



HUMA 12300 11 - Human Being and Citizen I - Instructor(s): Arnold Brooks

Project Title: **College Course Feedback - Autumn 2023**

Number Enrolled: **19**

Number of Responses: **12**

Report Comments

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

Creation Date: **Friday, February 2, 2024**

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

Comments
Basic philosophy
Discussions about necessity, love, revenge, agreement and other big ideas similar to this. Temptation, justice, etc...
I have learned how to clearly emphasize my main argument as well as supporting claims in order to create a deeper understanding for readers
how to think like a philosopher; his explanation was "building understanding" in essays and trains of thought as opposed to "persuading"
During this course, I strengthened my writing skills due to the freedom to experiment and play with writing styles, as the focus of the grades was on the ideas, not the writing itself. Further, I learned how to ask insightful, provocative questions about classic philosophical texts. This was particularly interesting, as we spent class time thinking about and answering rather simple questions that brought upon complex dialogues often surrounding the characters themselves and their relevance to the broader text and ideas that the text stimulates.
I learned how to engage in philosophical discussion.
I learn a lot more about ancient cultures and the values we take from them
How human culture and custom have risen from historical works such as epics, philosophy, and religious texts. This class was heavily focused on philosophy and I learned to think differently about all the little nuances and disagreements I have in society. More importantly, the class is focused on developing writing skills, especially writing with more clarity and less eloquence.
Human Being and Citizen completely rewrote my view on the world – in one quarter. I used to believe my morals and ethical practices (e.g., strongly hating academic dishonesty, always being punctual, being polite to others, etc.) was based on the idea that this is what it meant to be a "good human." Now, it is clear to me that it is true that none of us truly knows what is "right," let alone what it means to actually be a "human." As our world becomes increasingly globalized and we believe that every human has "basic rights" or something that makes them that way and worthy of respect, we must learn to answer these questions ("What is a human? What is a citizen?") in a way that's compelling to all of us. I suppose every professor will teach their class differently, but if you get Professor Arnold, you are in for an intellectual treat!
Skill-wise, I learned how to write not to persuade but to educate. Professor Arnold taught my section to think of it like a mathematical proof: start with premises and assumptions that everyone can agree on. Then, build the argument from there. Writing does not have to be flowery or filled with rhetoric. Instead, if the premises and logical reasoning are strong enough, then the conclusion should be inescapable without the other tricks of the writing trade.
I learned how to understand seemingly daunting ancient texts and approach alien ancient concepts. I also learned how to construct a philosophical agreement.

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

Comments
lectures challenged the texts. Made me see things that I otherwise would not have
All readings and discussions which I enjoyed. Hearing the thoughts of other classmates was super intriguing and opened me up to so many other ideas I wouldn't have gotten on my own by reading the text.
The prompts for our essays allowed for many nuanced ideas or themes from our texts to merge together which made my writing enriched
the class discussions were so enlightening i left every class with a new perspective or a mind-blowing moment. but he talks a lot and like u gotta rly just jump in and not be scared even though he plays devils advocate for everything. he takes every point made to its end and it totally reveals flawed assumptions in ur thinking but makes you SUCH a better thinker. reading was awesome but writing assignments (there r 3 essays) contributed like 0 to my learning since we don't get the essays back super fast so i don't have a great idea of where i can improve... i've got just one essay to base feedback off of right now and finals are next week.
The readings were the backbone of this course. They were not only the texts upon which our entire course discussion rested, but they were what provided so much of the intrigue and appeal to the course. We read popular texts from famous philosophers and books that have been read by millions of undergraduates, but the path of our conversations in class were uniquely our own. For me, it was super cool to see how each individual interpreted and valued each text, texts that have been studied for centuries. The discussions were fascinating without fail and the relatively short writing assignments made them more enjoyable, manageable, and fostered more genuine curiosity and thought experiment because I was able to focus on questioning the text and conveying my thoughts instead of being focused on making a lengthy word count and having the perfect structure and writing dynamics.
The discussions are interesting besides that our only assignments were the three papers.
The seminars were very interactive and were a great way to look at the broad message of the books
The class was discussion based which made class feel very interactive. Being able to know the paper prompts in advance helped guide the readings and allowed me to play for the essays better.
Discussions were crucial for my understanding of the material. Professor Arnold had many great insights, and hearing from my classmates helped me consider the material from new points of view. Reading the material outside of class was also very beneficial. Although we rarely discussed more than a few chapters in each class even if we read the whole book (because there was never enough class time), I found that it was really fun to read through the thoughts of past philosophers or to see the stories of characters in works like the Iliad.
I found that each assignment helped me with the next assignment and feel more confident in how to argue and contribute during class. I also felt that solidifying the themes and questions to be addressed in the class at the beginning of the course and exploring them more throughout helped me feel that I knew what to expect and how to read each text in the context of the class.

