



HUMA 11600 15 - Philosophical Perspectives II - Instructor(s): Magnus Ferguson

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

Number Enrolled: **19**

Number of Responses: **14**

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
I learned more about the stances of certain prominent philosophers, as well as how to examine their arguments critically.
how to think philosophically and understand philosophy
Philosophy, different types, views, opinions
I learned a lot about skepticism and philosophical texts during the time of the scientific revolution. Through reading Hume and Descartes, I gained a better understanding and appreciation of metaphysics and epistemology.
How to reconstruct arguments and raise original objections, how the different schools of philosophy have tied together (eg. Hume and Descartes) and the broader historical themes of skepticism and theology that surrounded these.
Philosophy! Mainly read Descartes and Hume. I feel much more capable of engaging with philosophical work at a high(ish) level.
Understanding how to interpret arguments made in philosophical texts by Hume and Descartes.
Evaluating and walking though philosophical arguments. Finding logical missteps and providing counter-objections. Learned about philosophical perspectives from Descartes and Hume.
We learned about Descartes Meditations and Hume's Enquiry, along with how to structure and write philosophical papers and convey arguments
I learned all of Humes and Descartes philosophy
How to find loopholes in arguments and present them, as well as how to consider the other point of view in an attempt to defend these "flaws".
How to examine ideas and think critically

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

Comments
The lectures are very helpful because the professor gives a lot of interesting and helpful context. He also breaks down the arguments implicit and explicit in the text very well. The essays are also very useful in really cementing understanding of the texts under study.
lecture
seminar where students and professor discussed readings in class and discussions included explanations and a place to ask questions about confessions
I would say discussions always helped me view the texts I was reading in new and interesting ways. Also, professor Ferguson was great with helping me comprehend deeper themes and ideas in the texts.
We start class with a little storytime (20ish minutes) that gives us the background of the authors and time period. This was beneficial for easing us into philosophy, humanizing our philosophers, and also giving us a good understanding of the reading we were actually approaching. The reading was very beneficial, in class discussions were very beneficial, while papers were a bit confusing but interesting in nature.
Classes are great! Loved how class was discussion based, made it quite interesting. Because of the thorough discussion, we moved slowly through the text and had very reasonable readings.
This course has been LIFE CHANGING. I came in the college intending to be a political science & econ major but now am seriously considering double majoring in philosophy instead. Professor Ferguson's office hours are something I look forward to every single week – he is always happy to engage philosophically with matters in or out of the classroom. He's the best.
We had readings and every class was an interesting discussion. There were sometimes small presentations to give context at the beginning of classes which were very interesting and helpful. The papers had challenging prompts but they made me understand the text on a deeper level.
Discussions were very helpful for understanding the key points of the text
Lectures/discussions were really useful because we would often discuss important aspects of each text; assignments were really hard but also helped me learn a lot more about each text.
The assigned readings were very interesting and I felt like I was learninh
The assignments were a good guide through our readings, and the discussions were essential to understanding each section and building up arguments that would help our understanding of the texts.
Our discussions in class were always fascinating

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.79	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	78.57%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.64	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	35.71%	64.29%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.07	4.00	0.00%	7.14%	21.43%	28.57%	42.86%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.64	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	21.43%	71.43%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.57	5.00	0.00%	7.14%	0.00%	21.43%	71.43%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.36	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	50.00%	42.86%
I felt respected in this class.	4.93	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	92.86%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.93	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	92.86%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
The professor is amazing.
Designed very well to have a much more nuanced approach to philosophy as the professor included a lot of his own elements which I really appreciated. I loved seeing the broader philosophical picture as opposed to what was "expected" of a philosophy course.
I don't know any other Philly P professors but I would highly recommend taking it with Prof Ferguson. His passion for it is infectious and I would totally take a third quarter if not for other classes and the fact that I find writing very unpleasant. Look up The MorningSiders on Spotify btw
It's the best. The course is alright, but Professor Ferg is the GOAT.
Wonderful course! Paper assignments were a bit long but I always ended up having to cut down anyway. Professor Ferguson is a wonderful professor in teaching the material and he provides amazing insights into the text in class and office hours.
Magnus is a really good instructor and is really nice, but his assignments are often graded very hard, and the prompts are quite difficult to grasp. It's definitely a pretty big time commitment.
It gets a little confusing this quarter, so I think it's a good approach to really slow down and focus on all aspects of the readings. I think providing background, alternative reactions to the text in its time, and some videos to contextualize can be really good for guiding the students through such confusing texts. Other accounts from the same author could also help understand their style of writing and perspective on their text.
Magnus Ferguson is great! I highly recommend him.

