



SOSC 15200 8 - Classics of Social and Political Thought II - Instructor(s): Joshua Trubowitz

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

Number Enrolled: **12**

Number of Responses: **11**

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
Lots of info about the formation of communities from the "beginnings of time"
What I learned most in the course is my ability to state a clear and concise argument and spot inconsistencies in others. Besides that, my skill in reading difficult texts improved (English is not my first language).
Deconstructing and comparing complex arguments about human nature, government, and their relationships to contemporary politics
Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft.
This course taught me how to critically assess and identify key claims in argumentative texts and helped me strengthen my logical reasoning skills. It really helped me become a more succinct and clear writer.
Reading Hobbes Locke and Rousseau felt pretty essential to understanding the foundations of post-medieval political theory. We worked a lot on basically understanding what an author is arguing and how different authors build upon and contradict one another.
I learned about many different views held by philosophers regarding morality, government, and virtue of individuals. My close reading and analysis skills improved significantly, as well as the understanding the arguments of these complex authors.
One of the most important things I learned in this course was how to pick apart the main arguments of a dense text. The books that we read this quarter were much more abstract than the books from last quarter, and there were plenty of times when there was no one to fully understand every single sentence in books by people like Hobbes or Wollstonecraft. Learning how to skim yet come out with an understanding was a really important skill.
In this class, I have read about great works from Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, which give me insight into the reason for forming political systems.
An introduction to social contract theorists, experience with essay-writing and academic discussion
This quarter focuses on evaluating how different philosophers consider topics such as inequality, society, sovereignty, government, oppression, and rebellion. I gained the ability to reconstruct writers' arguments and compare them to other arguments.

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

Comments
Lecture was interesting, can't say it was that helpful to papers though.
I think in regards to learning, the discussions had been invaluable as well the one to one.
Discussions offered increased clarity about topics from readings, guided essay preparation, and encouraged new questions about the content
Guided Discussions are useful for understanding the important topics covered in the relevant readings. Prof. Trubowitz gave us summary sheets for readings on Rousseau and Locke.
I learned the most from reading, and it was helpful to have discussion posts for every class, as that started people thinking about confusions with the readings.
Both modes of discussions (in-class and online) were incredibly helpful, as these encouraged participation among and within students and groups.
The discussions were most helpful for me because reading the books on my own only allowed for a relatively shallow understanding of the book. However, the class discussions helped me connect the books not only to themselves but to other authors. The understanding grasped from reading individually compares in nothing when it comes to in-class discussions, so I appreciated how in-depth and thoughtful the discussions were.
The discussion in class is generally helpful.
The discussion posts were done very well. I was a little bit annoyed when I saw that we had to do 2 per week but they were quite short and easy, yet thought-provoking and ended up being one of my favourite parts of the course. The discussions are done well, he provides great summaries of key points which are helpful, he facilitates conversation well and doesn't lecture like other teachers in the sequence tend to.
Discussions were really informative and streamlined; discussion posts were helpful in identifying whether your interpretation of the text matched others' and whether those differences posed legitimate contradictions made by the author or a personal misreading of the text.

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%	9.09%	18.18%	72.73%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.27	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	72.73%	27.27%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	3.70	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	50.00%	10.00%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.18	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	27.27%	27.27%	45.45%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	9.09%	9.09%	54.55%	27.27%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.09	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	27.27%	36.36%	36.36%
I felt respected in this class.	4.73	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	27.27%	72.73%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.36	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	45.45%	45.45%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
Very interesting stuff that we deal with, very harsh grading, and material is hard to grapple with
If you don't care about having a B/B+/A- on your essays or as a final grade, I recommend taking this class for the skills you develop. Feedback and grades can be harsh, but it appears to be common among all of the CSPT teachers for some irritating reason. Beware that your SOSC grades will be significantly deflated compared to those of your peers.

