



SOSC 12400 22 - Self, Culture, and Society I - Instructor(s) - Winston Berg

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

Number Enrolled: **16**

Number of Responses: **16**

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, January 31, 2025**

What are the most important things that you learned in this course? Please reflect on the knowledge and skills you gained.

Comments
Learned about society and social structures, economies, and philosophies relating thereto, reading selected works by Social Scientists/theorists including Ibn Khaldun, Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Hegel, Weber, Deleuze & Guattari, and more. Was really fascinating.
I learned about various social theories and theorists, such as Khaldun, Marx, and Smith. We learned not only about social theories but also about how to have conversation about abstract concepts.
This course helped me think intellectually and have conversations about difficult material. Our class often struggled with understanding the readings, so it was helpful to try to phrase the subject matters in ways that everyone could understand. I also think that this course helped me with my academic writing and feeling more confident.
How to critically analyze social theory, understand the different models that each thinker lays out, and think about the applications of their theories in real life
social theory – how societies are organized, read mostly Marx, Adam Smith, Weber, Khaldun, and some really weird/disturbing readings that made me feel really uncomfortable
in general, i think i got the most out of Smith, Marx, and Weber – towards the end of the quarter, it got so niche to the point where none of us really knew what was going on (or at least that's how i felt), and the discussion wasn't fruitful
I learned all about political economy and how to write effective essays.
Learning about how capitalism has started and evolved and about human nature (how people work together, etc)
How to handle rough readings.
We read Smith, Marx, and Weber as well as some interesting works by Deleuze and Guattari.
Political and social theories as well as an understanding of social science as a whole.
how to tackle challenging texts

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

Comments
Class lectures were very good—they were quite relaxed and more discussion-based, quite thought-provoking, and enjoyable. Great professor too. Readings were not over-the-top (usually only around 30-to-50 pages per session, so definitely not too much), and someone always "presents" that sessions' readings at the beginning of class anyway. Everyone definitely gets all the main points of the readings by the end of the session. Good conversation in class.
We had seminars in which we were able to discuss the readings in-depth, and gain a better understanding of the material through conversation with our peers.
I thought the lectures and how Winston explained things were very helpful so that I could understand the readings. I used this knowledge from lecture to be able to write my papers, which further enhanced my learning.
The class was structured mainly as a discussion, which was really helpful to hear different viewpoints on the text and how other people understood some of the more dense texts like Marx or Hegel
The discussions in class were well led and super enlightening.
Winston's explanation of hard texts made things much clearer.
All discussions
Listening to professor Berg analyze and breakdown texts was amazing, I wish he would do a bit more lecturing.
The discussions were always very interesting and engaging; Winston facilitated them really well and brought up interesting topics from the readings.
Discussions were most beneficial in understanding confusing readings and Winston pulling important sections from each reading in class for topics of discussion helped the material be more comprehensible.
I really enjoyed the class discussions

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.64	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	35.71%	64.29%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.57	5.00	0.00%	7.14%	0.00%	21.43%	71.43%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.57	5.00	0.00%	7.14%	0.00%	21.43%	71.43%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.71	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	14.29%	78.57%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.71	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	14.29%	78.57%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.79	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	78.57%
I felt respected in this class.	4.86	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	85.71%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.71	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	71.43%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
<p>Truly incredible course. Winston Berg is awesome! He's a pretty relaxed guy but knows exactly how to steer a conversation and deepen intellectual conversation, very engaging. I feel like I could listen to the guy talk forever!</p> <p>In terms of workload, it's really not terrible. As someone in STEM I have to say I am very happy I took this class, not because it's NOTHING but because it's just the right amount, and I think you can get out of it what you put in. If you decide you don't want to come to class, don't want to contribute etc, I'm sure you can still do OKAY. But that's also missing the point of the class, because I also feel like there's A LOT I took away from the class simply by attending lectures, even on the few times I didn't manage to get all of the readings done.</p>
<p>Loved this course! Professor Berg always made the classes super engaging and encouraged us to explain each thinker in our own words rather than using their specific terminology, which I think really helped me understand the texts better</p>
<p>prof is super chill – maybe a bit unorganized, but its very relaxed energy which i appreciated, especially as other classes and stuff got busier.</p> <p>i REALLY didn't like the readings at the end of the quarter, and that might be just me, but we started talking about psychoanalysis, schizophrenia and social theory with NO context. I feel like a content warning, or at least a brief on what psychoanalysis is might've been helpful, just to situate us in both the text itself, as well as where the authors are coming from.</p>
<p>It was fantastic! Definitely take Self with Professor Berg.</p>
<p>Great professor, approachable, and is good at connecting older texts to modern day ideas.</p>

