



SOSC 13210 1 - Social Science Inquiry: Formal Theory II - Instructor(s): Monika Nalepa

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

Number Enrolled: **18**

Number of Responses: **13**

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
Not much, equilibrium notions i guess
Modeling games in mathematical form
Pure strategy and mixed strategy Nash equilibriums, and further knowledge on game theory.
Dynamic/extensive form games
We mostly learned game theory: proofs related to Nash equilibria and practice on how to solve games of complete information for pure strategies, mixed strategies, continuous strategies, and turn-based strategies. There was an emphasis on some applications to the real world.
Mixed-Strategy Nash Equilibrium Subgame Perfect Nash Equilibrium
Mixed strategies, extensive form of games, Arrow's theorem proof using ultrafilters.
I think various aspects of game theory. I am not sure if there was any one concept that stuck out to me, but I appreciated the connections to real aspects of foreign relations and interactions within governments.
–Nash equilibrium –mixed strategy –extensive form games, backward induction, subgame perfect equilibrium
NE in pure and mixed strategies
Game theory, mixed strategies, extensive form games.

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

Comments
They didn't, tbh
Lectures contributed to the understanding of the material, while problem sets were useful in practicing.
The lectures and psets are very helpful in understanding the concepts.
Lectures were pretty confusing most of the time, I only properly learned the material when doing psets
We only had lectures helped, which helped with the theory. It was mostly assignments (the problem sets) that would mimic the real problems we'd see on exam or possibly in terms of analysis in the real world.
The lectures was interesting but at times can be confusing. The professor could be a clearer in her notations when writing out definitions. She could also be more strategic in her use of the blackboard, i.e. divided up the space for each chunks of information instead of writing things all over the place. The assignments were not well-allocated in that there were only two of them but they consist of a large chunk (30%) of the grades. Furthermore, the professor only graded one problem per pset. This means that one mistake can cost you 10% of your grade. Note that the threshold for an A in the syllabus is a 95%. The professor is also not very responsive to questions about her feedback on assignments.
Problem sets
It was very difficult to keep track of content in this class, but the best resources available were probably the Panopto videos on Canvas.
–not much contributed to my learning –I felt that I learned most of the material on my own –the panopto videos were helpful sometimes
Lectures were poorly organized and the professor was not very helpful outside of class
The panopto videos cover everything you need to know. Assignments may include something that's not elaborated in class.

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	3.77	4.00	0.00%	7.69%	38.46%	23.08%	30.77%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	2.77	2.00	15.38%	38.46%	15.38%	15.38%	15.38%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	3.54	4.00	7.69%	15.38%	7.69%	53.85%	15.38%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	3.38	4.00	0.00%	23.08%	23.08%	46.15%	7.69%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	2.85	3.00	15.38%	30.77%	15.38%	30.77%	7.69%
My work was evaluated fairly.	3.08	3.00	16.67%	25.00%	16.67%	16.67%	25.00%
I felt respected in this class.	4.15	4.00	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	46.15%	38.46%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	2.85	3.00	7.69%	30.77%	38.46%	15.38%	7.69%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
Apparently our Autumn quarter professor taught the winter quarter material, but Prof Nalepa didn't change her syllabus much so a large portion of the course was review.
The final exam only covered material from the very last day of the course which seemed quite strange. According to the syllabus an A is a 95% which would be almost impossible to attain without extra credit (5% extra credit were offered in total). There were two problem sets, each worth 30%, and she only graded one question from each so if you happened to mess up the question she graded you would be in deep trouble grade-wise. Overall, I wish that the material were presented more clearly. The final seemed to rely on everyone watching multiple classes worth of pre-recorded lectures from COVID, but this was definitely not made explicit in class.
The lectures felt somewhat disconnected from the work we did in assignments and in exams. The professor made a point about the course needing a TA for grading more problems to get more feedback, which was fair: I think a TA would have also helped for additional office hours or perhaps a discussion section/seminar to focus on more strategies for solving problems that we might see on exams.
The final was solely focused on Subgame Nash Equilibrium despite us only spending the last week on them. We only had no practice with SPE problems
The professor did not grade majority of our work.

