Student Evaluation of Teaching, Spring 2022
Samuel Schmitt, POLI 276-001 MAJ ISS POL THEORY
Mode:

Raters	Students
Responded	28
Invited	43
Response Ratio	65.1%

	Mean	Median	SD	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Overall, I learned a great deal from this course.	4.61	5.00	0.63	28	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	25.0%	67.9%
2. The instructor treated all students with respect.	4.96	5.00	0.19	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	96.4%
3. The instructor encouraged students to participate in this class.	4.89	5.00	0.31	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.7%	89.3%
4. The instructor saw cultural and personal differences as assets.	4.89	5.00	0.31	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.7%	89.3%
5. I could really be myself in this course.	4.46	5.00	0.79	28	0.0%	3.6%	7.1%	28.6%	60.7%
6. In this course I had multiple opportunities to express my viewpoints and questions.	4.79	5.00	0.42	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	21.4%	78.6%
7. The course challenged me to think deeply about the subject matter.	4.75	5.00	0.52	28	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	17.9%	78.6%
8. The design of this course (e.g., its format, selected materials, assignments, exercises, quizzes, etc.) helped me better understand the subject matter.	4.64	5.00	0.56	28	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	28.6%	67.9%
9. Overall, this course was excellent.	4.57	5.00	0.69	28	0.0%	3.6%	0.0%	32.1%	64.3%

11. The instructor held class meetings consistent with the official schedule published for this course.

Mean	SD	N	Yes	No
1.00	0.00	28	100.0%	0.0%

Department Specific

Political Science Undergraduate: Instructor Ratings

	Mean	Median	SD	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Demonstrates enthusiasm about teaching.	4.93	5.00	0.26	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%
2. Communicates clearly and logically.	4.75	5.00	0.52	28	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	17.9%	78.6%
3. Promotes a climate of mutual respect.	4.93	5.00	0.26	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%
4. Encourages student questions.	4.89	5.00	0.31	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.7%	89.3%
5. Emphasizes critical thinking.	4.93	5.00	0.26	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%
6. Uses teaching strategies that promote active involvement.	4.86	5.00	0.36	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%
7. Clearly communicates expectations for student performance.	4.79	5.00	0.42	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	21.4%	78.6%
8. Regularly provides constructive criticism of student performance.	4.61	5.00	0.63	28	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	25.0%	67.9%
9. Provides timely feedback on student performance.	4.61	5.00	0.57	28	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	32.1%	64.3%
10. Provides a fair evaluation of student performance.	4.86	5.00	0.36	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%
11. Is available when needed.	4.89	5.00	0.31	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.7%	89.3%
12. Is well-prepared for instruction.	4.93	5.00	0.26	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%
13. Overall, considering both the possibilites and limitations of the subject matter and course, I would rate this instructor as "excellent."	4.82	5.00	0.39	28	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.9%	82.1%

Political Science Undergraduate: Course Quality Ratings

	Mean	Median	SD	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. Course goals and objectives are clearly specified.	4.78	5.00	0.51	27	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	14.8%	81.5%
15. Requirements (e.g., assignments, attendance, student responsibilites) are clearly specified.	4.70	5.00	0.47	27	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29.6%	70.4%
16. Course assignments are clearly related to the course objectives.	4.74	5.00	0.45	27	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.9%	74.1%
17. Instructional methods in the course facilitate my learning.	4.81	5.00	0.40	27	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.5%	81.5%
18. In general, the course is well-organized.	4.63	5.00	0.56	27	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	29.6%	66.7%
19. Course materials stimulated critical thinking.	4.78	5.00	0.42	27	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	77.8%
20. I know significantly more about this subject than before I took this course.	4.73	5.00	0.45	26	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	26.9%	73.1%
21. Overall, considering its content, design, and structure, I would rate this course as "excellent."	4.63	5.00	0.69	27	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	14.8%	74.1%

