



HUMA 11600 16 - Philosophical Perspectives II - Instructor(s): Magnus Ferguson

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

Number Enrolled: **19**

Number of Responses: **9**

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
Descartes, Hume
Reading Descartes/Hume
I learned a new way of responding to a prompt because the prompts in this course were complex and much different to what I was used to but it helped improve my writing by opening it up to new skills.
I learned to reconstruct philosophical arguments, especially complicated and nuanced ones like Descartes' arguments in the Meditations. But I learned the value in doing that kind of work, because we get to think alongside the philosopher and share in their perplexity. It was pretty cool. But I also learned to not take these philosophers at face value and was able to question their arguments. We were able to pose objections to Descartes and poke holes at the premises that he constructed. Reading Hume after Descartes was mind-blowing because he questioned most of the philosophic traditions that we learned up until then, and it made me a little more skeptical of readings and principles that we covered in the fall like Plato's dialogues and Boethius' consolation.
Descartes, Hume, skepticism, proof of god
How to read and engage with a philosophical argument; the implications of various forms of skepticism; how to write about philosophy. We primarily read Descartes and Hume, and we had great discussions about what we can actually know and the nature of reality.

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

Comments
readings and discussions
Discussions were useful and stuff presented at the start of class helped
The seminars were very intriguing and really helped me understand the purpose of the course and the underlying meaning behind each text.
Class discussions really helped my understanding of the readings and gave life to them. Professor Ferguson assigned reading questions for homework, and if you did them you were really prepared to hold your own in these class discussions because he used them to guide the breakdown of the text. Everything from the reading questions to the historical context he used to prime us before discussion was very well thought-out and served a purpose in contributing to my learning.
In class discussions illuminated the text, and paper assignments made us walk through complex arguments made by the texts.
Professor Ferguson is a great facilitator of discussions — he strikes a great balance between getting his own point across and letting everyone contribute. He also takes everyone's contributions really seriously. The passage analyses and essays definitely helped me think through the implications of the readings and get more out of them.

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.44	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	11.11%	33.33%	55.56%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.22	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	11.11%	55.56%	33.33%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	3.78	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	44.44%	33.33%	22.22%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.33	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	11.11%	44.44%	44.44%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	11.11%	11.11%	44.44%	33.33%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.25	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	50.00%	37.50%
I felt respected in this class.	4.88	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.63	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	37.50%	62.50%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
Grading felt very arbitrary at times
Professor Ferguson was incredibly kind, and productive I learned a lot from him, which is what I think shaped my perspective of the course overall.
Overall, reading the texts and interacting with and questioning the philosophers' arguments taught me to question how I think as well. It was such a cool class and I felt like it was the perfect introduction to UChicago.
The texts are particularly complex.
Sometimes we got a bit bogged down in the weeds of some of Descartes's and Hume's arguments and didn't take a step back to look at the bigger picture.

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	12.50%	87.50%
Anyone interested in the topic	25.00%	75.00%

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

Comments
Discussions
I really liked the presentations at the beginning of class that gave us historical background. I also enjoyed how he would lead discussions.
The conversations we had in the seminars is definitely where I learned the most versus independently and being able to discuss with peers was very helpful.
Professor Ferguson brought to life what could have been convoluted and unreachable readings. His lectures, guided reading questions, and assignments made the content more digestible and helped teach us what role the texts played in a greater philosophic tradition. Conversations in office hours were really helpful too. You would see the way he organized material that he wanted us to think alongside him in expereincing and undersatndng the texts. It was clear that he put in a lot of effort in organizing the course and nothing we did felt extraneous— even the supplemental readings felt like the served a purpose in putting certain ideas into our heads and grounding us in the context of the time that these philosophers were writing in. I would definitely take another class with Professor Ferguson if he were to teach a non-core philosphy class (as a non-philosophy major).
Professor Ferguson helps us walk through the arguments made in these texts excellently, giving us clarity of what parts of the text to pay particular attention to.
Definitely the discussions — Professor Ferguson is really good at facilitating productive discussion and really taking seriously and engaging with everyone's contributions. I also really appreciated his efforts to contextualize our authors historically — it was really interesting!

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
More clear expectations
Allowing more time to write and dwell on essays would be beneficial.
Nothing comes to mind.
Nothing, I think he is fantastic as a professor.
Compared to last quarter, we spent a little bit more time on the mechanics of the arguments in the readings and, as a consequence, less time on both open-ended discussion and student contributions in general. I'd like to move at least a little bit toward that earlier, bigger-picture focus.

