

Grading Liberation: How I learned to love reflective assessment

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Abstract: Most faculty don't even question the idea of grades or the process of grading. They typically loathe the process but see it as a necessary part of their job and the assessment of their students. But what if faculty paused to question why they grade students? What purpose does it serve? Is the grading process consistent? What is it doing to our students? Is it actually assisting in the learning process? Does it motivate students? And what is the extensive amount of grading done to faculty and their relationship to pedagogy? In this paper, I will examine these questions as I continue the process of improving the ungrading approach or reflective assessment. Since the fall semester of 2021, I have employed reflective assessment in all my courses. These courses included a variety of survey courses and upper-level majors-specific courses. In each of these courses, I surveyed students on their reactions to reflective grading both during and after the course in hopes of gaining an initial assessment of the impact that this process has on the learning process and the fulfillment of the course objectives.

Introduction:

"I actually like this method! I was against it a bit at the beginning of the semester, but it provided a level of relief that I didn't have for my other classes. I was not constantly stressed about what my percentage was in the class, especially compared to others because that is a feature I use on Canvas religiously (it is not a good thing but it makes

me feel good sometimes...). So, I was ultimately doing the work to gain the knowledge and not the grade which made me enjoy it much more.”

A student in my 300-level Western Political Philosophy I

“I remember when you first mentioned that you were going to implement an “ungrading” system for your classes last year, I immediately got stressed out about that idea as I am a person who is very focused on grades...I just like knowing exactly what I have all of the time...After going through a full semester under your “ungrading” system, I have to admit, I thoroughly enjoyed it. Receiving the complete or incomplete helped me to judge where I was on the grading scale throughout the semester so I appreciated that. You helped to put my mind at ease at the very beginning of the semester by letting us know that if we ever needed a definite grade at any time... you would provide that for us. I have learned to become much more confident in myself as a student and in my capabilities due to this system. I think that this system provides most students with a great relief from stress as they are not worried as much about grades, but more so about the content of the course. I think you should absolutely continue to use this system in all of your future courses.”

-A student in 100-level Foundational Ideas of Political Society

I have been working in higher education for 25 years and I still love my job. And what I love most about my job is teaching. This is why I got into the profession and this is what keeps me in a faculty position as opposed to an administrative one. In fact, most of my current research agenda focuses on teaching and learning. However, one thing that I hated about teaching was grading. I hated judging students, serving as the final arbiter of their final grades, and knowing the impact this had on their mental health. I continuously attempted to make my grading system as objective as possible, but such attempts never truly succeeded. I was also aware that despite spending endless hours carefully reading student assignments, most students simply wanted to know what grade they would receive because the grade was the only goal in the course.

But all I ever knew was that grading is an essential part of higher education.¹ It is necessary that we, the experts, stand in judgment of our students. We need to provide rigor to our institutions so that students struggle the same way that we did. College isn't supposed to be easy and getting rid of grades would just make it easier (Davidson 2017). And yet, I had this nagging feeling that grades were actually preventing learning, not helping it (Kohn 2006; Supiano 2019).

In the fall of 2021, I decided to go all-in on ungrading, or as I now call it, reflective assessment. I spent the spring of 2021 considering numerous alternative methods of grading, including specification grading, contract grading, and a less robust form of ungrading (Stommel, 2017). In the end, I thought that full immersion in a student reflective assessment plan was going to work best for me because, upon reflection, I was already doing some level of alternative grading in previous semesters. This article is a discussion of that process, an analysis of the student feedback and professor insights, and a rationale for why I will never go back to a traditional form of grading. In order to accomplish these goals, I begin with a discussion of traditional grading and its shortcomings, then move to a detailed description of how I employed reflective assessment in my courses, before providing some concluding thoughts on what I learned in this process, why I will maintain this system, and what I might change for future courses, including the name change from upgrading to reflective assessment.

The Effects of Grading

Most faculty don't even question the idea of grades or the process of grading. They typically loathe the process but see it as a necessary part of their job and the assessment of their students. But what if faculty paused to question why they grade students? What purpose does it serve? Is the grading process consistent? What are the unintended consequences of grading? What is it doing to our students? Is it actually assisting in the learning process? Does it motivate students? And what has the extensive amount of grading done to faculty and their relationship to pedagogy?

¹ Despite the perception that grading is a long standing part of higher education, the current letter grade system most institutions employ did not gain popularity until the 1940s. See Schinske and Tanner (2014) for a history of grading.

