

Course description (syllabus) & other information

Course title: Japan 7A, Introduction to Premodern Japanese Literature & Culture
Semester: Fall 2012
Instructor: John R. Wallace
Meets: TTh 11AM–12:30PM (confirm time & class location at *Online Schedule of Classes*)

Please note ...

This syllabus contains critical information that covers the material unlikely to change during the term. Other details are on the web pages. I suggest you read this syllabus carefully and review it once or twice during the term. I run this class with the assumption that you have understood the below information so please contact me if something isn't clear.

Some grading aspects of my classes are perhaps unlike common practice of how you intuitively instructors will approach things. Reading this syllabus can help you score well in this class and not reading this syllabus will in many cases compromise your grade. I highlight in yellow key points but I want to repeat here information that is elsewhere on the syllabus that too often goes unnoticed or forgotten.

- ◆ Announcements: I do NOT make all relevant announcements in class, even important ones. Visit the *Announcements Page* frequently, at least once a day.
- ◆ **Academic honesty and grading fairness are important to me.** I watch my classes carefully and run tests and such in a way that those who choose to be honest are not at a disadvantage. I penalize. I expect everyone to operate under the same instructions and deadlines (although I might be flexible about major unexpected events that affect performance). My definitions of what is academically dishonest are stated on the web under “Policies” and in class at frequent intervals.
- ◆ Students who attend regularly, are attentive while in class, and avoid multitasking during class generally receive better grades.
- ◆ I have “bright lines” for submission times: something arriving at 1:01PM for a 1PM deadline is late.
- ◆ Skimming instructions, schedules and such can hurt your grade.
- ◆ Correct subject lines in emails are critically important (see below).
- ◆ Grades are reported as a number, not a letter, where A = 12, A- = 11 and so on.
- ◆ Note my treatment of extra credit activity stated elsewhere. Except for questions on exams, extra credit can have a slight grade effect but never *substitutes* for weak performance on regular assignments and is disregarded if I feel the student is otherwise not fully engaged in the class.

Course content & goals overview

Coverage: ninth to eighteenth century literature (prose, poetry and drama), aesthetic concepts, other relevant cultural concepts and some other “high art” cultural activities of Japan. The historical periods emphasized are Nara, early and late Heian, Kamakura, Northern & Eastern Hills culture of the Muromachi, and Genroku Edo.

Approach: Through lecture, discussion and project or essay submission we will read and analyze literary content and some other high art activities via specialized aesthetic terms, with attention to the cultural / historical context. Students will be expected to master a range of factual and conceptual information as well as produce interesting and credible analysis on relevant texts and other topics. This class is part lecture and part discussion during the regular sessions conducted by me, and of course active discussion in the discussion sections taught by GSIs.

Goals: The student will develop skills in reading premodern literary works with some sophistication and will become versed in a wide range of cultural concepts that are an important part of the cultural history of the country and/or relevant to contemporary Japanese culture. The student will have a good overview of major historical events relevant to culture, will read and analyze some of the major literary texts, will consider and try to apply to reading analysis some of the major religious / philosophical / aesthetic / ethical positions.

Texts: We read from a very wide range of texts (more than twenty) but place special emphasis on Tale of Genji, Tale of Heike, Narrow Road to the Deep North, plays by Chikamatsu, and several of the major poetry collections.

Aesthetic concepts: okashi, miyabi, mono no aware, ushin, yōen, yūgen, sabi & wabi, karumi

Other concepts: details of Shintō, Confucian, Buddhist religious concepts; uchi-soto—private-public, content-form, omote-ura; lyricism; mujōkan; michi; giri-ninjō; shinjū; bushidō

Course assignments-tests-grade scheme overview

- ◆ Quizzes: none
- ◆ Short (15-20 minute) written assignments based on reading assignments: multiple, probably six or nine
- ◆ Midterms: three — in-class, non-cumulative, primarily essay (analysis)
- ◆ Essay or project: one of moderate length and with a strong research component as well as an analytic component
- ◆ Final: about two hours during regular exam period, primarily multiple-choice (fact check)

The class approaches premodern literature and culture through a series of concepts. The student is expected to understand those concepts and apply them to achieve high quality reading of the poems, stories and other literary excerpts assigned. This is checked mostly through the midterms.

