guarantee credit for work that is incomplete, but I will hear your explanation out.

Drafts

Drafts are expected to be complete as defined by the terms above, except that I will allow them to be up to 100 words below the word count. If a draft is not complete, it will count as an insufficient discussion post. There is some wiggle room for drafts, since drafts will certainly not be perfect, but they should at least meet the basic requirements of the assignment. Again, you can include comments and questions about what is needed to make your draft complete when you post it for review, but that is no guarantee that I will allow any incomplete work to count.

Special Circumstances (Gimmes)

If you encounter extenuating circumstances during the semester that inhibit your ability to turn assignments in on time or come to class, I will decide (after you have proactively contacted me about the issue and we have discussed it) whether to allow a “gimme.” A gimme means that I will either: reduce your number of absences by one, reduce your number of insufficient discussion posts by one, reduce your number of late/incomplete assignments by one, or make one very late assignment a late/incomplete assignment instead. **A gimme will not get rid of a missed assignment.** The gimme can only be used once per semester.

You must come to me as soon as possible (usually before you actually breach the contract) to make fair and equitable arrangements. You may use a gimme for any reason, but only once in the semester. Because we negotiate this contract as a class, I have to make sure the gimme is not unfair to other students. A gimme does not allow you to ignore an assignment or work expected of everyone in the class. Gimmes are for rare and unusual circumstances out of your control.

The core requirements always stand unless you consult with me and we agree on modifications to the contract.

Exemplary Labor

If by the last day of the semester, you miss no classes; have no incomplete, late, very late, or missed assignments; and do not use a gimme, then you will earn an extra 3 points toward your final 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.

Final Note

Even though your individual assignments will not receive grades, I will read your work carefully and give you extensive feedback to help you improve your writing. My hope is that by not worrying as much about grades, we can have more productive conversations about what makes writing effective. I care deeply about reading what you have to say and helping you improve your writing abilities. Commenting on your work is a joy, and I will always give you feedback on your work.

For Your Records

Here is a blank grading table and list of assignments so you can keep track of your progress.

My Grading Table

# of missing assignments	# of very late (>48 hours) assignments	# of incomplete or late (<48 hours) assignments	# of insufficient discussion posts/drafts	# of absences

My Required Assignments

Done?	Late or Inc.?	Assignment	Due Date
		Design Analysis	
		Problem Description	
		Elevator Pitch	
		Proposal	
		Benchmarking Reports (3)	
		Literature Review	
		Formal Progress Report	
		Informal Progress Report 1	
		Informal Progress Report 2	
		Informal Progress Report 3	
		Informal Progress Report 4	
		Final Collaborative Design Report	
		Individual Memo on Collaboration and Report	
		Final Self-Assessment Essay	

My Elective Assignments

Done?	Point Value	Assignment Chosen	Due Date