



SOSC 12500 27 - Self, Culture, and Society II - Instructor(s): Omar Safadi

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

Number Enrolled: **19**

Number of Responses: **15**

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 got to dive into how we as individuals fit into society, looking at all sorts of stuff like religion, sex, gender, race, and even how politics can make us come together or split us apart. We checked out ideas from some heavy hitters like Durkheim and Freud to figure out why we stick with our groups and how all these big concepts shape who we are and who we hang with.
Theories about the relationship between the individual and the group
Learned about the classics
Learned skills in close reading.
Discussions of identity and culture
The confidence to approach intimidating texts and an effective way to structure a paper and construct an argument.
Read and analyzed Durkheim, de Beauvoir, Freud, Khaldun, and Fanon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Group formation and the origins of religious life according to Durkheim –Women's subjection (Beauvoir) –The psychology of the colonized (Fanon) –Origins of psychiatry (Freud) –Group aggression and defense (Ibn Khaldun)

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

Comments
Lectures were where we learned everything.
In class discussion
The quick review of the reading/authors background at the start of class was somewhat helpful.
Seminars were great for talking about material
The discussion of this course is really helpful. We dig deep into specific texts and the instructor brings in outside information that connects well with the course readings.
Discussions were helpful. I enjoyed lecture
Course was structured by 30% participation, 30% midterm, 40% final, though Omar changed it halfway through the quarter so that whichever paper scored higher is the one that would count for both the midterm and final grade.
Discussions mainly contributed to my learning and to improving my understanding of the texts
Papers provided the opportunity to make connections and synthesize between texts, and to connect to real-world examples

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.36	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	35.71%	50.00%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	3.71	4.00	0.00%	14.29%	14.29%	57.14%	14.29%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	3.07	3.00	7.14%	28.57%	21.43%	35.71%	7.14%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	3.50	4.00	7.14%	7.14%	28.57%	42.86%	14.29%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	3.43	3.00	0.00%	7.14%	50.00%	35.71%	7.14%
My work was evaluated fairly.	3.36	3.50	7.14%	14.29%	28.57%	35.71%	14.29%
I felt respected in this class.	3.21	3.50	7.14%	14.29%	28.57%	50.00%	0.00%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	3.21	3.00	7.14%	7.14%	42.86%	42.86%	0.00%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
Have not received feedback on first assignment yet but just turned it in
Prof was rude and mean. Made everything about homosexuality. I mean EVERYTHING. We would be reading books about feminism, and he would continuously be relating it to his experience as a gay MAN. Hello?? It felt so disrespectful. He confused the Indian girls in our class probably three times, calling them all Rhea once. He was rude and, if he disagreed with your point, would diminish your thoughts in front of the rest of the class. He assumed everyone around him agreed with his political views, which, as someone more right-leaning, made me feel quite uncomfortable. He fully compared Trump to Hitler?? Which I feel is disrespectful to the entire Jewish community. He plays favorites in class and acts like his extremely hot takes are the truth. There was a whole class period where he basically was saying all men in frats are r*****. I could go on and on about how unenjoyable he made the environment of this class. He's cold, not an understanding or empathetic person, and way too young to be acting like he's so above the rest of the students. His emails are rude, he WILL NOT give extensions, which I always hate when profs say they won't because like what if i get hit by a car or something??? Overall, he's just mean. That's the best way I can describe him.
n/a
The instructor was not always responsive to student feedback, making engaging in certain class discussions difficult, but his personal reflections on the material helped contextualize it to contemporary issues.
The professor is well intentioned and knows plenty about gender and sexuality.
Self, Culture, and Society II is a really great course. I highly recommend taking Self if you can, but sosc is a core that can be make-or-break based on the prof, and this prof broke it. Take this course, but not with Omar Safadi
I think that the course is designed well thematically as the assignments clearly connected with each other

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	7.69%	92.31%
Anyone interested in the topic	23.08%	76.92%

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

Comments
I guess the lectures since thats all we did.
In-class discussion
literally nothing
The instructor is very passionate and is very welcoming to all participation in the class.
Recaps of previous discussions at the start of subsequent classes helped to keep notes organized and to emphasize important discussions
His recaps
He lead incredibly engaging discussions and made me invested in a course and in texts in a way that I did not expect to be. Through connecting class discussions to his line of research and to modern day events, he made the texts come to life and encouraged me to really dive into them.
Omar retaught us The Muqqadimah with a better translation, and that was immensely helpful to understanding how Khaldun thinks and how the argument works.
Providing introductions to authors and readings in class was really helpful to situate the readings in context

