



JWSC 12001 1, NEHC 22011 1, RLST 22011 1, HIST 11702
1 - Jewish Civilization II: Early Modern Period to 21st Century
- Instructor(s): Kenneth Moss

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

Number Enrolled: **14**

Number of Responses: **6**

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
Development of Jewish Civ from 1600–present
The history and development of Jewish civilization
The interrelation of culture, religion, politics, creativity, and other topics with Jewish civilization from the 1600s to modern day.
Jewish civilization is not one homogenous phenomenon but several subethnic groups converging and diverging with each other
Jewish nationalism, Jewish culture, Zionism, Palestinian nationalism, and much more

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

Comments
<p>Assignments helped me learn more about Jewish civilization. They were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 7 1 pg, single–spaced comments/17 sessions on 3+ texts from class, due before class – 1 ~5 pg essay – oral final exam <p>Readings were useful, but sometimes hard to understand. They took 3–4 hours before class to prepare, so not too long!</p>
Lectures and discussion were both amazing! Professor Moss is an incredibly knowledgeable and enthusiastic lecturer, which made the class very engaging
Learning was a combination of reading and discussion– we would read texts before and most of lecture was contextualizing those texts with relevant topics.
Lectures expounded upon the readings
<p>Readings gave us many different perspectives on the main topics for each week and the main themes we would discuss.</p> <p>Lectures/discussions would allow us to delve deeper into the material from the readings. Responses that we had to write for every other class (and the midterm) allowed us to expand even more on the material.</p>

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.00	5.00	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	60.00%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	3.60	4.00	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	40.00%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.20	5.00	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%	60.00%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.20	5.00	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	80.00%
My work was evaluated fairly.	3.80	5.00	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	60.00%
I felt respected in this class.	3.80	5.00	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	60.00%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	3.80	5.00	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	60.00%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments		
We did so much reading but only had enough time to talk about a few texts each class. Sometimes it felt demotivating to have done all the reading and not get to talk about many of the texts.		
Overall, this was a great class, and one that I would certainly take again. This is why I feel so comfortable nit-picking two specific things. First, I'd change would be the number of readings. We were assigned quite a few (sometimes they were very long, albeit not super often), but there would frequently be classes where we would go over around 1/3 or 1/2 of what was assigned for the day. So I would restructure the course so that we either have fewer readings overall or can dedicate at least a little time to every reading assigned for every day. There's nothing more demoralizing than spending a couple hours close-reading a 75 page document only for it to never get discussed in class! Second, I would change the prompts for the midterm paper. I don't know why Civ profs are so keen on having you evaluate six sources in four pages, but Professor Moss does not deviate from this tendency. I found this structure frustrating because it did not, at least in my view, give me enough room to adequately show what I know about each source. In the future, I would either ask students to evaluate fewer sources (three seems reasonable) or extend the page count to give them more room to spend time with all six.		
The standards of success on this course were purposely vague and unclear to the point that our grades on assignments were lowered because we completed them too early. For example, the syllabus said "write a one page response" on the readings. That's it— that was the assignment. So I treated it like a formal one-page mini-essay. Then I got a bad grade and comments saying that I hadn't fulfilled the requirements of the assignment. I was confused because the requirements on the syllabus were "write a one page response." Then during Thursday of 3rd week the TA told us that our responses should survey three different sources and be focused only on the readings for the assigned day. This came after I had submitted multiple journal entries already! And I was not given a grade credit for submitting the journal entries before the standards of success were shared with the class. I was held to the same standards as everyone else who submitted their responses after the TA explained what the graders were looking for, which lowered my assignment grade. In short, I was punished for submitting my assignments too early before the instructors finally got around to explaining what they wanted from us. I would fix this by explaining what you want in a one page response on the first day of class, before any assignments are due, and not during third week. And if you do explain the standards of success in third week, people who submitted assignments before then should be given automatic grade credits for operating without a rubric.		
In addition, assignments were just graded needlessly ruthlessly and mercilessly. The grading was excessively harsh to the point that it was unnecessary and unhelpful. Every single thing was picked apart with no mercy. It made for a very resentful class culture.		
The readings were far too great in volume. Which would be fine, because this is UChicago after all and excessive reading is expected, IF we had actually gotten around to discussing all of them! But the way it would typically go is that prof Moss would assign 7-ish readings, then we would only discuss the first 4-5, and the last two would never be mentioned again (and typically the last two readings would take me over three hours to read), and this would happen every single class to the point that I spent hours and hours reading texts that we just never discussed. Either shorten the reading list to materials you actually plan to discuss, or work harder to fit every reading into the class lecture, otherwise it's just disrespectful to the class' time to do this every single class.		
While fantastic, this course was A LOT of work! I spent substantially more time on this course than on Accelerated Analysis which is an accelerated math course known for assigning higher-than-average work. This was a huge jump in work load over Jewish Civ 1.		