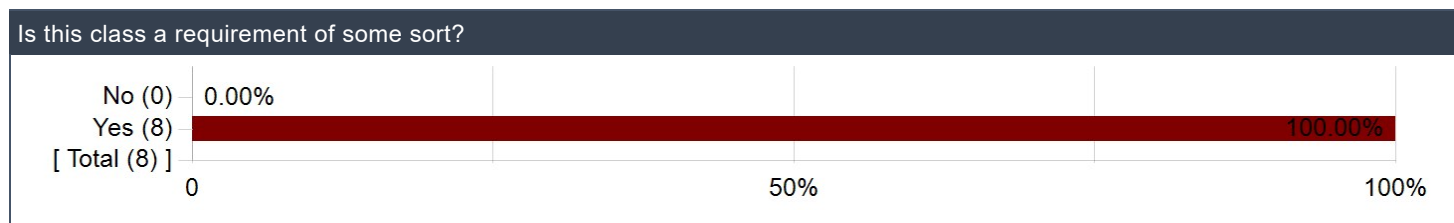
The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.63	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	37.50%	62.50%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.88	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.63	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	37.50%	62.50%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.63	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	37.50%	62.50%	0.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.63	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	37.50%	62.50%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.88	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.88	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%

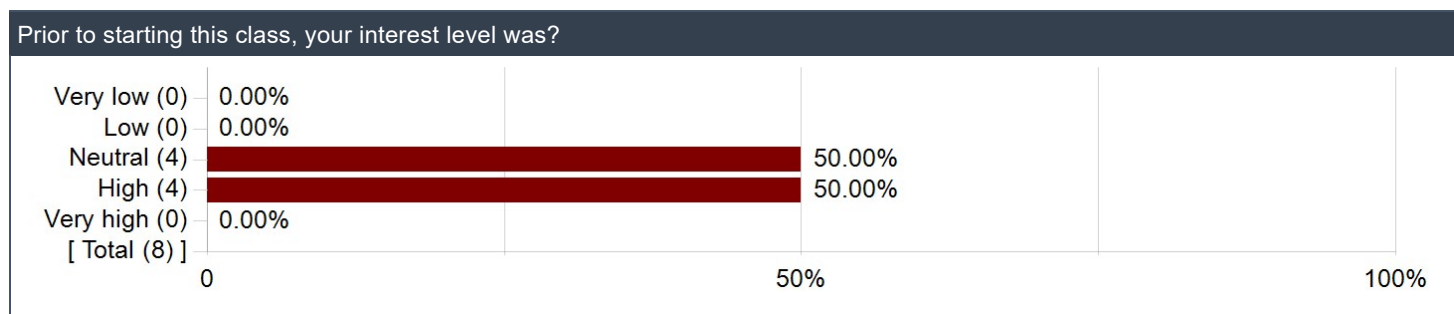
How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	Mean	Median	No Gain	A Little Gain	Moderate Gain	Good Gain	Great Gain	N/A
Laboratory Experience	1.00	1.00	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	83.33%
Field Trips	1.00	1.00	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	83.33%
Library Sessions	1.00	1.00	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	83.33%
Review Sessions	1.00	1.00	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	83.33%
Writing Seminars	2.86	2.00	0.00%	57.14%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%	0.00%

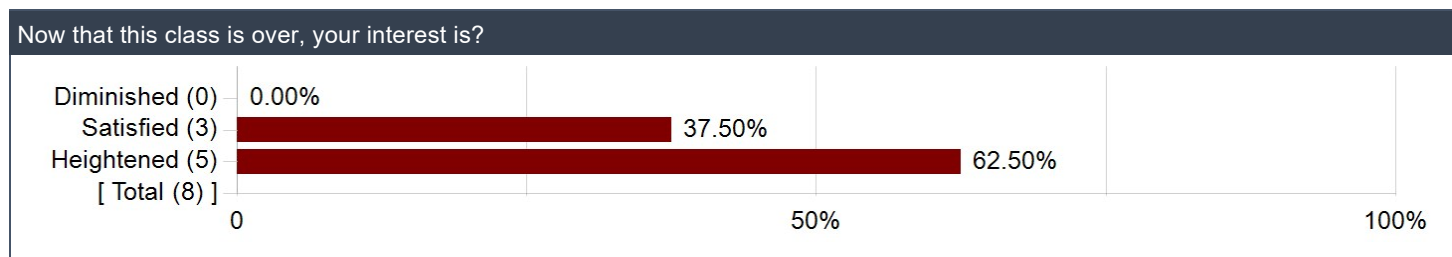
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