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	0.00%	100.00%
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
The careful, thoughtful answers and explanations in class and in office hours.
office hours
His intros to class giving a background for the book, and his small group questions really made you think and understand the book
I would say that Professor Ferguson utilizing visual diagrams and images really helped me better understand the main readings of the quarter. Also, before we started Descartes and Hume, we read a couple of short excerpts from different writers like Montaigne, Cervantes, and Teresa of Avila that really provided me good contextualization for the main readings.
He led discussions incredibly well making space for everyone to share and feel like their ideas had value, while also guiding the discussion in a way that I walked out of class everyday feeling like I took a lot away from the text.
His contextualization of each class and reading before discussion was very helpful. The class was 12:30–2, so a very nappy time, but (for the most part) I was engaged whenever he spoke. I really enjoyed his insights.
He always makes himself available to us outside of class, critically engages with our comments in class (intellectually devastating us but in a very kind nice guy type of way), and is willing to spend extra time walking through more nuanced arguments.
Class discussions were very interesting and helpful in understanding the material and forming opinions about it. The lectures at the beginning to provide context were also nice.
He was very good at facilitating open participation for every member of the class
The professor was amazing and very generous with office hours.
Background on the authors and texts as well as the discussion questions and how they were developed through classtime. This quarter it also really helped when he mapped out the arguments on the board, it was a very nice visual to have in the middle of so much writing.
His nuanced discussion with us about the text was great. It made the class feel very approachable and I felt I learned a lot more about the text.

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
nothing, magnus was awesome
He needs to release the essay prompts much earlier. Prompts would be released Wednesday and due that Friday. The short time to write and only a single office hour slot available the day prompt is released. Doesn't allow for preparation to succeed in writing good papers.
Sometimes, it felt like the reading questions were more "reading comprehension" questions instead of having me look deeper at the text.
Sometimes I felt like I was reading the text for the in-class discussion and having my own takeaways, but because those takeaways were often lost in the broader class themes we covered in discussion, it was hard for me to find ways to integrate my own findings into papers as opposed to key talking points we have in class, which seemed to be what was expected from some papers.
To be quite honest I don't really know. Excellent course. UChicago, if you're reading, PLEASE KEEP HIM AFTER HIS FELLOWSHIP!!!!!!
Idk, extend class time lol
I think assignments could be somewhat more clear in their wording
I would suggest setting up Canvas so the total grade can be calculated as he enters them, as well as providing some reference grade for participation around the middle of the quarter. It would be very helpful to have the assignment prompts posted with time in advance, I would say at least 1–1.5 weeks, and the paper prompts 2–2.5.
Maybe less reading per night? The texts are very dense so they quickly got overwhelming to read.

The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.79	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	78.57%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.79	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	7.14%	85.71%	0.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.93	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	92.86%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.86	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	85.71%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.79	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	78.57%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.93	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	92.86%	0.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.86	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	85.71%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.86	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	85.71%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.93	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	92.86%	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
Mike does his job fine. No complaints
Micheal Ossman was the writing coach. He was great and very helpful. his little lessons in wiring seminars were a great addition. And his thoughts, opinions, and availability was amazing when it came to writing papers.
Michael Ossman. I would say that Mike was helpful when I met with him during the office hours. However, the writing seminars often did not feel incredibly useful, and didn't really offer me much in terms of improving my writing. I will say that the lesson on key terms analysis was interesting and something that I would recommend doing again next year.

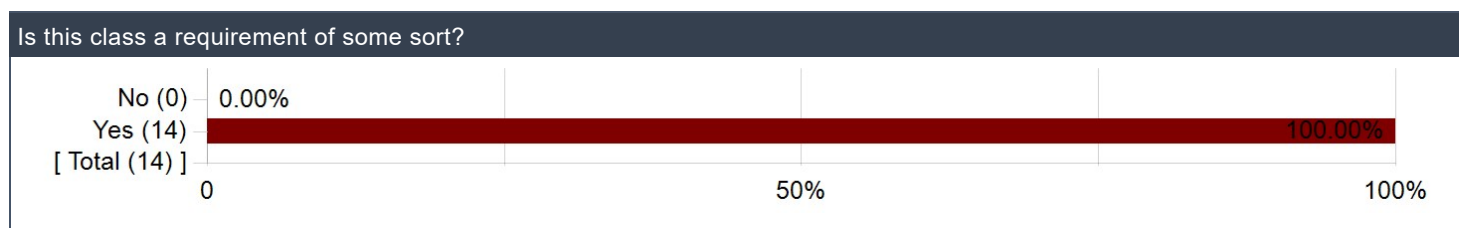
The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	3.67	4.00	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	3.67	3.00	0.00%	0.00%	66.67%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%
Helped you succeed in the class.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	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.	3.67	3.00	0.00%	0.00%	66.67%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%

