



Spring 2017 - Comment Report for Robert Howton

PHIL 0450 - KNOWLEDGE & REALITY - 1100 - Lecture

2174 - Teaching Survey

Total Enrollment 116

Responses Received 59

Response Rate 50.86%

Subject Details

DEPARTMENT_CD	PHIL
CAMPUS_CD	PIT
SCHOOL_CD	ARTSC
CLASS_NBR	27852
COURSE_NUMBER	450
SECTION_NUMBER	1100

Report Comments

Responses to open-ended questions

Creation Date Thu, May 18, 2017

What were the instructor's major strengths?

Comments
organized manner
Very straightforward
Very passionate about the subject matter.
The instructor's major strengths were using examples to help teach and clarify course material.
Professor Howton always presented the material we covered in a very interesting and engaging way. He made lecture an enjoyable experience.
He was energetic and well versed in the material.
Professor Howton presents difficult information in a clear and concise way.
Very energetic, cheerful, and good at explaining complex and sometimes abstract concepts without confusing students.
thorough explanation
It was great that he had the slides online ahead of time so that i was able to take notes on the slides directly during the lecture.
Very good speaker, knowledgeable
Good use of examples, very clear slides and fair exams
Having clear and organized slides that went along with the lecture
the topics that he covered
Robert's major strengths mainly consisted in the way he could make the difficult, abstract material as relatable and clear as possible to the students in class. His lectures made the topics being covered much more understandable and easier to relate to, and this greatly helped my comprehension of the readings as well as on tests and papers.
Clarifying concepts
His lectures were fantastic! I enjoyed coming to class every day and learning from him. He did a great job and introduced the material very well
Robbie was an excellent lecturer. He was very engaging and presented the material in a thoughtful and interesting way with lots of examples
His passion for the content he was teaching
Good, clear speaking. Good at reexplaining himself if class seems confused.
He taught clearly and provided many examples and explanations.
Presented the material in a very interesting way and had be engaged since the very first unit.
clarity
Presented material in very organized manner
Really good use of examples in explanation to content
Provided great examples for concepts. Helped to simplify drawn out arguments when needed and explained complex concepts rather well. Allowed for questions and clarifications frequently.
Coherence
Spoke clearly
The examples provided gave good detail to the ideas he tried to present, and he also gave a good number of examples so that was appreciated
His clarity with the concepts and the layout of his presentations
knew a lot about topics he was teaching
Explaining definitions of philosophical concepts through examples, organizing the course material in a clear way.
Explains things very clearly with clear examples. After the explanation there is little that doesn't make sense.
He clearly knows a lot about the subject, no doubt about it. His lecture slides are incredibly helpful and the readings he

Comments
assigns aren't too challenging.
He explains things very well and is extremely thorough
He explained difficult topics well. Made good use of PowerPoints.
The lectures were
Makes complicated things abundantly clear and power points were very very organized and very very helpful
Posting the lecture slides before hand. Giving the essay prompts well in advance of the due date
He is very down to earth. It's nice to have a younger philosophy professor who uses the same vocabulary that his students would use rather than trying to be very sophisticated.
Good examples and explanations of readings
Explaining difficult concepts through examples.
Lectures were very organized and the information throughout the semester was presented in an organized manner which was very helpful. Robbie is very passionate about what he is teaching and was very willing to answer questions and make sure we understood what he was teaching during lecture.
knowledgeable, stirred thinking, respectful and open to other opinions, well structured course with clear expectations.

What were the instructor's major weaknesses?