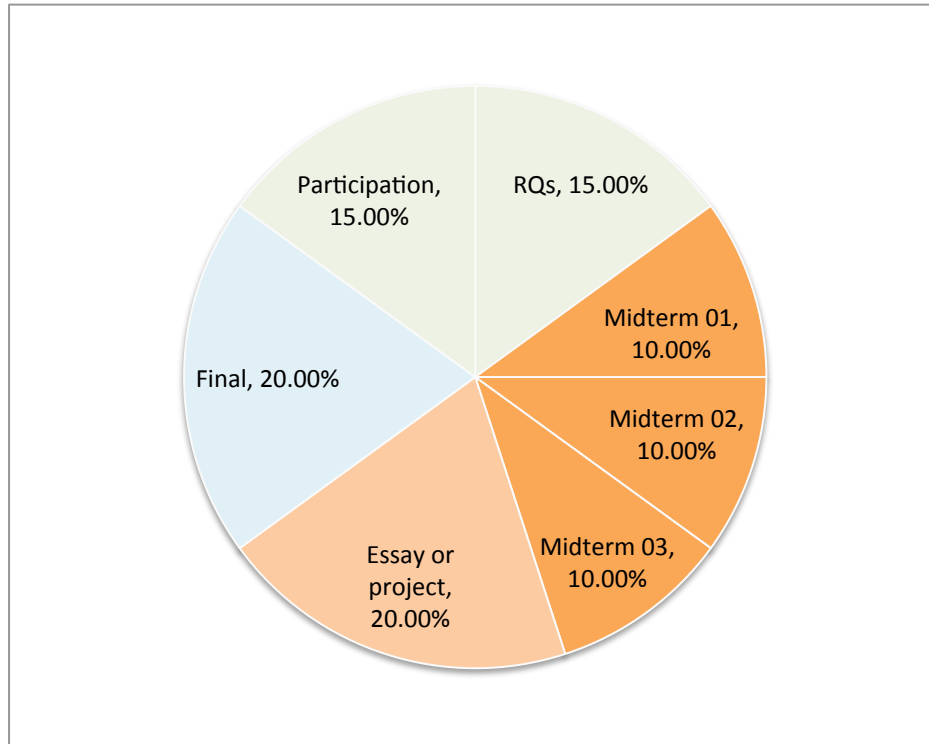
The concepts presented are difficult not so much in content but rather due to the unfamiliar nature of that content. Students get a better understanding of these concepts by reading the material on time and communicating with the instructor and GSIs about it. The student has various opportunities to show timely and enthusiastic “engagement” with the material — preparation (reading the assignments at the time requested), attendance (including attentiveness), participation (in discussion in section and regular session periods), and interaction with the assigned readings (expressed via RQs).

The class does not present the material chronologically — concepts are at the forefront. However, as part of the total package of the course the student is expected to know the basics of the texts, their authors, the historical eras involved, the genre and so forth. This is tested in the cumulative final.

In addition to the above, the student will submit a term paper or project, in stages.

The below pie chart shows grade weights for the various categories used to calculate the final grade. **Light green** — “engagement” grades: attendance, preparation, participation, communication regarding reading assigned completed with some care. **Brown** — scores based primarily on student’s analysis (lighter brown indicates the hybrid character, research + analysis, of the essay/project). **Light blue** — scores based primarily on mastery of factual information with some consideration of concepts presented. The end result of this structure means, in the main points:

- ◇ that the grade does not hang on a single event but rather consistent performance across the term and across various types of graded exercises
- ◇ that the student’s analytic abilities are an important part of the grade profile, while keeping in mind that this is a lower division course and “analysis” will be more basic than for an upper division course.



