HUMA 17000 7 - Language and the Human I - Instructor(s): S. Gray

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

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: **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
Linguistics from a broader and a more technical perspective; read key texts; essay writing; seminar discussions
Learning how to write and defend myself through the use a language and such
the impact that language, more specifically "standard english," has on race, gender, and identity.
I grew as a speaker and also as a writer. Because Professor Gray is interested in phonetics, we also learned about this subject! It was very interesting.
The details of writing a long college–level argumentative essay; the nature of what the linguistics major studies at the undergraduate level.
I learned about language as a lens for examining power in society, from views of accents and dialects to the suppression of language as a mode of domination.
Creating an argument, essay structure, subclaims
Books are ways that authors write their feelings out and reflect on how the world affects us and how we affect the world
How language affects societies through power, social classes, race, etc...
General analysis of texts with a linguistic perspective.
linguistics, how language impacts and effects human relationships, the meaning of language
I learned a lot about writing style and structure, he made sure to give excellent feedback and was very considerate to different styles of writing not just his own.

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

Comments
The supplemental readings and occasional short lectures filled linguistic knowledge gaps. The majority of the class was seminar–based discussions of the texts and ideas tangential to the texts. Writing seminars focused on common mistakes in essay writing. We also got specific feedback on our essays from the instructor and the writing specialist.
N/A
i liked the weekly reflections it allowed me to connect my stories with the readings we had
Discussions were great, I got to hear many different opinions. Writing assignments also helped me to formulate better arguments.
Some of the lectures were extremely interesting to me as I'm very interested in linguistics. The professor has introduced various aspects of linguistics. He claims to hope to add more things related to linguistics to the course (though, of course, I haven't had the chance to compare his syllabus to those of other instructors). Other times, of course, the he'd dive into the books (and not as often the smaller readings). Class discussions were sometimes focused on people's feelings of the texts, which can require some effort to sympathize with. But I know for certain that I'd say the same had I been in any other hum class.
The readings were always interesting and the class discussions were generally engaging
Discussions biweekly were interesting and engaging
The writing seminars helped develop my essays and correct mistakes I made
Prof. Gray had "commonplace entries" as weekly journal like assignments that reflect on anything we read for that week. These reflections truly helped formulate discussions and connect with other students through the use of these reflections.
Our discussions were very insightful and I never felt uncomfortable speaking up
this class was all discussion based.
I loved the group discussions and the individual writing responses. We were encouraged to think as a group yet still develop our own personal opinions to contribute.

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	3.54	4.00	0.00%	23.08%	15.38%	46.15%	15.38%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.23	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	46.15%	38.46%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.54	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	46.15%	53.85%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.15	4.00	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	46.15%	38.46%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.85	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	84.62%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.62	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	38.46%	61.54%
I felt respected in this class.	4.77	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	23.08%	76.92%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.77	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	23.08%	76.92%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
Professor Gray is the best at not only explaining the material, but encouraging discussions within the class.
My favorite class!
I switched between 3 hum courses early–on in the quarter. I initially had some fears that such a sequence would be much too liberal and would involve lots of politics. And quite arguably SOME of the texts were, but that's pretty much the extent of it. For someone like me who isn't at all into literature (and sometimes cannot understand literature), knows some languages well, and is somewhat interested in linguistics, this hum sequence made it so much easier for me to participate, compared to HUMA 110 and HUMA 140 which I had briefly been a part of. Sam's arguments and the discussions he lead are also rather moderate, so I'd say that anyone can feel just fine in this class. Also, on a side–note, Sam Gray is rather humorous at times, too (e.g. "when someone named 'White' marries someone named 'Black', they should both change their lastnames to 'Gray'").

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	7.69%	92.31%
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
Dr. Gray did a really good job of leading discussions: providing his opinion when appropriate and allowing us to share ours when we had things to say.
The thing that most contributed to my learning were the classes themselves, where the lectures helped me format my essays to some degree.
i really enjoyed how relaxing the class is despite some of the more difficult and sensitive topics we were having. sam really has that chill vibe which makes class discussions not forced and awkward
His kindness and respect towards students.
His lectures and whenever he sidetracks into the field of linguistics. He sometimes apologizes for deviating a bit far from the texts with his shared insights, but I'd say those digressions are actually very interesting.
Our instructor was very good at facilitating discussion – he brought up important points to discuss and definitely steered the topics at hand, but not in a heavy handed manner
Gives very helpful feedback, very understanding instructor
His background knowledge in linguistics contributed to understanding some parts of a text that I didnt understand, and it helped dig deeper into the topics in class
Professor Gray is an amazing instructor! He is well spoken, passionate about language, and truly knows how to conduct thoughtful class discussions. He is a very generous teacher and makes his students feel heard and comfortable in his class. His office hours are extremely flexible and he will make sure to give you feedback if needed. Highly recommend taking a class with him.
His background in linguistics gave every lesson an interesting dimension that was never too technical and always contributed to the classes interest
Sam's linguistics background made for some interesting conversations throughout the quarter. he made everyone feel very welcomed and comfortable to share their opinions in class.
The professor was very receptive and encouraging for new ideas.