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	16.67%	83.33%
Anyone interested in the topic	33.33%	66.67%

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

Comments
Lectures were helpful for contextualization.
Lectures and feedback on written assignment (Professor Moss and Ms. Goldsmith give EXTREMELY detailed feedback on all assignments, which I really appreciated)
Professor Moss was a great lecturer who was clearly passionate about the course content, which made lectures much more enjoyable. Pacing is a bit quick so it takes a week or two to settle in but after that it's easy to follow along.
Prof. Moss is an amazing lecturer. If you have the chance you should take Jewish Civ with him.
Prof Moss is one of the smartest people I have ever met. The way he discusses the texts in connection with historical context is very enlightening.
Professor Moss is clearly an expert in the field and was really great at explaining and providing context for everything that we covered. Also, Professor Moss was really great at moderating discussions, as he ensured that everyone could participate and he kept discussions flowing with thought-provoking questions.

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
I liked the idea of switching off who was the moderator for the discussion. Maybe it could be done for students as well? (Assign each of them a day to moderate + ask questions & then jump in when needed).
Also, I liked what we did for the class when we went around the room and talked about what was interesting to us. It felt more organic and everyone got the chance to speak about something that they thought was interesting. I also liked the last class, which had a similar structure.
Nothing
Discuss the standards of success on assignments during day one of the course.
POST the readings for the class WELL IN ADVANCE and not 36 hours before class.
I was not a fan of the 1–page responses that we had to turn in before nearly every other class. These assignments tasked us with writing something deep and nuanced about the subject for the next class while connecting at least 3 of the sources that we read. Writing about 3 sources in depth is really challenging to do in such little space. After the first assignment, the Professor told us that, apparently, the entire class decided to write 1 page single spaced instead of double spaced since it is so challenging to fit that amount of detail into a page. Even worse, my responses were always around 2 full pages single–spaced since I really couldn't figure out how to contain so much in so few words. As a result, these assignments were always really challenging and time consuming, much more so than any of the writing responses I've had to do for any other class.
I am also STRONGLY opposed to the class's participation policy. According to the syllabus, regular participation in this class will only get you a B. In order to get an A, you need "excellent" participation on a regular basis. This is also exacerbated by the fact that participation is worth 40% of our grade, more than every other aspect of the course. Participation without this added weight is already a very polarising aspect of courses as it disproportionately benefits extroverted students and harms introverted students who have trouble speaking. Requiring this extra degree of participation only makes these issues worse and makes the classroom uninclusive. I am hoping that the Professor doesn't actually intend to grade participation this harshly and only included these provisions to encourage participation, but I can't tell for certain until grades are released.
Finally, this course had a lot of readings and, while they were very interesting, we often didn't get to a substantial portion of the readings in our discussions. For most of our classes, we only discussed 66% –75% of the assigned readings. I know that the Professor tried hard to limit the readings for this quarter, as it seemed that there were often texts that were cut from each week's materials, but I think more texts can potentially be removed to make the workload more approachable.

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.	4.80	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%	0.00%
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.	4.00	5.00	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	60.00%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.40	5.00	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.40	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	60.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.00	5.00	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	0.00%	60.00%	0.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.20	5.00	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%	60.00%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	3.60	3.00	0.00%	20.00%	40.00%	0.00%	40.00%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.20	5.00	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%	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
Ms. Goldsmith – she was a great TA. I really appreciated getting the chance to talk with her about class concepts. She was always able to catch the nuances in discussion or a point of interest that someone wanted to focus on and pivot to it.
Tahel Goldsmith. She was awesome! Another great and knowledgeable lecturer. Had the class only been taught by her, it would have still been outstanding.
Tahel Goldsmith– Tahel was very helpful in providing feedback on weekly discussion posts, and also helped lecture multiple times, which were very interesting lectures.
Tahel Goldsmith. She was very nice and a genuinely kind person. I would say that her explanation of what to write in the one page response should have come earlier in the quarter, but other than that she was great.
Tahel Goldsmith was amazing! She was present at every class, taught certain portions of classes, provided her perspective on many of the topics, and graded some of our assignments.