Open-Ended Responses

1. In what ways did your instructor make learning possible for you during the Spring 2022 semester?

Comments
The best way he engaged us all was through the group project held throughout the semester. While somewhat challenging, this project help is to apply some of what we learned to real world topics.
Professor was very helpful and always available to his students. He was very optimistic and really made you dive into the material critically. He was always available to students after class, during office hours, and very responsive to emails. He was also very helpful when dealing with other situations outside the classroom. Overall, Professor really cares for his students and always mentally checked–in with us everyday. I have never had a professor who was as genuine and nice as Schmitt.
Very good, organized, and thought–out lectures with real life examples and many opportunities for student participation. Fun guy, good personality.
Sam made learning possible for me during the Spring 2022 semester through a consistent schedule that did little changing and holding engaging lectures. I was able to learn easily through Sam because he did not skim over anything lightly, he made everything very clear to the class and answered all of our questions to the best of his ability.
He was very understanding and flexible but also made class engaging so I never dreaded going.
He fostered great debate and gave us a chance to talk about what we were confused on.
Sam was enthusiastic about the material, he encouraged questions and challenges to his lectures, and he was always available to answer questions.
He really tried to foster in–class discussion with multiple questions, talking with classmates, and splitting into groups.
Sam engaged with the readings, that we did for homework, in class and we also had very good in–depth conversations regarding the subject matter. We followed power–points and then had conversations following those lectures.
The class was based on discussion with peers of the readings we completed, and group project.
It’s clear this was a well thought out structured course that leaned on actually proven methods of teaching and learning rather than the typical structured drabble of a ”normal” classroom. Sam gave us many opportunities to discuss and learn from each other rather than just talking at us and expecting us to absorb the information.
We were able to tailor the instruction to the necessary form of the class. Some classes needed to be lectures on content. Some classes needed to be more open–ended where questions could be asked. Some classes need to be focused on group work. Professor Schmitt allowed for all of these to take place when necessary and allowed for solid group cohesion to take place.
Sam was very accessible over the course of the semester, creating lots of time to meet outside of class if I had any questions or concerns about the course. In class, he encouraged us to think critically about the course material and made a greta attempt to make sure we understood the core concepts. Even if sometimes I got lost or confused I never felt hopeless in this class.
In the beginning of the semester, Sam consistently had a Zoom option available for students which made the class very accessible. He also created space for open dialogue within the classroom, which made me feel like he placed a lot of emphasis on student opinion/thoughts – not all instructors do this.
By presenting different ways of thinking about problems in a more practical sense, by using the question what should we do it became more engaging and helped learning because of what it meant to me.
Sam made learning possible by assigning relevant readings outside of class and explaining them clearly and concisely during lecture. He also facilitated discussion between students, which allowed for a deeper understanding of the material. He made himself readily available after class and during office hours for questions.
He made learning possible by being available to students outside of class. Also, by ensuring that days where people were sick or he himself was sick that the class was held via zoom and class material was not lost. Sam also always provided feedback to papers and ideas before submission.
Sam always had a positive attitude and responded to questions very thoroughly!
Very open with office hours and meeting with groups. Did have a strict attendance policy. Everything was turned in online and accessible on Sakai. Cognizant of events outside the class that would impaired students abilities to be their best and adjusted accordingly.
During the Spring 2022 semester, Sam really made sure that everyone understood what he was talking about. He happily answered any questions we had and did not treat any

Comments
questions as stupid or repetitive, even if we thought so. Sam really valued collaboration and gave us opportunities to talk with peers to help clarify anything we may be hesitant on.
Sam made learning really accessible by giving us all the required reading materials rather than making us buy a textbook, which I really appreciated.
Sam was really great with availability and meeting whenever needed. He also was very good with Covid by requiring mask wearing during the first part of the semester and making it optional without any stigma either way following the end of the mandate. He was very kind to everyone and helpful with all aspects of the course.
He made it easy to follow the lectures and the readings were very related to the material. This made it easier to under both the readings and the lectures.
He really encouraged discussion among the students in this class and active participation. His energy was always very engaging and helped make the course content enjoyable and easily comprehensible.
Sam combined readings on political thought with a course–long group project that asked us to think and apply the readings on a deeper level, which overall encouraged better understanding of the course material. His lectures on the readings helped to make them more accessible and understandable.
He allowed and encouraged class discussion, questions, and simulations that allowed us to get to know our peers and the course material better.