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
N/A
Nothing, it is the perfect class
i don't have any ideas because i really enjoyed how the class went
Not much, the class is already organized rather well. Maybe if the first drafts of our essays were due a week later, we could've had a slightly easier time allocating our time? But first drafts are graded based on completion, and he has given us weekend extensions for both drafts, so there isn't much to complain about.
Prof Gray was great – I don't think there's much room for improvement. That being said, the curriculum feels a bit incoherent at times. It feels as though the only requirement for a text to be taught in Language and the Human is for it to involve Humans speaking a Language.
There's nothing that needs to be modified
Nothing :)
i felt sometimes not very engaged in class discussions because we would go on tangents so maybe keeping conversations relevant and also have maybe more lectures on linguistics.
There is not much more as it was a very discussion based class. Potentially talk more about writing structure within class time.

The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.23	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	46.15%	38.46%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.33	4.50	0.00%	7.69%	0.00%	38.46%	46.15%	7.69%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.62	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	23.08%	69.23%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.54	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	30.77%	61.54%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.31	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	38.46%	46.15%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.54	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	15.38%	69.23%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.69	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.77%	69.23%	0.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.77	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	23.08%	76.92%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.85	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	84.62%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.85	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	84.62%	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
Helina, the writing instructor
Helina Mazza–Hilway. I appreciate our writing specialist's efforts and the help she's given us.

The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	3.50	3.50	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
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.	2.50	2.50	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Helped you succeed in the class.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	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.	4.50	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	1.00	1.00	12.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	87.50%
Field Trips	3.00	3.00	12.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	75.00%
Library Sessions	1.00	1.00	12.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	87.50%
Review Sessions	1.00	1.00	12.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	87.50%
Writing Seminars	3.00	3.00	0.00%	33.33%	33.33%	11.11%	11.11%	11.11%

Other course elements not mentioned above:

Comments
N/A
On a random October day, we sat downstairs outside as a whole class. It was pretty interesting, though I'm unsure if that'll happen again in the future, especially for any winter quarters.
Writing seminars were not helpful and were a waste of time. They also met literally right before the essay was due which was kind of weird.

Is this class a requirement of some sort?

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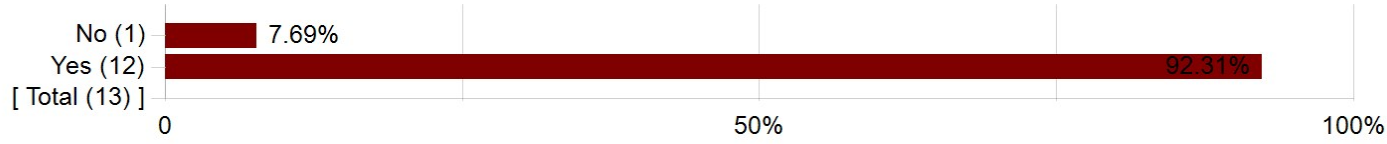

Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?

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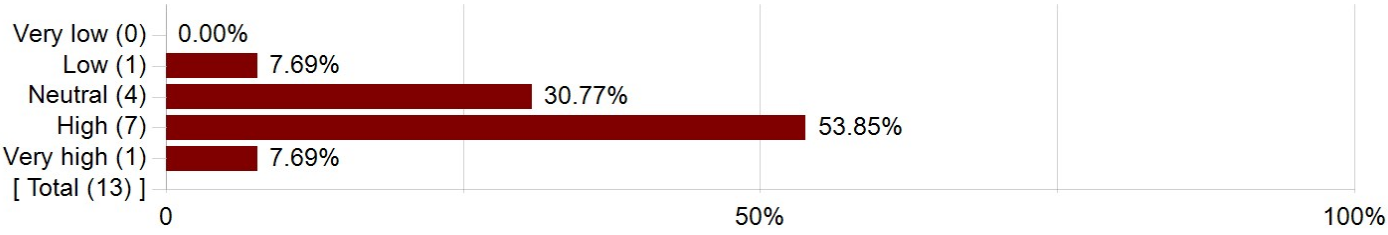

Now that this class is over, your interest is?