Let's start with the traditional understanding of why we grade. For most faculty, we grade because there is a sense that we must assess our students by applying our expertise to their assignments. If we do not assess students how will they know that they learned anything or learned the "appropriate" material? Faculty must assess students or there is no way to judge what they have learned. Built into this understanding is the idea that students will learn more because there is the motivation of a grade at the conclusion of the assignment and that will bring about learning. But as Alfie Kohn has shown, "Research shows three reliable effects when students are graded: They tend to think less deeply, avoid taking risks, and lose interest in learning itself." (Kohn, 2006). If Kohn's research, along with others, is correct, then grading is not accomplishing any of the goals we as faculty desire.

Grades do not automatically result in learning. In fact, they often lead to the opposite. Many students are not motivated to learn through the process of providing grades but instead seek the grade and thus, learn only what is necessary for that grade (Blum 2020; Gibbs 2020; Hattie and Timperley 2007). The grade itself is the motivating factor, not learning. This also means that students are less prone to take academic risks and learn the material on a deeper level. They learn the material to gain the grade, thus stifling their learning beyond the achievement of that grade (Taylor 2022). This can also mean that the extensive time instructors spend on assignment feedback is often for naught because students simply want to see their grades. The feedback is not a concern for many students.

Grades are a primary source of stress for our students. The angst over a grade causes a high amount of mental anxiety and depression among our students. Couple this with the ability to always see their grades and we have raised a generation of students who perseverate on grades as a marker of their "learning" and even a symbol of their worth. For those that subscribe to an alternative form of grading, the hope is to alleviate this stress in order to encourage greater learning among our students (Kohn, 2006; Heissel et al. 2021)

Along with this, grading can also be a major stressor for faculty. I find it hard to imagine that any faculty enjoys grading. Personally, I would stress about student grades almost as much as they would. Because I teach at a small institution in which professors get to know all of their students on both an academic and personal level, I loathe the idea of “assessing” the students that I know so well when I was aware of some of the other stressors that existed in their lives. Whether those are work-related, other courses, family responsibilities, or a plethora of other factors. A traditional grading system does not always take this into account and starts from a position of distrust or suspicion of our students. Plus the idea of creating rubrics that differentiate between 89% and 91% seemed ridiculous. I wanted a system that made assessment reside with the students so that they could gauge what they have learned and the process by which they engaged in this process.

Grading creates an atmosphere of competition rather than cooperation. This was the one aspect of grading that I found the most distasteful and discouraging. At their core, grades are a way to rank students, thus creating an atmosphere of competition. In such an environment, collaboration and peer learning become difficult at best, if not impossible. If we are to turn out students who know how to cooperate in their attempt to solve problems, this competitive atmosphere needs to be quelled.

Grading also pits students against professors. We, as instructors, are now seen as the enemy at worst or an obstacle at best. Almost as if we are a puzzle that they need to solve in order to ascertain a good grade. The focus becomes on how to solve the puzzle of doing well in “Dr. Death’s” class rather than engaging in the course material and enjoying that process of learning.²

² As an undergraduate, my institution had a professor who was nicknamed Dr. Death because of his/her rigid grading system. This professor would announce the fail rate of his/her class at the start of the semester with a sense of pride. This is just one anecdotal example of how some professors view the grading system.

Grading is not always objective and there may be no way to change the subjective nature of this process. Yes, as instructors we do everything possible to make the grading process objective. We engage in blind reads of exams, create detailed rubrics, and read and re-read papers, among other tactics. But in the end, there is no purely objective reading of student work. All instructors bring a level of bias to the grading process (Sadker and Zittleman, 2009). Especially those like myself who typically employ essay-style assessment rather than more quantitative means of assessment. If our assessment can't be purely objective then we are cheating our students and placing our own biases on their work. The answer, again, was to place the onus of assessment back on the student and allow them to self-assess. All of these reasons led me to the implementation of an ungrading method for my courses.

A “How To” of Reflective Assessment

Implementing a process of reflective assessment took a lot of time, planning, and honestly, courage (Warner 2020). It is important to stipulate at the outset that this new system of assessment was done with pedagogical purpose and intent. It was also done with transparency on intent so that students could understand why I was implementing such a non-traditional form of assessment and what their role would be in this process. You will also notice that I use the term assessment (Winkelmes 2013). Reflective assessment still provides a form of assessment. In fact, due to the fact that my institution requires that I submit a final grade for each student, an assessment of their learning is a must. But that assessment is no longer solely in my hands. The reflective assessment method places that responsibility on the students, thus creating a student-centered assessment process that requires students to claim ownership over the learning process.