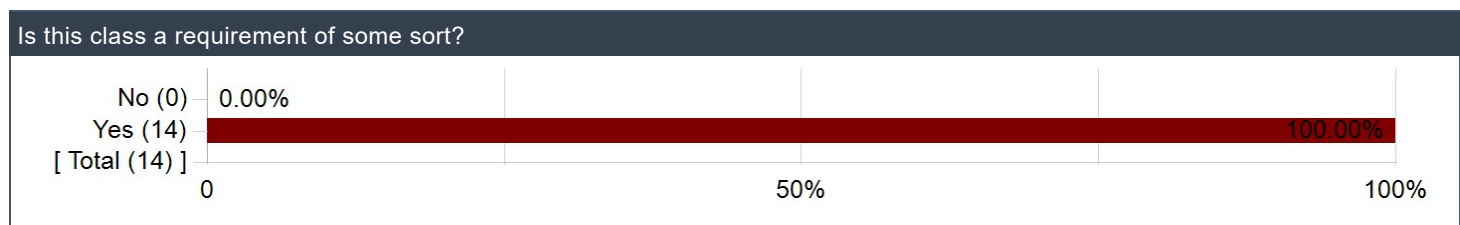
What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
There were moments where connections made by the instructor did not always hold relevance.
More discussion and less lecture
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– not be rude–not make everything about himself–not make class discussions about him showing off how smart HE was, but actually allowing students to talk–be more understanding–email more nicely–make the feminist discussion about women's struggles, not man's
The instructor could leads more discussions and conversations among the students.
Introducing small group discussions to encourage more students to contribute to class discussions
I wish he was more textual and less focused on his thesis or individual experiences. It felt as though the plethora of things he worked on later as a phd candidate influenced his teachings.
Given that this was the professor's first time teaching, I think the teaching overall was effective and engaging but there were some spots where he could have improved. I think one of those places was in communication. Occasionally, the professor came off a little intimidating and less approachable, but I do think the instructor was genuine and well-intentioned. I would recommend remembering that there is a power dynamic that exists between students and professors, and sometimes this power dynamic can heighten the way communication comes across and make things feel more antagonistic than they are intentioned to be. That being said, when speaking one-on-one with the professor, it is clear that he is genuinely invested in his students and does mean well, and so I would guess that this miscommunication was a product of this being a first teaching experience.
This was the first time that Omar has taught by himself, and it was very clear in the way he taught this class. Omar did not teach the texts; he argued them as though they were his dissertation. In fact, he treated the entire class like his own personal thesis defense and it was his job to take us through the texts as they relate to him and his research alone. There were at least two texts added to our syllabus that shouldn't have been there because he wanted to read them for his own research, and to fit them in, he skipped over important parts in other books. For example, we read Freud's Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, of which I believe we are the only Self section to do so. To fit it in, we had to skim Freud's Introductory Lectures, which means we missed a key part of his analysis that other classes covered: we talked about the love drive, but not the fear drive, and never the difference between ego and id. Additionally, if the discussion strayed too far from people, places, philosophers, or concepts he personally didn't know that much about or liked, he shut us down. He contradicted himself sometimes across classes (this applies to assignments too– Omar gave us very specific directions for our midterm and then downgraded many of us for completely unrelated and unmentioned expectations) or sometimes taught entirely wrong concepts to fit his version of the texts. Often times, he would simply lecture us on the texts for the last 10–15 minutes of class instead of having us discuss the sections we didn't get to, leaving no room for questions, comments, or other interpretations. Even during regular discussion, he would often dismiss our ideas wholesale, ignore us, or interrupt us while we were making our points if they disagreed with his point of view. Overall, I did not feel that my interpretations or comments were respected, and it's up in the air if I was respected as a student at all. Throughout the quarter, I noticed that other people commented the same to me or to other students in the class, and also that class participation went down as less–outspoken students felt less confident in their ability to match Omar's interpretation or less willing to contradict him. Omar made the class not just all about his thesis, but all about him. He made a point to fixate on any mention of sex or homosexuality in the texts, which was sometimes helpful and mostly us just talking about one or two throwaway sentences not critical to the author's argument. He also brought up his sexuality completely unrelated to our discussion multiple times a session, anywhere between 3–15 per class. As well as that, one of our first classes, he veered the topic directly into sexual assault and rape without warning or with no connections to any of the readings because he was researching sexual assault and rape, and only apologized hours after the fact when someone brought it to his attention after class had ended. After that class, he would sometimes give us trigger warnings for texts, but they were sporadic and did not cover all of the things that we needed trigger warnings for. I should note that I am not of the opinion that we needed trigger warnings for these texts, but I do believe that if you're going to give trigger warnings, they should be applied consistently. Omar appeared to pick and choose them based on what would trigger him, not us. In the classroom, he would often also detour the conversation to point out people who were laughing, may have appeared to be on their computers doing something unrelated to the course, or even sharing glances because he found it distracting, not because they were actually disrupting the class. Overall, I was disappointed by the way Omar taught the class. I, along with many others, was very excited for this quarter's readings, but Omar has reduced my interest in discussing the texts in class and even reading them in the first place. I don't say all of this out of malice, but out of the genuine hope that Omar will learn to improve and, if he doesn't, that students don't take classes with him. He is a very smart individual who was genuinely very passionate about teaching Self. However, as a Core class meant to teach us how to read, write, interpret, and argue fundamental texts on social theory, he did not do well. The only thing Omar taught me in this class was how to regurgitate points that would agree with his, not how to come to my own conclusions.
I think that the instructor could give more space for student participation as sometimes the entire class felt a bit more like a lecture I also think that the learning environment could be more actively cultivated as a welcoming space

