Report Comments

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

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

Comments
Tenets of postmodernism
I learned about postmodernism, postcolonialism, paradigms, gender and race relations. We read Eliade, Kuhn, Foucault, Butler, Said, and a few more articles and a podcast. But I think the thing that I took away most from this class is how to read texts like these skeptically and to write essays that are critical yet work with the framework of the author to explore something new. I also just learned so much about the self through all the authors through the sequences. I took this course with Mat for all three quarters, and it has been one of the most informative classes I have ever taken or will ever take because I feel educated.
We read Eliade, Kuhn, Foucault, Said, Butler, Mahmood, Srinavasin, and some others, and I learned a lot about the analysis of science and societal relations during the postmodern era from these authors. I also learned how to study, understand, breakdown, and analyze these authors' arguments.
feminism and feminist rhetoric; Kuhn, Foucault, Srinavasan, Mahmood
I learned how to critically think about texts, how to be analytical and argumentative instead of just descriptive. I also learned how to articulate my ideas in a convincing way in a discussion setting.
I was taught much about the drivers of human history and how to bring authors do past into my present.
How to analyze social theory and write about it
In this course we read texts from Mircea Eliade, Thomas Kuhn, Michel Foucault, Edward Said, Judith Butler, and other authors. As with the other quarters of Self, we learned a lot about what it means to be an individual in a society and how power structures influence the world.

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

Comments
Professor Messerschmidt's explanations on the whiteboard were the most helpful to me
We had relatively moderate readings and discussions that contributed to my learning. I think that Mat's explanation was the most helpful. He would either lecture the day of the discussion or before the reading was due to make sure that we can understand the content. This was especially helpful for denser texts like Kuhn and Butler.
They were all very informative and engaging and really forced you to deal with very different writers and relate them together.
The class structure was great. There was a lecture portion and discussion portion of class. During the lecture portion, Mat would provide bios of the authors and walk us through particularly challenging texts, which was always very helpful. The discussion–based parts of class were awesome; I looked forward to them. I always took a lot away from our class discussions.
class discussion, field trips, readings
The lectures and their discussions were great! They made me think deeply and question things about the way we exist today.
DIscussions really helped to break down the readings
This course only has discussions, and they were exceptionally useful to further my learning of the course material. Mat does a great job encouraging group discussion, lecturing when material gets dense, and guiding our learning to be in line with the major themes of the course. Mat also hosts meetings with students before papers, which were very helpful.

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%
I felt respected in this class.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	10.00%	80.00%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
Professor Messerschmidt is amazing!
This course has truly taught me so many things from reading and writing to thinking. This class is the epitome of the UChicago experience in the life of the mind. But to be specific about this section, Mat is easily one of the best professors that I could have had for this class. The questions that he would ask to facilitate discussions were invigorating. The structure of group discussions and larger class–wide discussions allowed more shy students a chance to be vocal. The debates were fun and interesting because it really got us to take a stance and defend it, and by debating with our classmates, we collectively learned more. The individual paper meetings and his feedback on papers helped me further develop as a writer. Overall, this class was amazing. My classmates and Mat really contributed to this feeling, and I am going to miss going to SOSC twice a week.
Mat is the goat
I love self. Mat is one of the best professors i've ever had and this has been both an intellectually stimulating and rewarding class. Highly highly recommend to anyone considering which SOSC to take.
From talking with peers, it seems very hard to compare different sections of SOSC with different professors. Overall, this was a great course, but I felt that was largely due to Mat, not something intrinsic in the construction of the overarching Self syllabus.

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
Whiteboard mind–map type explanations of concepts
Mat would provide mini lectures on the content that helped me learn a lot about the texts as I would often come to class having read the text but not understanding what I read. I also think that his response to feedback is something that more professors should treat like him. He was truly a class act in taking feedback during the quarter or at the start of the quarter and actually implementing it, which I find can be rare among professors. He also would meet one on one with us before papers to talk about our topics, which we chose ourselves since he doesn't give prompts, and his advice during those discussions were always helpful. Overall, Mat is an an amazing professor and I cannot give enough praise to him because he really changed my mind about Self especially since I was not very keen on taking it at the start of the year.
Literally everything. He always came to class prepared with a very deep understanding of the material, and was always open to students ideas.
The format of the class being part lecture and part discussion was great. Mat would give bios of the authors and relevant information about the time period and then would even walk us through particularly challenging texts, which was always very helpful. Our discussions were always great; Mat did a great job facilitating in getting us to think critically and analytically about the texts and would clarify the material whenever we went astray.
Mat conducted awesome discussions and easily bounced off all the students' comments and arguments.
Mat made an effort to get to know all of us and to have us all get to know each other, which made the dynamic of the class so much more engaging and making it so much more fun to learn than if we were just all strangers.
Matt was an excited and passionate professor who made the course curriculum engaging and interesting!
Mat was super helpful and receptive to any questions, comments or concerns students had. He was overall a great professor who really cared about each student
Mat's ability to connect with students made this class much more enjoyable and enabled me to learn and focus. This was partly due to the fact that we stuck with Mat for all three quarters, but I felt this was true even in the fall. He does an incredible job fostering group feeling among students, encouraging discussions with one another.

