



# SOSC 11600 21 - Power, Identity, Resistance III - Instructor(s) - Ryan Allen

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

Number Enrolled: **12**

Number of Responses: **8**

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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: **Thursday, July 11, 2024**

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

| Comments   |
|--|
| How to digest text. I came into this course with a decent ability to read, retain, and synthesize information. After this course I feel as though I have really been tested on that ability and was pushed to improve so I developed new and better reading and note taking techniques.  |
| The most important thing that I learned in this course is the value of reading as a writer, that is, the ability to not only absorb the information in a given book that I am reading, but also the way in which this information is being presented, and incorporating these methods of presentation and style into my own writing.   |
| Learning how to read troublesome texts is probably the most important thing for my future in academic literature. The reflections that Allen made us do were really helpful towards this with argument reconstruction and hyperfocusing on parts of the text.  |
| I learned how to edit better by analyzing each individual paragraph and picking apart the sentence structure, as well as how the sentences ought to be strung together. I also learned a lot of philosophy, such as psychoanalysis and existentialism, that I hadn't been exposed to before.   |
| I learned how to engage with difficult texts effectively. My writing skills have also improved immensely.  |
| The most important skill that I learned in this class was how to give an author a full, generous, sympathetic reading before then assessing their argument and finding a moment for critique. In addition, I gained great knowledge of the classics of social and political thought, and the unique ability to trace, sociologically, how exactly it is we have ended up where we are today.             |
| Built upon concepts from previous two parts of the sequence, focusing largely on sociology, psychology, history, philosophy, etc. Course focused on enhancing writing abilities, participating in class discussions, and synthesizing past course concepts into final paper assignment.  |
| This quarter, we learned about resentment and recognition. We first studied Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals followed by Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex, Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks, and Korsgaard's Fellow Creatures. Professor Allen's section specifically honed our writing skills—instead of discussion posts, we wrote reflections on each book we read, continually improving our prose. |

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

| Comments  |
|---|
| The most beneficial part of this course to my learning was the short reflections written after every book. They require both concision and precision. You have to write clearly, accurately, and make sure you understand the reading material. Incredibly helpful  |
| The discussions were by far the most helpful part of this course. Comments from my peers about the content that we were reading and lucid explanations from the professor about a given content was crucial to my success in this course.   |
| Discussion was always engaging, and while sometimes I had nothing to say, I always had something to think about from other people or from the instructor.   |
| The discussions were thoughtfully guided. I thought that the reflections, or the 500 word argument reconstructions on certain parts of the books, were really helpful in honing my writing.   |
| The discussions were great! Office hours were a necessity.  |
| Trying to separate class discussion from written assignments from course readings is simply nonsensical. Each element gains incredible value from the play it enjoys with each other element. In reading, I first absorb an idea, in discussion I refine my understanding of it and debate with peers about various interpretations. In writing, I thoroughly embrace the idea and make it my own. The whole process is Nietzschean, in the sense that I am like a cow, ruminating on new knowledge and continuously re-digesting it, gleaning a more complete and nuanced understanding each time. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Lectures explained difficult reading concepts effectively</li> <li>–Class discussion questions created fascinating, engaging discussions</li> <li>–Instructor was readily available for office hours outside of course time, and was dedicated to enhancing learning</li> </ul>   |
| Discussions were refreshing, engaging, and solidified understanding of the books we read. Reflections helped with further understanding these works and helped us improve our writing as well. Feedback was excellent! It was direct, specific, and serious—praise where praise was due, criticism where needed. Feedback was given by Prof. Allen himself.   |

Please respond to the following:

|  | Mean | Median | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree  | Strongly Agree |
|--|------|--------|-------------------|----------|---------|--------|----------------|
| This course challenged me intellectually.  | 5.00 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 100.00%        |
| I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it. | 4.63 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 12.50%   | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 87.50%         |
| I understood the standards for success on assignments.                           | 4.75 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 12.50%  | 0.00%  | 87.50%         |
| Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.                 | 4.88 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 12.50% | 87.50%         |
| I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work. | 5.00 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 100.00%        |
| My work was evaluated fairly.  | 4.88 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 12.50% | 87.50%         |
| I felt respected in this class.  | 5.00 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 100.00%        |
| Overall, this was an excellent course.   | 5.00 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 100.00%        |

Additional comments about the course:

| Comments  |
|---|
| Prof. Allen made this class good for me.  |
| Prof. Allen makes himself available for long, one–on–one office hours, which go into great depth on ideas in the books. From them, I learned a lot about editing, got recommendations for further readings, and gained a better understanding of the course material. He's a very intelligent and kind teacher. I would highly recommend take a class from him. |
| Power is one of the most difficult social sciences cores available. Be prepared to do the long readings. They are worth it!   |
| This class could very well be my favorite class ever. No small part of that unique enjoyment is due to the professor, Ryan Allen, whose unwavering dedication to his students, constant vigilance against the pitfalls of superfluous understanding, and genuine passion for the subject material make him nothing less than the ideal social sciences teacher. |
| Excellent professor—should have tenure here.  |

