

Grading Contract and End of Semester Audit

Requirements

Contract Due: Monday, 01/30/23

Audit Due: Tuesday of Finals Week

Both the Contract and Audit Memo are 2 pages, Typed in a readable 12-pt font (such as Times New Roman)

Context

This course uses a form of contract grading. There are no points or letter grades in this course, aside from the final letter grade earned at the end of the semester. Traditional grading systems encourage individuals to work for “points,” as if learning were a game whose goal was to get a certain grade. The goal of contract grading is to redirect the course focus on the process of learning, rather than an end “grade.” Contract grading provides reassurance that completing all of the assigned work, you will earn at least a C (Inoue 2012). This grading method focuses on the time and effort that students produce in their work and not just an end product. The goal is to develop lifelong practices, rather than “moments” that mean nothing to future learning.

As a genre of writing, contracts are some of the most important documents that an individual will face. They can range from simple and generalized documents to cryptic and lengthy pieces of legal documentation. Contracts at their core define the requirements of two entities that engage in some form of partnership, and in most cases they are enforceable in a legal setting, meaning that they are extremely important forms of control and protection. As creators, making sure that both sides of the contract are written, negotiated, and enacted in good faith is important to the trust between individuals, between individuals and companies, and/or between companies (among others). Many of you, in the future (if not already), will be working under some form of contract that defines your behavior, expectations, goals, etc. for your careers. This assignment is your chance to practice having a say in how you define these moments for the next 17 weeks.

Task

Your task is to develop a contract that you both can and will hold yourself to for the semester. You need to decide how you will track each item that you say you will do and be responsible for that tracking. You should adhere as closely as possible to any genre standards of contracts and the business memo that you will include with the audit portion of the assignment (at the end of the semester). The Audit at the end of the semester will include both the memo and any and all supporting documentation that proves completion of the contract itself.

Steps to Complete the Contract

Develop the Contract

Following the assignment and the requirements set forth by the University of California, Merced (See CLOs on the Syllabus, the Course Calendar, etc.), you will develop a specific and narrowed contract with reachable goals for your performance in class. You will want to define not only your desired grade, but also what you believe you could achieve for the grade you would like (this helps with specificity and prevents generalization and subjectivity in the final grade). You want to include measurable points in the semester that you will be able to include in your audit at the end of the semester. Remember, you want this specific, to the point, and concise. Bullet points, charts, etc. are okay to include if it helps meet your needs for the assignment.

Mid-Semester Check-In

During the designated conference week, you will meet with the instructor for a one on one meeting. In this conference, you will discuss how you are doing in completing the contract for the class (in terms of your effort, completion of work, writing, and participation). In this conference you are also welcomed

to share any struggles you're experiencing in the class or any feedback you have for this class. This is a chance to work with the professor to gain support for the rest of the course.

Audit of the Contract

At the end of the course, you have an opportunity to present your argument for what grade you earned in the class and why, using concrete evidence in the audit. There is no guarantee that the instructor will agree with your assessment, but you are encouraged to make the best argument you can, based specifically on the criteria set out in the syllabus and in the initial contract you developed. This assignment will be written in the genre of a memo explaining your choices, and you will be turning in all evidence to support your work and claims.

Contract and Audit Grading

The amount of work that is put into this class and that is defined in the contract you developed will largely determine the final grade received in this course. Remember, all mandatory assignments must be completed to receive a grade in the course and failure to complete any requirements will result in a failing grade.

Things to think about

- Eliminate any and all loopholes in the contract.
- All documents should be readable, easy to understand, and to the point.
- Keep track of all your work that can be used in the audit (including attendance, workshops, notes, etc.).