



# SOSC 17100 3 - Religion: Cosmos, Conscience, and Community I - Instructor(s): Alexandra Matthews

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

Number Enrolled: **19**

Number of Responses: **11**

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## Report Comments

Opinions expressed in these evaluations are those of students enrolled in the specific course and do not represent the University.

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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
I learned how to mirror/close read passages, think about what we can learn from religions, the different ways people define religion, and how to compare thoughts and ideas across texts we read.
Paper writing, participating effectively in class discussions
I learned how valuable making unique connections I'm passionate about can be.
The most important thing that I learned in this course would probably be the wide range of religious texts that we were able to read.
How to analyze texts, write essays, etc.
We learned about and critically analyzed religion's arguably inseparable role from society, particularly by reading creation myths such as the Enuma Elish (a Babylonian creation myth), Genesis, parts of the Qur'an, and others. We also read philosophical/sociological works by Mary Douglas and Emile Durkheim, giving us insight into different modes of thought and how to view religion as a societal construct. I feel like I learned less actual knowledge surrounding religious ideas or beliefs and more so gained a flexible perspective into analyzing religions and how they influence the way humans live.
religion and social organization
Different religious texts and how they relate to social structures of society

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

Comments
The discussions were really great in this class – everyone had such great points and I learned so much from what my peers had to say.
The discussions were usually very insightful, and the professor's input was useful in contextualizing readings
Discussions were super helpful for me to understand the content better/in a new way.
Without class time, it would be very difficult to extract as much meaning from each text we read, especially some of the more confusing ones.
Discussions were very helpful
Discussions in class were always illuminating. Because the texts interested me, I would come to class with my own notes and opinions on what we read, and so would my classmates; the professor also did an excellent job of facilitating discussion and debate, allowing us to test different opinions and come to conclusions about the texts as a class (which not everybody was obliged or expected to believe). The process of writing essays based off of previously submitted Canvas discussion posts, although not initially very exciting, did a good job of allowing us to "simmer" our thoughts and let them cook, layering in different ingredients and thus allowing us to compose intellectually complex, and enlightening writing.
the papers were the most useful to me because they allowed me to engage with the text in my own way
Class (discussion style) helped break up the text well. Small group break-out sessions were most conducive to this and broke up the class well. Often, the way the class prompts were framed felt a bit random (for instance, Professor Matthews kept emphasizing what the text views as natural vs unnatural). Reading felt quite manageable and I don't know if it was on purpose, but it felt like the heavier readings were in the beginning when things were less stressful. Essays also felt manageable, 3 short essays, no final essay. Prompt was flexible and could be based on a discussion post we did every other week which helped jump-start things.

## Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.36	5.00	0.00%	9.09%	0.00%	36.36%	54.55%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.36	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	27.27%	54.55%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.09	4.00	0.00%	9.09%	9.09%	45.45%	36.36%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	27.27%	63.64%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.45	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	36.36%	54.55%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.73	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	27.27%	72.73%
I felt respected in this class.	4.82	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	81.82%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.73	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	27.27%	72.73%

## Additional comments about the course:

Comments
I took this course at the same time as a HUMA course, and I thought that the work load for both classes was manageable, which I am very happy about.
Fantastic if you're interested in the topic at all you won't regret taking it!
This is a good class. Highly recommend for SOSC

## I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	12.50%	87.50%
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
I really liked how before each class she would assign a text summarizer and note taker, as well as have us discuss certain things in small groups during class time.
Prof. Matthews was great about adding useful information for the reading without lecturing too much and highlighting parts of the text that were interesting to discuss
Ironically the lack of letter grades on assignments and flexibility to work with people's individual ideas helped me focus on engaging with the content and getting into assignments without the pressure of grades.
Her ability to explain complex religious texts (and also allow the class to puzzle through them) was quite good and made the class more interesting.
Discussions that were guided by the professor were very helpful
Her desire to critically analyze not only the text but also our opinions of the text was eye-opening, and it made learning and testing learning about religion genuinely fun and interesting.
Prof Matthews is fantastic.
eventually we started to learn more about the history of the texts which was nice
Small group break-out groups

## What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
Clearer feedback on assignments earlier in the quarter
I think maybe having a guide for how to read and understand texts (especially for the older ones) would be beneficial.
N/A
Maybe giving more feedback on our essays and being clearer about how grading works? (Our professor told us we would get a grade at the end of the quarter, meaning that Canvas discussion posts and essays did not get graded along the way, which wasn't initially clear.) Overall, however, the professor did an excellent job running the class.
more context and more lecturing! i like discussions as much as the next guy but i was much more interested in what professor alex matthews had to say about religion than any of my classmates, who were mostly first years who didn't know what they were talking about
It would be nice if the class felt a bit more personal. It was discussion-style but it didn't feel like the warmest environment to participate

## The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.44	5.00	0.00%	10.00%	0.00%	20.00%	60.00%	10.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	20.00%	70.00%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.67	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	60.00%	10.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%	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
Mara Caden
Mara Caden. She was available for help with essays and gave insightful feedback on how to structure our arguments. I would have liked to see her pop into class a bit more so that we could maybe ask her questions or spark dialogues with her before or after class, or just have her there as another voice to contribute to discussion. Overall very helpful.