I would recommend this course to:

|   | No     | Yes     |
|---|--------|---------|
| Highly-motivated and well-prepared students | 0.00%  | 100.00% |
| Anyone interested in the topic              | 12.50% | 87.50%  |

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

| Comments  |
|---|
| Professor Allen facilitated discussion incredibly well. It is clear that he knows the books he is presenting on and where discussions should be focused. Even on slower days in class he would be able to fan a discussion. His writing feedback was also frequent, and incredibly helpful. His feedback was very thorough and the frequency of writing assignments allowed me to see my progress more quickly. |
| Dr. Allen's clear explanations of difficult topics which spanned many pages were key to my understanding of the content. Additionally, the many off-syllabus resources he pointed me during discussions and office hours gave me a broader background to the content as well as piquing my academic interest in other areas we did not have time to study.  |
| The manner with which Allen led discussions was always remarkably academic, with him having a near encyclopedic knowledge of the page numbers and topics in the books. His depth of understanding and focus on sympathetic readings made the class feel like I was really engaging in productive and interesting thought.   |
| Prof. Allen's guiding of the discussion, as well as his lectures on important concepts, greatly contributed to my learning.   |
| Professor Allen was a great discussion leader and was incredibly helpful both in and outside of class. Office hours were always informative and essential to formulating ideas around what one was interested in.   |
| The aspect of Professor Allen's teaching style that contributed most to my learning was his incredible ability to mediate engaging and rigorous, but also collaborative and forgiving discussions, in which students felt free to ask questions and where misunderstanding was met, not with rebuke or censure, but with compassion and a communal striving towards genuine understanding.                      |
| Detailed comments on papers that helped me improve throughout the sequence and quarter, availability for office hours to review difficult concepts and past essays, interesting discussion questions to facilitate participation in class discussion.   |
| In discussions, he was highly engaging, passionate, and insightful. In meetings outside of class, I felt respected and was taken seriously.   |

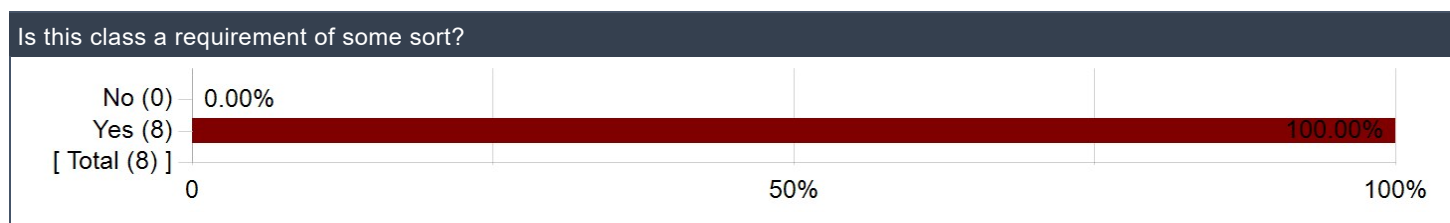
## What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

| Comments  |
|---|
| I honestly can't think of anything the professor could have done to help me learn more in this course. The professor was clear and concise in class and available and helpful outside of class. Any resource that I could have wanted to take advantage of, the professor readily provided or pointed me toward where it could be found.  |
| I wish his office hours were at a different time, I would've loved to have sat in and listened to him talk more about some of the books, but I had class during the slot he had it.   |
| I would have liked a little longer on the basic foundation of psychoanalysis, before getting into Simon de Beauvoir and Frantz Fanon.   |
| This is not necessarily something Prof. Allen could control, but I would have liked to spend more time on <i>The Second Sex</i> .   |
| Some days, especially while reading Simone de Beauvoir's " <i>The Second Sex</i> ," we would be assigned a good hundred and fifty pages or so, a brutal slog that would often require eight or more hours of dedicated focus over the course of a day and a half. While this extra reading did allow us to discuss the text in greater depth than many of the other Power sections, it is very difficult to digest such a density of information in such a short amount of time, and even were we able to digest the information completely, we rarely had time in class to cover every aspect of the reading that my classmates and I would have liked to discuss. |
| N/A   |