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	0.00%	100.00%
Anyone interested in the topic	10.00%	90.00%

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

Comments
Love the lecture style
I think that he listens to students' contributions thoughtfully.
Professor Trubowitz's guidance of discussions was especially helpful. He managed to steer them toward essential topics from the readings but managed to keep them open-ended enough for us to freely contribute.
Professor Trubowitz's facilitation of class discussion helped me gain a better and deeper understanding of the text. He facilitated conversations with a really good balance of direction and flow, allowing for natural conversation while also ensuring to steer us towards important ideas for a more full understanding.
Trubowitz is very good at reconstructing an author's argument and pushing the class toward making that argument intuitive. He makes excellent handouts.
His explanation of the core ideas, as well as his encouragement for further discussions and promotion of our own views on the readings.
I most appreciate Josh's ability to build from the class discussions and not just stick to a lesson plan.
He provided notes on the material covered in each reading which helped to deconstruct the arguments and highlight what points were most important.
Trubowitz facilitated discussions extremely well and spent time in office hours working through arguments and how to approach the paper prompts. It was apparent that his goal for us was to improve throughout the quarter, regardless of our starting point.

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
Maybe make it a tad bit clearer what the essays will be evaluated on. The rubric is basically non-existent, which is bad for a class like this where the essays are graded so harshly and to the book.
The instructor was helpful outside of class as well as in class. One suggestion is that less abrasive essay comments might encourage students to contact the instructor after receiving their grades.
The nine-week quarter is a small time window, but providing some readings about criticisms of the text could clarify additional ambiguities and lead to new interpretations.
I would like to have had slightly less structured discussion sometimes (not all the time), but with pressure on students to make coherent arguments or present authentic perplexities rather than reciting answers from the text. People were invited to share opinions about the text, but not usually asked to follow through with arguments, or Josh would provide the arguments for them.
Nothing. I went to a lot of office hours, and he even made himself available to me outside of his regular hours. He was quite available and definitely helped me succeed in the course especially during the later half.
More lecturing would be helpful to understand the hard materials.
Making feedback on essays kinder and more constructive.
Sometimes feedback on papers could be a bit harsh—we are sensitive undergraduates after all! The feedback in office hours was greatly appreciated and preferred by many.

The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.45	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	54.55%	45.45%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	54.55%	27.27%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.73	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	27.27%	72.73%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.64	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	36.36%	63.64%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	27.27%	63.64%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	27.27%	63.64%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	45.45%	54.55%	0.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.36	5.00	0.00%	9.09%	0.00%	36.36%	54.55%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	27.27%	63.64%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.36	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	27.27%	54.55%	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
Mia
Mia was a great help in learning what I have to improve in my essays to make them more effective. – as well as her open and friendly nature created an open environment
Mia Thacker; I appreciated that Mia always had plenty of availability to discuss essays and proposed ideas. However, the seminars felt like they only related to the class in terms of literary content and sometimes felt redundant.
Mia Thacker
Mia was very helpful in the workshops, and clearly explained what was needed
Mia Thacker

The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	4.25	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	40.00%	20.00%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.25	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	40.00%	20.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	3.75	3.50	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	0.00%	40.00%	20.00%
Helped you succeed in the class.	3.80	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	40.00%	20.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	40.00%	20.00%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	3.80	4.00	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	40.00%	0.00%

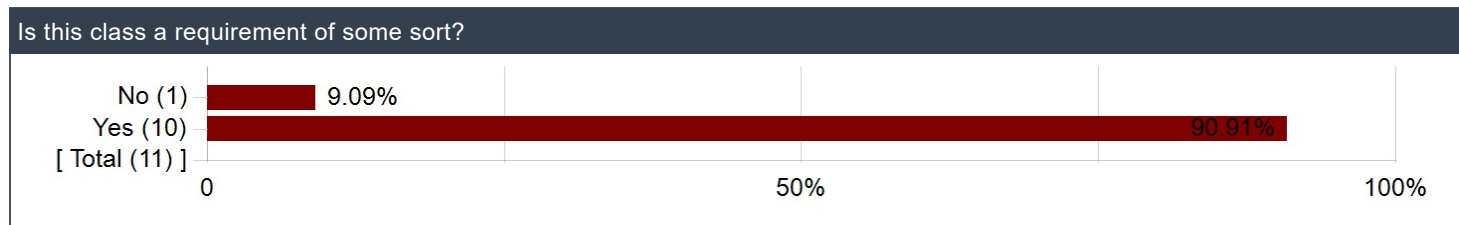
How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	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	1.00	1.00	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	80.00%
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	3.00	3.00	14.29%	14.29%	42.86%	14.29%	14.29%	0.00%

