



# SOSC 15100 6 - Classics of Social and Political Thought I - Instructor(s): William Levine

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

Number Enrolled: **18**

Number of Responses: **10**

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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
The Republic—read it well and it will change how you see all things—Aristotelian teleology, Aquinas' synthesis of Aristotle and Catholicism, and Machiavelli's rejection of a system whose end is the Good.
The political frameworks and systems of the ancients.
How to read and talk about philosophical texts
Analyzing classic philosophical texts, formulating arguments about them
I don't really think my writing improved much, but I do think that my ability to analyze and reflect on the merits of a complex text was improved. Discussion proved to be a helpful way to think about a text that definitely had its confusing moments. I think I'm better at understanding the structure and themes of the text than I was before.
How to unpack theoretical ideas and philosophies in both a classroom and paper/essay setting.
Social thought and classical texts.
The most important thing that I learned during this course was how go beyond just a cursory reading of a dense text. We spent a vast majority of the class reading texts in order to about the different ways the text can be interpreted.
Analysis of philosophical texts and early political writings, how to construct and evaluate well-articulated philosophical arguments

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

Comments
Readings were a good length (not short). The majority of the course focused on Plato's Republic, which was the right thing to do as it is immensely rewarding. Will let in-class discussions evolve as students saw fit but also grounded the discussions in specific questions. He also closed each class with a useful discussion of important takeaways.
Classics is discussion based, so quality depends on the people in your class. Discussions felt average at best since we almost always focused on the text's content which is elementary.
Discussions are the most important, as other people typically have different perspectives you can take away from.
Discussion was huge, and by far the most important thing we did. The question assignments were good for keeping me honest about staying up to date with the reading. Writing a paper is a pain with a busy schedule, but it definitely helped me interact more deeply with the text.
The question assignments helped me understand each reading and figure out what I was confused about.
The seminars were wonderful.
The classes were set up as discussions. The discussions were very effective in bringing about the many ways in which the texts can be interpreted.
Each class was discussion based, Prof. Levine was amazing at facilitating engaging discussions and encouraging us to see the text from a variety of perspectives

## Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.50	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	30.00%	60.00%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.30	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	30.00%	50.00%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.40	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	40.00%	50.00%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.40	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	40.00%	50.00%
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.	4.50	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	30.00%	60.00%

## 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
Will knew how to focus the class on specific questions and guide us over the duration of a class prior but also let students offer their own questions and challenge the instructor. Will is also persistent, which is great; when he asks an abstract question that no one can answer, he then breaks it down into smaller questions that, combined, bring us closer to answering the original question.
Whenever he reached a particular conclusion at the end that tried to tie in the major talking points of the day's class.
Strikes a good balance between letting people discuss what they want to discuss and keeping us guided so we hit the essential parts of the texts
Feedback on papers
He understands the text very well, and leads discussion very interactively. The quality of the class we have is dependent on the preparation of the students involved, and I appreciate that. Starting class with an agenda of entirely student-made prompts is very helpful, and creates a great structure for the class.
Will was very open to everyone's ideas, making every class discussion a true discussion rather than a lecture. He guided the conversation with really interesting questions and allowed all of us to guide the conversation in our own ways as well.
I love how prof. Will guides the seminars. He knows the stuff so well and has so much to teach. He perfectly balance the teaching and the seminar of each session, allowing us to learn stuff both through him and through each other.
Professor Levine was very helpful in giving information about the texts and in helping to analyze the texts. The fact that Professor Levine was always very kind and helpful increased the effectiveness of the course.
Discussions, Prof. Levine was amazing at leading engaging and thoughtful discussions while making sure that we understood the core ideas of the texts

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

Comments
The agenda setting at the start of class doesn't seem totally effective.
Formalize the 'point' of each class more so that we have something more concrete to take out of each discussion
Nothing much. I enjoyed the class, it wasn't too demanding, and now i have a better understanding of the texts.
As someone who has not had much exposure to the classic texts we read, our conversations sometimes felt a bit isolating or difficult to follow. It could be helpful to clarify different terms or just be more aware of the variety of exposure/understanding of terminology in the classroom.
Nothing. I love prof. Will.
The only thing that Professor Levine could modify would be to return assignments quicker and to maybe explain the comments more.
Not much, Prof. Levine was amazing and I couldn't have asked for a better professor to teach this course!

## The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.30	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	30.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.43	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	30.00%	30.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	60.00%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.50	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	30.00%	60.00%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.70	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	10.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	60.00%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	60.00%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	60.00%	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
Justin Smolin – writing instructor
Justin Smolin
Justin was really helpful. He was always accessible and willing to brainstorm and talk through ideas.
Justin Smolin. He led two writing seminars and greatly improved my ability to construct and deconstruct philosophical arguments