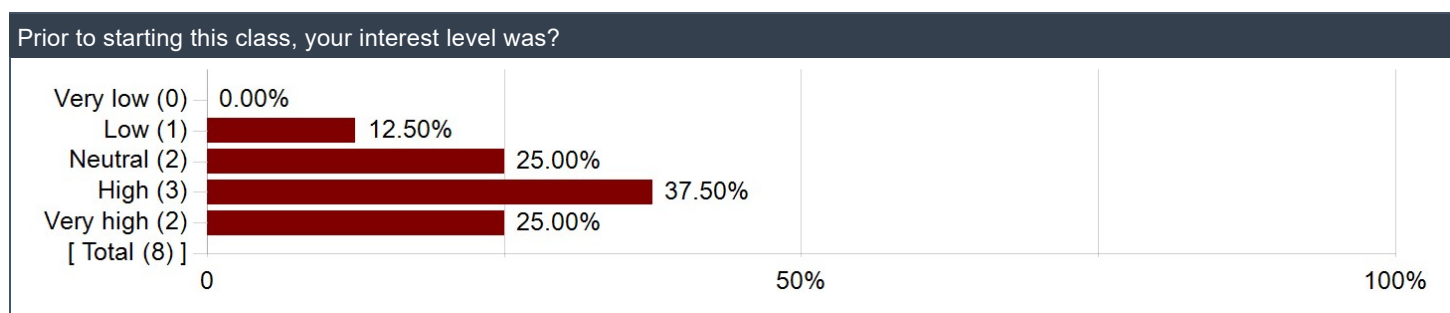
## The Instructor . . .

|  | Mean | Median | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree  | Strongly Agree | N/A   |
|--|------|--------|-------------------|----------|---------|--------|----------------|-------|
| Organized the course clearly.  | 5.00 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 100.00%        | 0.00% |
| Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.                       | 4.88 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 12.50% | 87.50%         | 0.00% |
| Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.                     | 5.00 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 100.00%        | 0.00% |
| Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.                  | 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 gain significant learning from the course content.              | 5.00 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 100.00%        | 0.00% |
| Was available and helpful outside of class.                                | 5.00 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 100.00%        | 0.00% |
| Motivated you to think independently.                                      | 5.00 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 100.00%        | 0.00% |
| Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.          | 5.00 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 100.00%        | 0.00% |
| Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning. | 5.00 | 5.00   | 0.00%             | 0.00%    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 100.00%        | 0.00% |

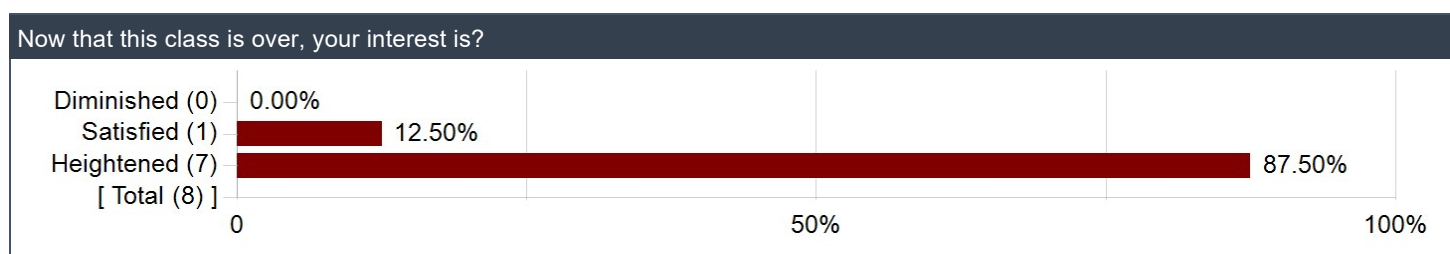
## Is this class a requirement of some sort?



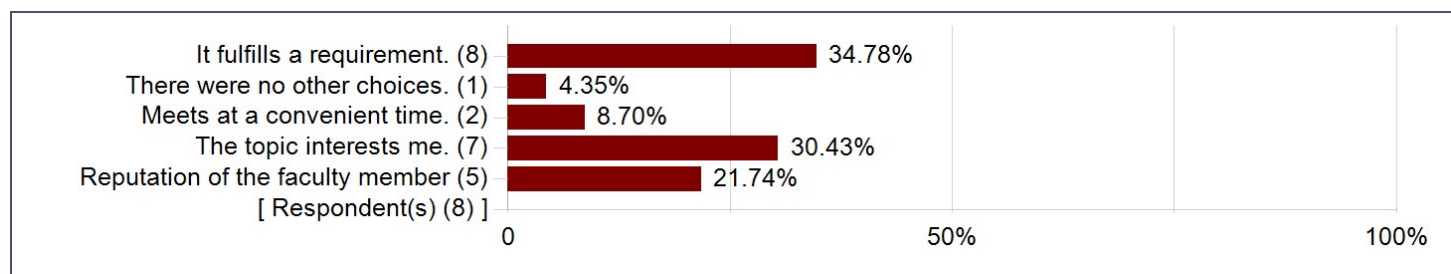
## Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



