

To: Dr. Dejun Liu
From: Dr. Antonio Jocson, Grade Appeal Chair
Date: May 11, 2009

In the matter of _____'s (hereafter student) grade appeal of her final grade in Professor _____ (hereafter instructor) class during the Fall Semester of 2008, the following report has been prepared by the Grade Appeals Committee. The committee was comprised of Dr. Delinda Marzette, Dr. Clay Hooper (at the student's request), and Dr. Antonio Jocson, committee chair.

PART 1: STUDENT'S ASSERTION

The student received a D for her performance in the course. She alleges the following in support of her appeal as stated from her letter of April 17, 2009 to Dr. Dejun Liu:

1. Her grade was erroneously and unfairly awarded because the instructor failed to post it in a timely fashion. This resulted, according to the student, in "adversely affecting" her ability to register during the normal registration period "as well as questioning whether I would be able to be placed in Freshman Composition II."
2. The professor was difficult to reach because of erroneously posted office hours on the professor's door.
3. Her class performance was impacted by being erroneously placed in the wrong course for three weeks at the beginning of the semester.
4. She had in fact completed all four papers required in class and not just the two the instructor contends were the sole essays she submitted.

PART 2: FINDINGS

While the student's appeal letter is forceful and passionate about her appeal, the committee must point out at the outset that three of her four reasons for overturning her recorded grade have actually little or nothing do with grade she received for the course. We will address each of these four points specifically.

Point 1: The student's main reason for appealing her grade – that the late posting of her final grade on Banner adversely affected her ability to register for Spring courses – has nothing to do with her actual grade. According to the instructor, the grade did not post on time because of a computer error in the system. Nevertheless, the posting of the student's grade has no bearing on her performance in the course. (There is no ostensible reason why the instructor would have deliberately withheld the student's grade.)

As a matter of protocol, final grades are only posted after all course work and instruction is completed. In the student's case, the final grade would most likely have been posted after the December commencement ceremony, nearly two weeks after classes would have ended. The student also contends that she was "adversely affected" because she did not know whether she would be able to register for Composition II for which she registered anyway. Her worry over this matter came only after she had completed all course work and not before it. **Conclusion: We cannot support the student's appeal on this matter.**

Point 2: The e-mails furnished by the student indicate that the instructor clearly posted his office hours on the course syllabus – MWF, 12nn-1pm and 2pm-5pm. The emails show that there was certain correspondence between instructor and student on this matter and that the instructor appears to have made efforts to meet with the student. It is not clear if the student visited the instructor's office during the specified office hours. The student may have visited the office *outside* of the posted office hours, which would mean that the instructor was not available at that time. In the e-mails, the instructor simply replied that the student should "see me when you get back on campus" or "stop by my office" without specifying a time. We can only assume that the instructor was available during posted office hours. It should be noted, however, that the instructor may not have been in his office because of committee or staff meetings. In any event, it appears that a good faith effort was made by the instructor to meet with the student, according to the e-mails and the posted hours on the syllabus. **Conclusion: We cannot support the student's appeal on this matter.**

Point 3: The student contends that her class performance was impacted by being erroneously placed in the wrong course for three weeks at the beginning of the semester. The instructor asserts in his statement that it was the student's advisor who inadvertently placed her in the wrong class; moreover, the instructor was never given proof – in the form of a letter or verbal communication – from the student's advisor confirming this error. Nevertheless, it is not the instructor's responsibility to follow up on the student's missed classes, much less to make up missed class instruction for the student. No instructor at any university would concede to such tasks. It is solely the student's responsibility to make up any missed work for any reason and provide appropriate and verifiable documentation for any missed classes. Furthermore, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that she is registered in the proper classes. **Conclusion: We cannot support the student's appeal on this matter.**

Point 4: The student asserts that she submitted all four of the required essays for the course. However, the student was only able to return three essays as part of her original appeal letter – Paper 1, Paper 3, and Paper 4. Papers 1 and 3 were graded and returned by the instructor. She received a D and a C on them, respectively. Paper 4 was ungraded. Paper 2 was not part of her packet. Although the instructor contends that the student only submitted three essays – Papers 1, 2, and 3 – there is no way to be absolutely certain that paper 4 was submitted and subsequently misplaced.