## The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	3.50	3.50	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	3.50	3.50	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	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.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	3.50	3.50	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%

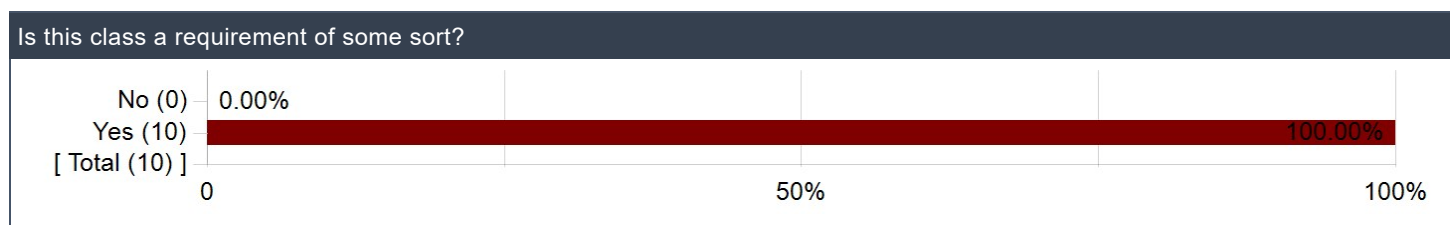
## How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	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	2.78	3.00	22.22%	22.22%	11.11%	44.44%	0.00%	0.00%

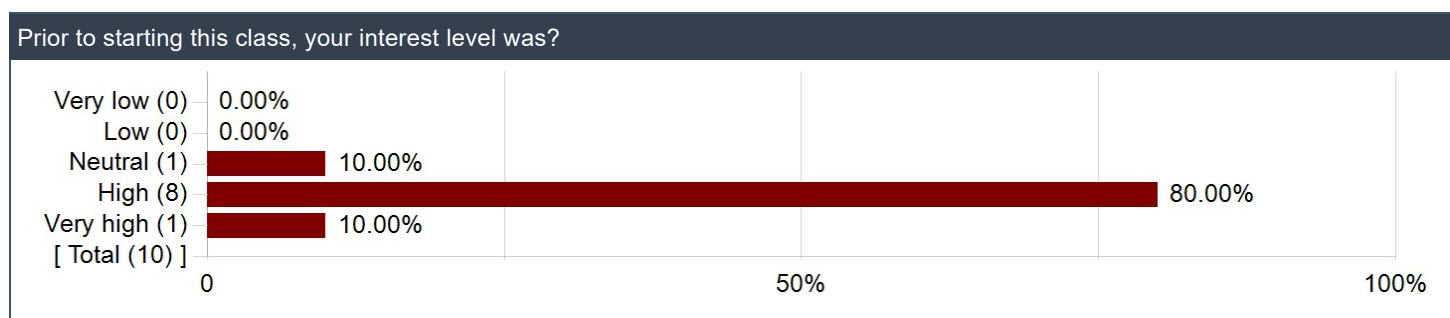
## Other course elements not mentioned above:

Comments
N/A

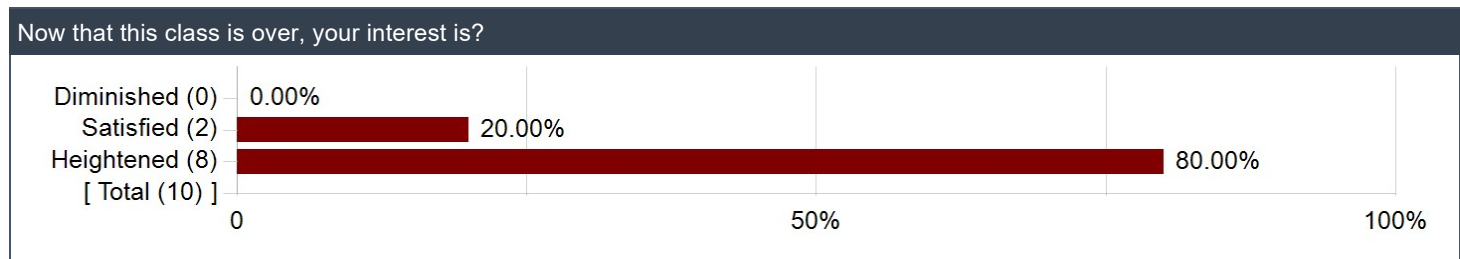
## Is this class a requirement of some sort?



