



SOSC 15100 10 - Classics of Social and Political Thought I - Instructor(s): Julia Brown

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

Number Enrolled: **19**

Number of Responses: **17**

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
Gained perspectives on topics such as justice, equality, and duty of a citizen.
Analysis of philosophical and political texts
How to analyze challenging philosophical text and fully understand what the writer is arguing
How to read difficult texts
Analyzing classic texts rigorously.
Exploration of four classic works which provided a great background in general political thought.
I learned how to analyze text and conceptualize topics across multiple writings, time periods, and authors.
I think that I learned how to unpack and learn to understand dense texts and create meaning out of them.
Learned about the different ways in which philosophers have discussed politics, what is best, and how humans can and should build societies.
how to read and analyze very dense text
Learning how to analyze and write about texts on morality, law and human nature.
How multiple authors characterize justice, law, and morality.
I think I gained analytical skills, my essay writing improved, and my ability to close read got better. I also learned a lot about political philosophy.
The most important things I learned this course are concerned with the themes of justice, virtue, and politics as described by Aristotle, Plato, Aquinas and Machiavelli/
The most important and positive aspect of this course was the depth in which we explored foundational texts in the western cannon, and were thus able to understand the development of a series of complex ideas and concepts.
This class has really improved my knowledge on Aristotle and Machiavelli, in addition to a strong foundation of political philosophy.

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

Comments
Classes were mainly discussions with some group activities: these were helpful in solidifying understanding. Close reading and analysis assignments were good, but given the limited feedback, felt sometimes like checking off boxes. Essays were biggest challenge, and given limitations to prompt, required creative thinking.
Classes offered context and analysis through group discussions
Class discussion helped to understand the material thoroughly
Commonplace books (weekly reading responses where we had to include annotations, questions, and comments of a passage of our choosing from the given week's reading.) An essay (rough draft and final draft submissions), and a take home exam. I liked the commonplace books, they were a good way to practice text analysis skills without the pressure of an essay. And the format of a rough/final essay draft helped.
Weekly commonplace entries, 1 essay and 1 revision, 1 final take home exam; the professor made sure to stay on topic for the lectures, following reading questions she gave out prior; super nice prof, readings were manageable within 40–60 pages
I think the discussions really helped because we would go section by section and unpack the language and concepts.
We spent a lot of time discussing the readings. Whatever sections we would discuss definitely added depth to my understanding. However, we would cover a 40–60 page reading in one class, which left not enough time to dig into what were very complex texts (that is partially just the nature of the quarter system, though).
the group discussions elucidated important perspectives of the works that I had not previously considered
The discussions in class were very helpful and enhanced my understanding of the content.
The discussions were helpful in helping me gain a deeper understanding of the reading, especially when we were working with more difficult/convoluted texts.
The discussions were a key piece to my learning as if I was confused from the reading before it would be clarified the next class in discussion.
The commonplace book assignments and reading questions before class, as well as close reading activities during class helped me to better explore the text and link it to my writing. The writing seminars were also very helpful.
The highly discussion-based nature of the class allows for a fun way to walk through the thought processes of the authors in a multi-faceted and logical manner.

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.65	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	23.53%	70.59%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.29	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	11.76%	47.06%	41.18%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.12	4.00	0.00%	5.88%	11.76%	47.06%	35.29%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.29	4.00	5.88%	0.00%	0.00%	47.06%	47.06%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.35	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	52.94%	41.18%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.29	5.00	0.00%	11.76%	5.88%	23.53%	58.82%
I felt respected in this class.	4.65	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	35.29%	64.71%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.35	4.00	0.00%	5.88%	0.00%	47.06%	47.06%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
Being prepared for class and doing the reading is critical in order to benefiting from this class and doing well
Very good class, the professor was very available during office hours and gave very useful feedback on the essays.
The final essay was graded pretty harshly and I didn't think the guidelines of the assignment were specific enough for students to know what they should do in order to receive a good grade.
N/A
Professor is wonderful. Incredibly kind, thoughtful, and an entertaining lecturer.