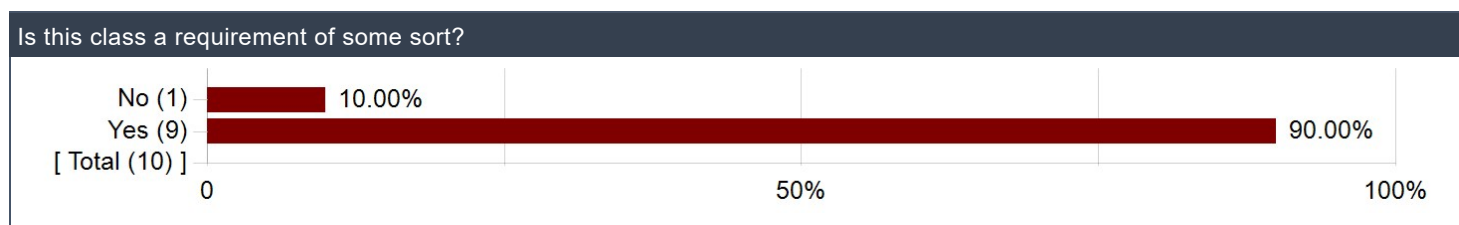
## The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	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%	40.00%	40.00%	0.00%	20.00%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	40.00%	20.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	3.33	3.00	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	20.00%	0.00%	40.00%
Challenged you to learn.	3.25	3.00	0.00%	0.00%	60.00%	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%
Helped you succeed in the class.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	20.00%	40.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.40	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	60.00%	40.00%	0.00%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	3.60	3.00	0.00%	0.00%	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	0.00%

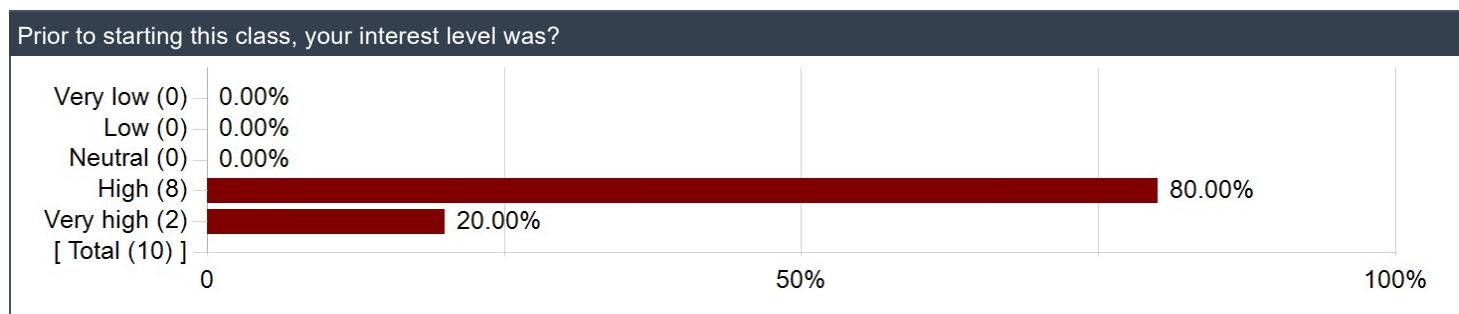
## How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	Mean	Median	No Gain	A Little Gain	Moderate Gain	Good Gain	Great Gain	N/A
Laboratory Experience	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	3.67	4.00	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	50.00%	16.67%	0.00%

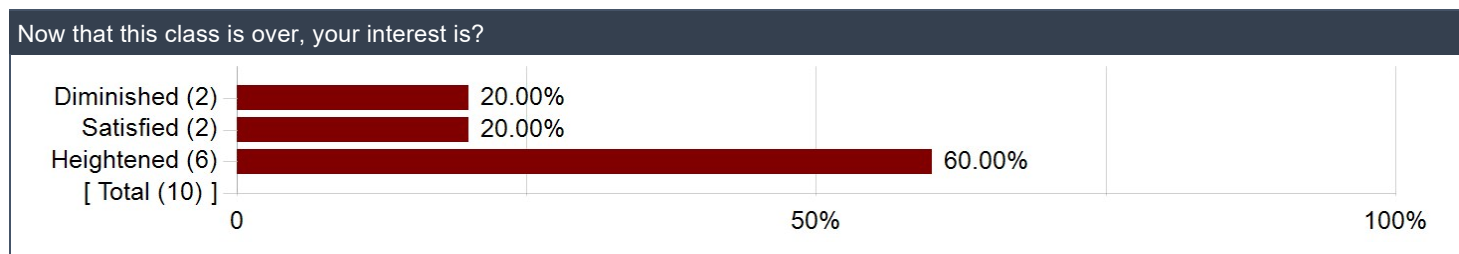
## Is this class a requirement of some sort?



