



Specifications Grading and Tokens

Build Content

Assessments

Tools



Token Use form

After you've submitted your redone or late assignment, fill out [the form](#) telling us your assignment is ready to be graded.



Specifications Grading

This course uses a system of "Specifications Grading" in which all grading is done pass/no-credit. Pay close attention to the specifications outlined each week on Blackboard as there will be no partial credit for any assignment. See Blackboard for an overview list of assignments and due dates, and the section for each week where the specifications for the assignments are detailed.

There will be 25 assignments this semester divided into four bundles. Each bundle has a different minimum number of assignments that you must pass in order to get CREDIT for it:

- Reading Bundle: you must pass at least 8 out of the 10 reading assignments to get CREDIT for it.
- Activity Bundle: you must pass at least 8 out of the 10 activities to get CREDIT for it.
- Discussion Bundle: you must pass at least 3 of the 4 discussions to get CREDIT for it.
- Final Project Bundle: you must complete a Final Project to get CREDIT for it.

Please note that if you do not pass the minimum number of assignments for a bundle you will get no credit for your work towards it. For example, if you only pass 7 of the assignments in the Reading Bundle you will get no credit for the 7 that you passed.

Your grade for the semester will be based on how many bundles you received CREDIT for:

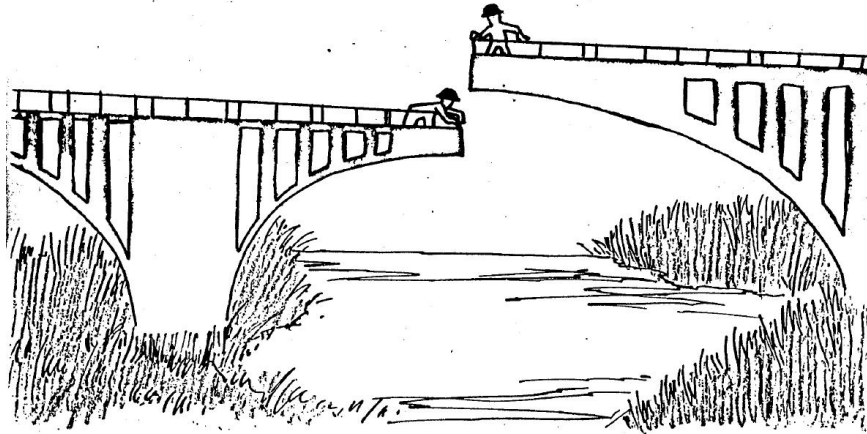
- A = all 4 bundles
- B = any 3 bundles
- C = any 2 bundles
- D = any 1 bundle
- F = no bundles

While this system creates higher expectations and rigor, it also incorporates some features designed to give you flexibility in how you allot your time and effort to achieve the grade you want to get in the class. As previously stated, you only need to pass 80% of the assignments in the Reading Bundle, 80% in the Activity Bundle, and 75% in the Discussion Bundle. In addition, we use a system of "Tokens" which you can use to turn in late assignments or redo some that you didn't pass. You also have the option to earn 1 or 2 extra tokens by writing a book report or answering questions on a series of documentaries. If you use a Token to turn in an assignment late, be extra careful to follow the specifications for the assignment so that you won't have to use a second Token to redo it.



You don't always give you partial credit in the real world

But don't I at least get Partial Credit?



There are many situations in life that you will have to adjust to that are pass/no-credit.

I'm not using the pass/no-credit system in the class because I'm unreasonable or enjoy being mean. I actually *am* mean and unreasonable, but that's not why I prefer Specifications Grading. I have adopted it because I think it fixes many of the things that are broken in the traditional grading system, and because I believe it will help you grow and become more effective in other classes, and in life beyond the university.

