Grading

borderline grades

• determine from the outset whether they exist in your class or if $89.99\% = B$ for everyone
• if will review, set a specific cut-off (.5%? 2%? may or may not want to include cut-off in syllabus)
• identify what you use to assign the higher grade
  o most assignments in the class are at that grade level
  o effort-based components (all assignments in on time, attendance, participation)
  o beware of being influenced by personality factors or characteristics that you really can’t measure- unfair!
• apply borderline grade changes consistently
• realize that borderline situations can increase and decrease student grades if done fairly

extra credit

• check department and other instructors’ policies
• make available to all students
• consider how the extra credit affects final grade- usually do not want extra credit to raise all grades one letter
• effort- or ability-based?
• keep as a separate column in gradebook so you can separate ability from other factors

t zeroes

• consider
  o effect of the zero on the final grade
  o reasons for the zero
    ▪ poor quality versus non-submission
    ▪ factors that led to the zero
  o policies on late work
• alternatives
  o give partial credit (late penalty, half credit substitution)
  o calculate the final grade without that assignment
  o provide different assignment
  o allow all students to drop or replace a low grade

methods for scoring

• checklists
  o distinguishes “done” from “not done”
  o best when you have a specific list of tasks within the assignment
• can be worth multiple points, but should be used for all-or-none credit
• e.g., “Paper was double-spaced” “Included example of concept”

• rating scales
  • generally 3-5 categories
    ▪ more than yes/no, but not so many categories to be fine distinctions
    ▪ use parallel descriptors
    ▪ avoid “average”
    ▪ can assign point values to descriptors
  • like checklist, breaks the assignment into specific tasks, but includes quality markers
  • e.g., “Concept description was detailed. Excellent-Good-Fair-Poor-Not Done”

• analytic rubrics
  • like the ratings scale, but each point value has a specific description
  • e.g., “5 points=fully explained description that links to theory. 4 points= somewhat vague description. 3 points= missed a theory link…”

• holistic rubrics
  • grade overall assignment with a single grade
  • still have descriptors for grade/point assignments
  • used when cannot be easily broken into tasks or allowing A LOT of freedom in responses
  • generally fastest scoring to use, but tough to justify and tends to be less reliable
  • e.g., “10 points= presentation was complete and accurate. 9 points= presentation well done, but could have used more evidence…”

process of grading

• optimize self and environment
  • have time, not tired or cranky (tough when facing a stack!)
  • minimize distractions (friends, significant others, kids, Facebook)
• more subjective tasks usually require more time and concentration
• try to keep student identities unknown as you grade to avoid biases
• if grading both, grade mechanics (grammar, spelling) first, then content
• aim for two positive comments for each improvement comment- think of grading as a conversation between you and the student, not a punishment
• read through a few assignments before grading to get a sense of content and quality
• make comments on a separate page (or version if electronic) and go back occasionally to see if you are grading the same as you had initially
• if others are also grading the assignment, have everyone grade a few to ensure consistency
• for selected-response items, grade one page at a time to give yourself a sense of how well items are working
• for multiple constructed-response items, grade one at a time for all students (e.g., grade everyone’s item 27, then everyone’s 28…) for greater consistency