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.82	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	81.82%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.45	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	36.36%	54.55%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.27	4.00	0.00%	9.09%	0.00%	45.45%	45.45%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.64	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	36.36%	63.64%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.00	4.00	9.09%	0.00%	9.09%	45.45%	36.36%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.45	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	36.36%	54.55%
I felt respected in this class.	4.73	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	9.09%	81.82%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.82	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	81.82%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
Professor Arnold sometimes takes awhile to give papers back. However, he has a very generous and kind extension policy. His office hours are somewhat limited as sometimes I'm not prepared to meet on Mondays.
With regard to "fairly," I'd actually like to say that Professor Arnold was generous. It was clear to me that I had no idea how to answer the questions he posed as we tried to work toward universal definitions of things like "necessity." Still, even though I also had reasoning errors (like the one described by the Euthyphro problem), he really respected effort and rewarded students for trying hard, even if our ideas weren't the most grounded. It was an excellent learning experience.
This class made me learn how much I enjoy philosophy and made me feel more confident in discussions and how to formulate an argument. Thank you, Arnold!

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	0.00%	100.00%
Anyone interested in the topic	0.00%	100.00%

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

Comments
Asking big questions
His explanations and questions that would really make you think
The discussions in class allowed the students to connect ideas with one another as well as the professor, this helped in developing essays as well as gaining a better insight into the text if you were confused prior.
literally anything he says honestly
The instructor listened carefully to everything that students shared and reflected on it with an enthusiasm for their thoughts and offered contemplative critique or challenge. This pushed us to think critically about the ideas that populated in our minds and to be very intentional about how we worded our theories so as to dissect our own opinions and contribute innovative and substantial thoughts to the group. The instructor taught with passion and diligence.
Professor Brooks is great at facilitating an engaging class discussion.
He made sure that the class was highly interactive which made the learning much more enjoyable and effective
Professor Arnold is very kind, funny, and smart. He likes to interact with students when we ask questions and he gives us a Socratic-like questioning whenever we give our opinions. He's always sharing fun stories and takes a very philosophical approach to the texts. Instead of talking about character structure and what it shows about humans, we talk about events in the book and how we can examine a character's actions in our own life.
I loved when Professor Arnold would play "devil's advocate" during discussions. It forced our entire section to really consider the topic from a different point of view. To do this, he brought in many great philosophical ideas. For example, to counter the idea that we only do things for pleasure and self-interest, he presented us with the Experience Machine. Furthermore, Professor Arnold also held regular Monday office hours that I signed up for whenever I needed help.
I found that Arnold's driving questions had me continue to think outside of class, as the synthesis of the texts through relevant themes and the reiteration of fundamental and challenging questions became more and more interesting with each lecture.

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
Open to asking the students even more questions.
Nothing. It's very clear my instructor knows the texts very well and understands the topics we discuss in class very well. He is brilliant
N/A
more comprehensive and timely feedback on essays, also a rubric maybe or guidelines other than a few points written on the board during one class, just would be great to have them posted to refer to while writing
More prompt feedback would be great.
N/A but a slightly bigger classroom would be appreciated
I would appreciate there being more days available for office hours. He's very generous in grading and very approachable.
I think Professor Arnold could improve the course a little more by providing clarity on the topics of the week and for each reading. For instance, our first essay was "Why does love require equality?" based on the Epic of Gilgamesh and Plato's Symposium. I initially had no idea this was going to be the essay topic when reading, so I looked instead into things like power or symbols in the Epic.
It would have been nice to have some discussions that didn't feel empty and fruitless at times, though that may have been the fault of the students rather than the professor.