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	46.15%	53.85%
Anyone interested in the topic	46.15%	53.85%

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

Comments
Writing everything on the blackboard, providing lots of real-world examples.
There are a lot of examples given, which makes the concepts easy to distinguish.
Honestly class was pretty confusing
The old Panopto videos were helpful when I needed them: they supplemented the lectures well and were effectively lecture notes.
The professor brought up interesting real-life situation relating to the material covered in class. Also her anecdotes about her daughter were interesting.
Spend more time on giving feedback.
Panopto videos
—maybe her pre-recorded panopto videos
N/A

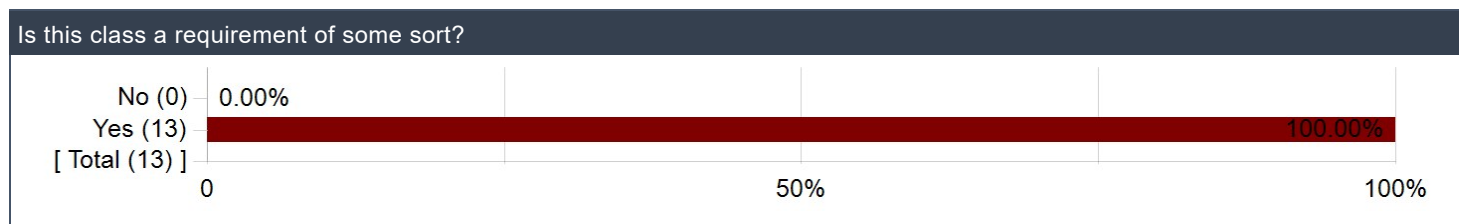
What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
The course needs a TA so we can actually have our entire problem sets graded.
I think it would be better if we covered examples in class that were more similar to the problems on the problem sets and exams. While the examples covered in class were very interesting, I often felt like they were too complicated and was unsure of how to use what was learned in the example on the problem sets.
Nothing.
Prof. Nalepa could choose one textbook and be consistent with the definitions provided in that textbook. Often she, and thus the class, would be confused about her presentation of the definitions. Also, her board work was very difficult to follow.
I think more practice with problems in class was necessary. I felt a lot of this come up in the final exam, where the concepts tested were all introduced in the last week of class: it is fair that we applied the knowledge from prior weeks (Nash equilibria on their own, etc.) to arrive at the conclusions of the content in the lectures in the last week, but the lack of practice for these new kinds of problems was really felt.
Organize the presentation of the material better by diving the blackboards and presenting concepts sequentially, (motivations, definitions, theorems, applications) instead of having things all over the place.
Having clearer lectures, prepared lecture slides, and smaller assignments that we received feedback on and went over in class
While Prof. Nalepa may be accomplished in her career and field, it definitely did not show in this course. She was arguably one of the worst professors I've had. It seemed as if she did not care at all about her students, about her quality of teaching, or about this course in general. Her lectures were extremely dry, disorganized, and not engaging. She looked at her notes and just scribbled them down on the blackboard, and half the time it seemed like she didn't even know what she was talking about. She made no efforts in trying to get to know the class, and often times even gave condescending responses to students' questions. So not only was she not that great at teaching, she was quite rude and disrespectful at times (which is arguably so much worse). Canvas was extremely disorganized: she didn't respond to things in a timely manner, she never inputted grades, never made the deadline clear, and graded everything on a weird grading scale that only consisted of a few points. Our 2 psets were worth 60% total (30% each), and for the first one, she only graded one out of ten problems (so a singular pset question is worth 30% of our entire grade). She said it was because she doesn't have a TA and doesn't have time to grade, but our class of 18 or so people were already working in groups of 3, and it's literally her job to grade assignments. And if her schedule was packed to that extreme, we shouldn't be the ones being penalized for that. She was never available outside of class (couldn't schedule additional office hours, didn't show up for over an hour one time), and would always leave immediately after class ended, before we could even ask her a few questions. Furthermore, whatever we did learn in class never really applied to what was on the psets, midterm, or final. She told us the final would be cumulative, only to make the entire final consist of questions on subgame perfect equilibria, a topic in which we just scratched the surface on in the last two lectures of the quarter. After the first quarter of this sequence, I was actually really interested and excited to learn more about game theory and was looking forward to this quarter. Not only did she make me dread going to class, I also feel like she talked so much about political science, which isn't really what I signed up for. Overall, if you are taking this quarter of the sequence, I wouldn't recommend you take it with this professor.
Make sure the lectures are organized and she knows what she is talking about because majority of the time she would be stumbling over the notes and students would keep pointing out incorrect parts of theorems or examples
A lot of the content is already covered by the last quarter, so I'd appreciate it if we have spent more time on the second half of the course.