While the committee could privilege the instructor's narrative on the matter – that only three essays were submitted – the committee thought it best for argument's sake to respect the student's contention that all four essays were indeed submitted. Moreover, since the unfairness of the grading is at the heart of this appeal, we decided then to re-assess all four essays, regardless whether they were submitted in a timely fashion or at all. We feel that this gesture removes all instructor bias on the matter. The essays were re-graded by Dr. Clay Hooper (chosen by the student), Dr. Delinda Marzette, and myself, Dr. Antonio Jocson. A detailed and complete commentary on the grades of the individual essays is attached to this report. Our conclusions are summarized as follows:

Dr. Clay Hooper

Paper 1: D-
Paper 2: D-
Paper 3: F
Paper 4: F

Dr. Delinda Marzette

Paper 1: D
Paper 2: F
Paper 3: F
Paper 4: F

Dr. Antonio Jocson

Paper 1: D-
Paper 2: F
Paper 3: D-
Paper 4: F

The instructor provided clear grade profiles in his syllabus. Based on the committee's assessment of the student's essays, the student's work clearly fits the profile of a grade F or D at best. The grade profiles are reproduced below.

- A The grade of A indicates work of **exceptional quality**. Papers which receive A's address the assignment thoroughly, appropriately, and insightfully; are sophisticated in structure, syntax, and diction; and conform to appropriate conventions of grammar, mechanics, and usage.
- B The grade of B indicates work of **above average quality**. Papers which receive B's address the assignment thoroughly and appropriately; are clearly focused; demonstrate sound structure, appropriately varied syntax, and diction suitable for the assignment; and conform to appropriate conventions of grammar, mechanics, and usage.
- C The grade of C indicates **satisfactory** completion of the assignment. Papers which receive C's meet the goals of the assignment adequately; have an identifiable and appropriate focus; are clearly structured and written, and are relatively free of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage.
- D The grade of D indicates **unsatisfactory, yet passing**, work. Papers which receive D's may be successful in some areas, but are weakened in one or more way, including failure to address the assignment; unclear focus; confusing structure; simplistic or flawed syntax and diction, or a number of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage.
- F The grade of F; indicates **failing** work. Papers may receive F's for failing to address the assignment; lack of focus; organizational deficiencies; significant errors in syntax and diction; or large numbers of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage.

PART 3: GRADE CALCULATION

The instructor's record for the student's grades is as follows:

Assignment/Grade	Quality Points (4 per assignment, maximum; 20-points total)
Fallacy Exam – 18/F	0
Paper #1 – D	1
Paper# 2 – D	1
Paper# 3 – C	2
Paper# 4 – NO SUBMISSION	0
Score	0.8

According to the instructor's calculations, the student scored a total of 0.8 Quality Points out of a possible 20. (Number of awarded points [4] divided by the number of assignments [5].) The minimum threshold for a D is 1.0 and 2.0 for a C. That the student's recorded final grade was a D, was an advancement of her actual grade.

PART 4: SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Based on the evidence provided by the student, we are unable to support the appeal of her final grade. Three of the main reasons she gives for overturning her final grade of D have, in fact, nothing do with her performance in class. Two of the three reasons she

gives – tardy posting of the final grade and inability to meet the instructor regarding the posted final grade – occurred after and outside the scope any and all factors that go into the computation of a grade.

Secondly, the instructor, via e-mail, appears to have made at least two good-faith efforts to meet the student concerning this matter. The instructor's office hours are posted on the course syllabus. At any rate, this occurred after final grades were posted and should thus have no bearing on those actual grades.

