



**SPAN280**

**“¡Ya Basta! Revolution in Latin America, a Practical Guide”**

Spring 2016  
Grading Contract

You determine your grade for this course by fulfilling a contract that spells out in advance the requirements as well as the penalties for not fulfilling the terms of your contract. You decide which (and how many) assignments you will contract to complete. For each assignment (or element of an assignment) you will receive one of three possible evaluations: Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, or Excellent.

The advantage of this method of grading is that you, the student, decide how much work you wish to do this semester. If you complete that work on time and satisfactorily, you will receive the grade for which you contracted. This means planning ahead, thinking about all of your obligations and responsibilities this semester and also determining what grade you want or need in this course. If you complete the work you contracted for, you get the grade. Done. I respect the student who only needs a C, who has other obligations that preclude doing all of the requirements to earn an A in the course, and who contracts for the C and carries out the contract perfectly.

On January 7 (our second class session), each student will sign, with a classmate as a witness, a contract for a grade. I will countersign and we will each keep a copy of your contract.

Again, there are only three grades for any assignment. Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, or Excellent. Satisfactory is full credit. Unsatisfactory (poor quality, late, or not submitted) is no credit. Excellent means that you have significantly exceeded expectations for that assignment. Note: I do not expect to be giving out many “Excellent” evaluations; Excellent is the equivalent of a high A or A+.

If you fail to do a contracted assignment, or if your work is not satisfactory, you will receive the grade penalty spelled out in the contract. But in certain cases, an “Excellent” grade may compensate for an unsatisfactory one; it will not, however, compensate for work that is not submitted. The goal is for everyone to produce satisfactory work, and to achieve the grade for which they have contracted.

**A NOTE ON PLUS GRADES:**

If you have a number of Excellent grades, surplus to any Unsatisfactory evaluations, then you may be eligible for a “plus” grade beyond the grade for which you have contracted (A+, B+, C+). So it will be possible to earn an A+ in this class, though--as in most classes--this is unlikely. Again, an “Excellent” evaluation represents work of a high A or A+ quality.

**A NOTE ON D AND F GRADES:**

The professor reserves the right to award a grade of D or F to anyone who fails to meet a contractual obligation in a systematic way. A D grade denotes some minimal fulfilling of the contract. An F is absence of enough satisfactory work, as contracted, to warrant passing of the course. Both a D and F denote a breakdown of the contractual relationship implied by signing any of the contracts above.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR A GRADE OF A:

### 1. *Class attendance and participation*

Class attendance is required. If you contract for an A in the course, you may miss two classes (and the corresponding blog posts) without an official (doctor or pre-approved) excuse.

Penalty: If you have more than two unexcused absences, your grade for the entire class will drop 0.5 (e.g. from A to A-). If you miss four classes, it will drop 1.0, and so on.

### 2. *Weekly Blogpost and Comments*

Think of this as an evolving research paper. It has the same importance and weight and seriousness. You will set up a blog (on a site such as blogs.ubc.ca, wordpress.com, or blogspot.ca; talk to me if you wish to choose another site) and each week will write 400-500 words on that week's reading. In your blogposts, you may comment on what you find interesting, what you find difficult, what you agree with, what you disagree with, connections you see with other texts we have read, and so on. It is always good to be specific, and indeed to quote from the text itself where that may be helpful. Blogposts must be completed by midnight the night before the Tuesday class session. If your blogposts are deemed unsatisfactory, you will have the chance to rewrite them.

You are also expected to read and comment on two of your fellow students blogposts each week, by midnight the night before the Thursday class session.

Penalty: If you are late and/or miss more than two blogs or four comments over the course of the semester, your grade will automatically drop by 0.5 (e.g. from A to A-). If you miss or are late for four, it will drop by 1.0 and so on.

### 3. *Midterm Exam*

There will be a midterm exam, in which you will be tested on the reading and work done so far in the course. Note that this exam will have a collaborative element.

This exam will also be graded according to the rubric of Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, or Excellent.

### 4. *Lead Class*

In collaboration with another class member, you will be responsible for *three* of the class sessions. This may involve suggesting extra reading assignments (articles, websites, or other readings), preparing a PowerPoint presentation or Prezi, and/or providing other materials for stimulating class discussion. It will certainly involve preparation, a lesson plan, reading and commenting on all the course blogs for that week, and leading discussion. The class presentation should be as interactive as you can make it.

After or before your session, post your lesson plan on your blog to document what you did as a peer leader and to serve as a model to others.

Penalty: Failure to fulfill this part of your contract satisfactorily will result in an automatic 0.5 deduction from the total course grade for each class session.

## 5. *Extended Assignment*

Choose either:

### 5a. *Wikipedia Assignment*

With another student, you will make substantive contributions to a Wikipedia article related to the course, bringing it up to the standard of a “good article.” You will then collaboratively write a four-to-six page essay reflecting on the process of contributing to the online encyclopedia. If your essay is deemed unsatisfactory, you will have the chance to rewrite it.

Penalty: Failure to fulfill this part of your contract satisfactorily will result in an automatic 0.5 deduction from the total course grade

### 5b. *Start a Revolution*

You will engage in the public sphere in some way that may be conducive (if in a small way) to the kinds of radical, systemic change that we are describing as a Revolution. This may mean writing a manifesto, setting up a website, contributing online in some other way, making a video, getting involved in some kind of real-world social movement, joining a protest or demonstration, working to promote community and the common good, or whatever else seems to fit the description. You may do this assignment on your own or with another student. Note that I do not condone violence!

You will then (collaboratively if appropriate) write a four-to-six page essay reflecting on your experience, including your rationale and an assessment of the results of your interventions. If your essay is deemed unsatisfactory, you will have the chance to rewrite it.

Penalty: Failure to fulfill this part of your contract satisfactorily will result in an automatic 0.5 deduction from the total course grade

## 6. *Final Essay*

You will write a six-to eight page final essay (with secondary references) on one or more of the set texts covered in the second half of the class. If you wish, this essay can be written collaboratively. If your essay is deemed unsatisfactory, you will have the chance to rewrite it.

Penalty: Failure to complete or contribute to the final essay will result in an automatic 0.5 deduction from the total course grade.

CONTRACT: By signing this contract for an A in SPAN280, I agree to all of the terms above.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness name: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-signed by Professor Jon Beasley-Murray: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTRACT FOR A GRADE OF B IN SPAN280

I wish to earn a grade of B in SPAN280. I will not miss more than four classes. If I do, I understand that my grade for the entire class will drop by 0.5 for each absence beyond that.

To fulfill my contract for a grade of B, I will complete satisfactorily assignments numbers 1, 2, 3, and 6 above.

In place of assignment 4 (leading two classes), I will lead *one* class, with another class member in the manner described above. For assignment 6, the final essay need only be four-to-six pages, and need not have secondary references.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness name: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-signed by Professor Jon Beasley-Murray: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTRACT FOR A GRADE OF C IN SPAN280

I wish to earn a grade of C in SPAN280. I will not miss more than six classes. If I do, I understand that my grade for the entire class will drop by 0.5 for each absence beyond that.

To fulfill my contract for a grade of C, I will complete satisfactorily assignments numbers 1, 2, 3, and 6, above. For assignment 6, the final essay need only be four-to-six pages, and need not have secondary references.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness name: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-signed by Professor Jon Beasley-Murray: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_