

Grading Policy and Guidelines for the Environmental Studies Program

Adopted Oct 30, 2013

Environmental Studies is a large, interdisciplinary program that includes faculty from the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the professional schools. These faculty teach courses that vary widely in content and approach. It is appropriate for faculty teaching environmental studies courses to rely on the grading culture and policy of their home discipline. We encourage faculty who choose to do this to make explicit reference to the grading guidelines they follow.

There are also instructors who teach solely or mostly environmental studies courses. The following set of guidelines is designed especially with them in mind, but any faculty teaching environmental studies courses are invited to refer to these guidelines in their syllabi.

Grades are a measure of student performance. Grades are not awarded on the basis of student effort, nor are they based on students' needs for scholarship requirements, financial aid, or future graduate school or employment needs.

Because grades are a measure of an individual student's performance in a class, they are not intended to rank students within a class. Faculty typically report ranking information separately, such as when writing letters of recommendation for students. Thus, there is no expectation that a given letter grade will be awarded to a certain percentage of the class.

The following guidelines describe what letter grades should signify. It is up to the discretion of individual faculty whether to use plus and minus modifiers for grades.

- F signifies that major parts of the coursework were not completed or, if completed, show very little mastery of course material and learning objectives.
- D signifies inadequate understanding of the material. This grade might be indicative of little or no commitment, motivation or engagement in the course learning opportunities; however even a motivated and engaged student could receive a grade of D if learning objectives are not substantially met.
- C signifies a modest level of achievement. The student shows some mastery of the material and a narrow range of application. This grade might be indicative of a mismatch between the study techniques and course assessments, or a lack of commitment, motivation or engagement leading to less than full participation in learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom.
- B signifies a good but not exceptional level of achievement. The student shows a grasp of the material and the ability to apply it at several but not all levels.
- A signifies an exceptional level of achievement. The student shows a superb command of the material and the ability to apply it at many different levels. This grade is indicative of a committed, motivated, and fully engaged learner who takes advantage of all learning opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom.

- Y signifies no basis for grade. It should not be used if the student attempted a substantial fraction of the course.
- I signifies that a small, but important part of the course was unfinished. Awarding a grade of incomplete is at the discretion of the instructor and should be accompanied by a clear written (or email) explanation to the student of what work remains to be completed and the deadline by which time the work needs to be finished.
- P indicates a passing grade, when a student has earned a letter grade of C- or better.
- N indicates a non-passing grade, when a student has earned a letter grade of D or lower.