

# Rigor with Redemption

## Grading Purpose

Saint Mary's assigns grades in order to communicate the level of a student's academic achievement in relation to established criteria in each course. They are not intended to communicate about a student's habits of scholarship—that is, effort, conduct, ability, or potential. While diligent study and effort are expected from each student, it is the quality of the student's performances on summative assessments that determine the grades the student achieves. Students' effort, conduct, responsibility, punctuality, behavior, and progress are reported in a separate "Habits of Scholarship" mark (E, M, U). "Habits of Scholarship" marks are not included on transcripts.

## Homework Intended as Practice (Formative Work Completed Outside of Class)

Saint Mary's allows a small percentage of the achievement grade to be comprised of practice-oriented homework. Teachers may value homework up to ten percent (10%) of the achievement grade for freshmen and sophomores and up to five percent (5%) of the achievement grade for juniors and seniors is allowed. This may be included in the grade determination in one of two ways:

1. A category entitled "Homework" will be part of the grade book.
2. A student's grade on unit exams/assessments may be raised by a maximum of one-third of a grade (for example, from a B- to a B) if the student has completed—on time—all homework designed as practice.

## Major Projects, Papers, & Performances

Every course requires students to exhibit their knowledge & skills by completing key summative projects, papers, or performances. Students must complete and submit all major assessments, which are identified by the teacher at the start of the term, as a condition of passing the course. Failure to complete and submit any of the major assessments will result in a final, permanent grade of I (Incomplete). The "I" grade is the equivalent of an F.

## Re-Testing Policy

Any major summative exam—except for the final exam—can be retaken once for full replacement of the original grade under the following conditions:

1. There will be one (1) opportunity to retest per major test/assessment.
2. Students have a right to re-test provided they show evidence of observable, consistent, assiduous habits of scholarship.
3. Students who exhibit proficiency (i.e., a B or better) may be advised not to retake the assessment. If a student has exhibited proficiency on the exam, the retake may have negligible effect on the overall learning (and grade) in the course, and subsequent course assessments provide opportunities to show mastery.
4. Students must take the retest opportunity during A Block within five school days of the return of the original exam.
5. Teachers reserve the right to offer students a retake of part or all of the assessment, the results of which replace the portion of the exam that was retested even if the student performs less well on the retake.
6. In some classes, the program of assessment is designed so that subsequent major exams are assessments of students' cumulative knowledge & skills, and performance on those subsequent exams incorporate the knowledge & skills measured in prior exam(s). In other words, retesting is already incorporated into the program of assessments, so re-testing is unnecessary.

7. Certain courses devote step-by-step in-class support and time for students to complete major assessments. Since these courses provide ample time, support, and ongoing feedback as part of the process, papers and projects are not re-submitted.

## **Late Work**

### Assessments Other Than Tests

Submitting work in a timely manner is a basic expectation of all Saint Mary's students. In the instance that unforeseen problems arise and a student cannot submit work on time, the student must contact the teacher as soon as the conflict is recognized, prior to the due date, either in person or by email. The teacher will establish a new due date for submission. Late submissions must be made within three (3) school days of the original due date. If the student meets these conditions there will be no grade reduction applied to the assessment as a penalty. Failure to communicate appropriately will result in a grade of Incomplete. No late work past the late-submission date will be accepted.

### Missed Quizzes & Tests

Students who miss a scheduled test or quiz for a valid reason (eg, illness) must reschedule the test within three (3) school days of the student's return from the absence. A student who fails to take a missed quiz or test will receive an "I" for the assessment and have the assessment marked as missing. An "I" on quizzes will not keep a student from passing. An "I" on major tests and assessments will result in an "I" grade, which is the same as an F.

### Interventions for Students Who Repeatedly Miss Deadlines for Submitting Assessments

1. Repeated instances of submitting work late in any or all classes will be reported to the student's counselor and to the administration and will result in the loss of co-curricular eligibility until the student maintains adequate habits of scholarship.
2. Repeated instances of a student missing scheduled quizzes or tests will initiate an inquiry by the administration regarding the pattern of absences.
3. Chronic examples of missed work deadlines (point #2) or missed test/quiz administrations (point #3) will necessitate a parent meeting regarding the student's ability or interest in meeting the school's academic expectations.

## **Extra Credit**

Additional opportunities for students to show evidence of improved learning are offered through the school's process for retakes. Consequently, no extra credit is offered.

## **Cheating**

Plagiarism or any other form of cheating will be determined by the teacher and reported to the administration. Any student who is found to have cheated on an assessment will receive a grade of I for that assessment, will receive U mark for the grading period for their Habits of Scholarship. They will be reported to the Dean of Academics, and are liable to lose co-curricular eligibility. Work on any major assessment—those identified at the beginning of each course--that is a product of cheating will result in a loss of course credit. To avoid a loss of course credit, the student will be required to complete the assessment. The manner in which the re-done assessment is assessed will be made by the Administration in consultation with the teacher.