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	0.00%	100.00%
Anyone interested in the topic	11.76%	88.24%

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

Comments
Prof. Brown's approach worked well – pre class assignments and readings were relevant to discussions and group activities in class. Essays were slightly out of sync with the readings (we didn't have a chance to read Machiavelli before our final essay). There also is a take home final.
Using questions to guide group discussions
Professor Brown led good discussions and had a good balance of class discussion and group work; the work load was reasonable (~30 pages of reading from challenging texts per class)
Feedback
Prof. Brown's really good at taking analysis from students and orienting the discussion to important parts of the text. She asks thought provoking questions so even though the class is mostly student discussion, you can still gain a lot from her input to the conversation
Keeping everyone on track and not letting them get ahead
I think generally her facilitation of discussions really helped me learn more about the text
Professor Brown is very knowledgeable on these subjects and would provide great insights in class. If someone had a question she couldn't answer in class, she would follow up with a comprehensive response via canvas. She also provides reading questions.
Office hours helped me a lot when it came to writing my essay
She was able to facilitate discussions very well. The books we studied were related to each other which made discussions even easier.
Very interesting discussions that elucidated the topics well.
The instructor's insight in each text contributed the most. When a peer made a point she would elaborate on it and make it clearer.
The difficult questions and engagement with specific textual evidence helped me to better develop my arguments and thoughts about the material.
Professor Brown posed questions, both to the class and to individuals where contributions were made. I think this allowed to students to figure out their own interpretations and then come inductively to the commonly-accepted one.

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
Allow a little more freedom in the prompt for the essay (allow more textual examples than two topics in a single text to support our claim)
Letting the students take control of discussions more often
I think sometimes I found that I needed a little extra support in some of the books.
In a perfect world, I would prefer shorter readings followed by deeper discussions.
I think that it would be helpful if Julia could outline modes of success in the grading process in more detail.
Reduce the time spent on the republic to have more time for other authors.
The instructor could possibly include visual tools like videos to have a more interactive class.
I can't think of anything that could be better about this course.
Nothing in my opinion.

The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.76	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	23.53%	76.47%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.14	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	17.65%	35.29%	29.41%	17.65%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.59	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	41.18%	58.82%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.06	4.00	0.00%	5.88%	11.76%	52.94%	29.41%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.47	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	52.94%	47.06%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.35	4.00	0.00%	5.88%	0.00%	47.06%	47.06%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.38	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	47.06%	41.18%	5.88%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.53	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	47.06%	52.94%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.53	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	35.29%	58.82%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.47	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	41.18%	52.94%	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
Sarah Jeffries – Sarah was really helpful in writing seminars, and available for help outside of that
Sarah
Sarah Jeffries.

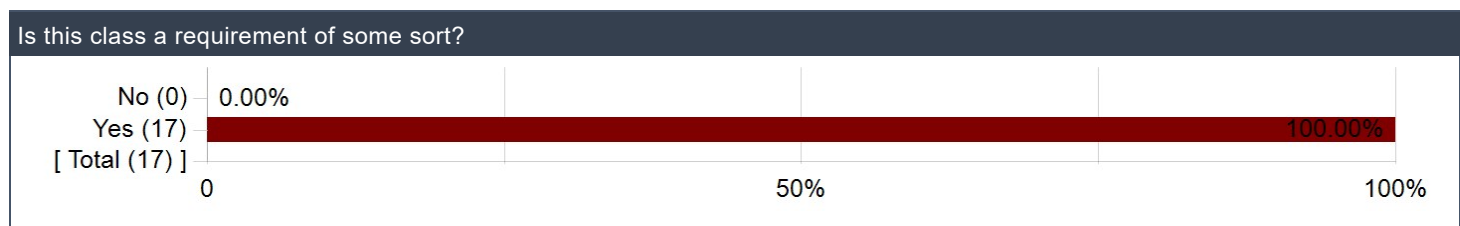
The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.25	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%	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.	4.25	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%	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.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	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%