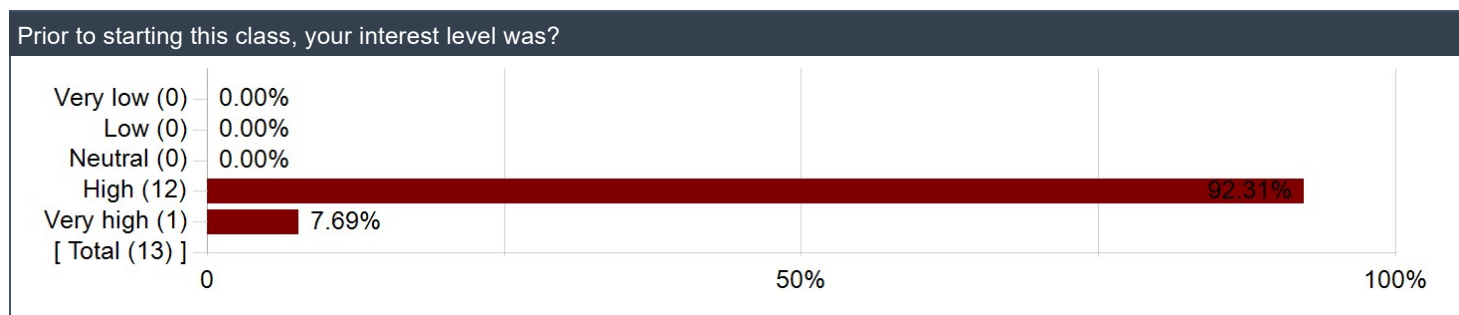
The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	2.83	3.00	8.33%	33.33%	33.33%	16.67%	8.33%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	3.25	3.50	8.33%	25.00%	16.67%	33.33%	16.67%	0.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	3.50	3.50	8.33%	0.00%	41.67%	33.33%	16.67%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	3.50	3.50	8.33%	0.00%	41.67%	33.33%	16.67%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.08	4.00	0.00%	8.33%	16.67%	33.33%	41.67%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	3.17	3.00	0.00%	25.00%	41.67%	25.00%	8.33%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	2.58	3.00	25.00%	16.67%	33.33%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.08	4.50	0.00%	8.33%	25.00%	16.67%	50.00%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	3.83	4.00	16.67%	0.00%	8.33%	33.33%	41.67%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	2.83	3.00	8.33%	25.00%	41.67%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%

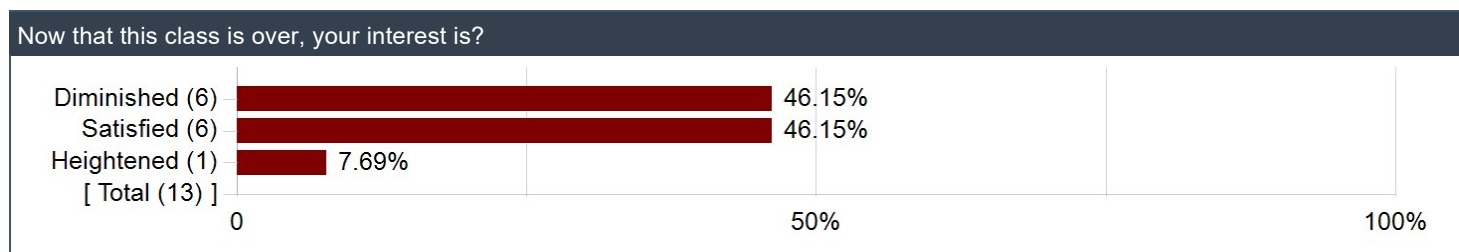
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



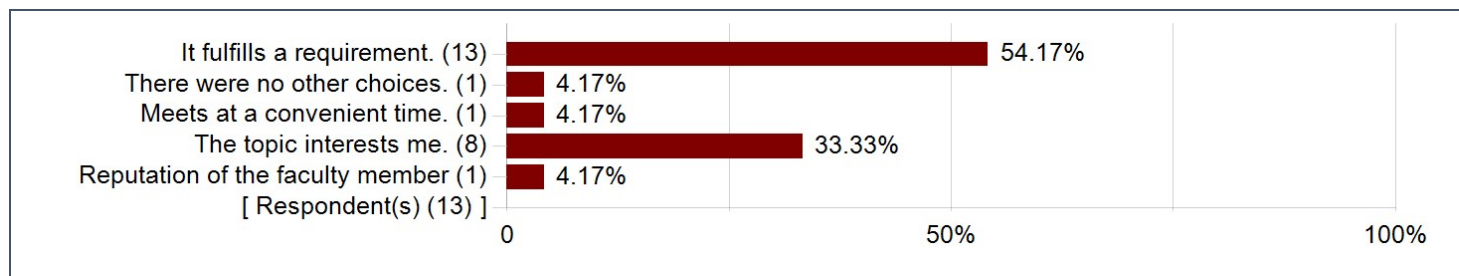
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



