HUMA 11600 7 - Philosophical Perspectives II - Instructor(s): Zachary Loeffler

Project Title: **College Course Feedback - Winter 2024**

Number Enrolled: **17**
Number of Responses: **15**

Report Comments

Opinions expressed in these evaluations are those of students enrolled in the specific course and do not represent the University.

Creation Date: **Thursday, March 28, 2024**

What are the most important things that you learned in this course? Please reflect on the knowledge and skills you gained.

Comments
Descartes, Hume, Spinoza... skepticism and critique
How to structure a logical argument, how to present ideas in class–setting, improving writing skills and understanding difficult readings
My first real class on philosophy so I learned a lot of the basics of philosophical thought. Learned how to write philosophy papers and how to do argument reconstruction.
There are three main texts and authors from this quarter in the sequence – Descartes: I think, therefore I exist, two proofs establishing God's existence, method to be certain without reasonable doubt – Spinoza: Substance, nature naturing and nature natured –Hume: necessary connection between cause and effect The most important skill gained is identifying a problem/tension with the text that may not have a resolution. Most passages were not linear and required second/third readings to understand the argument.
how to read difficult texts and think about philosophy
I learned about Descartes' project of building up a solid foundation for science and also Hume's understanding of ideas and senses as well as cause and effects.
I learned a lot about metaphysics this quarter and the idea of self.
I think the biggest part of this course was learning how to think for yourself. I had previously thought of people like Hume, Socrates, Plato, etc. as being all–knowing. Now, I see that their claims can be taken as more of a topic for conversation than for an absolute fact. I will use this going forward in my endeavors and hope to always be learning.
Knowledge of the texts.
I was able to read a lot of significant philosophy and deeply analyze each piece with the professors help.
I learned about Descartes, Spinoza and Hume. Overall, I felt like we were looking into how one can know anything at all.
Ability to interpret and think critically about complex texts.
Philosophy around the time of the scientific revolution. Taught me how to analyze a text–in depth and then write papers about them.

Describe how aspects of this course (lectures, discussions, labs, assignments, etc.) contributed to your learning.

Comments
readings were kind of a challenge but the prof went over most of the important parts in class to make sure we understood. class discussions are kind of stale
Class discussions allowed us to ask points of clarification and questions on topics we were confused about, reading guides posted on Canvas helped understanding of difficult content, lectures were generally helpful but a bit confusing at times.
Discussions are most helpful. Lectures are helpful but sometimes hard to pay attention to/follow because they don't seem like they're in a natural voice. I think they're pre–prepared and sometimes it's hard to follow the flow of the information.
Lectures were broken into initial thoughts of the text, professor's interpretation of the text (lecture portion), and Q&A period. Reading questions helped guide how to read the text.
lectures really helped me to understand the material and discuss my thoughts
The lecture is very helpful.
The classes were mostly lecture based with class discussions and the dicussions were interesting to see other points of view and the discussions helped with clarifying difficult readings.
I think the class discussions contributed greatly to my understanding of the course material. Being able to pick apart arguments helped tremendously
Helped me better understand the texts and their particular relations with one another.
The discussions in class were quite helpful, as I was able to see how my peers interpreted the reading and gained a better understanding overall. I feel that the professor's lectures were less helpful, as it was a lot of him talking to us and very one–sided, but they were alright.
Lectures were by far the best part of this course. Zach very obviously cares about what he is talking about, pay attention to lectures and you will already learn a ton!
The guided discussions were very important both in my understanding of the material and ability to articulate my thoughts. The lectures were very informative and helped fill any gaps. The papers allowed me to improve my philosophical writing skills.
Lectures helped so much in clarifying our readings. Discussions with other students sparked interesting questions and our professor was also very helpful in clearing them up and explaining our texts.

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.64	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	21.43%	71.43%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.21	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	35.71%	42.86%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.29	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	42.86%	42.86%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.25	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	41.67%	41.67%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.46	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	53.85%	46.15%
I felt respected in this class.	4.36	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	50.00%	42.86%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.08	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	61.54%	23.08%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
It's a leap in difficulty from the first quarter primarily because of the texts assigned. Descartes and Hume are particularly dense and hard to follow at times. While the standards are consistent with the first quarter, consider that the readings will take more time to attain the same level of understanding.
Prof. Loeffler was great!
The professor spoke frequently of his personal views in class, including his anti–Israel and pro–communist stances, which I felt was quite inappropriate, especially because he was in a position of authority relative to all the students. He asserted his opinions as facts, which I feel is quite dangerous, as we're told to believe our instructors, so him mixing in his personal beliefs alongside with the philosophy we were learning in class was incredibly inappropriate. He also referred to the Israel–Palestine conflict as a genocide and justified his stance by saying that he was Jewish, had a bar mitzvah, and that he had family that were holocaust survivors.

