Students who feel that they have received an unfair or improper grade in an Anthropology course, and who wish to seek redress, should follow these procedures:

**Step 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 or professor who assigned the grade and request a meeting to discuss the matter. At this meeting, the instructor/professor 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. If the instructor/professor is not available to respond to the student’s concerns, then the student should proceed directly to step 2. 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.

**Step 2.** If no change in grade results from Step 1, and if the student wishes to continue to appeal the grade, then the student should state the nature of the grievance in a letter to the department’s Executive Committee, headed by the Department Chair. This letter should be received no later than January 30th of the following year for a grade given in the fall term or by September 30th for a grade given in the spring, summer, or winter term. If the Department Chair is the person who conferred the grade in question, however, the letter should be addressed to a different faculty member of the executive committee. The student must attach copies of all relevant graded materials. The letter, with attached materials, should be delivered to the Department of Anthropology main office.

The appeal will be put on the agenda for consideration at the next Executive Committee (EC) meeting. The EC will conduct a preliminary review of the appeal, and may, at its discretion, appoint a grade appeal committee to further investigate the request. Should the EC’s review recommend denying the appeal for grade change, the student will be given the opportunity to make a personal appeal to the EC at the next scheduled EC meeting. Though not required, the instructor/professor who gave the original grade will have the option of being present during the student’s appeal at the EC meeting.

**Step 3.** Should the student elect to take the option of appearing in person at the next scheduled EC meeting, then, after hearing the evidence, the EC may do one of two things:

It may recommend that the grade be changed. In this case, a statement will be drafted stating the reasons for the recommendation and specifying the recommended new grade. The committee recommendations need not be limited to raising the grade. If, after careful consideration, the committee decides that the instructor/professor has given too high a grade, it may recommend that the grade be lowered.
It may judge the original grade to have been reasonable. In this case a statement shall be drafted stating that an appeal had been made and stating the reasons for the rejection of the appeal.

If the committee finds that the instructor/professor has not acted fairly or properly, it should determine whether the instructor/professor is willing to change the grade, or if some alternative action is acceptable, e.g., allowing the student to drop the course, permitting the course to be expunged from the record, or consenting to awarding partial credit for the course. If all attempts fail and if the committee remains convinced that the student has been unfairly or improperly graded, the committee shall prepare a letter setting forth its findings and place the letter as a matter of record in the department's grievance file and in the instructor's/professor's file. Copies of the letter will also be prepared for the student and for the student's file.

Step 4. The EC will notify the student in writing of the final determination. Subsequent to the above process, there shall be no further hearing of the matter within the department.

**Grounds Upon Which Grades Might Be Changed**

An unjust grade should be changed. There can be no dispute on this matter. Neither a clerical error, nor a capricious or biased professorial judgment should be allowed to remain as part of the student's permanent record. In such cases, students need, and deserve, a means of redress, and it is to provide this redress that this grade appeal procedure is established.

Nevertheless, it should also be stated that in the overwhelming majority of cases the instructor of the course is, by far, the most qualified person to make the judgment that lies behind the conferral of a grade. The Department of Anthropology takes this opportunity to reaffirm its confidence in the qualifications and in the good judgment of its faculty, and to reaffirm the traditional policy that confers responsibility for providing a grade upon the instructor of the course.

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 materials used in it. It 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, lest it thereby diminish the apparent achievements of other students who may have done better and whose original grade may have been higher.

For all these reasons, students contemplating appeals should be warned that the review committees 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.
* All Departmental policies and procedures are subject to possible change as University and LSA policies change.