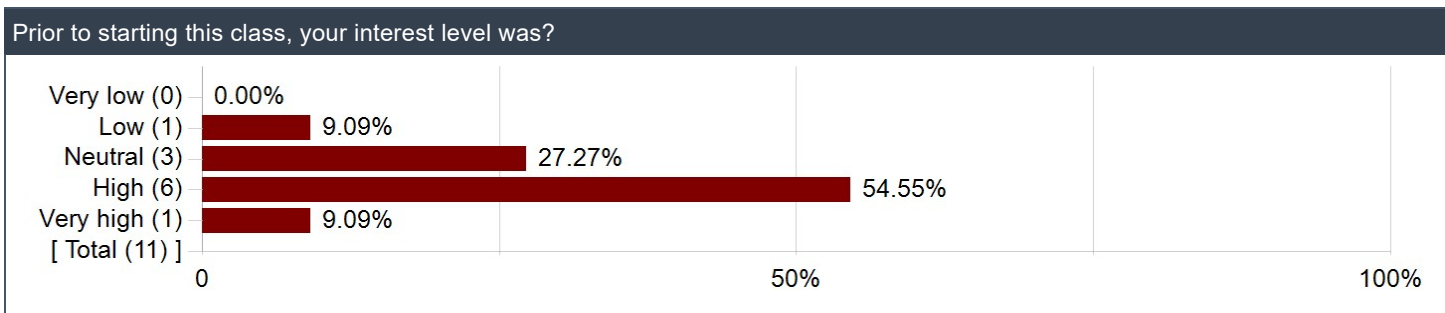
Other course elements not mentioned above:

Comments
There was a lecture but I did not attend

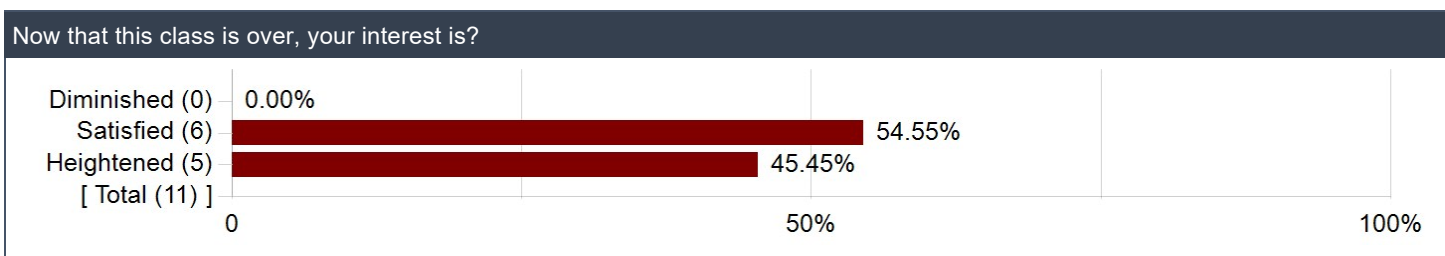
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



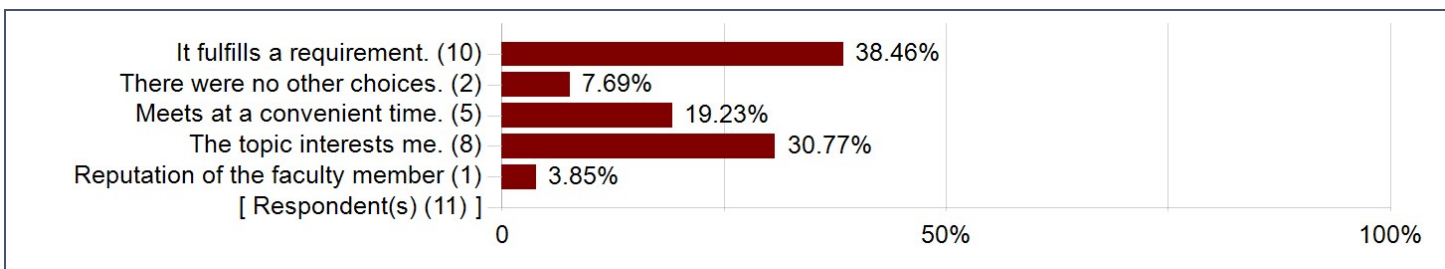
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



