NEHC 20014 1, CLCV 21722 1, HIST 25602 1 - Ancient Empires IV - Instructor(s): Mehrnoush Soroush

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

Number Enrolled: **32**
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: **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
Persian Empire from Beginning to End
An overview of how the Achaemenid came into power, how they sustained that power, and the legacy they left on the world.
Learned about the Achaemenid empire and why it's considered a pretty important empire amongst the numerous ones available.
History of the Achaemenid Empire.
I learned what is essentially the entire history of the Achaemenid empire! I learned a lot of useful skills as far as analysis of sculpture art and inscriptions.
I learned generally about the Achaemenids.
achaemenid
A good understanding of the Achaemenid Empire, including important rulers, royal art/ideology/administration, and its rise and fall.
The full span of Achaemenid history, including the dynastic history, the early setting of Persia, the reigns of Cyrus II and Darius I, the art and architecture of Achaemenid archaeological sites, and the happenings of the late empire, up to its fall at the hands of Alexander.
I learned about the ancient Achaemenid empire and its impact on today's society as well as specific kings, dates, events.

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

Comments
Readings were helpful for essays
Lectures were great and the quizzes were helpful to make sure we paid attention, while graded kindly enough to make sure there was room for error
The lectures were very interesting. The slides are not the most comprehensive so it is important that you listen carefully and take notes. I find the end of lecture quizzes useful to prepare for the midterm and finals, and as long as you pay attention, and participate during class you should get full marks as the quizzes are graded very lightly. We have two writing assignment (a long essay and a short museum object research), and in retrospect I feel that it would have been better for me to have attended office hours to discuss the two assignments as Prof. Soroush's expectations are not the most clear (especially when it comes to the museum object paper). She does allow for you to resubmit your paper and get it regraded after you have gotten the first grade and feedback which is nice, but you might feel a bit frustrated after you receive your initial feedback due to misunderstanding what was expected of you.
Lectures helped a lot.
Lectures are great but best supplemented by readings (because we often run out of time). Quiz at the end of almost every lecture, which actually incentivized me to do readings properly. I really like our two visits to ISAC – learned a lot!
Lectures accounted for all of the content that was tested. They were clearly organized, but sometimes just due to questions that were raised or discussion we ended up rushing or not being able to cover all that was planned for the day.
The lectures were great. She gave us quizzes at the end of each class and I thought they contributed immensely to my learning.
lecture slides were fine. Lectures weren't the best, but the daily quizzes were honestly really good since it is low stakes and tests me on my knowledge and makes studying for midterms and finals really easy.
Lectures and readings contributed to my learning.
The lectures were engaging and followed Prof. Soroush's slides.
The lectures were very important and helped me learn.

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.18	4.00	0.00%	9.09%	0.00%	54.55%	36.36%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.36	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	63.64%	36.36%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	3.73	4.00	0.00%	27.27%	9.09%	27.27%	36.36%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.36	5.00	0.00%	9.09%	0.00%	36.36%	54.55%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.45	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	54.55%	45.45%
I felt respected in this class.	4.64	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	36.36%	63.64%
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
Professor Soroush is amazing bro. She has an extreme late policy, but is super kind if you explain yourself. She cares about making sure you know the material and makes it easy to get a good grade
This was a great course and I learned so much!

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	0.00%	100.00%
Anyone interested in the topic	8.33%	91.67%

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

Comments
The end of class quizzes were useful for studying
Lectures and slides were very well put together
I think it is how passionate Prof. Soroush is about the topic, and the fact that she is a very effective lecturer.
Lectures helped a ton and the small field trips to the ISAC museum were super useful in putting into perspective the Achaemenid empire.
Great lectures! I also appreciate the way Prof Soroush encourages us to speak up, because some of us asked really good questions and prompted Prof Soroush to go on interesting detours (even though that means running out of time at the end).
Her lectures.
daily quiz
Highly, highly available.
Professor Soroush gave clear lectures and answered all of our questions. She is so nice and I loved having her as a professor!
The lectures were packed with content, and I mostly learned from her slides.
I think the lectures were very helpful.

