In the middle of using ratemyprofessors.com, I began to realize this isn’t the most accurate way to design an entire schedule.

Ratemyprofessors.com is a website that allows students from different colleges across the country to share their thoughts about their past professors.

The website is a compilation of ratings, ranging from “easiness” to chili peppers to symbolize the “hotness” of a professor.

When the time came to register for next quarter’s classes, I would always open two websites – the Highline class list and ratemyprofessors.com.

I would immediately search the names of my potential future professors and analyze how each person has been reviewed. Intense difficulty level? Maybe I’m feeling up for the challenge. Assigns a $300 textbook necessary for the course? I think I’ll pass. Long lectures with a monotone voice? No thanks.

Occasionally, some of the reviews online perfectly matched up with my experiences – both good and bad. I knew exactly what to expect from the professor and in turn, this made me feel more prepared. The sense of comfort is what always pulled me back into using the website.

Ratemyprofessors.com is like a dating site where only the person’s exes get to submit reviews. While some past students write about how they had the time of their lives, other students make it clear they never want to see that professor again.

It’s a skewed combination of reviews since mainly those who post on the website are on either extreme of the spectrum of enjoyment.

The amount of reviews per professor also varies widely, which makes it tough to gauge overall experience without the input from a multitude of students.

Three out of three negative reviews total for a professor can drastically alter the overall rating, in comparison to a professor who has more than 50 reviews with only three negative remarks intermixed.

If I had solely based my schedule this year off a few of the pessimistic reviews from students, I might not even be in journalism. My experience in journalism has been challenging and stressful, but rewarding and I’ve found this is where I am the happiest. My experience is the polar opposite to some of the other reviews I read about, but I decided to make my choice off of the subject, rather than the professor.

Another area ratemyprofessors.com fails to address is learning styles. Students may comment about the instructor’s use of lecture slideshows or how the professor focuses on discussion involvement, but there is no clear understanding of how that professor will work with you and your learning style.

In the long run, a challenging professor who made you work your hardest to earn a high grade could be more beneficial than a professor who didn’t even care if you showed up to class once a week.

An easy “A” to bump up the GPA can’t replace the gain of valuable life skills like time management, study techniques, or perseverance through tough times (like finals week).

Basing your life choices off of what other people say is a bad habit to get in to, even starting with a simple decision of choosing a teacher.

While you can always take what people have to say about a professor into consideration, finding the right instructor might require a bit of effort on your end.

You could sit in on a class for a day to get a glimpse at how the professor teaches. You could ask a friend who is in the class you’re considering if you could look at the type of assignments and overall workload given by that instructor. There are other ways to design your schedule without relying on the opinions of other people.

As college students, these are the years of learning much more than subject matter. These years can often be the most influential time in our development into who we’re meant to be. You should embrace all opportunities of choice and willingly go into the unknown because the area just outside of your comfort zone is the place where you begin to grow.

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