Imagine that you have a job and want to keep it in order to pay your bills. You're sitting there one day, minding your own business, and your boss calls you in to tell you that you've been assigned to produce a two-page typed report on the company's letterhead by Friday. Being the recent and proud BSU graduate that you are, you come back (late) the following Monday instead with something handwritten on a single piece of binder paper. Do you think she's going to give you partial credit? If you're lucky and she is a BSU alumnus willing to cut you a little slack, you may be instructed to do it over. How many chances do you think even the nicest boss is going to give you to redo things or turn them in late? Fewer than 5 times? In this class you get 5 Tokens for extra chances, and you can earn 2 more if necessary, so I think I'm being pretty lenient.



Changing your attitude about not meeting expectations on time will serve you well. Once you've mastered meeting expectations on time you can move up to the winning strategy of exceeding them and turning things in early, which will create loyal customers, and help foster a sense of calm and confidence in your life.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Which bundles can I use a Token for?

A: Activity and Reading bundles. You cannot use a Token for Discussions or for the Final Project.

Q: How do I know how many Tokens I have left?

A: Look in the grade section of Blackboard to see how many Tokens you have left. You start out with 5. You can earn 1 or 2 more by writing a book report or reviewing episodes in a series or a longer single program. See below for the specifications for those. There is a Grade Calculator tool below that you can print out on paper or use and update online.

Q: How do I use a Token?

A: You do not need to ask permission. Turn in the Reading or Activity assignment late or redo it in its assigned place on Blackboard. After you've done that, fill out a Token form (see below) to let your professor know that you have finished. Filling out a Token form is a signal to him that the work has been posted on Blackboard and is ready to be graded.

Q: What is the deadline for using a Token?

A: You have two weeks to use a Token starting from the time it was originally due. For example, if an assignment is due on September 4th you can use a Token to turn it in late or redoing it up until September 18th.

Q: Why are we using Specifications Grading? I don't think it's fair that I don't get partial credit if I miss one little detail on an assignment, and worse, if I don't get CREDIT for the Reading or Activity bundles if I did 7 of those assignments, or for the Discussion bundle if I did 2 of those.

A: I agree that there are aspects of the system that are strict and can appear unreasonable, especially if part of what you've learned in other classes is that you can still pass a course by doing mediocre or incomplete work. One of the goals of Specifications Grading is to help raise standards and develop a more detail-oriented mindset, which your employers and clients will value in the future.

Since you're still in school, and not able to devote your full attention to any one class, I am offering a system of Tokens which give you the option to redo an assignment if you don't pass it, or to turn one in late. Taking advantage of this option will help you pass the number of assignments necessary to get CREDIT for each bundle to earn the grade you want. It's up to you if you want to make the effort.

Most students figure out the system and end up not using all their Tokens, but I recommend that you track your progress and monitor the number of Tokens you've used using the Grade Calculator tool (below). One of the most common pieces of advice to you from students who took the class last semester is to do the assignments thoroughly and on time from the beginning of the semester, so that you don't need to use Tokens to turn in assignments late, and can save them to redo something if necessary in order to get CREDIT for a bundle. If you do that you will be able to skip some of the assignments at the end of the semester and you'll still get the grade you want.



Grade Calculator Tool

The Grade Calculator tool is designed to help you see your progress in passing enough assignments in each bundle to get the grade that you want in the class.

Make a copy of [the Grade Calculator tool](#) in your Google Drive area and then type in the number "1" in the shaded boxes for each assignment you've turned in, used a Token, and passed. Bookmark your copy of the spreadsheet to make it easy to open it again for each assignment. Like all Google Drive documents, your work is automatically saved when you type something in—you don't have to Save your progress as you go.

Here is a copy of a student's spreadsheet so far that shows that:

- They have turned in Reading assignments 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, that they used Tokens to turn in [R-1] late and redid [R-5], have passed 3 Reading assignments: [R-1], [R-4], and [R-5] and need to pass 5 more to get CREDIT for the Reading bundle.
- They have turned in and passed the first 8 Activity assignments, and since only 8 are needed to get CREDIT for the Activity bundle the word **CREDIT** appears at the bottom of that bundle.
- They have passed 2 Discussions and need 1 more to get CREDIT for the Discussion bundle.
- They haven't done a Final Project yet.

If the student doesn't do any more work this semester they will end up with a "D" in the class since they have CREDIT for only one bundle.

