

April 29, 2020

Dear students in POLI 203

I am writing to make sure you can all make the best decisions for yourselves about your grades in our class. Of course I hope you all do well! But I also know that some of you have had serious disruptions. The University knows that as well, and has provided three new options that I want to make sure you all know about.

First, you may elect to take the class on a Pass/Fail basis. More information about the P/F option is here: <https://college.unc.edu/2020/03/grading-students-faq/>. Any grade above an F will convert to a P. You can wait until you see your grade and then choose. However, if you are thinking of this option, I would encourage you to see where you stand right now, since many of you are probably well above the D range, and whether you get a D, a C, or a B, you might want to consider the P option. (I'm assuming those likely to get an A will want to keep that grade...)

We have now updated all grades so you should be able to check where you stand now on the Sakai gradebook. Please note that two elements remain, and are therefore not reflected in the grade calculation so far: Part A of the final (the five quizzes), worth 10 percent of your final grade, and the narrative, Part C of the final exam, worth 4 percent. This means that the hypothetical student with perfect scores on all assignments would have a grade of 86 as of today.

If your current grade is above 59.99, you will pass the class even without taking the final exam, and if your current grade is above 55.99, you could pass the class while taking just Part C, skipping the quizzes. If your current grade is below 56 but above 46, then with perfect scores on both remaining parts of the quiz, you would pass the class.

If your current grade is above 76, then with 14 additional points you would qualify for an A. Many of you are in this situation. Therefore, if you want to get an A, you should take the final. If your current grade is between 59.99 and 76, then you will get a passing grade but are not likely to get a final grade of A. The final exam will not make a difference to your grade, if you choose the pass/fail option.

So, you might find it worthwhile to see where you stand and act accordingly. If you choose the P/F option, you do not need to let us know. Just follow the instructions at the link above; you have until August 7, 2020 to make this decision.

A second option is to take an incomplete in this course if you feel that you want to complete the material but cannot do so in the time remaining. We will be flexible in considering any such requests, given the circumstances. In this scenario, you receive a temporary grade of "CV" until January 12, 2021 in order to complete the work and receive a permanent grade. If you do not complete the work by that extended deadline, the grade automatically converts to an F. If you want to select this option, please email me at Frankb@unc.edu and let me know before 3pm on May 5, when the final exam is due.

Finally, please note that the university has offered a new option to withdraw from a class, receiving a grade of WCV, until Friday May 8, 2020. Note that if you drop the class, there can be consequences, and you receive no credit at all. Then again, you also receive no grade so it does not count toward your GPA. The university is being much more flexible than normal in offering this “late drop” option, and it may be a good one for a few of you.. Please see more about this policy here: <https://college.unc.edu/2020/04/course-drop-accommodations-faq/>.

If you have questions about what is best for you, please be in touch with your TA.

In the meantime, best of luck to all of you!

Frank Baumgartner for the entire POLI 203 team of instructors and graders.