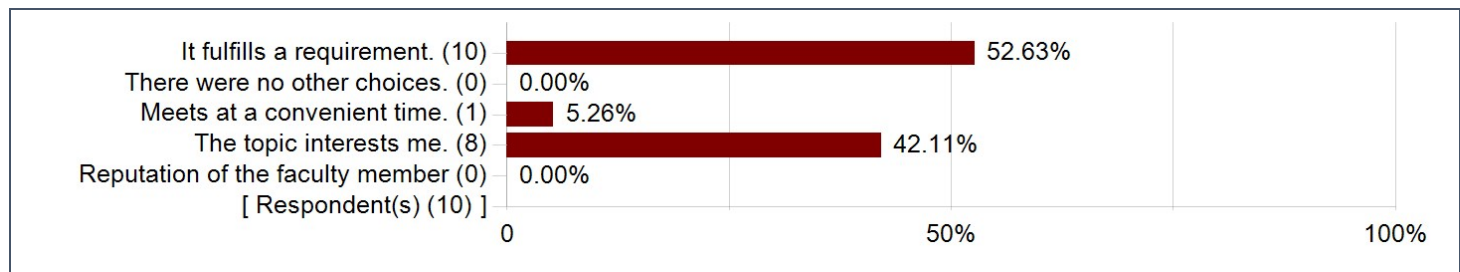
## Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



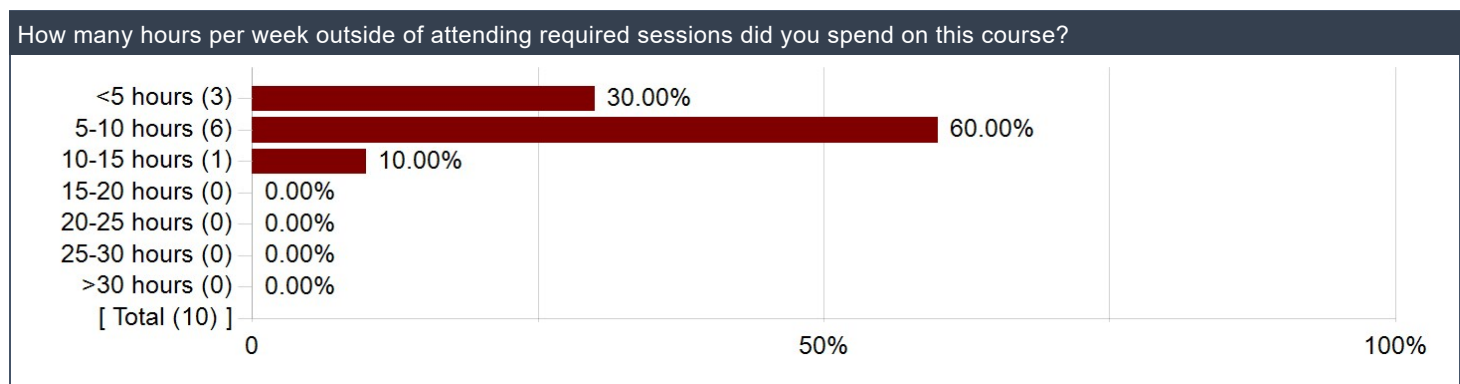
## Now that this class is over, your interest is?



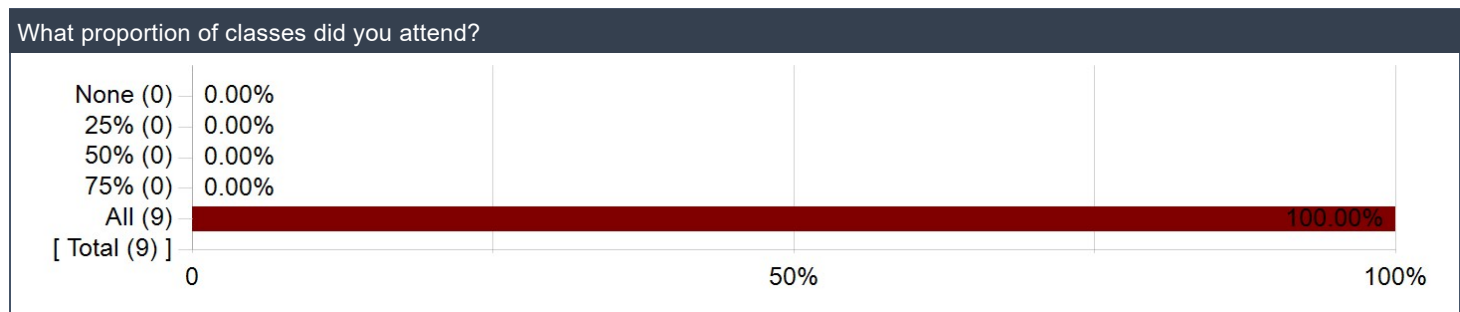
## Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



## 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
The discussions were lively, but with a little prior experience in religious studies, the class wasn't too challenging.
I found the readings to be challenging at times even as someone who's primarily interested in reading and writing but always managed.
Some of the readings were rather complex, and some weeks the reading load was rather high, but overall the essays were not that long so difficulty wise it was rather manageable.
Not too difficult. Readings are not that long and papers are only 3 pages long
A lot of reading, and much of it was dense and difficult to get through. It is certainly doable if you are passionate about learning about religion, though.
very easy if you have patience