Grade Calculator - MMP 100, Fall 2018										Enter a "1" in any colored box					
Week	Due	Tokens				Activity Bundle	Tokens				Discussion Bundle	Pass	Final Project Bundle	Pass	
		Reading Bundle	Turned in	Late	Redo		Pass	Turned in	Late	Redo					Pass
1															
2	Aug 23	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1				
3	Sep 4	2	1			2	1			1					
4	Sep 11	3				3	1			1					
5	Sep 18	4	1			4	1			1					
6	Sep 25	5	1		1	5	1			1					
7	Oct 2	7				6	1			1					
8	Oct 9	6	1			7	1			1					
9	Oct 16	8				8	1			1					
10	Oct 23	9													
11	Oct 30	10				9									
12		Total (Need to pass 8)				3									
13											Total (Need 3)		2		
14															
15															
16															
Final	Dec 12						10							Final Project	0
							Total (Need to pass 8)				8			Total (Need 1)	0
							CREDIT								

Underneath your spreadsheet you will see the number of Tokens you've used so far. You can check how many Tokens you have remaining on Blackboard. You start out with 5 at the beginning of the semester and have the opportunity to earn 2 more if you need them.

The total number of assignments you've passed in each bundle will be periodically updated in your Blackboard gradebook after assignments are graded.



Earn a Token by reviewing a documentary

Earn a Token by review reviewing two episodes of either of these two documentary series or the one below those, for a maximum of two bonus Tokens. Upload your report using the Blackboard link below, and then fill out a Bonus Token Request below that. If you get credit for the assignment you'll have an extra Token to use.

Documentary Series #1: Write a review of any 2 episodes of Netflix's series *Hip-Hop Evolution*. You must have a Netflix subscription to do this. Interviews with influential MCs, DJs and moguls trace the genre's dynamic evolution from the 1970s through the 1990s in this documentary series. Each lasts about 48 minutes.

Review any of these two episodes:

Episode 1: "The Foundation". In the 1970s, DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, Grandmaster Flash and the first rhythmic rappers lay the foundations of hip-hop in the South Bronx. Questions:

1. Where did hip-hop start, and under what conditions?
2. What pioneers were mentioned, and what new approach or innovation did each one bring?

3. How did hip-hop go from being party music to a show that people would buy tickets to go see?
4. In the beginning, who was the most important person in a hip-hop event? Over time, who took over the audience's focus?

Episode 2: "The Underground to the Mainstream". Bootleg tapes capture the energy of live battles, the Sugarhill Gang releases a Top 40 hit, and hip-hop meets art punk in downtown New York.

1. What led to hip-hop's first hit record, "Rapper's Delight"? What was the reaction in the public, and the other musicians in the hip-hop community?
2. How did hip-hop move downtown and combine with punk and techno?
3. What were some technological breakthroughs that facilitated sampling?
4. What was happening in the Bronx at the time?

Episode 3: "The New Guard". Run-D.M.C. and Def Jam bridge the rock-rap divide. Innovators like Marley Marl and Rakim usher in a new sound, and Public Enemy raises consciousness.

1. Describe the partnership between Russell Simmons and Rick Rubin, their goals, and what they were able to achieve with each artist they worked with.
2. Summarize the story that is told about Run-D.M.C.
3. According to the program, what was
4. What was different about Public Enemy? Compare their music with "Rapper's Delight".

Episode 4: "The Birth of Gangsta Rap". Ice-T and N.W.A put West Coast rap on the map, documenting the reality of life in South Central LA. Dr. Dre tops the charts with "The Chronic."

1. What was different about the L.A. hip-hop scene in the early days compared with New York? How did it shift to Gangsta rap?
2. What was the relationship between some hip-hop musicians at the time and gang members?
3. What were the reactions of the general public to records like "6 'N The Mornin'" and "Straight Outta Compton", compared with those in the community who had experienced pressure from the police?
4. What influence did Dr. Dre have in general as a producer, and with "The Chronic" specifically?