At the outset of the semester, I provide a detailed understanding of what the reflective assessment process will look like and most importantly, why I decided to implement this form of assessment. As this article will discuss later, transparency concerning the instructor's decision to enact reflective assessment is essential to the success of this method. All of my courses employ a syllabus “quiz” at the beginning of the semester

and a question about reflective assessment and their understanding of this assessment method is included. I also make it clear to students that a final grade is necessary, according to university rules, but that students would provide a self-assessment of their grade at several points in the semester. I reserve the right to question that self-assessment grade, but that does not necessarily mean changing the grade. This means I reserve the right to ask for a meeting with the student in order to discuss the justification for their grade prior to submitting the final grade. Finally, I also emphasize to students that if at any point in the semester, they feel the need to know what their grade is we can conference to determine their grade at that moment in the semester. This last point is an essential part of this method because the main concern students have about reflective assessment is not knowing what their grade is from week to week within a semester.

It is also important to note that my classes are flipped classrooms using a hybrid delivery method. This means that students are submitting formative assignments on a weekly basis. I mark these submissions as complete or incomplete and include feedback on the student's work. That feedback is intended to serve as a way for students to understand what is good in the submission and what needs improvement. My hope is that they will use the feedback to improve throughout the semester (Hattie and Timperley 2007). I also include the same level of feedback on any summative assignments, but they also receive a mark of complete or incomplete on all assignments. Along with my feedback, I provide students access to a Google doc "Answer Key". I update the answer key after each assignment with an exemplary submission from the class. The goal of the Answer Key is to provide students with a model assignment that they could review and use as a comparison for their work. It is also helpful for me when providing students with feedback because I can point them to the Answer Key as a way to show them how to improve their work.

At several points in the semester (typically three), students complete a self-assessment assignment (Appendix A). This self-assessment forces students to reflect upon their

engagement in the class prior to submitting a grade.³ It is important to ask students not only about their assignments and attendance but also about what they have learned and what stuck with them about the course material up to that point in the semester. The self-assessment is an attempt to get students to pause in the semester and think about what they have learned, what effort they put into that learning process, how their submissions compared to the exemplary ones in the answer key, and ultimately, what grade they earned at that point in the semester.

As mentioned above, a key component of this method is the instructor's right to request a meeting concerning the student's self-assessment grade. I use this request only when students seem to overestimate their performance in the course. I would make clear to the students that the meeting was not about me changing their grades, but about them providing a more robust justification of their self-assessed grade. I believe this is a vital part of the reflective assessment method because students understand that there is some check or accountability on their assessment. They can't simply submit a grade with no justification and in fact, they need to defend that justification when questioned. However, other instructors have argued that an acceptance of the grade as the student submits it is satisfactory for their courses (Stommel, 2020). Each instructor needs to determine what method works best for their course goals. On the other end of the assessment spectrum, If a student underrepresented their grade, I do not ask for a conference, I simply raise their grade and provide the student with an explanation. In my time using this method, I have raised far more grades than I have requested conferences.

Overall, the how-to of ungrading was not difficult but I also feel that it is a continual process (Blum 2020, Stommel 2021 and 2023). For instance, one question that I have added to the final self-assessment concerns the students' intellectual development throughout the semester. In other words, how did their engagement with the course material and assignments evolve from week 1 till week 16? I am interested to see if

³ Blum 2020 provides another example of a self-assessment assignment. There is no correct way to create these documents, it is about what the professor is hoping to learn about the student's performance and what they are hoping the students will reflect upon.

students feel that they learned from the feedback and implemented the recommendations in their assignments as the semester progressed or if they engaged in the course in a similar fashion or even regressed throughout the semester.

What Did I Learn

The student quotes included at the beginning of this article are very representative of my students' reactions to the method of assessment. Overall, my students have reacted to this method in a positive manner, even by those who were skeptical at the outset. Over the years there have been a few negative comments, but as I will discuss, those were mainly focused on the students' desire to know their grades. This does not mean that there isn't room for improvement. I continue to hone the self-assessment assignments, along with how I introduce the method to students. As a result, I have gained several takeaways from my early implementation of this assessment method.