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
I think the first paper was graded too harshly, and the class average was a 73.
I would like a more detailed rubric for the written assignments.
Kinda niche but maybe for the map quizzes, papers, and exams, they couldve been a lot more clearer with what was to be expected on them, especially the papers. Maybe having an example paper template to follow would help with trying to figure out what kind of paper the instructor wanted.
Maybe it's just me but I feel like guidelines for the response paper and object research paper can be clearer. Also I understand that quiz questions are sometimes reused, but it would really help studying for the midterm/final if we have standard response guides (for instance, I found the Lec 3, 4, 6 response guides really helpful while studying for the midterm).
I think having a clearer rubric/expectation for examinations and written assignments could be more helpful.
Nothing
make lectures more engaging
Nothing!
The standards for success on essays could be slightly clearer
I think that the writing assignments were sometimes unclear and I had to fix my essays.

The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	45.45%	54.55%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	45.45%	54.55%	0.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.36	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	45.45%	45.45%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	45.45%	54.55%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.45	5.00	0.00%	9.09%	0.00%	27.27%	63.64%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.36	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	45.45%	45.45%	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.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	45.45%	54.55%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	45.45%	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
Our TA was Samar. I did not have many contact with Samar, so I have little experience to provide an evaluation.
Summer.
Summer Neghadar. Most of the lecture content was delivered by Dr. Soroush, but she was still engaged in class discussion and would provide interesting and valuable knowledge. She gave very helpful and diligent feedback.
Samar Negahdar. She did a great job and provided helpful feedback on my assignments!

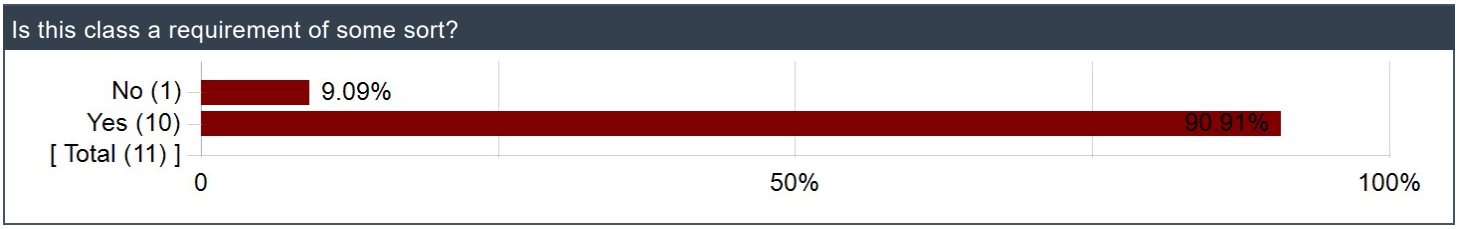
The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.67	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	40.00%	40.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	4.67	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	40.00%	40.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	60.00%
Helped you succeed in the class.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	60.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	60.00%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.67	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	40.00%	40.00%

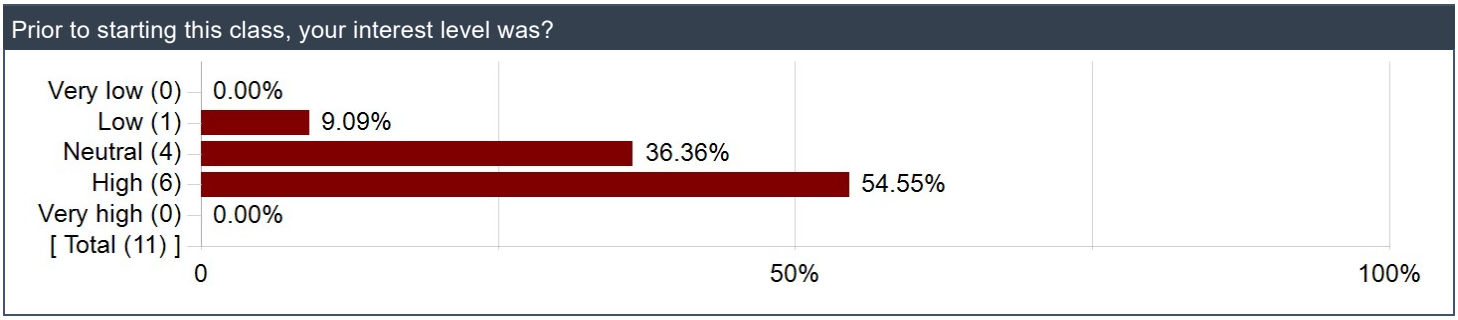
How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	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	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
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	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