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	14.29%	85.71%
Anyone interested in the topic	7.14%	92.86%

Thinking about your time in the class, what aspect of the instructor's teaching contributed most to your learning?

Comments
i think his lectures/him going over the reading helped clear up my understanding of the reading/filled in missing pieces. his reading guides were also helpful
Instructor created welcoming, engaging class environment and made an effort to clear up points in readings students were confused about
When he guided our class discussions.
–Attentiveness to student's questions –Care for the text
facilitation of student discussion
His lecturing and his responses to students questions are helpful.
I think the thing that helped the most was the when the instructor would answer questions that we had about the reading in class.
His ability to let us think for ourselves in the beginning of class, then after, his ability to guide us to a different way of thinking.
Breaking down things at sentence levels and highlighting important passages.
I would say the in–class discussions contributed most.
His lectures were great, outlining the reading for the day and pointing to further links to other ideas, works or applications.
The questions he posed to the class.
His lectures were always very helpful and thought–provoking.

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
not sure how but maybe give us a clearer sense of what to talk about during the class discussion
Maybe speaking a bit more slowly in lectures so students have time to take notes + showing written notes (powerpoint, etc)
I think he could make his lectures easier to follow
–More availability/Calendy for individual writing appointments
explain philosophical concepts in more basic language
I think it would be helpful if the instructor slowed down a little during class. There was definitely a lot of content that needed to be covered but sometimes I felt like we moved onto something before something else was resolved.
Overall, he did a very good job.
Being simpler or more explicit with point at the beginning and building from that.
N/A. He honestly did a pretty great job at this. Maybe just making his in–class lectures more engaging.
Try to make the discussions before his lecture a bit better, maybe by posing a question to the class or trying to offer some direction. Not much besides that.
Nothing.
–

The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.43	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	42.86%	50.00%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.29	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	28.57%	50.00%	0.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.64	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	21.43%	71.43%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.43	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	57.14%	42.86%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.43	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	42.86%	50.00%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.14	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	57.14%	28.57%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	35.71%	42.86%	21.43%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.29	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	57.14%	35.71%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.57	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	42.86%	57.14%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.21	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	50.00%	35.71%	0.00%

Please include the name of the TA/CA/Intern you are evaluating. What aspects of the TA's teaching contributed most to your learning? What could the TA modify to help you learn more? Please include any additional feedback for the TA/CA/Intern.

Comments
Katie Howe: super helpful, writing seminars cleared up expectations on written assignments and gave me tools I needed to succeed in the class.
Katie howe
Katie Howe. Her feedback on the drafts of paper is helpful.
Effective at holding discusions to flesh out ideas.
Katie Howe. She has been extremely helpful in the drafting process of our essays, and is just very fun to talk to. Writing seminars have been a great experience that orient me as to where I will be going with my essay.

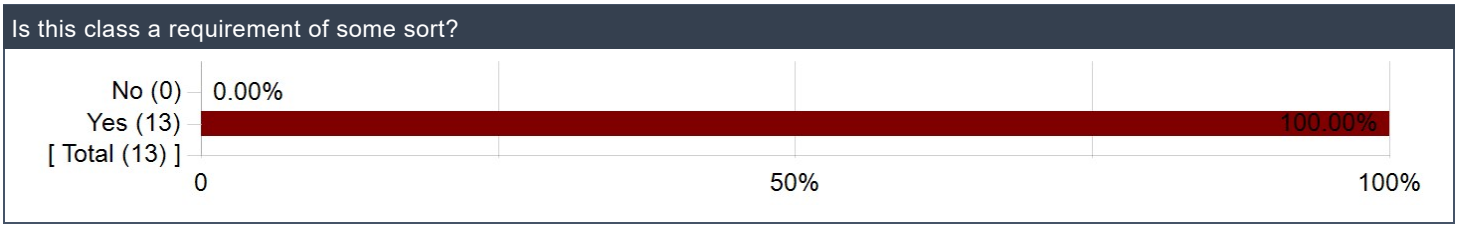
The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	4.38	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	37.50%	50.00%	0.00%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.25	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	50.00%	37.50%	0.00%
Helped you succeed in the class.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.38	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	37.50%	50.00%	0.00%