## Grading & Reporting at Saint Mary's

"Grading is a professional judgment of student performance measured against course criteria (as expressed in course outlines/syllabi). Teachers develop their own grading practices in compliance with school policies and in collaboration with their department colleagues. While mathematical computation may help inform a teacher's judgment, grading is more than a process of mathematical computation. It is a professional judgment of student performance."

—Saint Mary's Grading Purpose

### Recording Grades

Two grades are reported in PowerTeacher: one that communicates about the student's academic achievement, and one that communicates the student's habit of scholarship.

#### Academic Achievement Grade

Saint Mary's uses a twelve-point letter-grade scale for reporting academic achievement (A=4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B= 3.0, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C= 2.0, C- = 1.7, D+ = 1.3, D = 1.0, D- = 0.7, F = 0.0, I = 0.0).

#### Habits of Scholarship Mark

Every student receives a separate Habits of Scholarship" mark (E = Excellent, M = Meets Expectations, U = Does Not Meet Expectations) for each class, which is a report of academic behaviors and orientations that contribute to—but are not reflections of—academic achievement (i.e., Process- and Progress-oriented Criteria). Habits of Scholarship marks are updated every three weeks. Teachers report a one-sentence comment for each student who receives a U at the midterm and final grading periods.

Students with two U marks in any grading period will meet with their counselor or an administrator in order to eliminate the behaviors that contributed to receiving Unsatisfactory marks. Students who earn three or more U marks at the midterm and final grading period will be placed on academic or disciplinary probation.

#### Elements for Consideration in Reporting Habits of Scholarship Marks:

- **Effort** – Does the student exhibit consistent, adequate effort in pursuit of academic achievement?
- **Attendance/ Punctuality** – Is the student on time & in class?
- **Responsibility** – Does the student submit schoolwork and other assessments on time? Does the student communicate with the teacher when issues arise? Does the student come to A-Block when he/she needs help?
- **Engagement** – Is the student attentive in class and actively participate?
- **Improvement** – Has the student shown improvement\* over? \*This means an A student could show little improvement, or a struggling student could show significant improvement.
- **Behavior** – Is the student's conduct in class good? respectful of teacher and peers? follow instructions? distracted by electronic devices? distracting others?

Students will receive a U (Unsatisfactory) mark in a grading period for the following behaviors:

- Any form of cheating
- Repeated failure to submit work (formative or summative)
- Failure to submit any major assessment

- Repeated instances of submitting work late
- Repeated failure to bring materials (iPad, notes, reading material, etc) to class
- Excessive absences for reasons other than verified health issues
- Repeated off-task behavior or misbehavior requiring teacher intervention
- Disengagement from class activities

#### Teacher Comments

For any student who earns a U, teachers will write a brief (one sentence), personalized comment that provide context for the mark. Such comments are proven by research to guide student approaches to learning more than marks or letter grades alone and communicate effectively about student progress in class.

#### Student Narrative Self-Evaluations

At the mid-point of every term students must write a narrative self-evaluation of their performance in each class, which are available for students, parents, administrators, counselors, and teachers to review in order to assist students.

### **Letter Grades for Reporting Assessments and for Final Grades**

Saint Mary's teachers translate students' performances on assessments into one of thirteen letter symbols for reporting student performance. (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F or I). These same letter grades are used for reporting students' final grades.

#### Grades Translated to Numerical Value Ranges

To assist teachers in computing final grades, Saint Mary's letter-grade symbols correspond in the PowerSchool grade book on a 50-point scale from 50 to 100: A = 98, A- = 91, B+ = 88, B = 85, B- = 81, C+ = 78, C = 75, C- = 71, D+ 68, D = 65, D- = 61, F = 55 / I = 49. No scores between 0 and 48 are reported.

### **Grade of Incomplete**

The mark of "I" is reported for any assessment a student fails to submit, is incomplete, or is a product of cheating. The "I" mark indicates that the student has not provided evidence of learning, thus preventing the teacher from making a determination of the student's level of achievement of the course outcomes being assessed. A final summative grade of "I" will be assigned at the end of the term when a student does not complete all the essential assessments for the course as determined by each academic department. Under normal circumstances, this grade of "I" is a permanent grade. The "I" grade is the equivalent of an "F" grade and is calculated in the student's GPA.

### **Standards-Referenced Grading Categories**

Saint Mary's employs standards-referenced grade-books. They are based on the core content and skills the students learn in the course; assessment results are placed in the grading category that aligns with the knowledge and skills each assessment measures. Each department identifies the learning categories teachers in that department will follow. The value of each category comprises a portion of the final grade. Within each category, assessments may differ in their value. For example, a quiz assessing a student's analytical skills will be worth less than a midterm exam assessing those same skills.