Thirdly, despite the fact that the student was accidentally placed in a different course for three weeks at the beginning of the semester, it is the student's own responsibility to make up any missed work and to catch up with current instruction. Furthermore, it is also the student's responsibility to ensure that she is registered for the correct and appropriate courses for her core and major.

Finally, in order to honor the student's contention that all four essays were submitted in a timely fashion, the committee re-graded all her existing essays for the course. The committee found that her work was below average for the standard set in Composition I. The frequent basic sentence-level, logic, and other compositional errors mar and frustrate reader comprehension. Moreover, the numerous instances of plagiarism are automatic grounds for failing the assignments, if not the course.

Based on the essays, the student would have earned a D at best for this component of the course. In this respect, Professor [redacted] was wholly correct in awarding his final grade of D. However, it should be noted that since the student did not pass Composition I, it raises questions as to how she was able to register for Composition II. It is clear she understood the prerequisite for Comp II – passing Comp I with a C – prior to registering for the course, but disregarded it nevertheless.

Conclusion: Having reviewed the evidence submitted by the student, the committee believes that Professor [redacted] grades were awarded fairly. Much of the factors the student cites in support of her appeal have nothing to do with her final grade. However, based on the student's below-average written work, we cannot support the [redacted] appeal to overturn her final grade of D. We recommend that the original grade of D, as recorded by [redacted], remain in place.

Antonio Jocsan

RE: Grade Appeal (ENGL 1123, Fall 2008,)

Paper 1: This essay exhibits frequent sentence-level, conceptual, and logical errors that mar the reader's comprehension. The thesis is poorly defined, which negatively impacts the overall organization of the essay. The organization of ideas and argument are incoherent. The essay lacks details on every level; assertions are often unqualified and unsubstantiated, indicating a substantial lack of connection with a targeted readership; in other words, the writer writes as if in a vacuum, without understanding the need to cater the needs and questions of an audience. Transitions at sentence and paragraph levels are not clear, and highly problematic syntax makes sentences difficult to follow. Mechanics are an area of concern. Citations are uneven and incorrectly constructed throughout the length of the essay, so much so that it is often difficult to separate the writer's own words from the quoted sources. When it is the writer's own hand, however, the writing is frequently incoherent. Use of outside sources appears arbitrary and haphazard. Mistakes interfere with comprehension. The weakness of the conclusion is of concern; summary of main points is not coherent or conclusive.

1. Purpose D _____
2. Organization & Content D _____
3. Audience F _____
4. Style F _____
5. Mechanics D _____
6. Conclusion & Citation F _____

GRADE: 59.50 – F/D-

Paper 2: An essay that frustrates the reader on multiple levels. Essay exhibits frequent sentence-level, conceptual, and logical errors carried over from Paper 1, reflecting no improvement. The thesis is poorly defined; a possible introductory paragraph – an uncited and quoted source – seems to be instituted in its place, but there is no context for it. The organization of ideas and argument are incoherent. The essay lacks details on every level; assertions are often unqualified and unsubstantiated, indicating a substantial lack of connection with a targeted readership. Transitions at sentence and paragraph levels are not clear, and highly problematic syntax makes sentences difficult to follow. A fair amount of redundancy and rambling frustrate the reader. Mechanics are again an area of concern. Numerous instances of plagiarism. Citations are uneven and incorrectly constructed throughout the length of the essay. Use of outside sources appears arbitrary and haphazard. Mistakes interfere with comprehension. Finally, the weakness of the conclusion is of concern; summary of main points is not coherent or conclusive.

1. Purpose F _____
2. Organization & Content F _____
3. Audience F _____
4. Style F _____
5. Mechanics D _____
6. Conclusion & Citation F _____

GRADE: 56.17/0.00 – F

Note: Because of instances of plagiarism, this essay is unacceptable and would be failed with a score of 0.00.