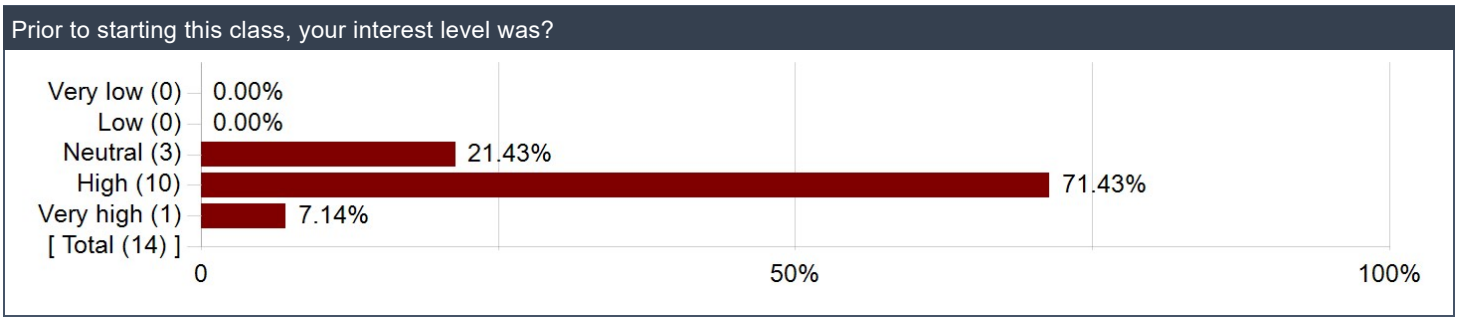
How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	Mean	Median	No Gain	A Little Gain	Moderate Gain	Good Gain	Great Gain	N/A
Laboratory Experience	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Field Trips	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Library Sessions	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Review Sessions	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Writing Seminars	4.30	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	10.00%	60.00%	0.00%

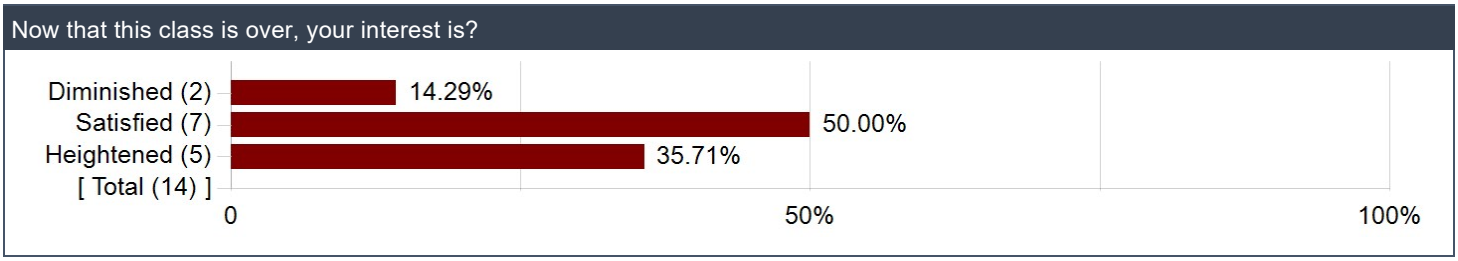
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



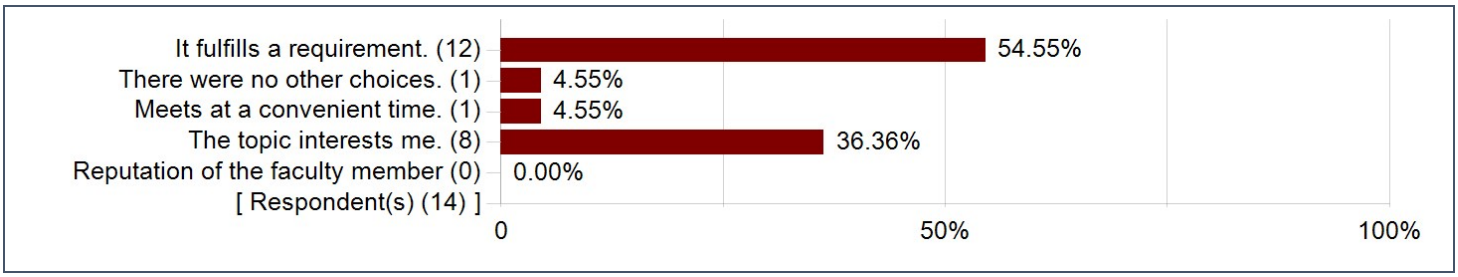
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