The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Helped you succeed in the class.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.60	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%	0.00%

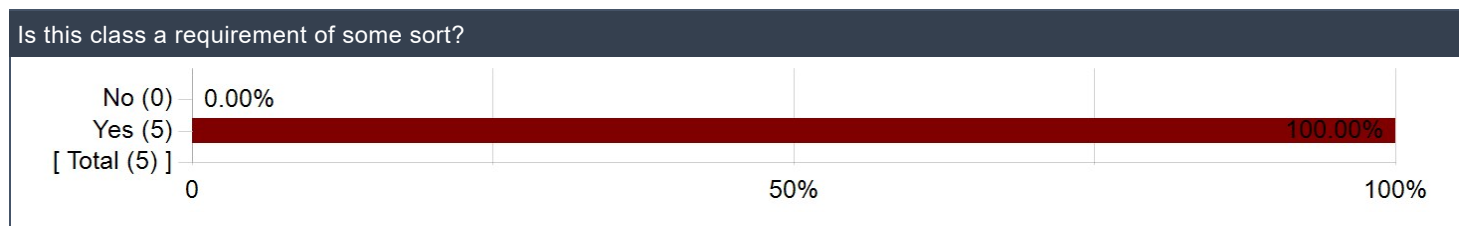
How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	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	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

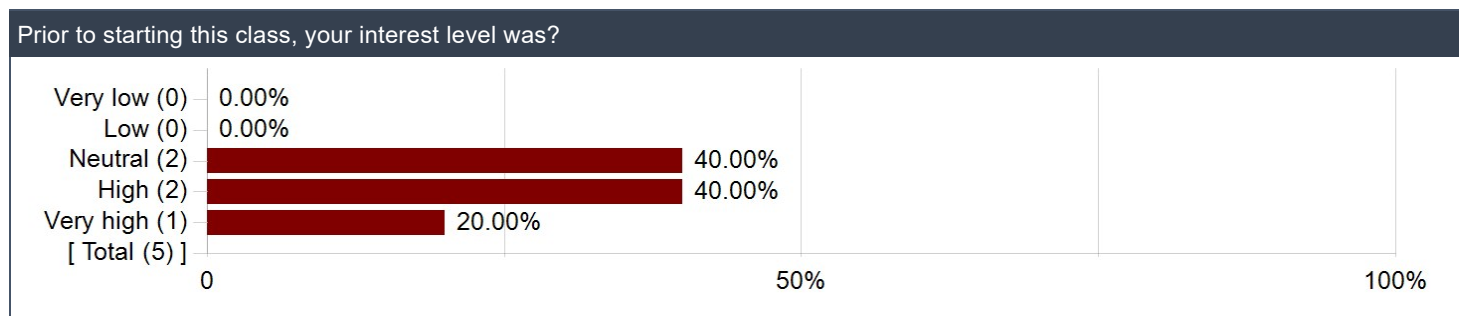
Other course elements not mentioned above:

Comments
Oral Final Exam

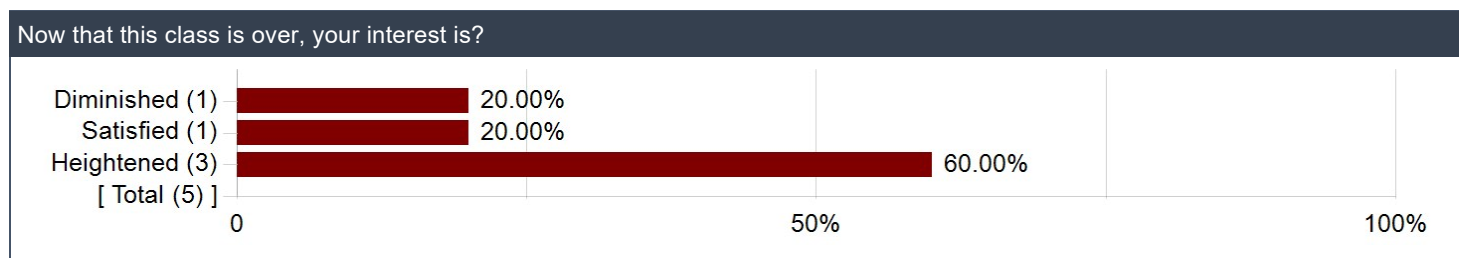
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



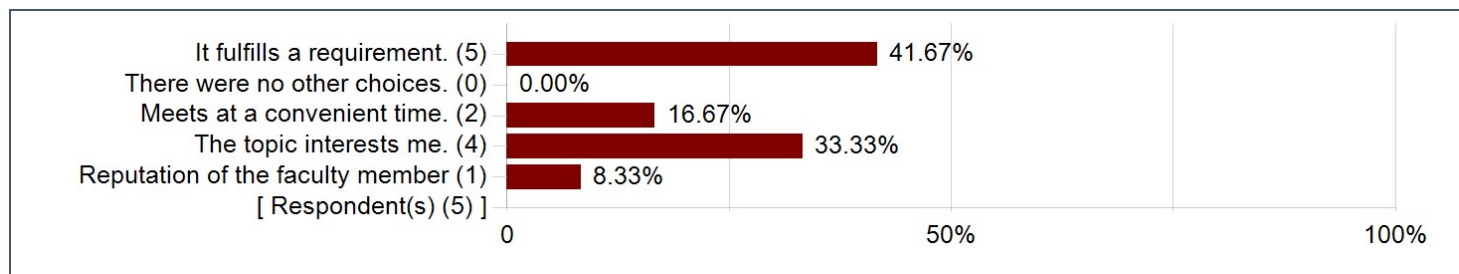
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