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
It was a tad disorganized: the reading schedule changed a lot which was a little annoying since I like to do the reading in advance and often did the wrong ones.
Nothing :) Mat is the best.
Literally nothing
literally nothing

The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.20	5.00	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%	60.00%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	10.00%	0.00%	10.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.90	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	90.00%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	10.00%	0.00%	10.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	0.00%	90.00%	0.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	10.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	10.00%	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 |
|---|
| Kristen French was our guide at the Art Institute of Chicago. The pieces we looked at were really interesting, and her background and questions were thought provoking. She was a great guide, and I learned a lot from the trip. |

The TA/CA or Intern. . .

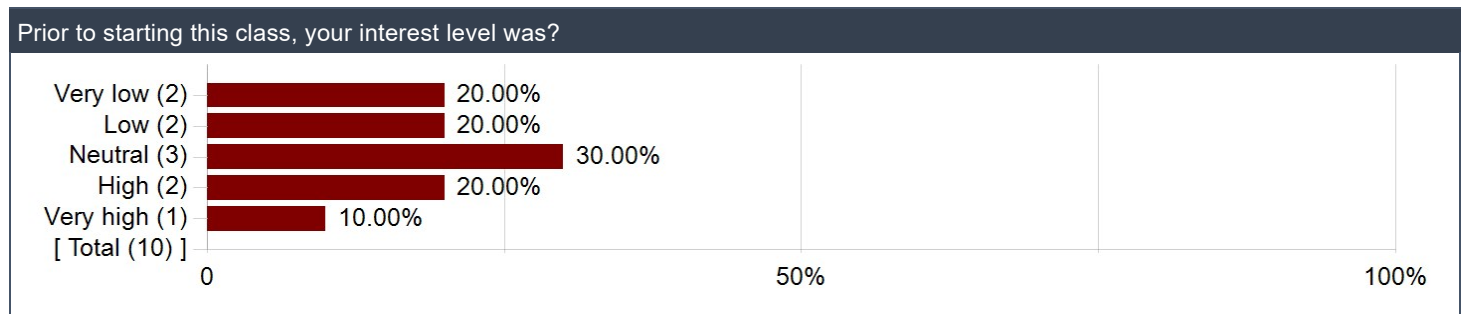|	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Helped you succeed in the class.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	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	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%	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?
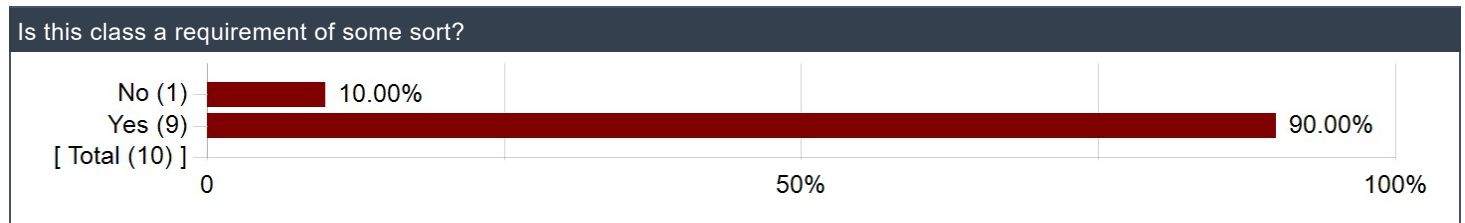
Is this class a requirement of some sort?

No (1) — 10.00%
Yes (9) — 90.00%
[Total (10)]

Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?

Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?

Very low (2) — 20.00%
Low (2) — 20.00%
Neutral (3) — 30.00%
High (2) — 20.00%
Very high (1) — 10.00%
[Total (10)]

Now that this class is over, your interest is?