The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	45.45%	54.55%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	72.73%	9.09%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.73	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	9.09%	81.82%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.91	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	90.91%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.82	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	81.82%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.73	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	9.09%	81.82%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.44	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	45.45%	36.36%	18.18%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.82	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	81.82%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.73	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	9.09%	81.82%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.82	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	81.82%	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
Thomas Pfannkoch was an amazing help in facilitating discussions during the writing seminar and would not only allow students to present ideas in class but encourage us to branch off of what the professor discussed to create our own ideas. Additionally, he demonstrated various writing preparation styles which I found to be helpful.
Tommy Pfannkoch: He was the writing advisor for this course. He was quite helpful and very engaged in the work he was doing with us. He offered good ideas, was well-organized and prepared for our advising meetings, and gave helpful feedback.

The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	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.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Helped you succeed in the class.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%

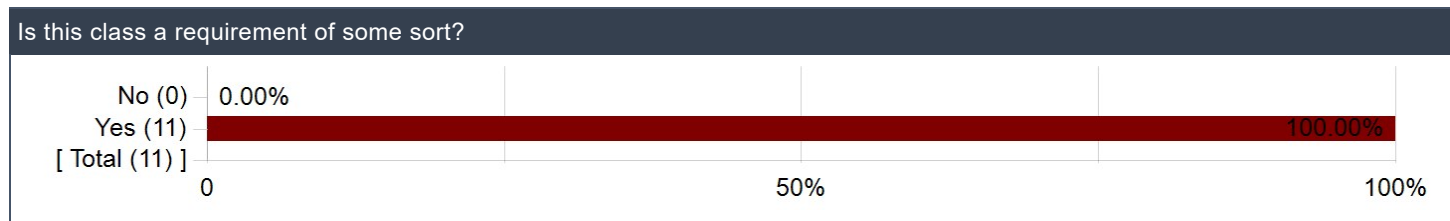
How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	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	3.30	3.50	10.00%	20.00%	20.00%	30.00%	20.00%	0.00%

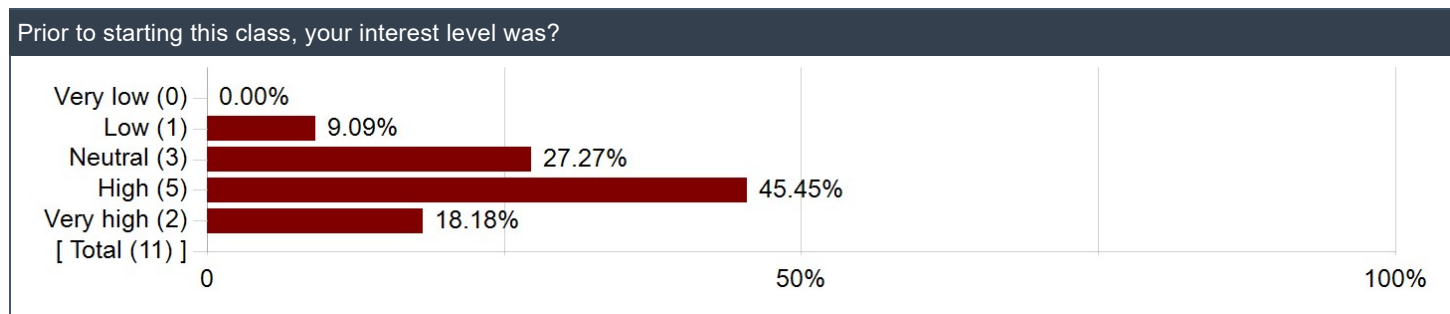
Other course elements not mentioned above:

Comments
The Writing Seminars were part of a larger group of resources made available by our assigned writing advisor, Tommy. He was also available for regular office hours (scheduled via email), and he never failed to respond to me.