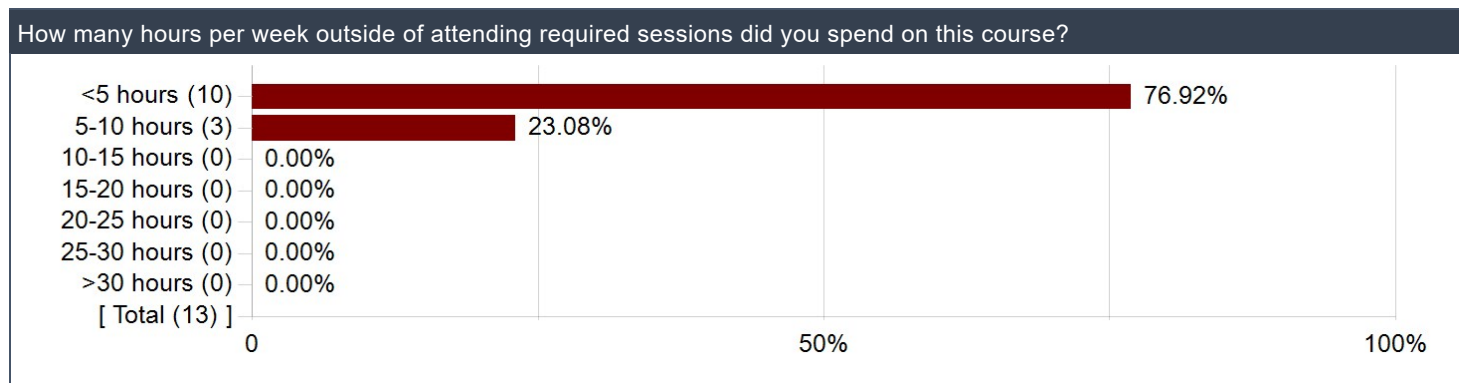
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



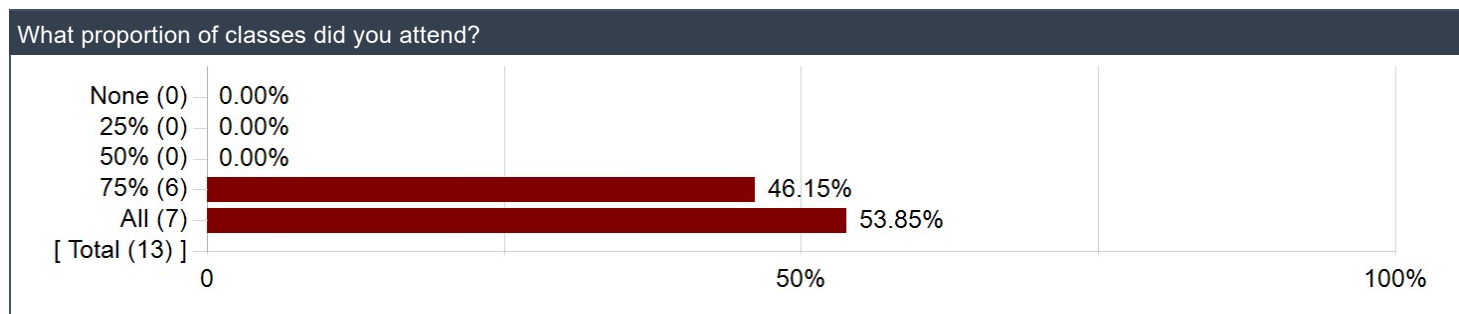
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



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
Just right
The course was not very difficult since it was mostly a repeat of the last quarter. However, Prof. Nalepa is a harsh grader so you have to be very careful with assignments.
Coming from a math major background, I thought the high-level concepts and the theory behind the course were fine to manage. Again, I think more practice in class or more time on exams would have been helpful for the general application-side of things.
In the first quarter of SSI, we have already covered a large chunk of the material covered in the second quarter. Despite that, I still find the class confusing because I wasn't sure of the direction of the lectures. My recommendation to anyone taking the class is to read the books early. This will be your best source of information. The professor followed the book but her sources were varied. So Osborne and Tadelis is your go-to
It felt extremely difficult to me, even given my experience in the previous quarter of this sequence combined with calculus knowledge.
Not difficult content-wise, but difficult because assignments and tests were graded oddly and harshly, instructions for assignments were unclear, and lectures were somewhat disjointed from what she expected us to know.
The topic was interesting and the only reason we knew how to do anything was because last quarter's professor taught the material well.