First, my experience conforms with the studies on how ungrading methods reduce stress levels for students, although not completely. My end-of-the-semester course evaluations, along with the self-assessment assignments all asked students about their perception of the reflective assessment method. The final self-assessment assignment asks students, "Upon completing the semester, what are your thoughts on the 'ungrading' or reflective learning system of assessment?" Should I continue to use this system in future courses?" The overwhelming response to this qualitative question was positive. Out of the 34 students in my upper-level political philosophy course and survey-level ideologies course, 1 student gave a somewhat negative comment. This trend holds for all of my courses, with many courses returning a 100% positive response to the method.

The negative comment was the following. "This ungrading has grown on me because it is based on a student's ability to learn and put effort into their work. They get to truly reflect on everything they've put forward and go from there." I mention this as "somewhat" negative because in earlier self-assessment submissions this student was

not supportive of the assessment method. But it appears that she/he started to see benefits to this system.

In terms of more quantitative data, my end-of-the-year evaluation asked students, “The ‘ungrading’ method was beneficial to my learning process in this course.” I did not receive a response from every enrolled student, but out of 24 student responses, I received 1 neither agree nor disagree, 6 agree, and 17 strongly agree. Although this is a very small sample size, this data shows at minimum the students’ desire that I continue to work with this form of assessment in future courses. Only upon receiving more data and growing my sample size can a more definitive conclusion be drawn. ***(I know have that data and I am working through it. I hope to share it during my presentation.)***

Second, I learned that a high level of transparency is necessary for this method to work. Students had an initial reaction of trepidation to this method of assessment. When first mentioned, it was apparent that students were wary of this means of grading, and some articulated those concerns to me. However, as I began to talk through the process of ungrading, students’ concerns began to ease, and an understanding that this method of assessment would not change the course, it would simply change how the student is evaluated. In order to overcome this initial student angst, I have discovered that a few key points are necessary during an instructor’s initial discussion of this assessment method.

First, that ungrading is about student ownership of their learning process. If you show them that this method allows them to be part of the assessment process rather than just a bystander, they tend to react positively. Second, that self-evaluation of their work is a necessary skill for future employment. We discuss the fact that individuals should be self-reflective on the work they produce and that such honest self-reflection will assist them when doing independent work in their profession. Third, that their college courses should be about more than just grades. This is a tough one at first because so many of these students have been focused on grades as the purpose of their education. But

when you ask them to shift their focus from “how to get a grade” to “what am I learning”, it can shift the whole dynamic of your course. Finally, you need to explain to students that they can know what their grade is at any moment in the semester. All they have to do is ask. As I have mentioned, the biggest student concern with this method is the “not knowing” in terms of their grade. Students need to know that they can get an update on their grades at any time.

Third, my fears of lazy students, bad assignments, and lack of attendance were unfounded. This was the aspect of ungrading that gave me the most pause. Despite reading all the research that should have dispelled the anxiety (Clark and Talbert, 2023), I was still unsure if students would become unmotivated when the rigor of grades was not looming. In the self-assessment assignments, one of the most common responses to the student’s perception of reflective assessment was that it allowed them to stop stressing about grades and start focusing on learning. In fact, that is what I saw in my courses. Overall attendance did not decline and students did not come to class unprepared. In fact, students came to class more willing to discuss the questions they had from the formative assignments completed prior to class. Students were more willing to say, I don’t know the answer or I don’t get that theory, rather than just fake their knowledge in order to acquire a grade. And yes, I still got some sloppy work and superficial assignments, but the number of poor assignments did not increase from past years and students typically acknowledge their insufficient work and accept the final grade that they now stipulate they earned.

One measure of student recognition of their work is the number of students that I had to counsel about their grades at the conclusion of the semester. At the conclusion of the “worst” semester, I needed to meet with 3 students. All of these students thought that because they put effort into the course, they should receive an A. After pushing them to look over the answer key and compare their work, they immediately recognized that effort is not all that matters and subsequently lowered their final grade. This, along with the fact that another 50+ students that semester provided a reasonable assessment of

their work, shows that students aren't just giving themselves "As" when they don't deserve it.