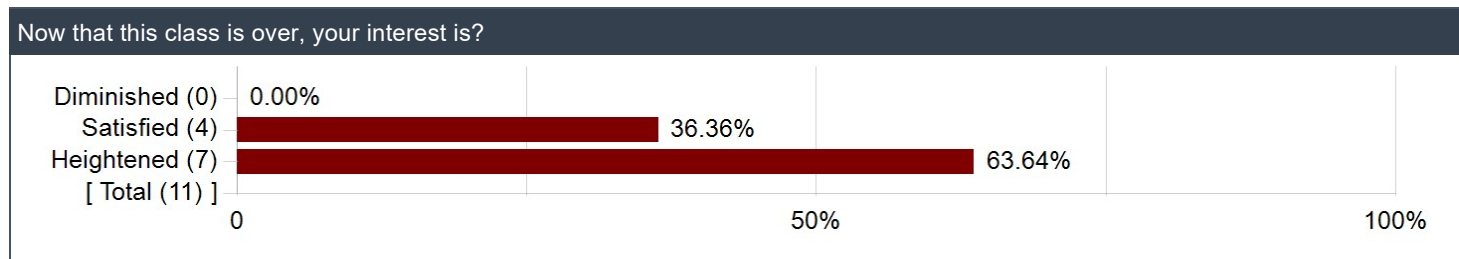
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



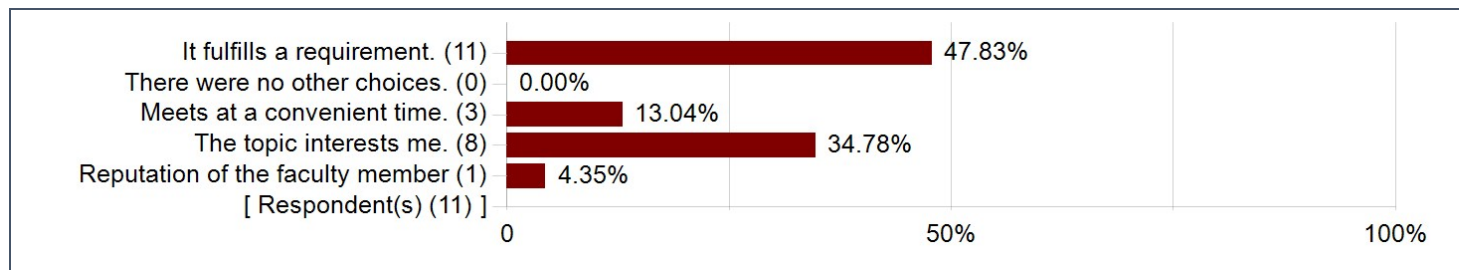
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



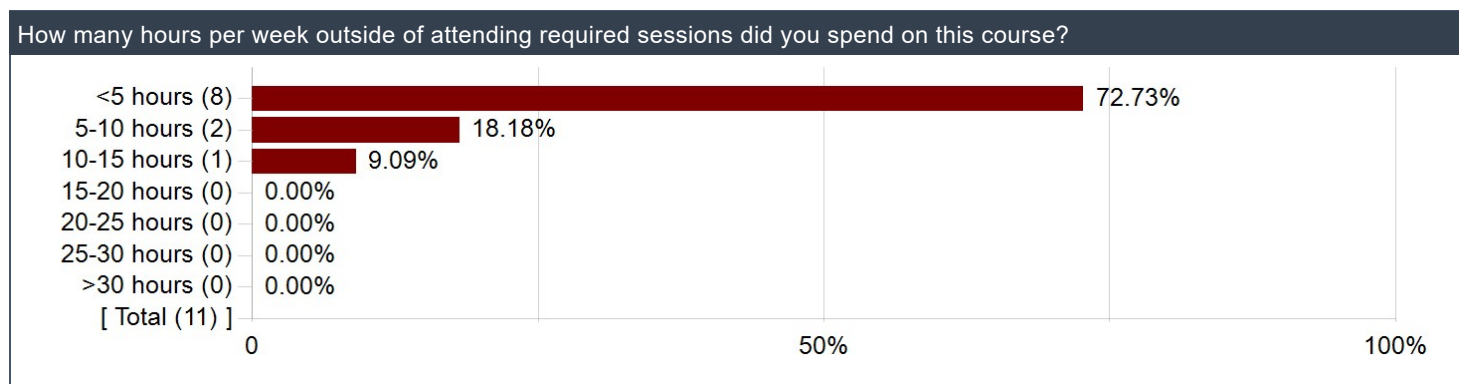
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