Course prerequisites

This class has no prerequisites.

Course materials

Some of the assigned reading is available through the below two books which should be at University Press Books (2430 Bancroft Way, ph 510-548-0585 / 800-676-8722, fax 510-849-9214 upb@universitypressbooks.com www.universitypressbooks.com). Also, both of these books, I believe, have been placed on reserve.

These are the books that need to be purchased for this class:

Classical Japanese Prose: An Anthology edited by Helen Craig McCullough and published by Stanford UP. It is in both hardback and paperback.

Genji & Heike: Selections from The Tale of Genji and The Tale of Heike, edited by Helen Craig McCullough and published by Stanford UP. It is in both hardback and paperback.

BUT, you might find that buying the unabridged versions of one or both of these works (*Genji*, *Heike*) is a better value in your case, since extra credit is possible in the case of these texts but requires reading the full version. Details on this issue should on the Web site sidebar tab "What texts to purchase".

In addition to these books there will be other readings of short stories, poems and secondary material. They will be provided as pdf files or web links.

Communicating

How to reach me

Office hours: Please use the link on the *Announcements Page*.

My office is **Dwinelle 5110**.

My email is jwallace@berkeley.edu.

- ◆ ALL emails for this class should use one of these subject line templates (note the underlines!):

J7A_ LASTNAME_ classname keyword
J7A_ assignmenttag_ LASTNAME_ classname
J7A_ assignmenttag_ LASTNAME_ classname keyword

See Home Course Page sidebar “OH & EMAIL ME” for definitions of assignmenttag, classname, and keyword.

- ◆ I usually do not check email after 9:30PM and check less frequently during weekends.

This class uses two web sites (tabine.info & bSpace)

This class uses a primary and secondary Web site. Off-campus individuals following my class via podcast, please email me. I might be creating a special site for this group since you do not automatically have access to the bSpace site.

<p>PRIMARY — <i>Announcements Page</i> <u>ALWAYS START HERE</u> http://www.tabine.info/~tabine/aa/calcrses/annc/annc.html</p>	<p>announcements links to course pages</p>
<p>PRIMARY — <i>Various web pages (access via Announcements Page)</i> The usual structure is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a Schedule / Outline page that lists all the class sessions and their basic topic ▪ individual session pages that include details of what to do for that day ▪ support pages of various types accessed through sidebar tabs </p>	<p>sidebar: class policies, syllabus, assignment & test information, links to other Web site, etc. main window: class schedule</p>
<p>SECONDARY <i>(materials that require restricted access usually due to copyright laws)</i> —bSpace—</p>	<p>course materials (texts, vocab glosses, sound files, powerpoints, etc.) unofficial grade postings* *If I have posted a grade to bSpace then for whatever reason changed the grade, the new grade will almost never appear on bSpace. You should have an email from me as a receipt of the change.</p>

Class announcements

I do not make many announcements in class, even important ones. Read the announcements page.

Where to look for announcements?

Once the class is up and running, go here: <http://www.tabine.info/~tabine/aa/calcrses/annc/annc.html> In the days and weeks before class begins, I might contact the class using the message tool on bSpace.

After class stops meeting but until grades are submitted, I continue to use the *Announcements Page*. Once I submit grades, I will soon switch back to bSpace for any additional announcements.

When to check for announcements?

- ◆ **Please check the *Announcements Page* frequently** beginning a few days before the start of the course until the end of finals week.
- ◇ Any announcements that are less than 24 hours before class will not include any required material. In practice, however, I very often add material to a web page just before or even after the class. Your class experience is probably enhanced if you are able to follow any of the new information. **For exams, you should definitely review the pages since there may well be relevant changes.**
- ◆ **Remember to refresh your browser** to insure you are seeing the updated version of the page.

Class sessions schedule & content, deadlines

- ◆ **The class schedule / outline is accessed via the *Announcements Page*.**

- ◆ **Please DO NOT download the Course Schedule / Outline or individual schedule pages** since these might change after you have downloaded them.

