

Center for Japanese Studies
The University of Michigan
Grade Appeal Policy on CJS Courses
Effective Fall 2012
Approved by the CJS Executive Committee, 09/17/12

Jurisdiction

This policy applies to courses listed under subject code CJS for which the Center for Japanese Studies serves as the home department. Students enrolled in cross-listed and meet-together courses for which CJS is not the home department must bring their grade appeal to the home department of the course, even when the student is registered under a CJS course number. This includes individually arranged graduate/undergraduate meet-together courses using CJS 591.

Grounds for a Grade Change

For a change in grade to be recommended, a student must make the case that the grade originally given was unjustly awarded. Dissatisfaction with a grade alone is not sufficient for an appeal.

Grade appeal procedures are available only for review of alleged **capricious** grading, and not for review of the judgment of an instructor in assessing the quality of a student's work. Capricious grading, as that term is used herein, constitute any of the following: (1) the assignment of a grade to a particular student on some basis other than performance in the course; (2) the assignment of a grade to a particular student by resorting to more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in that course; (3) the assignment of a grade by a substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced standards. Correction of clerical errors does not require grade appeal procedures; the instructor simply fills out a Supplementary Grade Report.

We recognize that an unjust grade should be changed, and that students need and deserve a means of redress. The establishment of a grade appeal procedure provides this means. However, the committee that is called upon to hear an appeal by a student must acknowledge that it cannot possibly share the instructor's familiarity with the subject matter of the course or with the specific material used in it. The committee must also acknowledge that there is an inevitable minimum of imprecision in grading, and that the difference between a C and a B-, for instance, is hardly one that can, or should, become a matter for detailed litigation. The committee, in judging a single case, cannot know the range of excellence of the students in the class, and it should be cautious about raising the grade of one individual. Otherwise, it may thereby diminish the apparent achievements of other student who may have done better and whose original grade may have been higher. A grievance based on the argument that one instructor's grading standards are stricter than those of others will not be pursued.

For all these reasons, students contemplating appeals should be warned that the review committee will not, and must not, place their judgment over that of the instructor involved except in clear cases. The burden of proof in challenging a grade once given must rest on the student. In all cases of a reasonable doubt, the grade once given will be approved. The Center's obligation to handle a grade complaint is limited to a maximum of one term after the course in question.

Adjudication Process

1. Within two weeks after the start of the following semester, the student should convey his or her concerns about the grade in writing to the instructor who assigned the grade and request a meeting to discuss the matter. At this meeting, the instructor should explain the basis upon which the grade was conferred and give the student an opportunity to point out any apparent errors or misjudgments. If

the instructor conferring the grade is a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI), the GSI should be consulted first. If agreement is not reached with the GSI, the student should then contact the faculty member in charge of the course. It is expected that Step 1 will be completed by January 30th of the following year for a grade given in fall term or by September 30th for a grade given in spring, summer, or winter term. Only in extenuating circumstances will a grievance beyond this time frame be heard. If the instructor's term of appointment has expired and the instructor is no longer at the University of Michigan, the student should proceed directly to step 2.

2. In the event that the conference with the instructor does not resolve the difficulty, or if the instructor's term of appointment has expired, the student should discuss the problem with the Center Director, and should submit to him/her a letter detailing the nature of the complaint. If the instructor is still appointed at UM, the Center Director shall solicit a response from the instructor; if the instructor's term of appointment has expired, the Center Director will make an attempt to contact the instructor and solicit the response but the instructor has the right to delegate the resolution of this matter to the Center Director. The Center Director shall then determine whether any basis for a committee hearing exists. If the Center Director is a party to the grievance, his/her role shall be assumed by the Director of the International Institute.
3. If the Center Director concludes that there is no basis for a committee hearing, he/she will inform the student. If the student is not satisfied with the explanation, he/she may still insist upon a committee hearing.
4. If the basis for a formal hearing is found to exist in the review described in item 2, or if the student insists upon a review in spite of the advice of the Center Director, the grievance shall be referred to an ad hoc review committee.
5. The review committee shall consist of three persons to be appointed by the Center Director (or the Director of the International Institute, if the Center Director is a party to the grievance or if he/she has decided there is no basis for a formal hearing): two faculty members and one student. The student member of the review committee will be an undergraduate if the grievant is an undergraduate or a graduate student if the grievant is a graduate student.
6. The review committee will submit a written summary of its findings and recommendations to the instructor and the Center Director.
7. If the review committee concludes that the assigned grade should stand, the Center Director (or the Director of the International Institute) will inform the student in writing that the grade will not be changed, and that no further appeal within the Center for Japanese Studies is possible.
8. If the review committee concludes that the instructor did not act fairly, properly or judiciously, the Center Director shall attempt to persuade the instructor to follow the recommendations of the committee. If the instructor has previously delegated this matter to the Center Director, the Center Director shall implement the recommendation of the review committee on behalf of the instructor.
9. If the instructor refuses to change a grade in spite of the recommendations of the review committee and the urgings of the Center Director, the instructor shall provide the student and the Center Director with a written explanation for his/her refusal to change the grade, and the Center Director shall provide the student with a written statement summarizing the procedures followed in processing the appeal, noting the recommendations of the review committee, adding his/her own evaluation of the review committee's findings, and noting the refusal of the instructor to change the grade. There is no appeal beyond the Center for Japanese Studies.
10. These procedures describe the full appeal mechanism available in the Center for Japanese Studies to deal with grade grievances. When these procedures have run their course, no further appeal within the Center is possible.

Administrative Support and Record Keeping

CJS Academic Services Coordinator shall assist the grievant in locating and contacting the instructor and/or in determining if a visiting instructor's term of appointment has expired. The CJS Academic Services Coordinator shall provide administrative support to the Center Director in the adjudication process. All

records of the outcome of grade grievance brought to the Center shall be kept in the CJS Academic Services Office.