Documentary Series #2: Write a review of any 2 episodes of the PBS *Soundbreaking* series. The eight-part series explores the art of music recording, and offers a behind-the-scenes look at the birth of brand new sounds. Featuring more than 160 original interviews with some of the most celebrated recording artists of all time, *Soundbreaking* explores the nexus of cutting-edge technology and human artistry that has created the soundtrack of our lives. The DVDs are on reserve at the Educational Resources Collection on the lower level of Bracken Library. They can direct you to a room where you can watch them. The optional companion book with additional information on the series and many of the participants is on reserve at the Main Circulation/Reserves desk upstairs. Each episode lasts 54 minutes.

Review any two of these episodes:

Episode 1: "The Recording Artist" profiles some of the greatest record producers of all time. Questions:

1. What producers are mentioned? What did each contribute to the project?
2. What do they and the other people interviewed say about what the producer's role is?
3. What artists are mentioned that don't want or need to have producers? Why are they better off without them?
4. What was the most interesting thing you learned in this episode?

Episode 2: "Painting with Sound" reveals how the recording studio itself became an instrument.

1. Trace the development of some bands and albums that led to the use of the recording studio as an environment to produce music that couldn't be performed live.
2. What effect did the development of multi-track recording have on the way music was made.
3. How did the shift from analog tape to digital recording help spread the recording process out, so it wasn't just limited to a recording studio anymore?
4. How is experimenting with sounds in the studio more like the process of painting compared with photography?

Episode 3: "The Human Instrument" explores the art and science of recording the human voice.

1. How did microphones change the way we hear singers?
2. What singers are mentioned? What made them great?
3. What's the difference between singing a song on stage compared with in a studio?
4. What do they say about striving for perfection vs. honest performances? Which one do you prefer? Why?

Episode 4: "Going Electric" explores how amps and electrification transformed sound.

1. Who did electric guitars, amplifiers, and effect pedals change music performance?
2. What bands and artists were featured? What did amplification help them achieve?
3. How did the blues get from the south in the United States to England?
4. Describe the use of the synthesizer by Stevie Wonder, Brian Eno, Hans Zimmer, and Skrillex.

Episode 5: "Four on the Floor" gives a look at rhythm in music, the pulse that stirs our senses.

1. What effects did disco have on the development of pop music?
2. What was Barry Gordy's vision for Motown's music? How is Motown's standard beat described, and who was the band that created it for many of the label's artists?
3. What was different about James Brown's music, and his beat?
4. What do they talk about in the episode about the power of a prolonged, continuous beat spread out over longer time periods? How does it affect dancers?

Episode 6: "The World is Yours" looks at the art of sampling and the musical revolution it inspired.

1. How have hip-hop production techniques changed the way music is produced today?
2. What was the first official rap record? How did it get made?
3. What was different about Public Enemy's production technique, and their motivation for making records?
4. How did lawsuits over sampling in the 1990s affect the ability of bands to make records like *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back* and *Paul's Boutique*?

Episode 7: "Sound and Vision" follows the rise of MTV and how video overhauled the industry.

1. What are some of the effects that MTV had on the record business?
2. What were some of the ways that audiences saw music and image combined before MTV?
3. Why didn't MTV want to play Michael Jackson's videos? How did CBS help?
4. How did Madonna get on MTV? What effect did it have on her career?

Episode 8: "I Am My Music" explores how formats, from the LP to mp3s, have shaped our musical lives.

1. Why do you think the producers of the series focused on the portable cassette player as the first portable listening system? What opportunity did cassettes offer listeners over transistor radios, which were also portable and came with an ear piece?



2. What did the LP record format offer Bob Dylan, Miles Davis, and Marvin Gaye that 78s and 45s didn't? What changes in music did they offer for composers and performers?
3. Why did the Grateful Dead allow and assist people to live their live concerts? How did it help them develop their fan base, and bring in over \$386 million in ticket sales?
4. Why were record companies afraid of about CDs? Why did consumers like them at first? Why did they end up going back to purchasing individual songs?