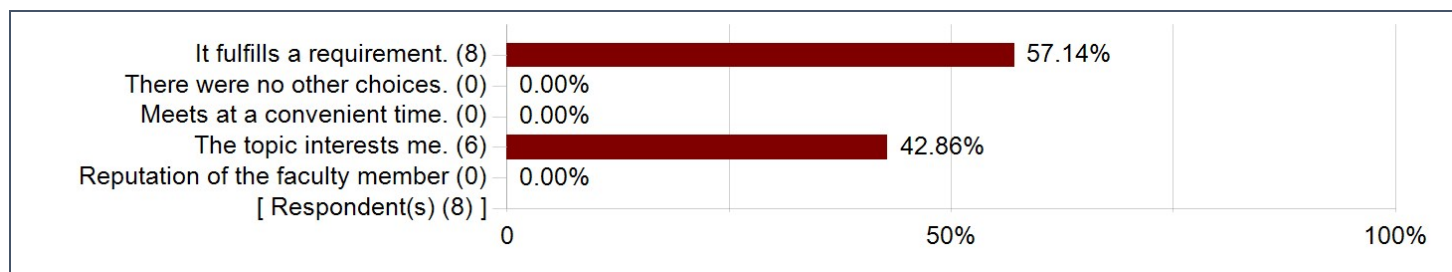
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



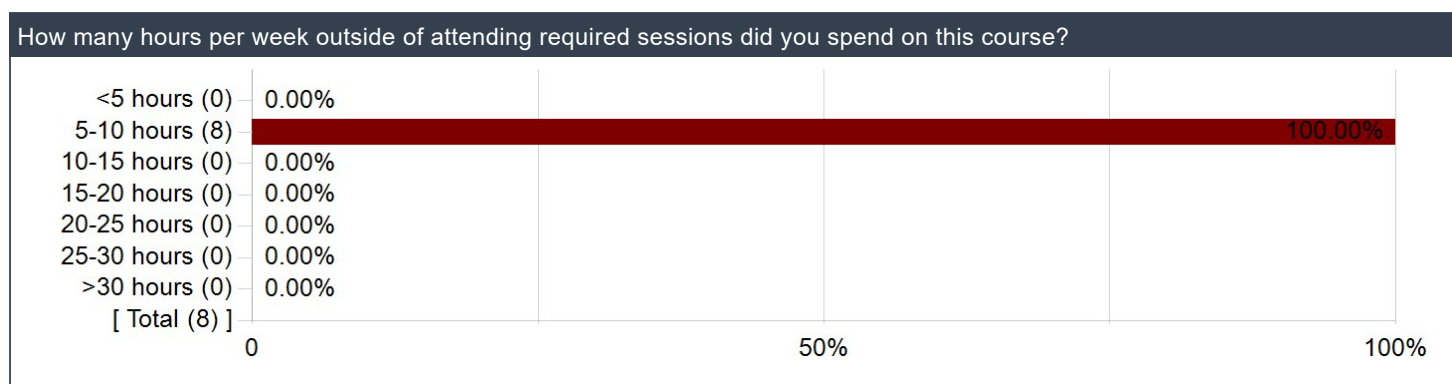
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



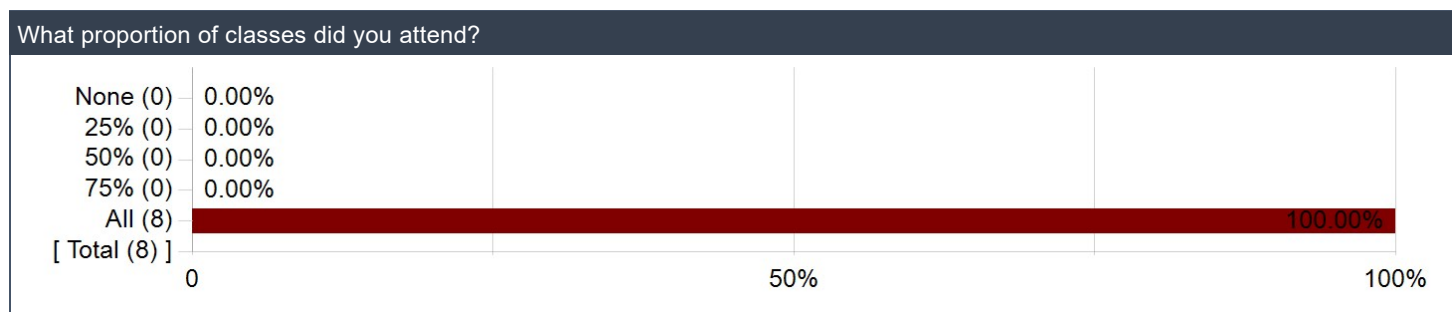
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



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
I took AP literature and therefore I was accustomed to writing however being that the prompts are complicated it was still pretty challenging.
I've never read philosophy before, and it was fairly challenging at first but quickly became more and more accessible by the end of the quarter once I got used to the style/routine.
The prompts Professor Ferguson assigns are complex and not simple. It takes a lot of practice and hard work to make satisfactory papers.
It's really not too bad. If you do the readings and engage meaningfully in class, it can be really meaningful without being too much of a burden.