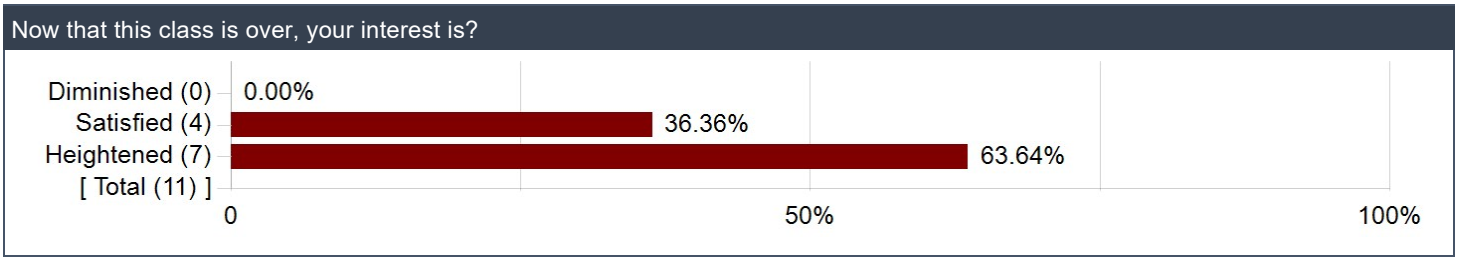
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



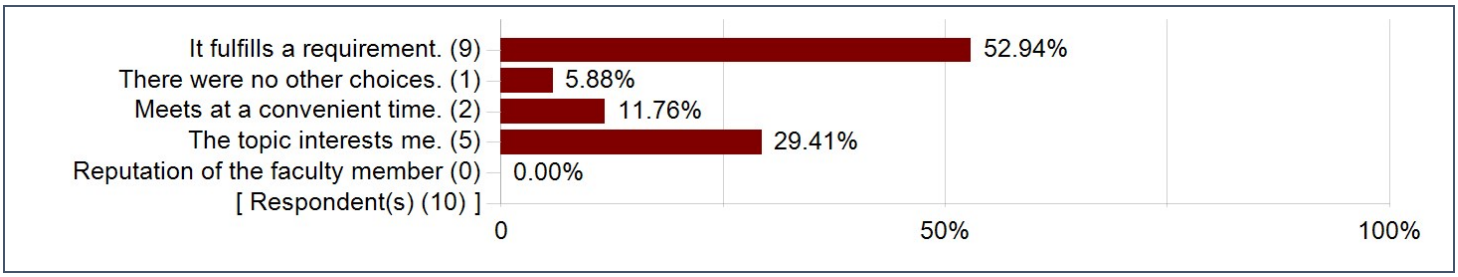
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