Now that this class is over, your interest is?

Diminished (1) — 10.00%
Satisfied (2) — 20.00%
Heightened (7) — 70.00%
[Total (10)]
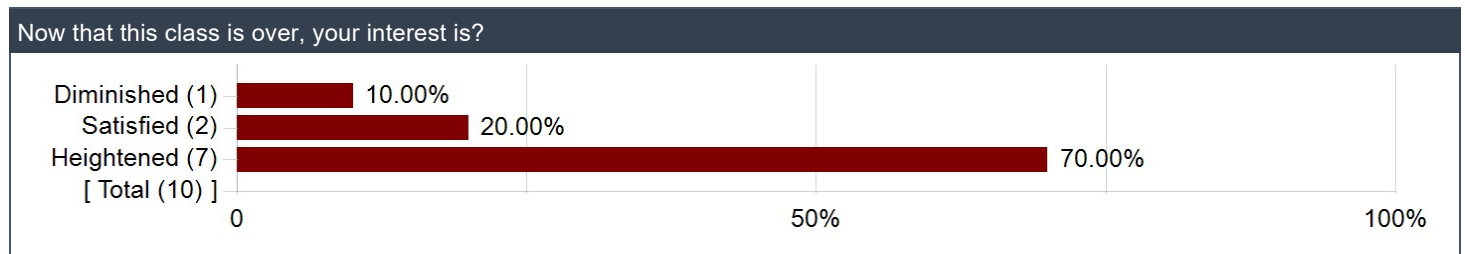
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)
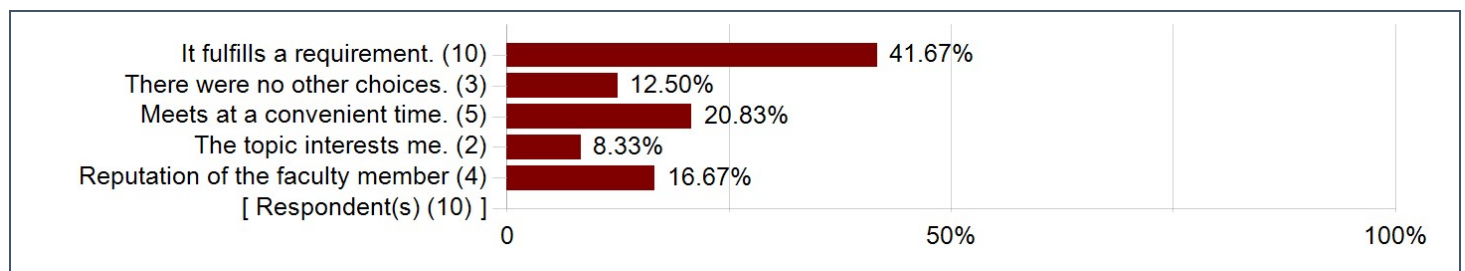
It fulfills a requirement. (10) — 41.67%
There were no other choices. (3) — 12.50%
Meets at a convenient time. (5) — 20.83%
The topic interests me. (2) — 8.33%
Reputation of the faculty member (4) — 16.67%
[Respondent(s) (10)]

How many hours per week outside of attending required sessions did you spend on this course?

How many hours per week outside of attending required sessions did you spend on this course?

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<5 hours (3)   ████████ 30.00%
5-10 hours (7) ██████████████████ 70.00%
10-15 hours (0)  0.00%
15-20 hours (0)  0.00%
20-25 hours (0)  0.00%
25-30 hours (0)  0.00%
>30 hours (0)    0.00%
[ Total (10) ]
              0              50%            100%
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What proportion of classes did you attend?

What proportion of classes did you attend?