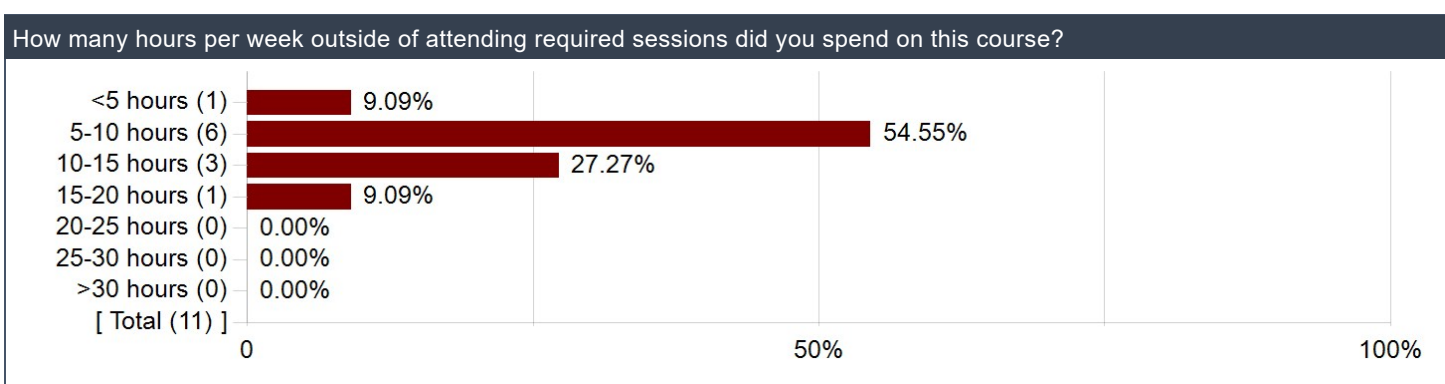
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



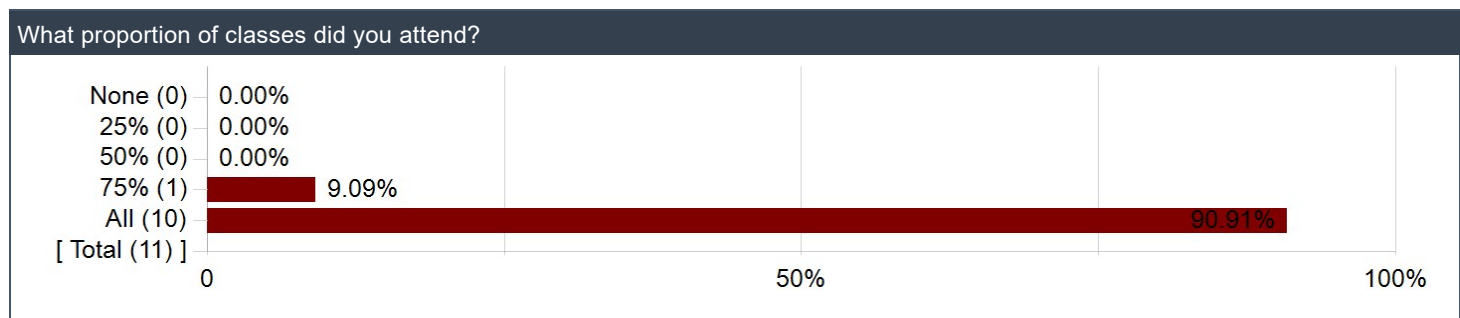
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



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
As a first year, very difficult to get an A, but you get better over time
The texts are quite difficult + the level expected to develop in writing
As someone with minimal experience in classical literature, approaching some of these dense texts is difficult at first, but class discussions offer several different ways to approach the text. Part of the class is feeling confused after the first reading and gaining clarity later.
Sufficiently Difficult.
This was easier than most high level close reading fundamentals courses, but much harder due to the standards of the sequence than other core classes.
Classics is a difficult SOSC in general, but this quarter was especially difficult for me because we read so many others with so many different (and similar) views. The pacing was also a bit difficult.
I think the reading materials and writing assignments in this course are challenging to me.
This sosc sequence is harder than many others I think, especially in terms of grading. Joshua prides himself on being a harsh (he would say fair) grader. He's pretty fair I think but definitely thinks of student success as apart from like traditional grading systems—some people like that, if thats you this is a good course but it is definitely not an easy a
I had zero experience reading philosophical texts prior to Autumn Quarter, but each time I have Trubowitz I have been able to improve and walk away with new skills in close reading, argument reconstruction, and presenting ideas in class.