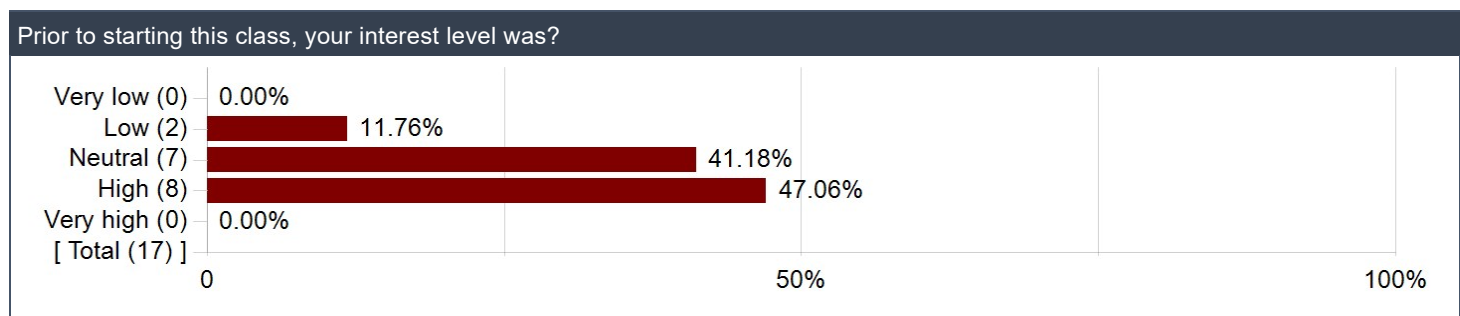
How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	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	3.57	3.00	0.00%	14.29%	50.00%	0.00%	35.71%	0.00%

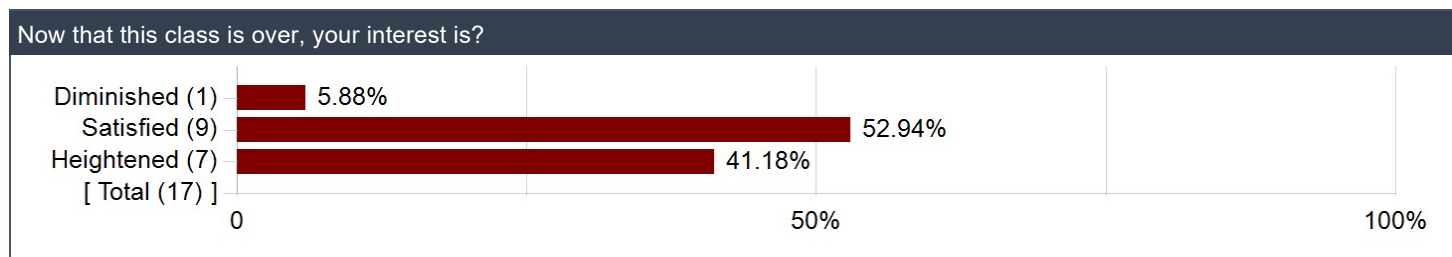
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



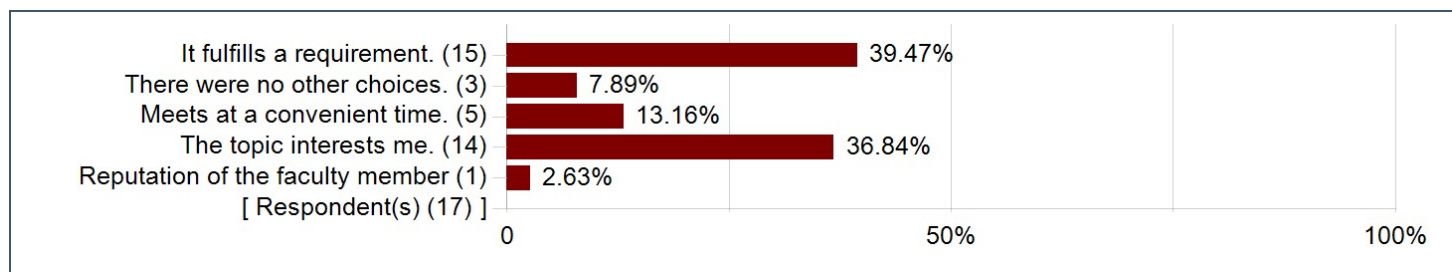
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