General policies

On the sidebar of the Course Home Page are links to my policies about

- ... my efforts to be “green” in class operation (including an invitation to contact me if my policy is hindering your learning experience),
- ... laptops use in the classroom and all other types of multitasking (**prohibited**), and
- ... **academic honesty** (extensive page of definitions, explanations, examples, penalties mostly related to plagiarism and the accurate and fair use of research material).

Please read them. Some of the information there affects your grade, sometimes dramatically.

An important note on academic honesty

I am very attentive to issues about plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, both in the production of assignments and essays and during quizzes and exams.

Dishonesty during quizzes or exams usually is penalized by a “F” on the question involved or the entire exam. It also triggers a review by me of all other material a student has submitted. **I reserve the right to rescore material that I once thought was honest but given later actions by the student appear more suspicious under a second review.** For material that is done at home on the honors system, **dishonesty on one assignment can generate an “F” on all other similar assignments and, when severe, might disqualify the student from submitting any more of that type of assignment.**

Plagiarism is difficult to define. **All students are expected to read carefully my full statement on these issues.** Access the Academic Honesty page through the Course Home Page sidebar. The academics honesty page is long, for a web page. **Please read it in full by the end of the first week of the term.** Ask questions. **After a week I will assume you are fully aware of, and have understood thoroughly, its contents including the penalties described.**

Please note that “I’m sorry, I won’t do it again” does not release you from the penalties incurred due to academic dishonesty.

Accommodation for students with disabilities

If you need accommodations for any type of disability or if you want me to have emergency medical information, please email me, or speak to me after class or during office hours.

Grades

General comments

- ◆ Students are always welcome to discuss with me concerns about grades. **If you use “J130” at the beginning and “gradeissue” as a keyword in the email subject line your emails will be reviewed again before assigning a final course grade. I recommend this.** (Keywords are irregular word strings I request to be put in emails so that later I can use them as a search term. This is explained in my comments on emailing me, found through the Course Home Page sidebar.)
- ◆ **Some grades are reported to bSpace**, though this report might be several sessions after the grade is determined. bSpace is NOT the official grade book record. Also, **when I have discussed a grade with a student and changed it, these changes are almost never uploaded to bSpace.** (It is time inefficient to upload grades on an individual basis.)
- ◆ **All grades in all categories are either originally in or converted to a 12-pt scale where A = 12, A- = 11 and so on.** (See the charts at the end of this document.) This is also the way grades are communicated. To tell a student that s/he made a 12 on an assignment is to say that s/he received an “A”. Test grades might initially have a raw and/or percent score but this is curved and given a letter grade and it is the letter grade, not the raw score or percent that counts towards the final grade.
- ◆ **Travel plans:** Students often schedule travel plans very close to class sessions. I do not consider missed flights, delayed or cancelled flights or inexpensive tickets to be excusable reasons for absences. I take our class sessions very seriously and hope you will, too.
- ◆ **Leaving early or arriving late because of midterms in other classes:** I do not consider this a valid reason for missing part of the class. I do have sympathy with a student’s desire to arrive early to a test room or when a test runs overtime.

However, this explanation is so frequently abused that it is difficult to sort out those who legitimately need to do this and those who do not. Therefore, please email me ahead of time if possible and perhaps we can work something out.