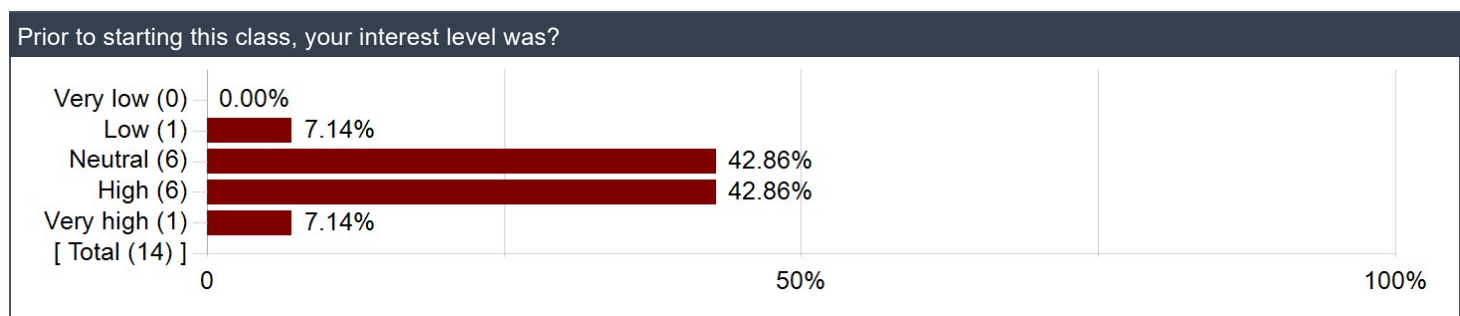
The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	3.79	4.00	0.00%	7.14%	14.29%	71.43%	7.14%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	3.57	4.00	7.14%	7.14%	14.29%	64.29%	7.14%	0.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	3.36	4.00	7.14%	14.29%	21.43%	50.00%	7.14%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	3.46	4.00	7.69%	15.38%	7.69%	61.54%	7.69%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.08	4.00	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	53.85%	30.77%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	3.54	4.00	7.69%	7.69%	23.08%	46.15%	15.38%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	3.85	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	84.62%	0.00%	0.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	3.25	4.00	15.38%	7.69%	7.69%	61.54%	0.00%	7.69%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	3.33	4.00	8.33%	8.33%	25.00%	58.33%	0.00%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	3.42	4.00	8.33%	8.33%	25.00%	50.00%	8.33%	0.00%

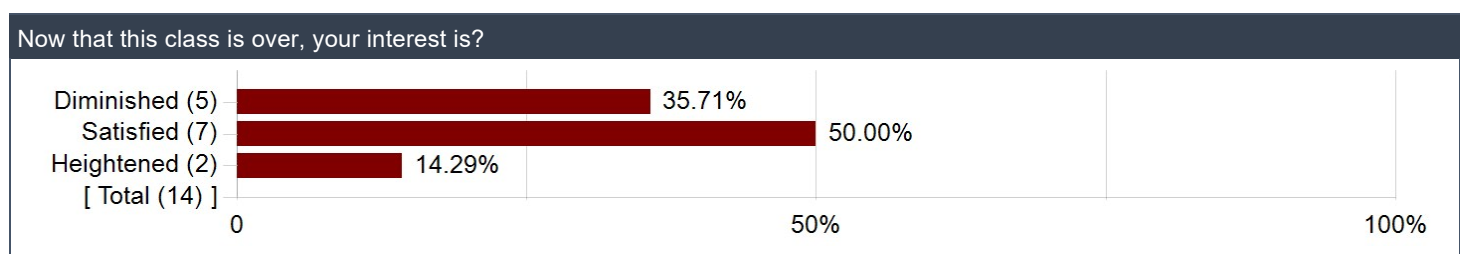
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