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	0.00%	100.00%
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
The lectures contribute by far to your learning. Besides this, I spoke to the professor a bit, and I think some other people in the class also emailed Winston directly about some questions and had good conversation with him. The readings are good too.
The instructor made sure to add in information to the presentations to ensure there was a relative understanding of the works assigned. He also patiently further explained concepts that were unclear.
Winston is very good about breaking down the readings and explaining them so that we can understand the main arguments. In addition, I was unsure about what I wanted to write in my paper and he was very helpful in office hours. Winston is a great professor and I highly recommend taking Self with him.
Professor Berg is an amazing instructor!! At the beginning of each class, we would have a presentation by a classmate. It was always very helpful to center the discussion on the most important parts of the text, so I really appreciate this part of the teaching. Professor Berg always did a great job organizing the discussion, answering questions, making us think deeply about the texts, and encouraging us to talk about what we found the most interesting parts. He was really open to hearing everyone's opinions, which made the discussion more interesting and fun.
discussion is always really engaging – Professor Berg is really good at taking what you put out (even if not the most articulate) and being able to dig a bit deeper by asking follow up questions.
His explanation of hard to read texts.
Daily discussions about how theories from the readings can be seen in today's society — helped me understand the concepts the authors were talking about much better
Explanations of texts
His summaries of the texts that he had us prepare before class that he also added onto were very helpful in helping me understand the texts we were reading, particularly harder ones that I didn't understand on initial read as well.
Winston gave really helpful feedback on our essay drafts and led the discussions very well.
In class discussions led by Winston's reading of different excerpts from the reading helped keep the discussion flowing and was very beneficial in making sure everyone could contribute at least once a class.
Great discussions on topics and made topics relatable and understandable especially
he was very understanding of students and asked questions that facilitated critical thinking of the texts that we were reading

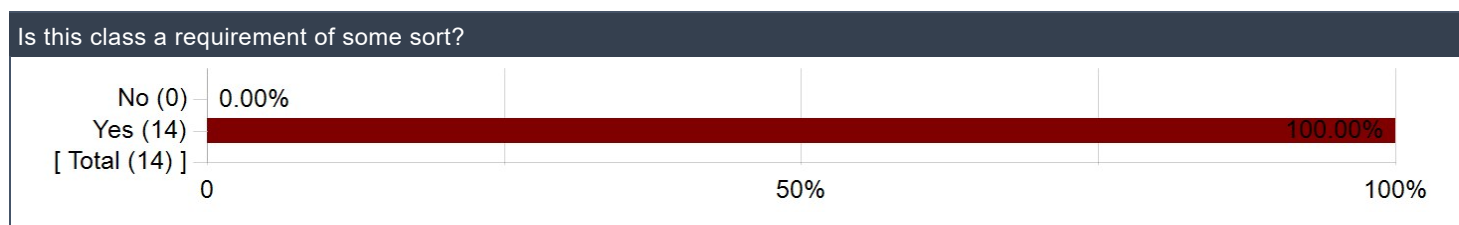
What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
Honestly not much. Perhaps putting some notes online or something? I don't even know if that is necessary, just going to the lectures gives you basically everything you need to know about the readings, and from there you can both write the essay and gain a deep understanding of relatively complex texts. Also Winston barely uses Canvas at all... I think it would be good if he would put the grades up on Canvas rather than via email so that we can gauge some level of our position in relation to the rest of the class. Just a possible suggestion.
N/A
N/A; everything was great!
its week 9 and i lowkey have no idea what my grade is for this class...i'm talking like only one assignment has been graded
More time to read.
I will say the discussions did jump around a lot based on what the class was interested in talking about so maybe having it more structured would be good in terms of what concepts from the books we should discuss
Lecture and give a bit more context of readings when assigning them
Nothing! Everything was perfect.
n/a
Nothing, great class structure and flow.