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None (0)   0.00%
25% (0)    0.00%
50% (0)    0.00%
75% (2)    ██████ 20.00%
All (8)    ████████████████████ 80.00%
[ Total (10) ]
           0              50%            100%
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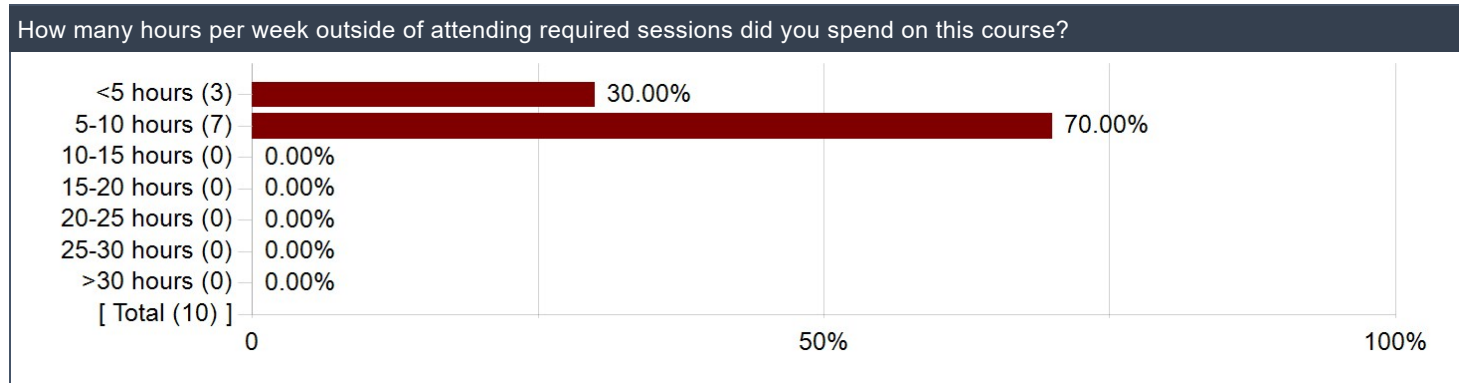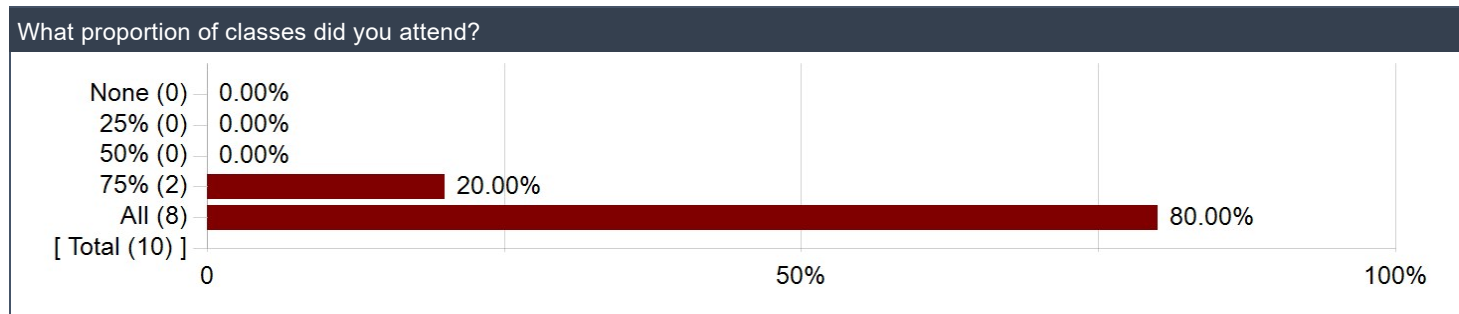
Please comment on the level of difficulty of the course relative to your background and experience.

Comments
Same as the first two quarters
I thought that this class was amazing. I came into Self with no knowledge on any of the authors that we read, and I am leaving feeling comfortable with these authors and feeling more educated. Mat has contributed the most to my learning because he is not only an amazing professor, but just an amazing person all around. To be honest, I did not want to take Self at all coming in and I was afraid of Mat's grading scheme, but I have never been more glad to have taken a class at UChicago. I found myself genuinely interested in the topics we covered, and Mat greatly contributed to my enjoyment in the course. I'm sad that Mat is leaving UChicago because he is the type of professor that makes an impact on shaping one's college experience and that will allow me to look back fondly of the UChicago experience and taking the core. In more ways than one, Mat has changed my learning for the better and for that, I am incredibly thankful for getting to learn from him. And in retrospect, I feel like a fool for thinking that I would not enjoy this class because no class could better represent the beauty of education like this one— a sense of community with intellectually challenging and interesting conversations. I would recommend this class to anyone if not for Mat's departure from UChicago, but any student who has an opportunity to learn with him is truly lucky– myself included.
As someone who had no idea any of the authors in this class even existed, the readings were a bit tough but very doable with the support mat gave
Not difficult. I am a CAAM major and not a humanities person at all, and yes some of the books are hard reads, but the workload was manageable.
you have to put in effort but it's so rewarding. I highly recommend Self.
This course is very similar in difficulty to the prior Self sections.