2. Which aspects of this course should be kept for future times this course is taught?

Comments
I enjoyed the journal prompts because they made you think on a deeper level while also considering our own background/beliefs. I also enjoyed the presentations at the Hanes Art Center because it allowed us to present our work in front of other people. I also liked how we were able to work on our poster presentation skills which are vital for the future. Moreover, i learned a lot through the group projects by working with my group through deliberation and cooperation. Although it wasn't easy at times, I found a way to overcome the bumps along the way and successfully complete the project without giving group–members sanctions. Through this group project, I was able to realize how important how much you can accomplish compared to just doing everything yourself.
All of it!
I definitely think all aspects of this course should be kept. The journal entries especially were helpful and insightful as they helped me further understand and look into the course material. I think the journal entries will help future students retain the readings taught in this class.
I really enjoyed the lectures they helped me understand the course readings
The group project, the debates, and the reading.
Although the main project was intimidating, it was really fun, rewarding, and it allowed students a chance to interact with the community.
In–class discussion and the poster presentation paired with the public lecture were particularly interesting.
I think the lectures were well done and the conversations that we had in class were really helpful.
Parts of the group project, enjoyed most of the readings.
The emphasis on conversation and discussion and the structure with the individual paper, group paper, and then poster project.
The course was as far as I could tell perfect. The course was formatted in the proper way and I would not change a thing.
The group poster presentation should definitely be kept. I think that was the strongest aspect of this course and it made the learning of course material feel worth it.
I thought the culmination of our work at the end was really cool, and brought the course full circle. The readings were insightful and I learned a lot.
I liked the length of the group project. by being over almost the entire semester it helped really engage deeply on one specific issue
I would keep almost every aspect of the course for future times. Although it was hard work and uncomfortable at times, I think that all of the assignments and projects made for a better understand and deeper appreciation of the practical uses of the material.
The group project was a great culminating point of the course.
All of the aspects, I learned a lot.
Almost all of the readings were super interesting. All of the very helpful and constructive feedback on assignments.

Comments
I really loved the group project embedded in this course. I also liked the Q&A sessions we had with Sam that integrated real life and political theory. Being someone who does not like politics or political discussions, I can honestly say that the structure and content of the course interested me and taught me about how to be a good citizen and member of society.
I enjoyed the chosen course materials and think they all came together really well in the end with the group project. Going off of that, I think the group project should definitely be kept because it allowed us to make real world applications of what we learned in the local community and required us to examine how different theories can combine in one problem.
The overall course structure was very good. The group project in particular was very helpful for learning and the format of the tests and journal entries were also very good. Overall this course was very well structured to promote learning.
Variety of projects, especially presentation and group projects.
I think the journal entries were especially helpful in really understanding the content on a deeper level. Also, the project taught me how to work in group settings well and learn about meaningful topics within the community, beyond just the classroom. I thought the content as a whole was really applicable to the project and made the class feel very full circle and real.
The group project, while initially seemed very daunting, turned out to be very engaging and fulfilling. It helped me learn more about the course material and about problems within the Chapel Hill community. The lectures on each reading also should be kept, as they helped me better understand the course concepts and reading material.
The group project was awesome, and I really liked how much discussion was an element of the class.

Department Specific

Please comment on the strengths of the course.