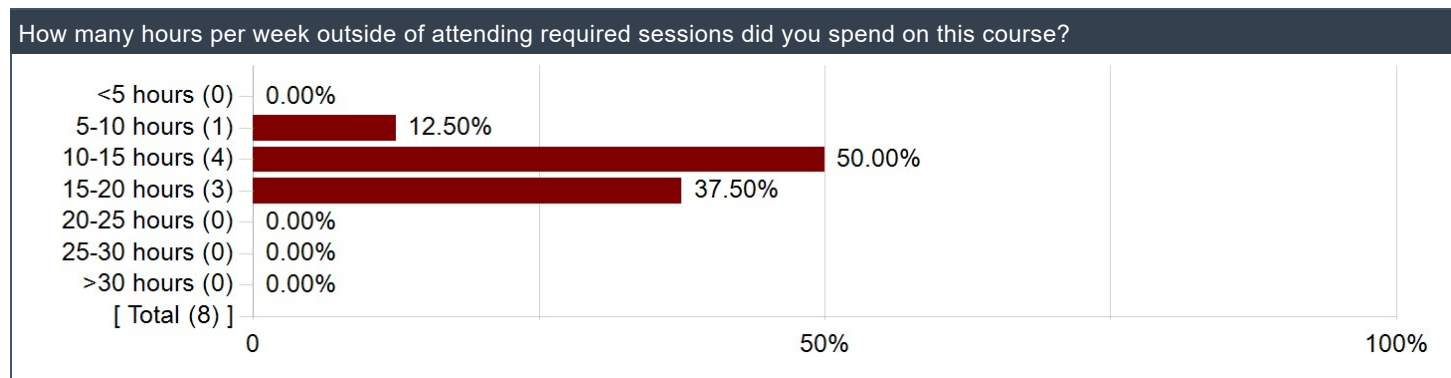
## Now that this class is over, your interest is?



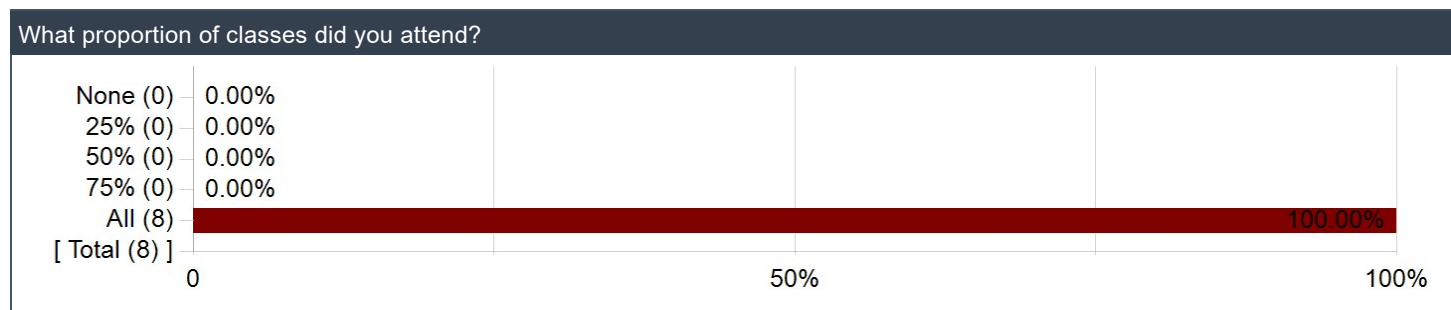
## Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



## 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  |
|---|
| In relation to other power professors Allen will require more reading a writing however his grading is incredibly fair and the extra reading and writing really pays off as the books added to the sequence are incredibly engaging and the extra writing creates more efficient writing practices which saves time in the long run                           |
| As a first year, this course was difficult, but not impossible. I believe that this course has prepared me for future college–level writing courses, and that I have gotten out as much if not more as I have put in.   |
| This class is hard. I am not a big social sciences guy, but I am fairly competent. Even with that, I struggled to keep up with readings and the near weekly writing assignments.  |
| I've read a little philosophy in high school, such as Camus and Foucault, but not to the depth that this course goes into. The course was difficult for me.   |
| If you do not have a ton of reading and writing experience, the first quarter will be tough. But, you will find a rhythm and gain essential skills! It is worth it!   |
| Reflecting on the entire Power sequence, I would list the individual classes as some of the most difficult, but also most rewarding, classes that I have taken. This quarter was no exception. However, with the experience of two quarters of Power, I felt much more confident and prepared about my ability to handle the rigors of this particular class. |
| Difficult but manageable– readings required significant time investment and essays were difficult but well worth it– writing significantly improved over course of sequence   |
| Challenging but rewarding—I am generally a solid reader but the texts still required critical thought and time devoted to careful reading.  |