- ◆ **Job interviews:** I am ambivalent about job interviews. If you seem otherwise to be fully engaged in the class, I will probably consider missing class as inevitable but I will regret that you have missed the material. You should make extra effort to participate in the sessions you are able to attend. When the student seems otherwise relatively uninvolved in the class, I do sometimes wonder if the interviews might have been able to be scheduled at a better time.
- ◆ **I consider the final exam period a firm date.** Please do not ask to take an exam early because you have travel or moving plans. (This is a general statement, some of my classes do not use the final exam period.)
- ◆ **I basically never give incompletes in a class.**

About “grade categories”

When there are multiple assignments of a similar nature, I usually group them under a single category. Short responses at the end of readings, or multiple quizzes are good examples. Categories are more than just a higher hierarchy of a grading system. They *are* the grades used to calculate the final grade. At the end of the term I give one more consideration to the category grade and determine if it seems to be a fair representation based on the mathematical average. I manually adjust the category grade on rare occasions either because the student had a legitimate reason (major illness, death in the family, etc) for under-performance on a specific test or, in cases where skills are being built over the term, grades towards the end of the term might get greater weight than those towards the beginning. Manual adjustments are rare and, when done, will have a note in the grade book that preserves as a record my reasoning. Manual adjustments almost always improve a student’s grade. However, I reserve the right to reduce the grade as well.

Estimating grades

The student can generate various final grade scenarios by using the “**Grade estimator**” link on the **Course Home Page sidebar**, when provided. This is usually towards the end of the term. If we are in the last three weeks and I have not yet made an estimator available, please feel free to remind me to do so.

Please show some restraint in asking me to project a final grade for you towards the end of the term. (Basically I like all grade issues to be discussed in person. However, I understand that there might be times when this is not workable.) I will speak only in general terms, so if your question is, for example, whether I think you will get an “A” or an “A–”, I can’t answer that question. (This is true for P/NP students, too, when they are close to the borderline.) Also, if you are just curious, please wait for the reported grades. That being said, there are situations when such questions are legitimate. Please include “**gradeissue**” in your subject line. If I do not answer your email it either means that I don’t think your situation warrants an answer or I am simply too busy to do so. I will give it serious consideration and respond as quickly as possible if appropriate. However, please remember that it will not be entirely accurate since there are many calculations involved in the final weeks, including balancing your performance against that of other students after all grades have been calculated (usually something that happens in the last 48-72 hours before grade submission). Estimating an individual grade before I have entered into the phase of considering the class as a whole is a time-consuming process since it is not just a matter of running numbers.

Grade category details

Grade category—Participation

“Participation” is an umbrella grade that I give the student at the end of the semester that includes preparation for the class, attendance, attentiveness and engagement in *both* section discussions sections and regular session periods. It is based on your GSI’s report to me and my own observations. “Participation” means, for this class, preparation of the material ahead of class, regular attendance to regular sessions and discussion section, attentiveness during regular session and discussion sections, and active participation in discussion sessions. (I sometimes ask students questions during regular sessions, but students can “pass” if they wish. This will not affect their grade. However, contributing ideas and comments or answer questions based on the reading assigned in most cases to regular session is a *definite* plus for the participation grade.)

The GSI report is key. It includes attendance records (including late arrival, early departure, multitasking comments), comments, and a provisional letter grade. **Attendance means attendance to your assigned section. You will receive no credit for attending any other section.** Early in the term your GSI will give to you, in writing, his or her expectations for participation. (Make sure you have this document.)

While the GSI report is key, **the final participation score is assigned by me**. I rely heavily on the information reported to me, and I might discuss your case with the GSI, but the final participation grade includes my own observations.

I define participation in broad terms as being thoughtfully engaged in the assigned readings, attentive listening to lecture and the comments of other students, and contributing to discourse in class for those who choose to do so. Therefore participation happens both in and out of class.

Always avoid multitasking in discussion section and regular sessions. This is particularly true when video material is being presented, or during student presentations, if any.

How the category grade is calculated:

- ◆ The GSIs submit two interim reports to me with provisional participation grades. They then submit a final report at the end of the term. The grades and comments on those reports are balanced against my own observations during regular session.

Grade category—RQs (Reading questions)

RQs are short written assignments about assigned reading(s). There are quite a few of them during the term. “RQ” means Reading Questions and indicates that there will be a set of questions to which you are to respond.