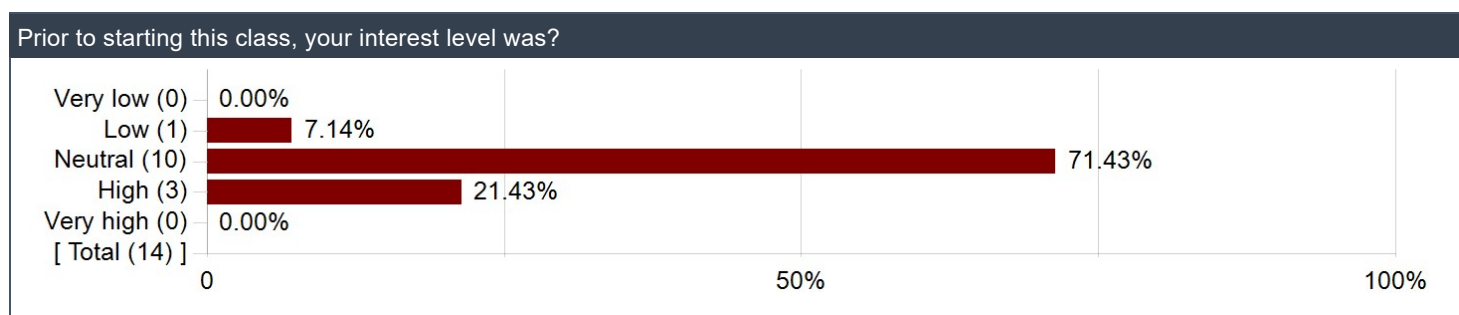
The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.57	5.00	0.00%	7.14%	0.00%	21.43%	71.43%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.69	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	64.29%	7.14%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.79	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	78.57%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.57	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	28.57%	64.29%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.64	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	35.71%	64.29%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.71	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	71.43%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.92	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	84.62%	7.69%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.71	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	71.43%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.93	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	92.86%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.86	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	85.71%	0.00%

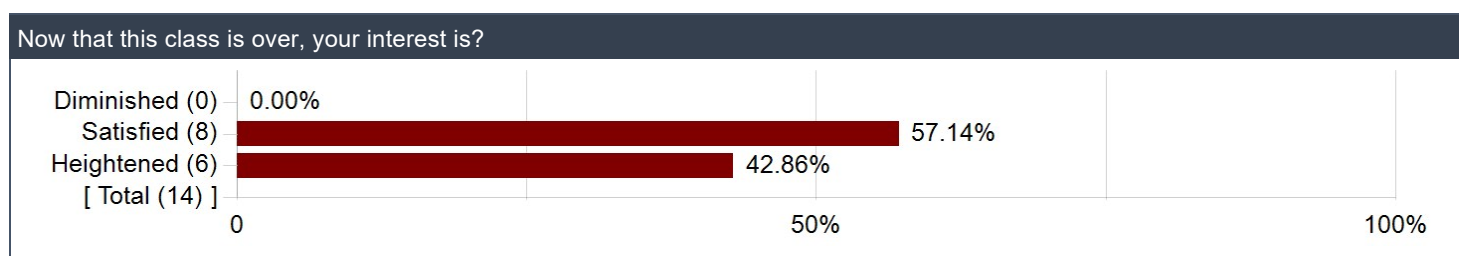
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



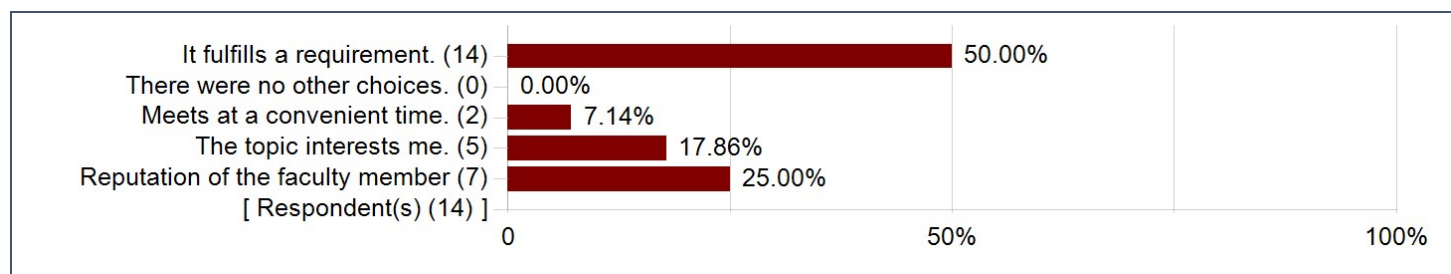
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



