

**Trent University
Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies**

Course Principles & Grading Template

Approved at the February 14th, 2010 FC Board meeting.

Course Principles

The following is a list of principles that underlie course, structure, content, and grading for Frost Centre courses:

- These guidelines are not intended to limit the development of innovative pedagogies, but they are intended to establish consistency in expectation in Frost Centre courses. Faculty teaching for the Frost Centre who want to deviate significantly from these principles should discuss their ideas and plans with the Frost Centre Director. The Director may approve these plans or may consult more widely with the Frost Centre Board, at their discretion.
- Course content must be fundamentally interdisciplinary, drawing on materials from at least two or three relevant fields.
- It is expected that students will normally spend 10-14 hours in preparation for each weekly class. Within the context of a FC graduate course, it is understood that much of this time will be spent reading and digesting the equivalent of 200 pages of scholarly material. In light of the time invested by students in such preparatory work, class content should draw significantly on materials assigned weekly for review.
- Assignments and assessment strategies must be directed at developing the analytical, critical thinking and writing skills of students. Clear guidelines as to what is expected in assignments must be included in the syllabus.
- A range of assignments and assessment strategies directed at fostering library and research skills must be included. Students should be expected to be able to locate a wide range of secondary sources to address their research topics.
- If original research with human subjects is to be included/permitted as part of a course assignment, students need to be made aware that all such work must be approved well in advance by the appropriate Ethics Committee.

- As course work is preparation for the *writing* of a thesis/MRP, students are expected to be asked to complete a range of assignments that total at least 30-40 written pages in any one course.
- All students should be expected to contribute to class discussion, and to take a lead in discussions as appropriate. Faculty must work to ensure that all students feel comfortable contributing to class discussion.
- A requirement that active participation in class with a demonstrated knowledge of the assigned weekly readings must comprise at least 20% of the class mark. As students need to clearly understand how their class participation grade will be determined, it should be detailed in the syllabus.
- Grades for assignments/the course in total must follow the established marks template for the Frost Centre (see below). It is expected that there will be a range of grades for each course/assignment that will reflect the anticipated range of student abilities at the graduate level. (This range would anticipate a small number of A+'s; the bulk of the grades would fall into the A/A- range; but that it can be expected that there will be some B+'s; and in some cases, B's and B-'s. A passing grade in a graduate course is 70% and if a student's ability to succeed in graduate school is seriously in doubt, grades below 70% should be assigned. These patterns may vary with the number of students in a course; with more students it is expected that the range grades will be broader.) Significant deviation from these general patterns must be explained in writing to the Director, who may and if he/she deems it appropriate, seek the advice of the FC Board (or Board Executive depending on the time of year) on what action, if any, should be taken. The decision of the Board will be final.
- Grades and assignments must be returned to students in a timely manner and within the deadlines for grade submission established by Graduate Studies. Students must receive sufficient written and/or oral feedback on each assignment designed to constructively foster their research, writing, and analytical skills specifically, and the development as young scholars more broadly.
- Syllabi must be delivered to the Frost Centre Director by **August 15** each year.
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Marks Template

A+ 90-100

Extraordinary work that might be publishable, or a brilliant accomplishment that pushes the boundaries of scholarship in new areas. May be no essays (or final marks) that warrant this mark.

A 85-89

Absolutely excellent work; meritorious on absolutely all counts including research, writing, analysis. An original piece of work that offers new perspectives on a subject.

A- 80-84

Solidly first class work, not stellar and original, but excellent writing and research.

B+ 77-79

Very good work with some strong characteristics. Not accomplished and excellent on all counts.

B 73-76

Solid and capable, but demonstrates limited problems in writing, research and argument that need improvement.

B- 70-72

A good effort, but there are some problems such as writing, research, conceptualization that must be improved.

C 63-66

Indicates some significant problems in one or more areas. Inadequate or unacceptable effort for the graduate level