How the category grade is calculated:

- ◆ RQs are submitted via bSpace and have a specific time window during which time they must be submitted or the student will receive a “zero” for the work. RQs absolutely must be one’s own work with no editing of English, discussion with others or such. If an RQ is determined not to be solely one’s own work, *all* RQ scores revert to “F” without review, no further RQs can be submitted, and, instead, the student will complete a portion of the RQs during a special makeup period after the final exam, under proctored conditions with the highest possible grade in this category set at “C-minus”. These details will not change during the term. The grade rubric, however, might need to be slightly adjusted. Therefore, see the Web site sidebar tab “Assignments & Tests” for further details on how the assignments are announced, submitted, the grade rubric, what happens if you miss an RQ, and so on.
- ◆ RQs are graded by the GSIs and me but any questions about the grade must be directed to me.
- ◆ The category grade is the average of all *scored* RQs. (In other words, if you receive a “zero” for an RQ it is part of the scores used to determine an average. If, for some reason, you never receive a score, such as a missing RQ that is not later required from me, that “blank” score does not affect the total average.)

Grade Category—Midterms:

There are three in-class midterms. They are non-cumulative except that since we are working with concepts you might find that your understanding of a concept from an earlier portion of class will be helpful in answering the questions posed on a subsequent exam. They are primarily essay. Other details—coverage, what to bring on the day of the test, etc.—when available, can be found through the Web site sidebar tab “Assignments & Tests.”

How the category grade is calculated:

- ◆ I grade all exams. The category grade is an average of the three exams.

Grade Category—Essay, project or final:

The student will submit an essay or project. In all cases the student is assigned a mentor (one of the GSIs or me), must submit a proposal that is approved, will submit an outline/flow or other detailed description of the work, and will submit a draft (or something appropriate) before submitting the final work.

All essays and projects involve research that displays a discerning and effective use of secondary sources and includes the student’s own analysis in some way. It is my hope that the student finds something that is personally exciting to him or her and, to that end, there is quite a bit of flexibility in what might work as an essay or project, as long as research and analysis have key roles.

There are severe penalties for academic dishonesty related to this grade category. The usual penalty is an “F” for the *course*, not just the essay or project. This summary does not suggest that all aspects of the course were performed in an academically dishonest way. Even if done with full honesty, the issue is a penalty, not a judgment of honesty, so the “F” is for the course, not just the assignment affected. Please keep this in mind.

Other details can be found through the Web site sidebar tab “Assignments & Tests.”

How the category grade is calculated:

- ◆ I have not yet decided. I use two basic schemes depending on how the course is going, the student body of that particular class, and so forth. In one scenario, each submission step (proposal, outline, etc.) receives a grade; in another scenario all steps up to the final are only on a “must submit and achieve a certain level to advance to the next submission step” basis with the grade resting entirely on the final product. When I do this, however, the student is given somewhat informal “provisional” grades to give a sense of about where he or she might be on the grade scale. Details, when available can be found through the Web site sidebar tab “Assignments & Tests.”

Grade category—Extra Credit (on tests and such), Major Extra Credit (additional, substantial assignments), General Extra Credit (little things that you do), “A+” as course grade, and “gradeissue”:

I use three types of extra credit in my classes.