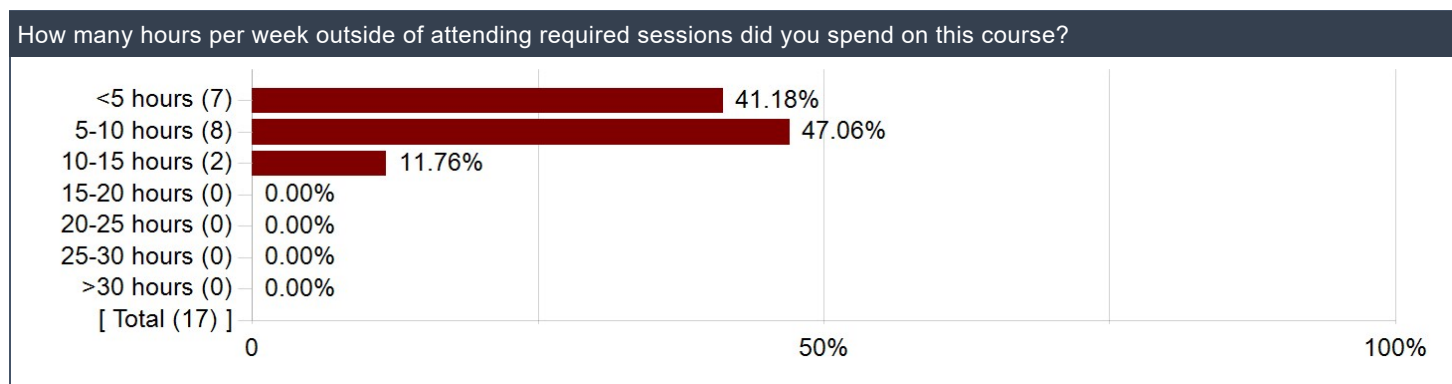
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



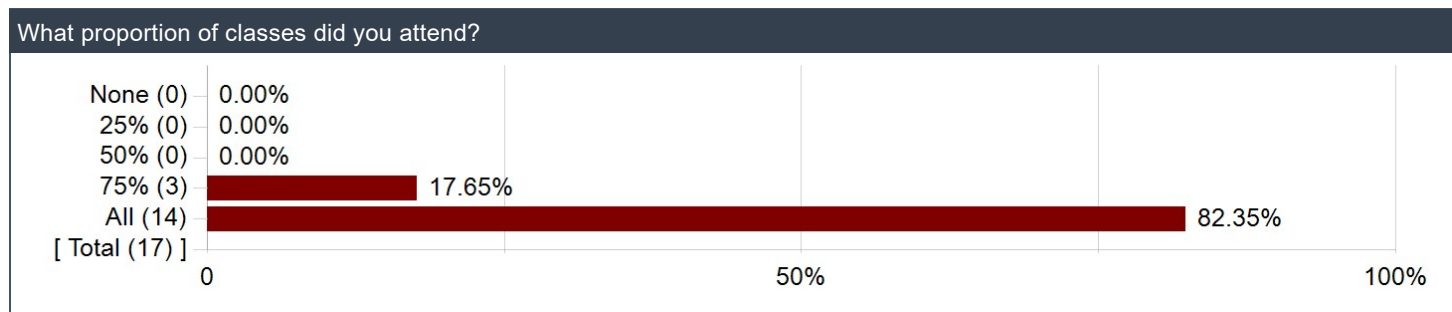
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



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
It's fine – if you did well in HUM, there shouldn't be any particular issues unless you hate philosophy.
Very dense classical texts make it quite difficult to understand
Completely manageable, easier than hum, although keeping track of each authors philosophy and how they interact with each other can get tedious
I've read dense texts and philosophy in the past but the rigor of this course was still a challenge but not too bad
Difficult, especially because of the long readings
the readings are very dense and very different from anything I have read before (some were very focused on religious perspectives)
I took HBC and a lot of the themes brought up in this class related back to HBC which I enjoyed. I also found that the writing style I used for both classes was quite similar
It was manageable, specially if you did Hume on a similar topic.
The course itself was pretty manageable, though the readings were sometimes hard to understand. The essays were harder.
I had no prior experience regarding the topics in this class.