Finally, I realized my liberation from grading and the subsequent ownership that students took over their learning. It was wonderful to watch students own their learning process and reflect on that learning process in such a way that it showed their ownership over the course material. Part of this is due to the flipped learning method employed, but one can also see it in the detail and analysis put into their self-assessments. Because these forms of reflective assessment push students to consider not only how they performed, but what they learned, you see them own their learning in a way that I did not see with a traditional grading system. Along with the benefit to the students, this form of assessment was also liberating for me. The anxiety that I once felt upon submitting final grades is now greatly alleviated. It is not completely eliminated. I still find those moments when I need to conference with a student emotionally jarring, but even those are typically amicable with the result being an agreed-upon grade that makes sense to both instructor and student. However, students now recognize their role in the assessment process and that provides me the opportunity to also concentrate on their learning process and how I can enhance that process, instead of worrying about grades. It truly has been a liberating method for all involved.

Conclusion

After employing this system of assessment in all of my fall 2021 courses, my only thought was why did it take me so long to discover and use this form of student assessment? For that reason, I have continued with this system until now and plan on continuing it for the remainder of my career.

(expand on this conclusion)

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Appendix

Reflective assessment material
Syllabus statements:

Reflective Assessment or "Ungrading"

This course will not follow a traditional grading method. What I mean by this is that you won't receive a grade on their weekly assignments. I will simply let you know that I mark the assignment as complete or incomplete. Along with this very basic statement, I will provide feedback on the assignment, ask questions about their answers, and discuss how you might improve on future assignments. I will also post a model submission from this course so that students can learn from their peers and have a model answer to strive for. You will also complete three self-assessments of your knowledge as a way to dialogue about student learning. I will not "grade" those self-assessments either.

It is important to note that the university does require me to submit a final grade. When engaging in a self-assessment of your work in this course, students will consider their participation in our Tuesday classes, if they submitted their assignments on time, the quality of those submissions, and the effort that they extended in the course.

Why reflective assessment? It took me a long time to get to this point in my courses. A few reasons I choose an alternative form of assessment are that grades cause student anxiety, they create competition, not collaboration, and grades don't create learning. As a result, the focus of this course is on collaborating, learning, and enjoying the subject matter. In the end, we will work together to submit your final grade, but overall the point is to de-emphasize grading and emphasize learning. However, after extensive dialogue about your final grade, I reserve the right to lower the grade from what you have submitted. I don't anticipate having to use this authority but students should be aware that I retain this right.

Self-assessment assignments

There will be three moments of comprehensive self-assessment during the semester. The purpose of these exercises is to provide students with the ability to assess what they have learned and how this relates to the course outcomes. The first self-assessment occurs after week 5 of the course. The second occurs after week 10, and the third during finals week. I will discuss these assignments at length during our first week.

Along with these self-assessments, students must also engage in a short exit question after every Tuesday class. In this question, students must answer the following:

1. What will you most remember from our discussion today?

2. How would you rate your performance today? Excellent, good, fair, or poor. In answering this question consider how engaged you were in the discussion. And whether you were prepared for the discussion.

Self-Assessment #1 assignment:

The following is your first self-assessment assignment. Be sure to answer all of the questions and provide comprehensive explanations for each answer. I would also like everyone to INCLUDE the questions in your submission. You can easily copy and paste the answers from below into a Word doc and then fill in your answers.

This assignment is due on Friday, February 23rd by 6:00 pm.

The following is your first self-assessment assignment. Be sure to answer all of the questions and provide comprehensive explanations for each answer. I would also like everyone to INCLUDE the questions in your submission. You can easily copy and paste the answers from below into a Word doc and then fill in your answers.

This assignment is due on Friday, February 23rd by 6:00 pm.

1. What did you learn so far in this course? **Provide at least a paragraph assessment of what you have learned in the first third of the course.** This could focus on something very specific or provide a narrative explaining more broadly things that you have learned.

2. Overall, did this portion of the course assist you in understanding how we understand the global community and specifically, how we perceive the global system and the impact that globalization has had on our community? And explain how this was accomplished.

3. What did you learn in this course that either surprised you or was the most impactful on how you think about the global community?

4. How, if at all, was the course content relevant to your life?

5. How many times have you missed class this semester? Feel free to explain if relevant.

6. How would you assess your level of participation? How engaged are you in the group discussions? Please refer to your exit tickets to remind yourself of your level of engagement in each discussion.

7. How, if at all, did your base group assist you in learning the course material? Or what did you learn from your peers?

8. At this point in the course, did you complete the readings, lectures, and other course materials regularly? And do you take notes, a summary, etc. of your engagement with the course material? Provide some explanation for your answer.