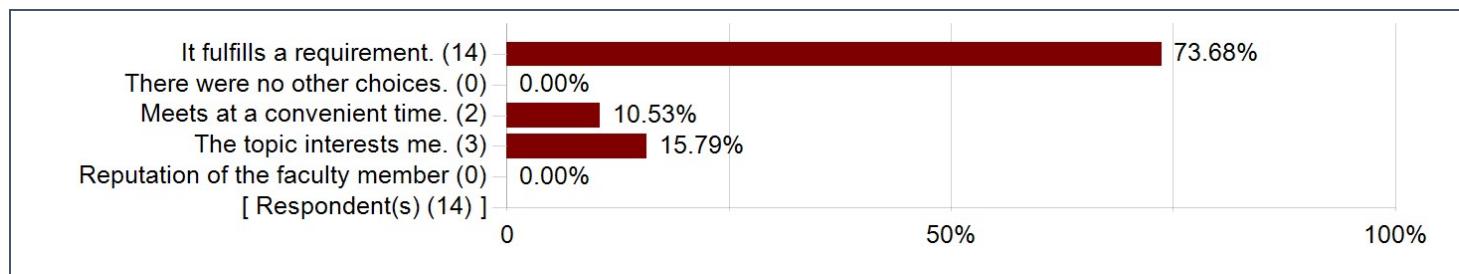
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



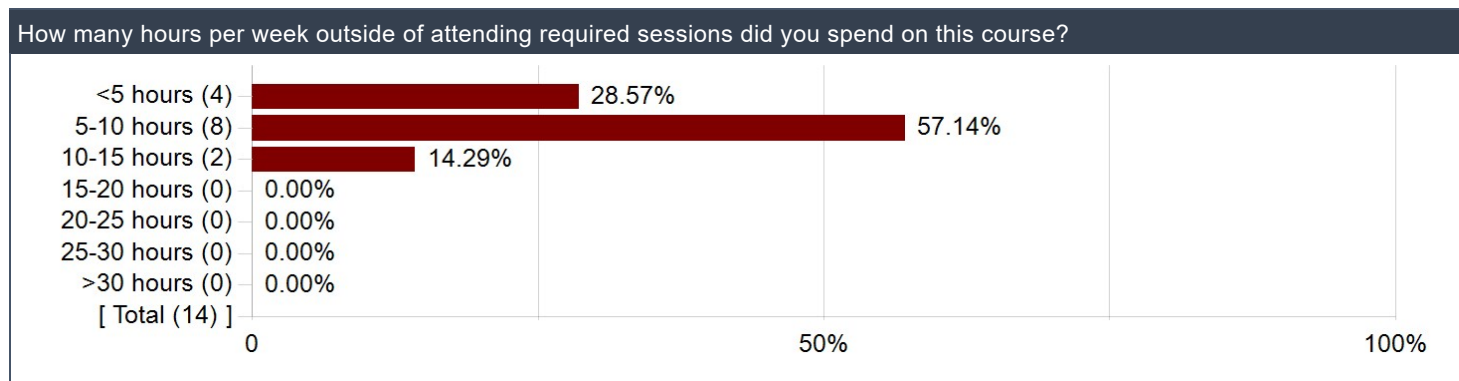
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



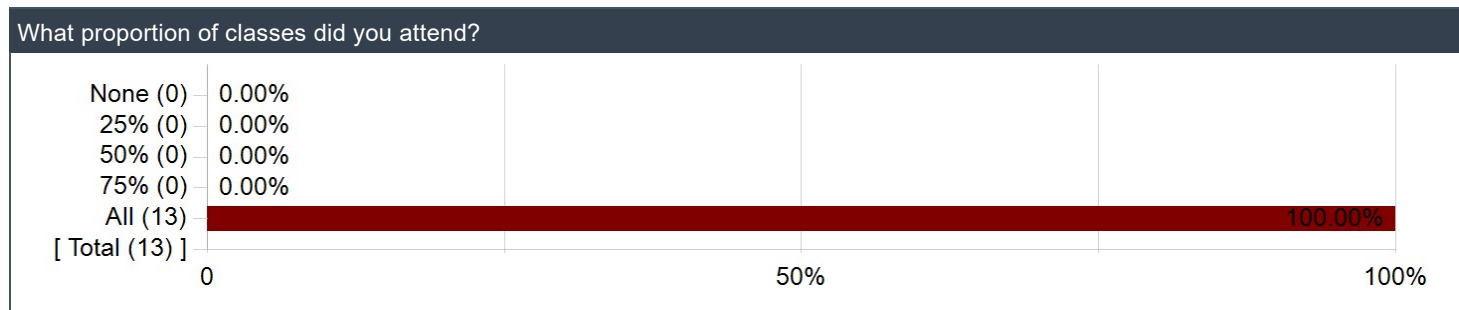
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



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
No background
Quite challenging of a grader
The instructor's aesthetic expectations for essays and delayed clarification on midterm requirements made producing satisfactory assignments difficult.
I've taken a fair amount of social theory classes, so I found this class fairly easy to manage. The most difficult part was managing the teacher, to be honest, not the course materials itself.
Moderate difficulty, but nothing I was unprepared to handle