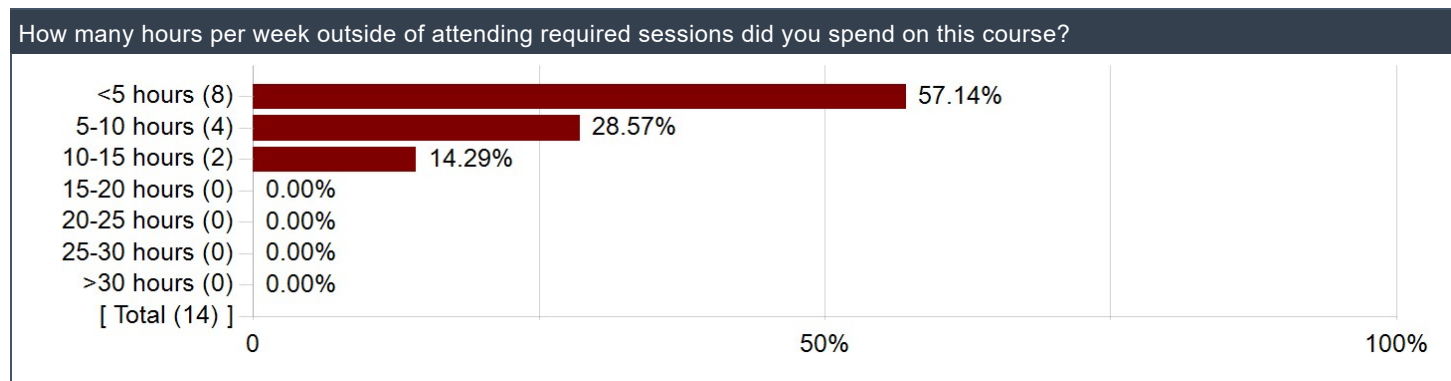
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



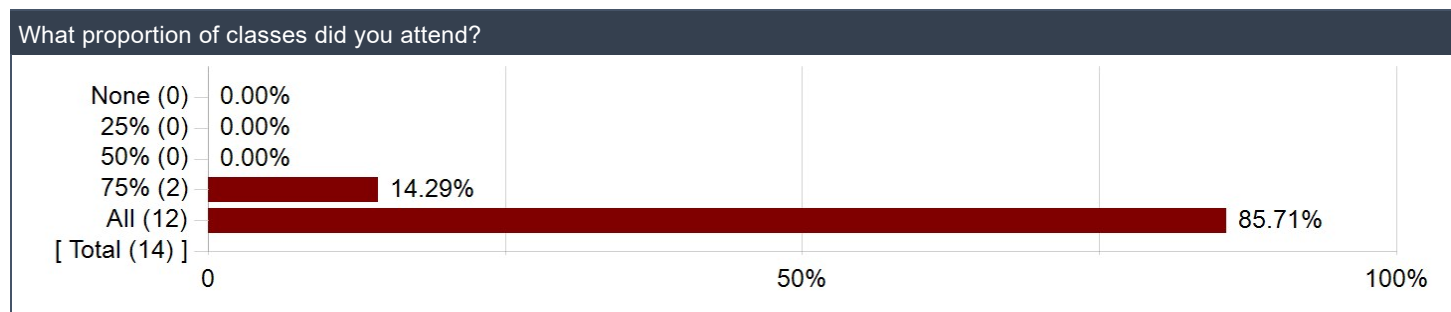
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



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
Really PERFECT level of difficulty. Couldn't ask for a better level — not too hard and not too easy, it's more about getting out what you put in.
The class was overall somewhat difficult, even as someone who has taken reading-intensive courses before. The length of the reading material was significantly condensed, which did make the reading more bearable, but the material itself is difficult to get through. However, that is to be expected from the material, and the professor really does work to make the content as understandable as possible.
I thought reading highly academic texts that were written a long time ago was difficult, but Winston made it more manageable.
Some of the texts were quite dense, but we were encouraged to do close readings and talk through the difficult parts of the text in class, so I feel it was very open to everyone regardless of prior experience in social theory
little to no experience reading "classical" social theory: found a lot of the earlier readings a bit more digestible, the Deleuze & Guattari was absolutely atrocious
Adequate
Readings were difficult but Berg was cognizant of that.
Some of the readings were challenging, but the class was very doable.