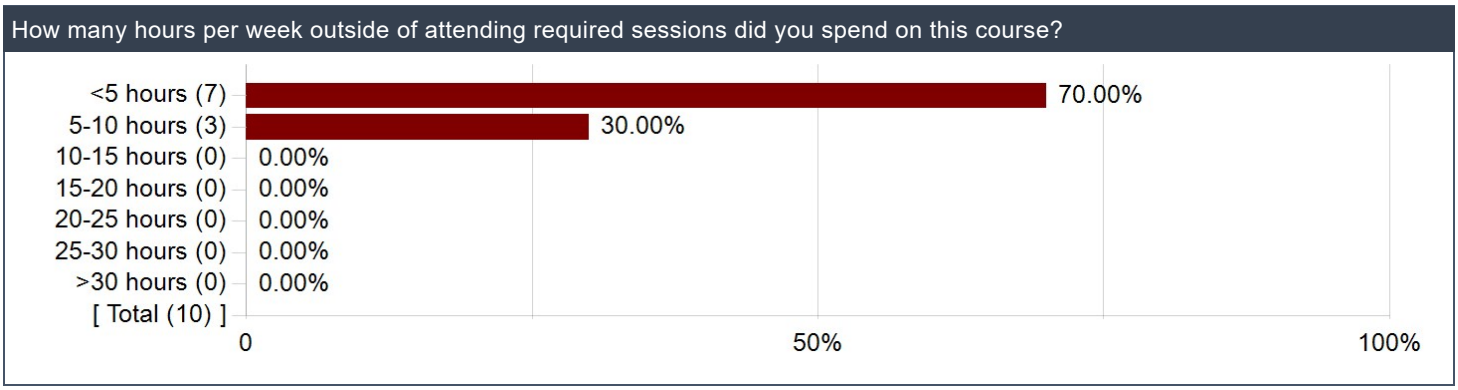
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



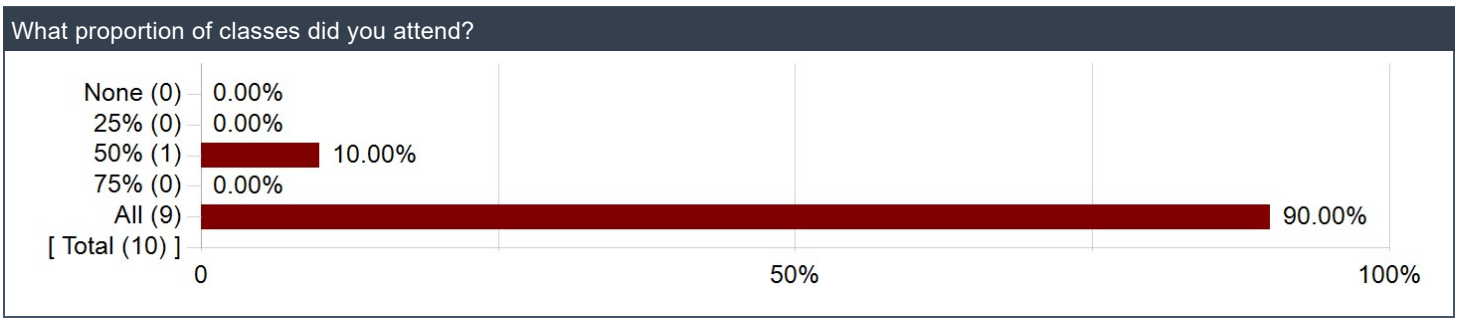
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



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
This class might be more work that your typical CIV class and includes a lot of memorization, but if you are willing to put the work in you will be able to get a great grade fairly easily.
It was a moderate class. You need to put in effort to do well, but nothing extreme. As long as you pay attention and take notes in lectures you should be fine.
No prior experience needed, though having taken other courses in the sequence (for me, Sumerians and Akkadians) helped make interesting connections.
This course is very easy, rewarding, and interesting if you are willing to diligently attend class and implement feedback on written assignments. I have a prior personal interest in the course topic, but I think Dr. Souroush makes the content interesting and accessible to people of all backgrounds.
I have no background in Persian history but the class was very doable as long as you went to all the lectures and followed along.
Very accessible class for students with no background knowledge.
Not difficult
This was not too difficult given I had no prior knowledge of the achaemenid empire.

1. What are your thoughts on the response paper assignment? Looking back, do you regret having this assignment, or do you believe it contributes to your learning process? If you think it was a helpful assignment, do you have any suggestions for improving the instructions?

