DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GRADE APPEAL POLICY FOR UPPER DIVISION AND GRADUATE COURSES

The information provided is in accordance with departmental and university policy. No appeal will be considered valid that does not conform to the policies, procedures, and deadlines set forth in this document.

1. Grades may be appealed ONLY if the student believes that his or her instructor has issued a grade in a capricious, arbitrary, or discriminatory manner. The definition of these terms is as follows: a. arbitrary refers to a grading decision for which there is no sound academic reason, or a decision based solely on preference or whim; b. capricious refers to a grading decision not resulting from a reasonable and announced grading policy and procedure; c. discriminatory refers to a grading decision reflecting differential treatment based on race, religion, color, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin.

2. The department follows university policy: "Unless there is capricious, arbitrary, or discriminatory behavior, the professional judgment of the instructor is not a matter which can be challenged or appealed in this process." These are the only circumstances under which a grade may be appealed. The student is responsible for proving that a grade was issued in an arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory manner falls.

3. Before appealing a grade, the student should discuss with his or her instructor the final grade and the rationale behind the grade.

4. A student may not appeal a grade before he or she has officially received a final grade in the course and has attempted to discuss it with the instructor. The student has until mid-semester of the semester following the course in question to appeal a grade; after mid-semester, the student MAY NOT appeal a grade.

5. The following are some examples of situations in which a grade may NOT be appealed:
   a. A lowered final grade due to a student's excessive absences.
   b. A lowered final grade due to late paper, assignment, or homework submission.
   c. An "F" grade due to failure to complete a grade of Incomplete.
   d. A "WF" issued by the instructor due to a student's excessive absences after the withdrawal date.

6. The syllabus is a contractual agreement between the student and instructor. The student accepts the terms outlined in the syllabus by remaining enrolled in the class.
All appeals must be initiated no later that the mid-point of the semester (as indicated by the last day to withdraw with a "W") immediately following the semester during which the alleged grievance occurred, whether or not the student is enrolled during that semester. In carrying out the steps in the appeal process, all parties should be mindful of the laws regarding slander and libel.

A. Before initiating the formal appeal of a grade, the student should contact the instructor who assigned the grade and attempt to resolve the dispute well before the deadline for initiating the appeal process. If the student cannot resolve the complaint as a result of this discussion, he or she should contact the Chair of the Appeals Committee, Dr. Scott Lightsey (2446, 25PP; lightsey@gsu.edu; 404-413-5831) to discuss the appeal.

B. If the complaint remains unresolved, the student initiates the appeal process by submitting a written statement of grievances addressed to Dr. Lightsey. This statement must allege that the student was the object of capricious, arbitrary, or discriminatory behavior and must include copies of any evidence to which the student alludes (course syllabus, graded papers, tests, correspondence with instructor, etc.).

C. Within two weeks after receiving a copy of the student's appeal, the defending professor must submit to the Chair of the Appeals Committee a written reply to the charges alleged in the appeal.

D. Within one week after receiving the instructor's reply, the Chair of the Appeals Committee will appoint as arbitrators of the dispute three English faculty members. He Chair will provide copies of all relevant documents to the members of this ad hoc committee.

E. After reading the relevant documents, the members of the ad hoc committee will submit written opinions of the merits of the student's case to the Chair of the Appeals Committee. If at least two of the three members of the committee find in favor of the student, the student wins his or her appeal.

F. Within one week of receiving the committee's decision, the Chair of the Appeals Committee will advise the student in writing of the Committee's decision. If the student wins the appeal, the Department of English will see that the grade is changed.

G. If the student is dissatisfied with the result of the appeal, he or she may initiate a further appeal to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.