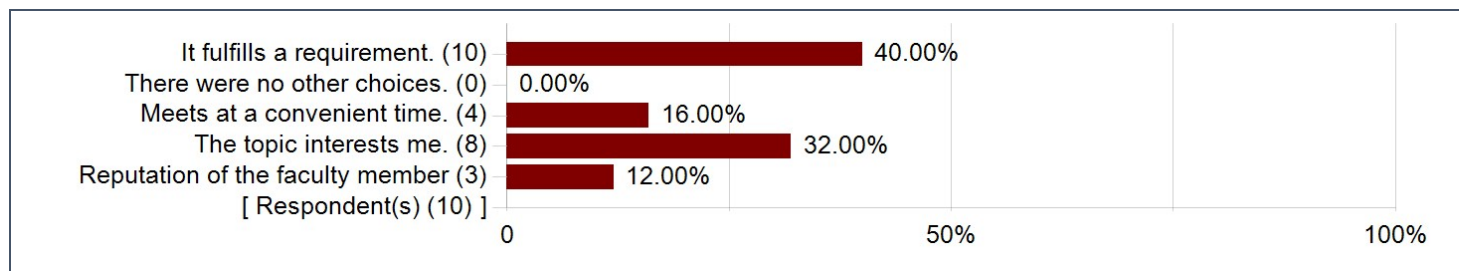
## Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



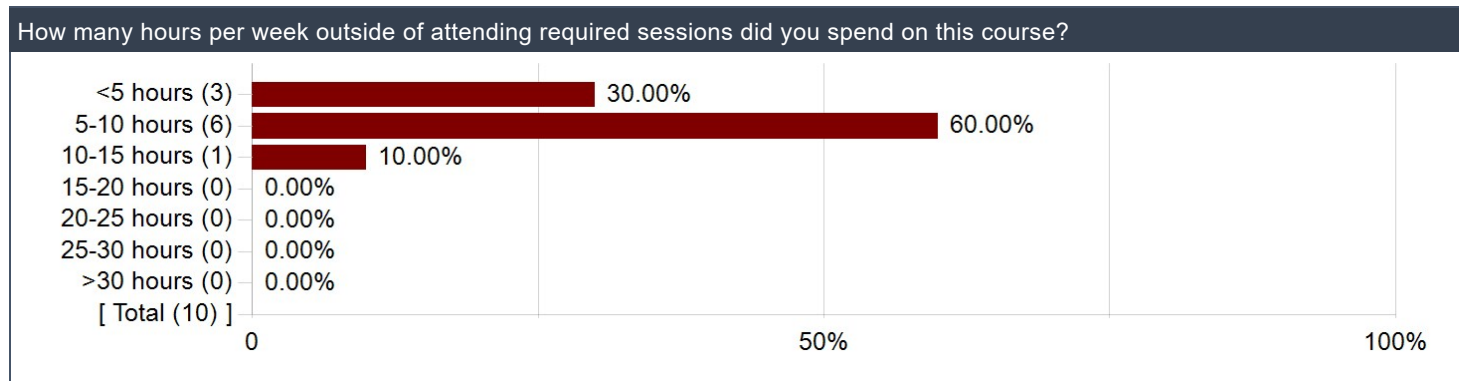
## Now that this class is over, your interest is?



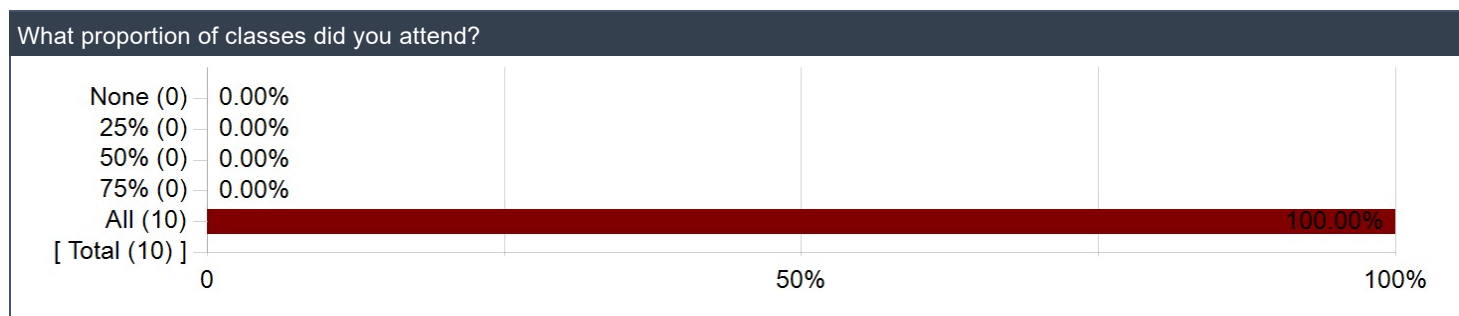
## Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



## 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 entered this class having taken Philosophical Perspectives in my first year. It was a valuable background to have, as rereading the Republic after a year of philosophy presents an entirely different reading experience that was quite enriching. Likewise for Aristotle. That being said, I did not feel like I was ever skating by; I learned a great deal and was challenged.
Not challenging.
Don't have much background in these sorts of texts, and I didn't find that to be an obstacle
It shouldn't be difficult for anybody with solid writing and an interest in the class. Pay attention, do your reading, and write a solid paper and you should do well.
Just do the readings and you'll be fine. Essays are a bit hard at first but Will is crystal clear with his expectations. Go to OH and chat to improve.
I took this as a first year so taking a course designed for those who already had a year of HUM under their belt was definitely tough at times, but I never felt overwhelmed or like I was struggling. If you put in the work and read all of the texts, you can do very well regardless of your background. If you're not much of a reader or already have a heavy course load I might suggest a different course, 40-50+ page readings were not uncommon towards the end