

Approach to Grading

This class uses an approach to grading called **ungrading**, in which I do not assign grades to your work. Research has decisively demonstrated that grades are terrible gauges of students' learning. It has also shown that traditional grades decrease students' intrinsic motivation and enjoyment of learning, and increase their anxiety and fear of failure. Conversely, my goal is to create a classroom space that maximizes freedom and growth, where we function as allies rather than adversaries and where you cooperate with classmates rather than compete with them.

This approach is rooted in the following feminist and antiracist pedagogical principles:

- Constructing a community characterized by trust, respect, collaboration, and care;
- Producing a democratic space by reducing the hierarchy between students and teachers;
- Empowering students to think critically and take control of their learning;
- Honoring a diversity of experiences;
- Challenging typical learning ideals.

Instead of simply evaluating your ideas, then, I will be making comments and asking questions that meaningfully engage with them. Of course, BU asks that I submit a final grade for each enrolled student. Therefore, you will be asked to regularly evaluate your own work. At the end of the semester, you will grade yourself based on your semester's reading, speaking, listening, writing, interacting, growth/progress – all the elements of your learning, including those outlined in the course requirements section above – in a final essay and conference with me. Although I reserve the right to change your grade, I intend to use that right sparingly, and usually in an upward direction. If you have any questions, or this approach produces anxiety for you, please don't hesitate to talk to me about it!