Paper 3: Essay exhibits frequent sentence-level, conceptual, and logical errors carried over from Paper 1 and 2, reflecting no improvement. The thesis is poorly defined; again, a possible introductory paragraph – an uncited and quoted source – seems to be instituted in its place, but there is no context for it. Incorrect citations throughout; wholly weak paraphrasing. Likely plagiarizing. The organization of ideas and argument are incoherent. The essay lacks details in numerous places; assertions are and unsubstantiated. Essay again exhibits a substantial lack of connection with a targeted readership. Transitions at sentence and paragraph levels are not clear, and highly problematic syntax makes sentences difficult to follow. Grammar and punctuation continue to be a substantial problem. Paragraphs exhibit redundancy; rambling frustrate the reader. Mechanics are again an area of concern. Numerous instances of plagiarism. Citations are uneven and incorrectly constructed throughout the length of the essay. Use of outside sources appears arbitrary and haphazard. Mistakes interfere with comprehension. Conclusion is weak and of concern.

1. Purpose D _____
2. Organization D _____
 & Content
3. Audience F _____
4. Style F _____
5. Mechanics D _____
6. Conclusion F _____
 & Citation

GRADE: 59.50 – F/D-

Paper 4: This essay reflects no improvement whatsoever over the previous three essays. Frequent sentence-level, conceptual, and logical errors persist. The thesis is poorly defined. Incorrect citations throughout; wholly weak paraphrasing. Basic foundational concepts and assumptions concerning content are deeply flawed (eg. "gender [is] taught throughout school as male verses [sic] female). The organization of ideas and argument are incoherent. The essay lacks details in numerous places; assertions are and unsubstantiated. Essay again exhibits a substantial lack of connection with a targeted readership. Transitions at sentence and paragraph levels are not clear, and highly problematic syntax makes sentences difficult to follow. Grammar and punctuation continue to be a substantial problem. Paragraphs exhibit redundancy; rambling frustrate the reader. Mechanics are an area of concern. Citations are uneven and incorrectly constructed and used throughout the length of the essay. Use of outside sources appears arbitrary and haphazard. Numerous instances of plagiarism. Mistakes interfere with comprehension. Conclusion is weak and of concern. Student's work did not appreciably improve. Student writes at a below average level.

1. Purpose D _____
2. Organization F _____
 & Content
3. Audience F _____
4. Style F _____
5. Mechanics D _____
6. Conclusion F _____
 & Citation

GRADE: 56.17 – F

Note: Because of instances of plagiarism, this essay is unacceptable and would be failed with a score of 0.00.

To: Dr. Antonio Jocson, Grade Appeals Committee Chair
From: Dr. M. Clay Hooper
Subject: Grade Appeal (ENGL 1123, Fall 2008,)

It is regrettable that Ms. [redacted] did not receive her final grade in a timely manner. There also seems to have been a lack of transparency in how her assignments were graded. That said, Ms. [redacted]'s grade appeal contains no rationale for her claim that her grade was miscalculated, and the assignments that she has submitted for review do not, in themselves, warrant a reconsideration of her grade. The four papers contain D-level work at best, and three of the four papers include plagiarized material. Ms. [redacted]'s papers do not demonstrate the depth of analysis that should be expected in a college writing course, and they do not demonstrate the ability to develop a clear and well-organized argument. In addition, Ms. [redacted]'s prose contains frequent lapses in grammar, clarity, and basic mechanics. Based on a review of her four major assignments for the class, then, I recommend that Ms. [redacted]'s grade for the course remain as recorded by [redacted].

Below are my evaluations of each of the four papers submitted by Ms. [redacted]. Fully marked versions of the papers are available on request.

