

## **Understanding Grades** (modified after J.H. Williams, 1993 by Catherine A. Rigsby):

Grading students' performance in class is not an easy task. People cannot be pigeonholed, but they can and are judged on the basis of their achievements. As such, grades reflect *both effort and achievement*, not effort alone. This is an attempt to explain why different students obtain different results, and to give you an idea of what is expected of you in this and other courses.

### The "A" student - an outstanding student:

- *attendance*: has virtually perfect attendance; commitment to the class resembles that of the instructor.
- *preparation*: prepared for class; always does the reading; does not miss deadlines; attention to detail is such that occasionally may catch the instructor in a mistake.
- *curiosity*: shows interest in the class and in the subject; looks up or digs out what she doesn't understand; asks interesting questions and makes thoughtful comments; participates in all class discussions.
- *retention*: has retentive mind; able to connect past learning with the present and does so frequently; brings a background with her to class.
- *attitude*: has a winning attitude; has both the determination and the self discipline necessary for success; shows initiative; does things that she has not been told to do; both values and enjoys learning - it is a priority in her life.
- *talent*: has something special, such as exceptional intelligence and insight, unusual creativity, outstanding commitment and organizational skills, or a combination of these talents; the special talents are evident to the instructor and usually to other students as well.
- *results*: makes high grades on exams and papers - usually the highest in the class; she is pleasure to have in the classroom and her work is a pleasure to grade.

### The "C" student - an average student:

- *attendance*: misses class; puts other priorities ahead of academic work; in some cases, her health or constant fatigue (because of poor use of "leisure" time) renders her physically unable to keep up with the demands of high-level performance.
- *preparation*: prepares assignments consistently, but in a perfunctory manner; work may be sloppy or careless; papers typically read like unproved drafts; at times work is incomplete or late; often seeks extension of deadlines.
- *attitude*: not visibly committed to the class or to her education; participates without enthusiasm; body language often expresses boredom; may have exceptional ability, but shows undeniable signs of poor self-management or bad attitude.
- *results*: obtains mediocre or inconsistent grades on exams and papers; has some concept of what is going on, but clearly has not mastered the material.