

Assessment

While grades cannot reflect the full amount of learning student's experience, they are nonetheless a tool by which instructors are able to give students feedback as to their performance. Although we prefer to give only qualitative feedback (written comments and consultations), we are also required to provide students with quantitative assessments, i.e. grades. Therefore, in this program, students are provided both. We would hope that student could focus their attention mostly on the qualitative assessment, as grades reflect only partially how much has been learned.

Grading Criteria

While criteria will vary slightly from assignment to assignment, most work will be grade on the following four criteria: 1) Form (10%), 2) Content (30%), 3) Interpretation and Analysis (30%), and 4) Connections (30%). The instructor considers superior work to be work which fulfils the following criteria:

1) Form (10%)

- extremely well organized
- articulates ideas clearly and concisely
- correct grammar and spelling
- legible
- typed or handwritten on 8 ½ x 11" paper
- accurate citation of readings and speakers (using footnotes or endnotes and bibliography)

2) Content (30%)

- demonstrates accurate and profound knowledge of the subject
- includes an articulate statement of your thesis and/or questions for further exploration
- scales down information to what is most important
- exhibits a profound understanding of the main points expressed by guest speakers and in required readings
- employs solid logic and well-documented data
- supports arguments with concrete examples from readings, speakers, class sessions, and other experiences

3) Interpretation and Analysis (30%)

- presents more than just a summary of information
- analyses issues from different viewpoints, including views opposite one's own
- recognizes interrelationships among issues
- draws upon assigned texts, class sessions and guest speakers to support own thesis
- makes logical arguments
- articulate complexities of the issues
- generates critical questions not addressed fully by authors or speakers
- applies principles and generalization already learned to new information

4) Connections (30%)

- demonstrates an understanding of the ways in which issues interrelate with each other
- integrates knowledge from diverse sources, including authors and speakers
- compares ideas and authors of required readings with each other
- makes connections between ideas raised in required readings with those of guest speakers
- takes new information acquired in Central America and effectively integrates it with prior knowledge and experiences
- synthesizes and integrates information and ideas

Explanation of Grades

Number grades are used with these definitions:	Percentage	Grade
4.0 Achieves highest standards of excellence	(372-400)	A; 93-100
3.5 Achieves standards much above basic course standards	(352-371)	A-/B+; 88-92
3.0 Good/Above basic course standards	(332-351)	B; 83-87
2.5 Slightly above basic course standards	(312-331)	B-/C+; 78-82
2.0 Average/Acceptable	(292-311) (PASS)	C; 73-77
1.5 Below average - just over enough to pass	(272-291) (NO PASS)	C-/D+; 68-72
1.0 Below basic course standards	(252-271)	D; 63-67
0.5 Below basic standards	(240-251)	D-; 60-62
0.0 Unacceptable performance (no credit for the course)	(under 240)	F; 0-60