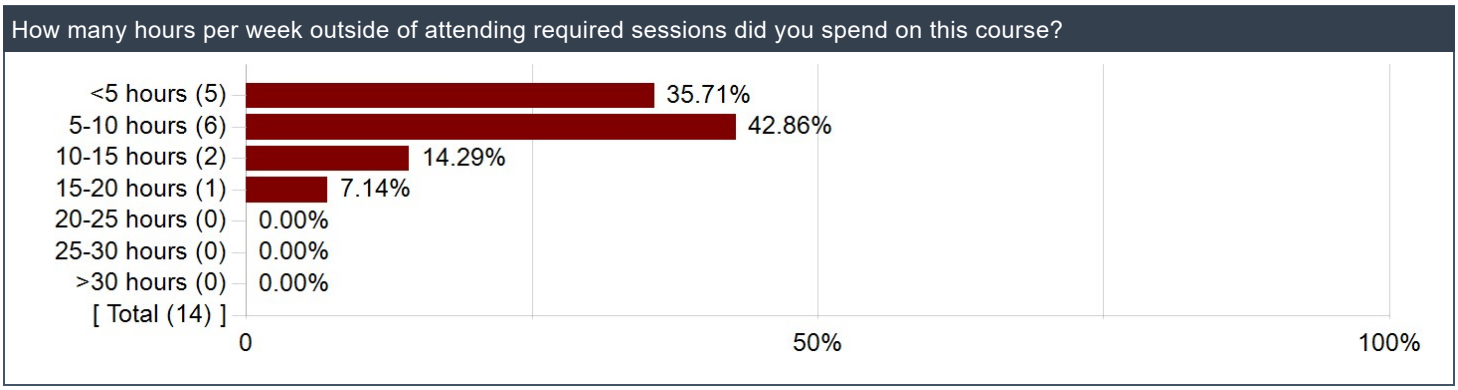
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



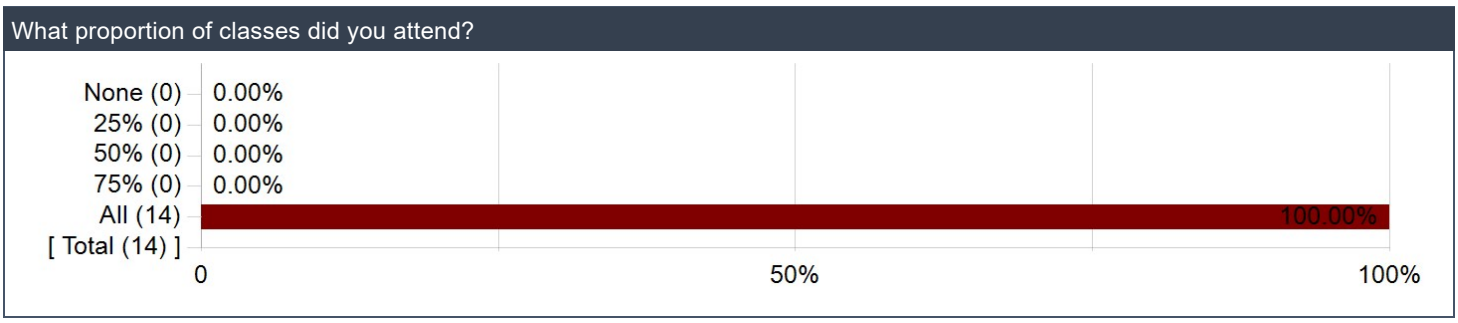
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



How many hours per week outside of attending required sessions did you spend on this course?



What proportion of classes did you attend?



Please comment on the level of difficulty of the course relative to your background and experience.

Comments
not very hard but definitely do the reading yourself
Relatively difficult but structured similarly to first part of sequence, so I understood expectations and what was required for success in the class
This quarter 8.5/10. I thought the readings were very difficult
Dramatic increase in difficulty from first quarter
hard
Quite difficult for anyone I would say.
the course, especially the readings, are not easy at all, so make sure you do all of them and attend every lecture. I would especially recommend attending all the lectures if possible, as they are very helpful.
No background in philosophy but honestly it is not required.