Here is the third documentary that you may watch in order to earn an extra Token, in this case watch the whole thing rather than two episodes. It is about the changes in the music industry brought on by MTV and the consolidation of record labels and radio stations, Napster, and advice about what musicians can do to have a career.

You can watch it online here or on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/181093211>

Submit your answers to the following questions in the space below, separating each with a blank line from the one before and after it.

- 1) When was the Telecommunications Act passed, and what effect did it have on radio station diversity?
- 2) What are “playlists” and why did Clear Channel develop and use them?
- 3) When did MTV start, and what effect did it have on who became popular as musicians?
- 4) Who developed Napster? How did it work, and what was the effect on record sales?
- 5) How was artist development affected by the switch from small record labels to large corporations concerned with quarterly earnings?
- 6) Summarize the comments made by any two of these people featured in the interviews: Branford Marsalis (saxophone player/teacher), Erykah Badu (Artist), Dave Matthews (Artist), or Bonnie Raitt (Artist).



Write a book report to earn an extra Token

Enabled: Statistics Tracking

Here are three options for a book report that you could write in order to earn an extra Token:

- a biography of a musician
- a book that could be used as a textbook for the class
- a book about another aspect of the music business

If you're on campus, here are some places to look on the shelves in the Bracken Library:

- Possible textbooks and other books about the "music trade" (i.e. the music industry) are in the ML 3790 – 3792 range of call numbers in Bracken Library.
- Biographies of musicians are in the ML 385 – 429 range of call numbers.

BIOGRAPHY

For a biography of a musician, answer these questions. You may have to do some additional research on the Internet if the answers are not contained in the book.

- Title, author's name, credentials and/or experience.
- How is the book organized? What is covered in each section?
- Summarize the content of one section of the book.
- How did the person get involved with music?
- What challenges did they have overcome? How did they overcome them?
- What was the most difficult time in their career? What was hard about it? If they overcame their problems, how did they do so?

- What was the most successful time in their career? What defined their success at that time? How long did it last? What came next, and how did they adjust?
- How would you define this musician's brand?
- Who were members of their team?
- Were they ever signed to a recording contract?

TEXTBOOK

For a textbook review, answer these questions:

- Title, author's name(s), credentials and/or experience qualifying them as experts
- How does the Table of Contents of the book you're looking at compare with *Midwest Music Business*?
- Summarize the content covering one representative area (i.e. recording, publishing, or live performance) in the book you're reviewing. How does it compare with the presentation in *Midwest Music Business*?
- What advantages does your proposed replacement have?
- What does *Midwest Music Business* do better?
- How do the cost of the two books compare?
- When were the latest editions released? How current do you think the information is?
- Which book does a better job of covering the traditional music industry in the 20th century? Which does better in the 21st century? Include at least one example in your explanation.
- Which book has a better support website for students?
- Which book do you think would help students learn the material better? How?
- Which book has more "do it yourself" sort of suggestions for enrichment exercises?
- Any other comments or comparisons?

ANOTHER TOPIC

For a book about some other aspect of the music trade, answer these questions:

- Title, author's name(s), credentials, and experience that qualifies them as an expert
- Why did you pick this book? What is your chosen career title, and how does it relate? What information in the book could you apply to your career?
- Summarize the content briefly by chapter
- What chapter was the most interesting/useful to you? Why?
- What level was the book written for, i.e. beginners/experts? Give an example.
- When was the book written/revised? Does it seem to relate to current business conditions? Give an example.
- What sort of person would be most interested in the book and/or have the most use for it? Why?
- Other comments?
- Where in our textbook is the subject matter of this book covered? What does this book have that would be of help to students in the class who were interested in going beyond what our textbook covers?



Turn in your bonus Token work here

Turn in your documentary or book report here that you've done for a bonus Token, then fill out the form right underneath this to let us know you've turned it in.



Tell us you've turned in your work for a bonus Token

Fill out [this form](#) after you've turned in a report on Netflix or Soundbreaking or a book report. This will be the signal to us that you have turned in the work and are ready to have evaluated and a bonus Token added to the number of Tokens you have left for the semester.