9. How many assignments have you missed and/or marked incomplete this semester? Also, did you complete all the assignments prior to class time? Feel free to explain why, if you believe it is relevant. You DO NOT have to include the Exit Tickets in your count of missed assignments.

10. How would you assess your assignments for this section of the course? Excellent, good, fair, or poor. (Provide some justification for your answer and list an example of your best work.) **Be sure to look over the [answer key](#) as a means of comparison.**

11. Do you ever seek outside sources or unassigned sources to assist in your understanding of the course material and/or to fulfill your intellectual curiosity in this section? If yes, please provide an example.

12. How would you assess the level of effort you put into this class? Can you provide some explanation of that effort?

13. After considering all the previous questions and your self-reflection, at this point in the semester, what grade would you give yourself? Please provide a short justification for that grade. *Remember, your grade should be a combination of all aspects that go into learning the course material. That includes your weekly written submissions, your participation in our discussions, the effort you put into this course, and your overall engagement with the learning process.*

14. What are your initial thoughts on the reflective system of assessment?

Final Self-Assessment—basically the same with a few changes

The following is your final self-assessment assignment. Be sure to answer all of the questions and provide comprehensive explanations for each answer. I would also like everyone to **INCLUDE** the questions and/or outcomes in your submission. You can easily copy and paste the answers/outcomes from below into a Word doc and then fill in your answers. Also, do **NOT** complete this self-assessment prior to submitting your final paper. It is important that you reflect upon your work in that final paper, along with the rest of the course material.

This assignment is due on Friday, May 17th, by 9:00 am.

Please answer the following questions. All questions should be answered in terms of your performance throughout the ENTIRE semester.

1. What did you learn in this course? **Provide at least a paragraph assessment of what you have learned.** This could focus on something very specific or provide a narrative explaining more broadly things that you have learned.
2. Overall, this course was supposed to assist students in gaining a better understanding of the interdependent nature of global affairs and be able to assess the ethical nature of different global issues.. Do you think this course accomplished that goal? Explain how this was accomplished.
3. What did you learn in this course that either surprised you or was the most impactful on how you think about the global community?
4. How many times did you miss class? Feel free to explain why, if you believe it is relevant. FYI--we had 14 Tuesday meetings that counted towards attendance, including the Google doc discussions and Town Hall night.

5. How would you assess your level of participation in class and the quality of that participation? How engaged were you in the discussions and did you add something substantive to the conversation?

6. How, if at all, did your fellow students assist you in learning the course material? Or what did you learn from your peers?

7. Did you regularly complete the readings, lectures, and other course materials? And did you take notes, a summary, etc of your engagement with the course material? Provide some explanation for your answer.

8. How many assignments did you miss and/or were marked incomplete? And did you hand in your assignments by the initial deadline or were they late? Feel free to explain why, if you believe it is relevant. We had a total of 25 assignments, including the weekly relevance assignments but not including the exit tickets and end-of-the-semester ShenEd reflections or Shenandoah Conversations reflection.

10. How would you assess your final exam Town Hall essay? Excellent, good, fair, or poor. Provide some justification for your answer. I ask this question because this was a more substantive assignment and you should weigh this more heavily in your final grade calculation.

11. How would you assess your submitted assignments for this course? Excellent, good, fair, or poor. Provide some justification for your answer and an example of your

best work. In answering this question, **please review the shared Google doc ["Answer Key"](#) to compare your assignments to the exemplary work of your peers.**

12. Did you ever seek outside sources or unassigned sources to assist in your understanding of the course material and/or to fulfill your intellectual curiosity? If yes, please provide an example.

13. How would you assess the level of effort you put into this class? Excellent, good, fair, or poor. Can you provide some explanation of that effort?

14. How did your academic performance evolve throughout the semester? In other words, did you see steady improvement in your performance? Did you maintain a certain level? Or did your performance decline as the semester progressed?

15. Did this class provide you the opportunity to improve your "employability" skills? Did you take the opportunity to improve those skills? Employable skills could include critical reading and/or critical thinking, oral communication, written communication, working with others, and ethical reasoning, among others.

16. After considering all the previous questions and your self-reflection, what final grade would you give yourself? Please provide a short justification for that grade. *Remember, your grade should be a combination of all aspects that go into learning the course material. That includes your weekly written submissions, your participation in our discussions, the effort you put into this course, and your overall engagement with the learning process.*

17. Upon completing the semester, what are your final thoughts on the "ungrading" or reflective assessment system of assessing student learning? Should I continue to use this system in future courses?