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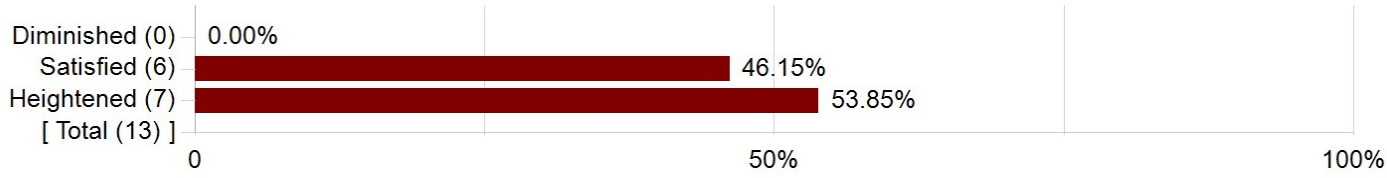
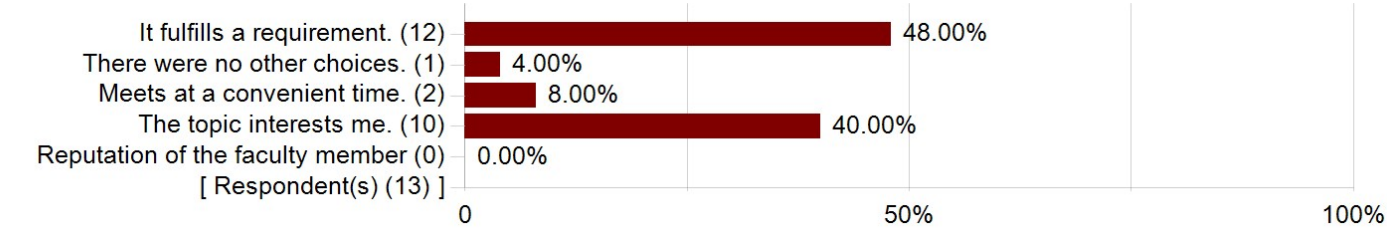


Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



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

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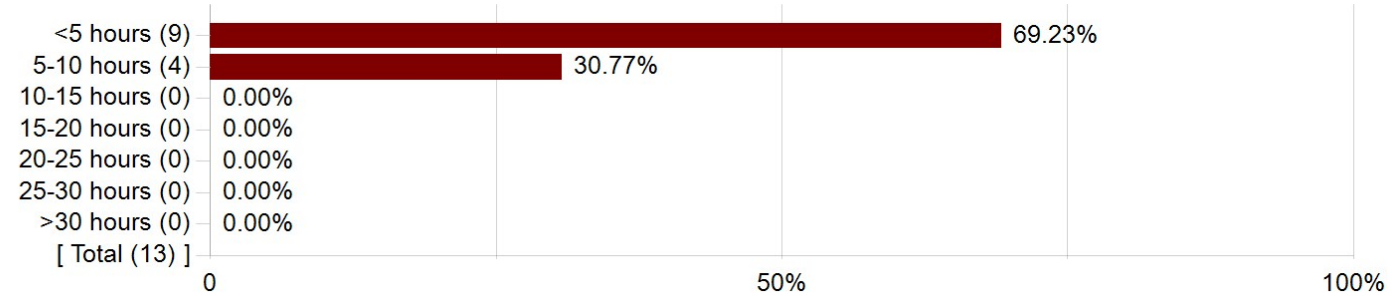

What proportion of classes did you attend?

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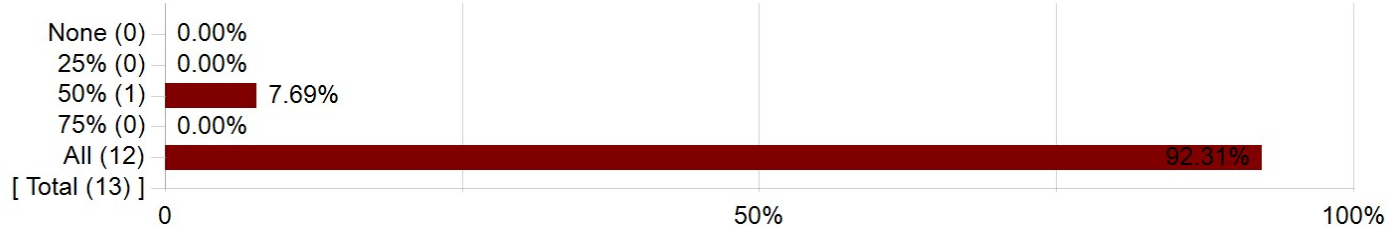

Please comment on the level of difficulty of the course relative to your background and experience.

Comments
Not particularly difficult given basic essay–writing experience. Readings took time but were definitely manageable.
It is very manageable if you stay on top of the readings
i felt it was pretty good, i was scared for the essay grading but it turned out very well
Pretty much just high school English; some knowledge of linguistics and mastery of some languages. The essay writing wasn't too difficult, and the linguistics was interesting. While I would imagine that someone without any backgrounds in linguistics or a second language may need more work to fully understand some of the digressions, these discussions are rare and are not the foci of the class; these students would still be extremely engaged in the class (the vast majority of students I think would fall under this category.)
Not difficult if you do the readings
Very good course regardless of background! Dr. Gray is chill & understanding of all experience levels when it comes to linguistic/argumentative writing.
No background needed
If your writing skills are proficient, it will help you overall succeed better paper wise as UChicago expectations are very high. But discussions in this class are overall fruitful regardless of some of the repetitiveness (prevalent in ALL hum classes).
not very difficult, if you keep up with the readings and meet with the writing specialist/professor to talk about your papers, you will get a good grade.
not difficult, everyone can enjoy this class