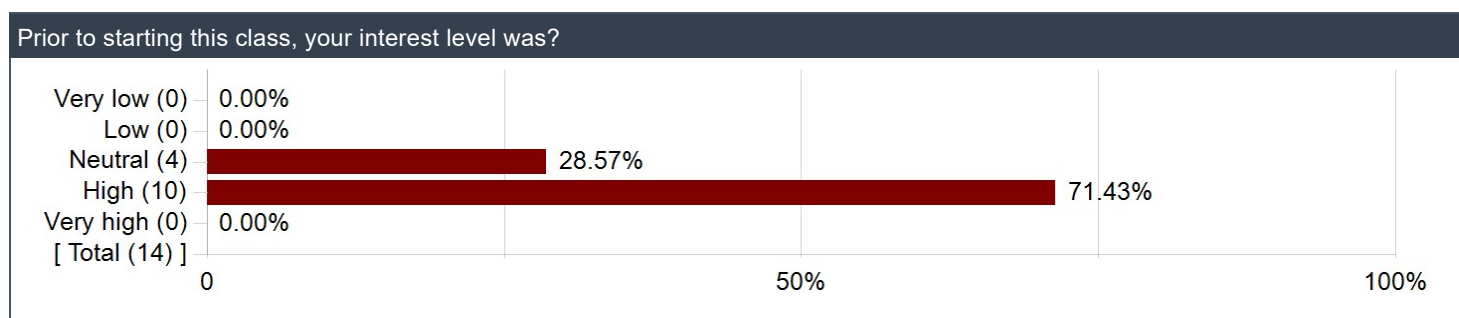
How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	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	2.73	3.00	9.09%	27.27%	45.45%	18.18%	0.00%	0.00%

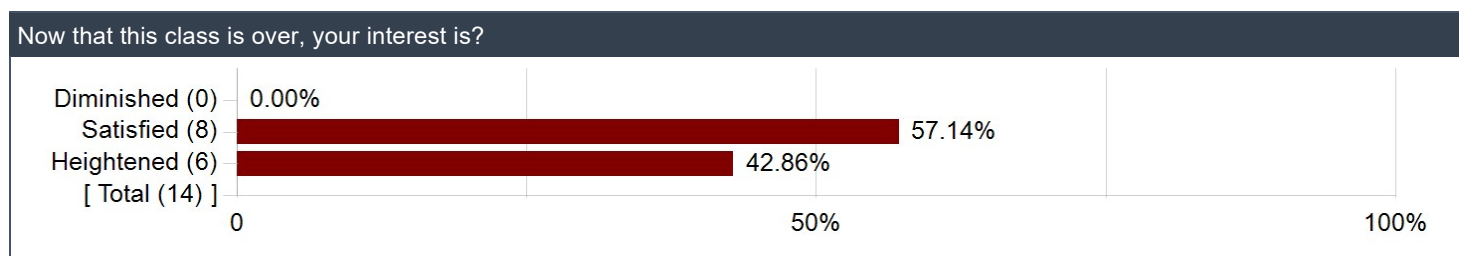
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



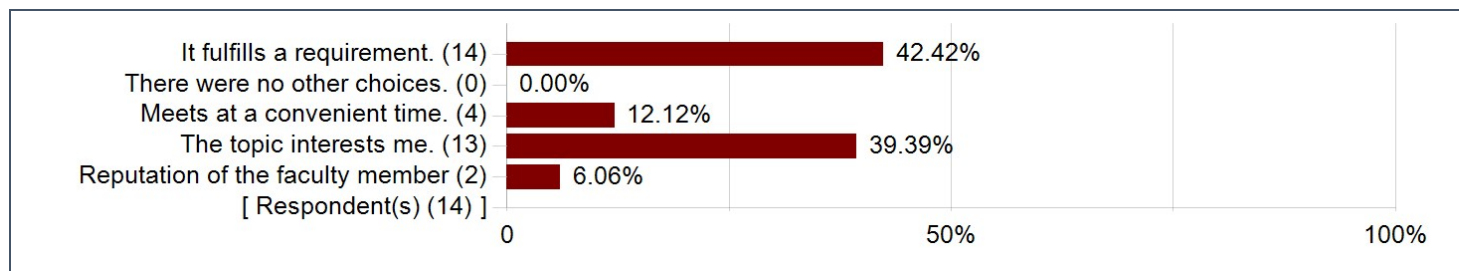
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