Comments
confusing
Focuses too much on semantics and specifics
It is very ineffective to read a lecture to a class. Robbie used many complex sentences that confused the ideas and concepts even more. He was more clear when he went off script to explain something. He also said "right" way too much, Like at least once every two sentences, which was distracting and annoying.
Did not keep class engaged. Hard to follow. Bad in class examples.
None
The topics aren't the most attractive
None really come to mind! Maybe the language used to explain concepts was a little complex, so maybe try using simpler words to explain things?
Didn't always explain things in a way that was easily understandable to students
When speaking, you interject your thoughts with the word "right" a lot, which can sometimes break up your thoughts and be hard to follow (especially for people like me who are visual learners and do not do well following verbal lectures)
N`
too hard to understand his lecture. But I think it's because it's a philosophy
I cannot think of any major weaknesses to comment on.
It took a long time to get our first test and paper back
n`
Giving a lot of information and maybe too much explanation during class time. It was a lot to take in at once
None!
He did only four units for the first test but did 7 units for the second which seemed inconsistent. There was too much material to learn too suddenly.
maybe exploding into unrelated topic every so often. Not really an issue though.
Sometimes felt like he was reading a script
Unfortunately its difficult to keep students attentive in the class because of content. Maybe find ways to make class more interesting.
The lectures sometimes did not feel engaging.
Reading off slides
Talked very fast
N`
very long winded
None were apparent.
He gets a bit distracted when there is shuffling outside the lecture hall.
He is a very condescending lecturer. He says the word "right" about a hundred times over the course of one lecture. He does not explain things very simply.
N`
Some topics were explained in a topical manner and could be explained in better detail to help students understand.
Sometimes the information provided in lecture didn't prepare me for the recitation.
Posting class notes right before class time (not enough time to print and prepare notes)
More outside examples rather than just the ones in the readings would be greatly appreciated, because examples provided in the reading were hard to understand at times.
pacing around sometimes got a little distracting

What aspects of this course were most beneficial to you?

Comments
none
Good overview
Honestly I don't know.
I found the lectures and notes to be very helpful and they were accompanied well by the recitations!
The material being online.
The papers.
The course really helped me look at things in a different way, and tackle logic problems that I haven't normally tried.
recitation
Made me think about the world in a new way
Recitation in which students were able to meet and talk with other students about the material.
thinking more deeply about knowledge
The aspect of the course that was most beneficial to me was the thorough breaking down of the material being covered along with the frequent use of examples, as this made topics more personally relevant and easier to comprehend.
This course helped me to think in an entirely new way
The discussions about epistemic injustice and testimony and other things that could be applied to the ridiculousness of our modern world/government
It opened my mind to a way of thinking that I haven't had in any other class
I learned a lot about the world of empirical knowledge that can be applied to every day life.
I learned a lot of things that I didn't know about philosophy before, which was virtually nothing. This was the first step I took in philosophy and I thought it was very engaging.
everything
Gave interesting way of thinking about knowledge
The information was very interesting to learn and think about.
The course brought up new topics that I was unfamiliar with and helped to make them interesting. Helped to introduce students to fields and concepts of philosophy.
Beginning when we spoke about illusion
have a good reception teacher
I liked the idea of having alternative ways to look at things, philosophy isn't as straight forward as some other classes.
The discussion
This class was at its best when it was truly making me think about how i experience the world around me. This happened when the professor would use common or current examples to present material.
Knowledge and Reality?
The lecture slides he provides are excellent. The recitations are helpful too.
I got to work on my critical thinking and writing techniques
PowerPoints
Recitation !!!
Having the lecture slides posted for us to look at.
It really made me think in ways I never have before.
Recitation helped clarify concepts
Term papers forced me to explore the concepts deeply so I could understand and tak about them.
The papers were a good way to organize thoughts and delve into a specific topic.
critical thinking!

What suggestions do you have to improve the course?

Comments
none
Provide handouts which summarize each chapter
DO not write your lectures before hand. Stay organized but be able to give a presentation, not a confusing speech.
Offer a course with more structure. This course seems to lack quite a bit of that.
I think it would help to get grades (especially for the essays) back a bit sooner just to help make improvements for the next essays.
nothing
Less hypothetical circles of thought
No suggestions, really. Great course!
for the review sessions, it might be better to just give a review or study guide and go over things as a class like questions.
More assignments
Put example essays on course web for students to know how to format their essays, since many have never taken a philosophy course before.
give more examples to clarify the notions
I do not have any suggestions to improve the course as I found it very satisfying as it was.
N'
I wish we could have a spent a little less time on the early topics and moved into topics that are more relevant to our everyday life. Epistemic injustice, disagreement, etc. Those were by far the most interesting topics we covered, but it took so long to get there
making lecture days a little more exciting
None!
Split up the material more evenly to avoid too much sudden information.
none
Make lecture more interesting.
I do not have any suggestions.
More on the nature of knowledge itself instead of social epistemology
Less reading directly from power point slides
N'
Perhaps allow a higher word count for essays
It's pretty good, I don't know more about the content presented other than what was presented.
Better lectures. That would make this class much much better.
N'
Explain things in more detail to give the students a better understanding.
I would try to go into deeper explanation of topics to better prepare us for recitation.
I wish we could have more discussion based lectures and that the tests were more short answer based rather than just regurgitating definitions. I feel that this would have really helped me develop a deeper understanding of the subject material.
none