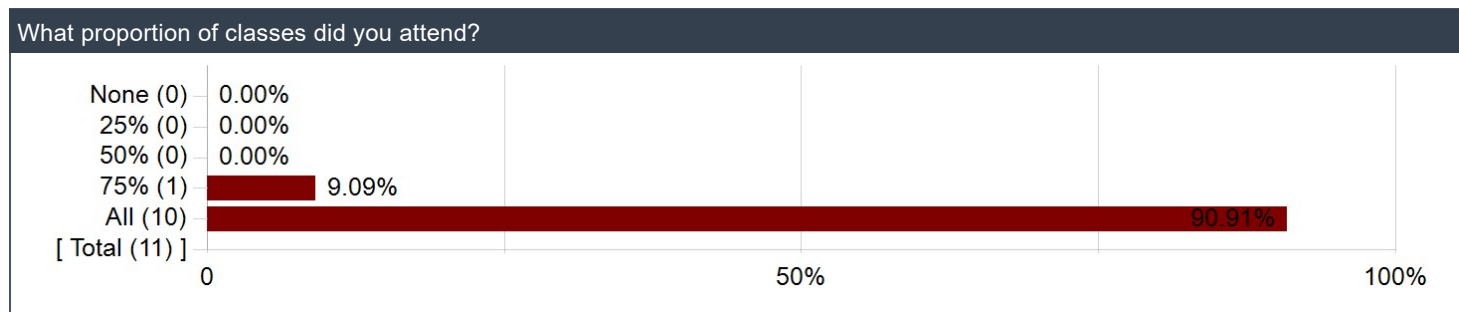
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



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
Some texts (Iliad especially) were difficult to understand if you are not good at older texts. watching videos to get a deeper understandings helped.
Definitely challenged me to think and analyze a reading in a way I hadn't before. I think I learned and grew a lot throughout the course
Having taken both AP English courses I felt I had a decent background on academic or literary analysis writing however, I think that with this course I was able to alter my style to become more clear and concise.
i didnt realize it would be so heavy in philosophical thought but it isnt bad at all once you get used to the way he runs discussions and what type of thoughts he is looking for. i.e. not english class "this theme that theme," more like "what is respect? lets dissect our understanding of it and what this text does to support or reject that" etc (or like what is judgment, justice, how do dif authors/narrators lay out a defintion or argument for these kinds of broad more meta concepts that we tend to have broad stroke assumptions about). i was challenged intellectually but i can't say if it was a ton bc the feedback wasn't enough for me to tell if my writing was challenged a ton. but definitely super thought provoking and i loved it
The reading assignments are quite reasonable and the writing assignments are relatively relaxed.
Its fairly easy if you are good at participating in class.
Very similar to AP Literature. It's like a Book Club.
I had no previous experience in philosophy before, so learning to approach the essays and texts from this angle was probably the most difficult aspect for me. Reading a text to understand general principles (e.g. a general definition of justice) was unlike anything I'd done in any of my previous English classes. However, I did not think the course was too challenging because there was plenty of time for reading the texts and working on essays; just don't procrastinate.
I don't think that the material was especially hard, but I found that this course challenged me to think in ways that were at times uncomfortable but interesting.