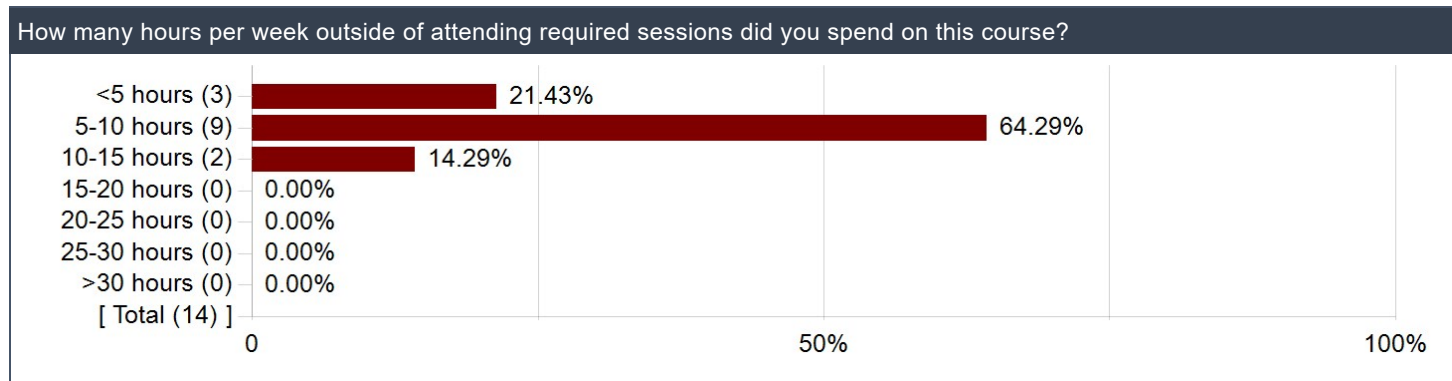
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



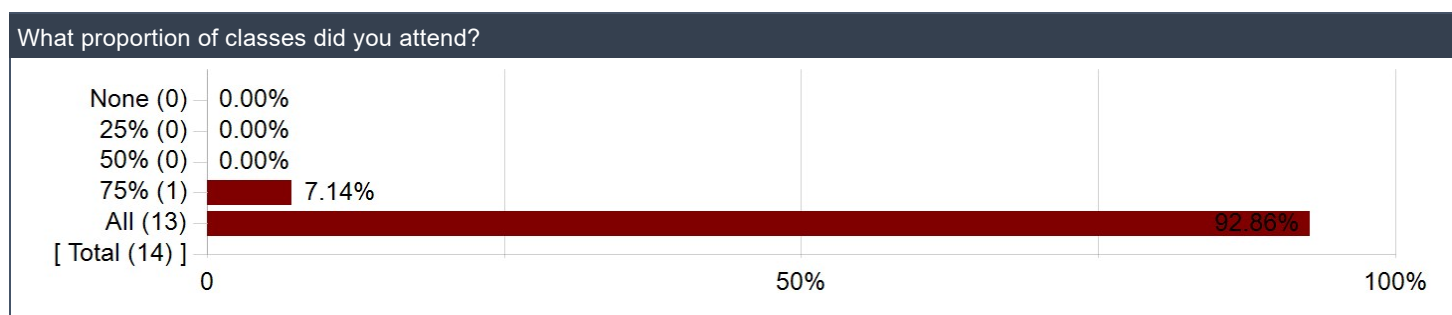
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



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
I didn't know much/anything about the authors we covered this term, but the courseload and material was very manageable. The professor is very understanding and he explains concepts very well.
It was a great course, would recommend to everyone for their HUM class.
It was not an incredibly difficult course. However, the readings could often be quite dense and took a lot of time to work through.
No experience in philosophy and was hard to get an A, but an A- is very reasonable especially if you go to office hours.
I had never read philosophy before this class, will definitely read it after. I'm a STEM person and writing is really painful for me, so the papers and passage analyses were obviously a struggle. Nevertheless, very accessible to people who have not been exposed to philosophy.
It's alright. You'll struggle if you're not interested or don't pay attention in class. But if you do pay attention, this class will blow your mind.
I had not read any major philosophical works before this course. I found it challenging but also rewarding to understand the material. The passage analysis assignments were not that difficult but it was sometimes confusing to understand what Prof. Ferguson was looking for. The paper assignments were very long and challenging, but were doable with enough time. Likewise, the grading on the papers were sometimes confusing.
Not a particularly hard course, but interesting and fun nonetheless
I have no experience, so it was pretty hard as far as writing classes go, but I'm satisfied with the difficulty
I had no prior experience with Hume or Descartes
This quarter was more difficult to me as an abstract thinker who really had to go outside the box for some of the arguments we read to make sense to me. It was challenging, but not impossible, and with the proper support from my professor, writing advisor and external sources I ended up completing it just fine. I would say no previous experience is too necessary, although it helps, but to do well in this course a student does need to put in a fair amount of effort.