Comments
I think the response paper was graded a little too harshly considering the class average, but it was enjoyable to write.
I thought that it was a great idea to have this assignment to test our knowledge of the content in an essay format, rather than only focusing on tests and quizzes. The feedback on the 1st attempt was super useful as well and allowed me to get a good score on my 2nd attempt.
I quite like it. It really pushed me to read deeper into the readings, and think more critically about Cyrus as a historical figure. I found the feedbacks useful.
I liked the response paper but when I received my grade back I was a bit confused as to what the instructor wanted out of the paper. The prompt was a bit unclear, and so while I was writing my paper I thought it was a strong paper but the grade said otherwise. Maybe including an example paper would help a lot.
I think it was a helpful assignment! One difficulty I encountered during the assignment is that the goal of the assignment was to push us to read primary sources and make inferences, but given my nonexistent background, I was constantly doubting how valid my inferences were (and I feel like this is a valid concern because it did turn out one of my smaller arguments was not substantiated). I really appreciated the in–class reading of Cyrus Cylinder, which helped a lot. I understand there are too many sources to go through all of them in class though, so this is just some thoughts, not suggestions :)
I think the response paper was helpful, as it required an engagement with a variety of sources/perspectives to craft a valid, working argument.
The response paper assignments were expected as in any CIV class. Prof. Soroush gave constructive feedback and a chance to resubmit, which I though was a great way to improve.
It was a good assignment, but I think it was unclear on what exactly the professor wanted. I don't think the problem was with the instructions, since they were clear, but with the prompt itself. I think a more detailed prompt talking about what response was needed would have helped students.
I thought it was a good assignment. It helped me to think about the beginning of the Achaemenid Empire, and I felt it was well timed to get me more invested in the class material.
I thought the response paper was a useful assignment – I enjoyed the opportunity to expand upon the content learnt in class. I thought the standards for what made an A–grade essay were slightly unclear.
I think that the response paper was very important to my learning of the Cyrus Cylinder so I do not regret it. I wish the paper guidelines were described more clearly initially.

2. What are your thoughts on the museum object assignment? Looking back, do you regret having this assignment, or do you believe it contributes to your learning process? If you think it was a helpful assignment, do you have any suggestions for improving the instructions?

Comments
Loved this paper, and it was incredibly fun and interactive.
Very interesting! The assignment fit perfectly in the context of museum visits and allowed us to link the museum objects to course content.
I enjoyed it, but I feel like the word constraint made it quite hard to fulfill all the elements outlined in the rubric. I also would have preferred a more detailed grading rubric so I know what a good paper would look like for such an assignment.
Same things as the response paper, having an example to follow would help.
I love the two visits to ISAC, and I appreciate the museum object assignment because it gave me a chance to explore the Persian gallery properly! I also think the paper topic proposal a week before is a very good idea. The concern about making wrong inferences holds, but to a much less extent.
I greatly enjoyed the museum object assignment, it reminds me of assignments in art history classes I have taken. I think this was a useful assignment, it required us students to engage more critically with the ideas of Royal Achaemenid Ideology in artwork in a specialized setting. Rather than recall and list back elements of a certain example from class, we had to analyze the chosen object ourselves.
The museum object assignment was a great way to apply the things we learnt in class, and going to the ISAC museum was very helpful in gaining more insight on what we learnt in class.
It was a fine assignment but i think we didn't have enough resources in our readings (only in lecture slides) to do detailed analysis. I had to be really careful and look through all the readings to find one or two pieces of evidence that didn't just come from the lecture slides. Maybe readings should be ore streamlined or encouraged since it didn't feel like readings were needed when the lecture talked about completely different things or just summarized the readings for us.
I found this assignment very helpful in learning more about the Achaemenid royal art program. I would definitely keep this assignment in the future.
I thought the museum object paper was a fun chance to show the connections between the physical objects in the ISAC's collection of Achaemenid artifacts and the content we learned in class. Again, I'd hoped for a clearer standard as to what made an A–grade paper.
I did not think that this was super necessary. Also the guidelines were not that clear. Maybe if the due date was not during thanksgiving it would've helped.