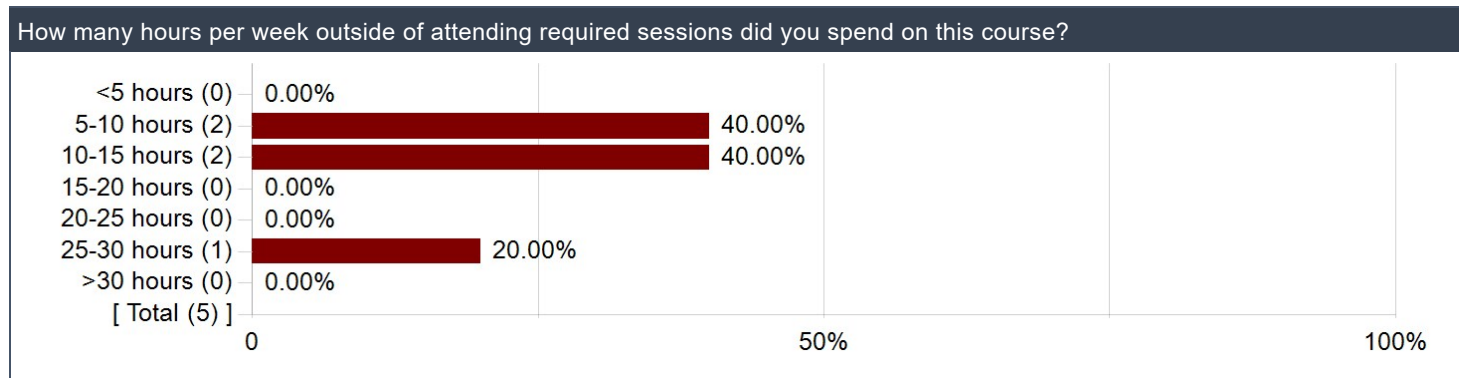
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



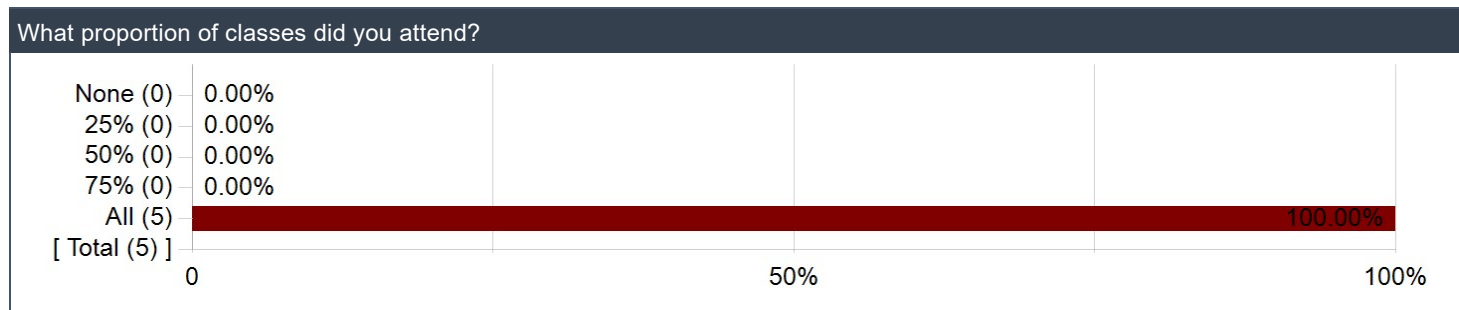
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



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
If you do the readings, you should be fine, but you will have to think beyond just the readings themselves – so make sure to take a step back when analyzing the readings to look at it at a deeper/broader level.
One of the harder humanities classes I've taken, but not too bad at all
Getting the readings done is pretty important, and doing that makes the course significantly easier to follow
This class was a very advanced challenging class that would not suit complete beginners to the subject matter
This course was substantially harder than Jewish Civ 1. It was also a LOT of work, more than for Jewish Civ 1 or for any of the 3 sections of Classics.