Paper #1: Frequent problems with grammar and basic mechanics. Frequent problems with clarity on the sentence level and the paragraph level. The paper does not develop or support the thesis in clear, organized fashion. The points made in the body paragraphs are very unclear and disjointed; there is no logical progression of ideas that advance the thesis. The paper seems to pull points at random from various sources (which are not cited on a works cited page) without clearly explaining those points or their relationships to each other and the thesis. GRADE: D-

Paper #2: The paper contains plagiarized passages as well as frequent problems with grammar and clarity. The argument as a whole is unclear because the paper establishes no connection between globalization and disadvantages faced by black Americans. Consequently, the paper seems to shift back and forth between two unrelated topics. Body paragraphs lack coherence. GRADE: D-

Paper #3: The paper contains several plagiarized passages: unmarked quotes from sources cited on the Works Cited page as well as passages borrowed from internet sources that are not cited on the Works Cited page. The paper contains frequent problems with grammar and mechanics and suffers from a lack of clarity. The content of the paper is vague and redundant; it provides only a vague account of the Bush Administration's response to the Kyoto Protocol and does not analyze this response with any depth or clarity. Aside from restating the Bush Administration's position on climate change, the overall point of the paper is unclear. GRADE: F

Paper #4: The paper is heavily plagiarized and demonstrates an inability to comprehend sources and use them appropriately. There is no coherent argument or train of thought within the paper. The paper contains frequent problems with grammar, basic mechanics, and sentence-level clarity. GRADE: F

TO: Antonio Jocson, Ph.D.
Chair, Grade Appeals Committee

FROM: DeLinda Marzette, Ph.D.
Grade Appeals Committee

DATE: 10 May 2009

RE: 's Grade Appeal (ENGL 1123—Fall 2008 with)

~~~~~  
~~~~~

After reviewing Ms. 's four essays in question, the grades submitted by ' should remain. Admittedly, without the writing prompts, it is difficult to evaluate the way in which each of the essays were to be weighed and evaluated; still, the overall problems with thesis support and argumentation, cohesive ideas, and most importantly, probable plagiarism as well as mechanical/grammatical issues cause Ms. 's essays to fall below the average of college-level grading standards.

The following summarizes my findings:

Essay 1—Interpretations of How Evolution verses Creationism is perceived in today's Society

Grade – 65/D

- Average thesis, but a bit formulaic.
- Student does not support thesis, merely summarizes or clarifies concepts associated with evolution.
- Many awkward, garbled, unclear sentences.
- Problems with punctuation, especially the comma and semi-colon.
- Severe problems with citation documentation; possible plagiarism as it is not clear where student's ideas stop/start and citations stop/start.

Essay 2 – Students Class is Now in Session!

Grade – 59/F

- Opening first person speech is odd and stylistically unclear. It seems that the student has confused the writer's point of view, which was probably provided by instructor, with this performative paragraph.
- Although citation documentation seems better in this essay than the others, still, there are several passages from secondary sources stated as student's ideas.
- Many punctuation problems, particularly with comma and prepositional phrases.
- Many unclear sentences, such as, "The Black community will have to embrace each other and form a type of system that allows African American to help the culture expand into higher education").
- Works cited page incorrect if MLA style format is the goal.

Essay 3 – Is Your Global Warming Real?

Grade – 54/F

- Opening paragraph is totally confusing. Thesis and quotation have no distinction.
- Paragraph topics and ideas disjointed, disconnected. Transitions nonexistent.
- Argumentation and/or reasoning illogical, unclear.
- Entire essay reads like a pamphlet on Kyoto Protocol and/or Bush.
- Sentences do not make sense or their relation to one another unclear.
- Thesis unsupported and entire essay seems unclear with regard to intent.
- Problems with citation documentation; plagiarism very likely.

- Works cited page wrong if MLA style is the aim.

Essay 4 – Analyzing Gender in a More Complex Form

Grade – 59/F

- Severe problems with citation documentation: no page numbers are ever cited as well as quotations marks distinguishing verbatim quotes. No distinction made between student's ideas and secondary source(s).
- Often quotes and/or paraphrases comprise the entire paragraph.
- Many nonsensical, awkward, garbled sentences. (i.e. "...gender is behavior and organizational practices at the interactional level, and selves and identities at the individual level").
- Several word omissions within sentences make meaning nonsensical.

If you need the essay hard copies with my commentary, please do not hesitate to ask.