- ◆ The first is a type you are used to encountering—**on assignments and tests** where students are given the opportunity to answer more challenging questions or include information beyond the usual expectations of the assignment. This type of extra credit influences directly the grade on the assignment.
- ◆ The second type also a type you sometimes see, I think: **extra assignments** that include a challenge of some sort. I call this “Major Extra Credit” and identify the assignments as such. Completing Major Extra Credit in **excellent form** will change your final grade cutoff lines from n.5 to n.3. (Whereas in a usual scenario you must have a course final grade of 11.5 to round up to a 12, an “A”, for the class, under this scenario, your grade is rounded up to an “A” if you have 11.3 or higher.) Completing Major Extra Credit in **good form** will change your final grade cutoff lines from n.5 to n.4. (Whereas in a usual scenario you must have a course final grade of 11.5 to round up to a 12, an “A”, for the class, under this scenario, your grade is rounded up to an “A” if you have 11.4 or higher.) Completing Major Extra Credit **mechanically as if only done for the course grade** will not change your final grade cutoff lines. Some of my courses do not have major extra credit opportunities.
- ◆ The third type of extra credit is something more ineffable and you probably have not had this as an explicit grade category in your classes although I imagine it does work behind the scenes in some of your classes. These are little **things that you do that indicate an enthusiasm for the class**, or more than the usual attentiveness to assignments, or acts that help the teaching environment. This might be web links you find that are of special value, or an extended comment you send by email about something that interested you, or finding an error in my Web site or other instructions. I acknowledge these things with an email that includes the keyword **“extracredit”**. **This type of extra credit is only valuable if, one the whole, you seem to be participating very well in the class. It cannot replace assignments. Indeed, it might work against you if I conclude that you are only interested in your grade and believe the extra credit can substitute for work on the regular assignments. This is an opportunity to show enthusiasm and share ideas and help others, not polish your grade although, indirectly, it does have that effect sometimes.**

At the end of the term: In my gradebook, there are columns directly next to the final grade box. They list details for extra credit, various grade issues you have discussed with me (that have the gradeissue keyword in the subject line, no others), and notes I make during the term about you (such as multitasking during class, or special circumstances). After the grades are calculated mathematically, I consider these issues.

I consider giving one or two “A+”s in a course. Extra credit is usually necessary to qualify being considered for this, and the content and quality of the extra credit is definitely a factor in choosing among students who are on the short list. I do not assign “A+”s strictly based on the highest final grade score.

Table: Equivalents of 12-pt scale numbers to letter grades

When a “12-pt scale” grade is reported on bSpace or elsewhere, the letter grade equivalent to that number is:

13 / A+	10 / B+	7 / C+	4 / D+
12 / A	9 / B	6 / C	3 / D
11 / A-	8 / B-	5 / C-	2 / D-
			0 / F

Table: Conversion of 12-pt scale course average to letter grades for the final course grade

At the end of the term, the 12-pt scores for each grade category are calculated together, according to weight, for the final grade.

That mathematical result is then rounded to the nearest letter grade step. In other words, an 11.50 is rounded up to 12 while an 11.49 is rounded down to 11, and so on. Below are the cutoffs for each final course letter grade. *(May 20, 2012: I have noticed that my grade profiles recently have been generating, at the end of the term, fewer grades in the "A" band and, for those grades in the "A" band, the vast majority are "A-minus" not "A"—such as 3 "As" to 15 "A-minuses". While I am not against the idea of there being more "A-minuses" than "As" I have been adjusting the basic scale below to a 11.4 or 11.35 cutoff to generate final grades that are closer to and equal number of "As" and "A-minuses". I don't seem to have the same phenomenon in the case of the "B" or "C" band, so those cutoffs don't change.)*

Course 12pt average	letter grade reported to the university	Course 12pt average	letter grade reported to the university	Course 12pt average	letter grade reported to the university	Course 12pt average	letter grade reported to the university
When given, usually highest 1-2 class averages, with general EC taken into consideration	A+	≥ 9.5	B+	≥ 6.5	C+	≥ 3.5	D+ (NP↓)
≥ 11.5	A	≥ 8.5	B	≥ 5.5	C	≥ 2.5	D
≥ 10.5	A-	≥ 7.5	B-	≥ 4.5	C- (P↑)	≥ 2	D-
						< 2	F

Table: Start point in defining cutoffs for grades when "percent correct" is the criterion used to determine a letter grade (multiple-choice tests and such)

≥ 100	A+	≥ 86.5	B+	≥ 76.5	C+	≥ 66.5	D+	< 60	F
≥ 93	A	≥ 83	B	≥ 73	C	≥ 63	D		
≥ 90	A-	≥ 80	B-	≥ 70	C-	≥ 60	D-		