

MEMORANDUM

To: Faculty
From: Doug Blaze
Re: Special Grading Procedures
Date: November 9, 2006

The following sets forth the procedures originally outlined by John Sobieski regarding three specific grading issues that regularly arise. One stems from the need to preserve anonymity in courses involving multiple, anonymously-graded exercises. The other involves adjustments to the grade earned on the final examination to reflect class participation, attendance, or other matters not measured by the examination. A third issue centers on the problems created when some exercises in a course are graded anonymously while others are not.

I have updated John's original memo to reflect our newest grading policy.

Anonymity and Multiple Graded Exercises. In a number of courses, the students are expected to complete several different exercises, each of which is graded separately and anonymously. After the last exercise, a final grade needs to be assigned by combining the grades on each individually-graded exercise. In some instances, the Student Records Office has been asked to discharge that responsibility.

The anonymity of the grading process must be preserved. The best person to assign the final grade, however, is the instructor. Assignment of the final grade requires value judgments which can be made only by the instructor. Moreover, the exam and grading period is a very hectic one for the Student Records Office. The Student Records Office simply is not in a position to assume responsibility for calculating final grades.

Accordingly, after receiving the grades for the last graded exercise, the Student Records Office will compile a list indicating the grades a student earned on each of the graded exercises. The students will be identified only by number, thus preserving anonymity. The list with all the grades will be provided to the instructor by the Student Records Office as soon as possible after receipt of the last grades. Needless to say, the earlier the last grades are provided to the Student Records Office, the earlier it can provide the information necessary to allow the instructor to calculate the final grades.

Extra Credit. The final grade a student is assigned often reflects class attendance, participation, and other matters in addition to performance on an examination or other graded exercises. Our newest grading system, based on increments of .1, will significantly simplify the process. Professors may now simply provide the Student Records Office with the names of the students whose grades are to be adjusted and designating how many tenths of a point the grade should be raised or lowered.

Anonymously and Non-Anonymously Graded Exercises. In a few courses, the final grade may reflect a student's performance on both anonymously and non-anonymously-graded exercises. Legal Process II is a good example. While the written exercises are graded anonymously, the oral arguments are not. The question thus arises regarding the information that should be reported to the Student Records Office and the information the Student Records Office should provide the instructor.

The procedures that to be followed are similar to those that will be followed in courses where there are multiple, anonymously-graded exercises. Instructors in these courses are asked to submit to the Student Records Office grades for each anonymously-graded exercise as well as grades for the exercises that are not graded anonymously. After receiving both sets of grades, the Student Records Office will compile a list indicating the grades a student earned on each component of the course, identifying the students by number. Only then will the Student Records provide the instructor with a list of all the grades each student was assigned on each component. The instructor then will calculate the final grades. Although this approach cannot guarantee anonymity--in fact, none can--the procedures outlined at least have the advantage of making a record before there is any possibility of compromising anonymity.