Comments
Group–project because we were able to work with other peers to develop a paper, poster, and present.
The readings and philosophers that were chosen for the objectives of this course were perfect and helped me to easily understand the subject matter. The lectures following the readings also further helped my understanding and I enjoyed being able to talk/relate to my peers about the subject matter.
The ability to ask questions
I think your teaching and the early readings in this course were the strongest parts. The later readings were helpful but didn't feel as relevant as the Ostrom, Hardin and Fishkin.
It is strutted in a way that challanages your critical thinking skills and helps you learn a lot of different schools for thinking.
The course allowed for quality discussion on what it means to be a good citizen, and then proceeds to act on it by encouraging students to engage with the Chapel Hill community.
A strength was trying to get us to think about this material and apply it to our everyday lives. Many poli sci courses use theories that aren't personal or are removed from the individual, so this course was very different and challenging. Yet, it seems to have more daily and individual applications than many other philosophy and political theory courses.
I think we talked about a wide range of topics and that engaged with different aspects of everyday life.
I enjoyed most of the readings, some were dense and hard to understand. Also enjoyed the group project, but it was worth a large percentage compared to exams and other assignments.
Overall, the structure of the course is its strength.
The strength of the course is the way in which reading and class discussion are intertwined. The expectations are clearly laid out where you come to class having prepared yourself with the reading and are able to discuss it and get Professor Schmitt's thoughts which will be more complex than our own. He creates an open space for questions and is always patient when we do not understand.
Communicative classroom environment, engaging readings, group work, fairly composed exams
I thought the readings were well chosen, and they all fit together to provide a comprehensive amount of information. I also liked the structure of the course, discussing with my

Comments
classmates and peers made learning more feasible. I also think that seeing everyone's group work at the end (during the mini conference) was really cool because not only did I get to see the efforts of my peers, but everyone's project prompted me to think more deeply about the issue at hand.
it helped think about issues differently to how they are often taught in other courses by emphasising what we can do about them, and how we might do this. Used a lot of different ways of thinking about issues across different disciplines (PPE)
The strengths of the course are the practical applications of the material, which we were (gently) forced to recon with through our group projects.
The course certainly caused me to think more deeply about questions in political theory. Working in a group reinforced the idea of collective action and deliberation. It proved to be essential to understanding that it is difficult to get people to work together, specially large groups. However, this course did provide thinking tools to decipher the problems of everyday political questions. What should we do is often difficult to answer, but after this course I have a clearer path to how I might go about answering that, and helping others think through these issues.
sam
Everything contributes towards a further understanding of the course material. There was no busy work. Almost all the readings were super interesting and built off of past readings, which helped facilitate continued use and deeper understanding of the material. Expectations and prompts always very clear.
–group work –relevant, contemporary political theory –enthusiastic professor –engaging topics –fun project
I really enjoyed this course because its main focus was applying political theories to everyday problems, which I think often gets overlooked in other political theory courses. Often in those courses, the theories appear to be very large ideas meant for action at the governmental level, but this class helped make those theories more accessible and applicable for students.
The group project is really really good for learning and applying knowledge.
Active participation from the students teaches makes the content easier to understand
I think the active engagement of students in this course, as well as the collaborative environment and the application of the course content to a project that is meaningful to the community was a great way to learn political philosophy as it applies to everyday life.
The course was very strong, especially the first half, of getting students to think critically about the course material and apply broad political theory to daily life. It promoted apply theory to everyday life, helping ingrain the material better.
Class discussion and feedback were always top priority for Sam, and it showed that he really cared about his students and our success.

Please comment on the limitations of the course.

Comments
Some of the limitations would no hybrid option for students who contracted COVID–19.
I didn't enjoy how we stopped doing journal entries, although they took a load off of me, because they helped me better retain the material I was learning so I could use it on exams. I definitely think that journal entries should be continued throughout the semester.
The group project was heavily weighted on our grade and some of the expectations were a little unclear.
The group project being focused on the earlier readings seemed to disincentivize me from investing as deeply into the later readings.
The time. We did not have enough time to go into everything on a deeper level.
The readings were a bit long for a two day turn around.
Obviously, the lessons might be limited in actual practice since we'd have to start very small to be able to build very big in terms of getting people to cooperate to achieving social transformation. But almost anything can have a realistic scope limitation.

Comments
I think this class was a lot of work for a 200 level course. The readings could become extremely long to the point where I was no longer engaging with them. Also, the structure of the group paper was very strange to me and I found it really hard to write alongside 4 other people. I liked the group presentations, however it was a bit stressful having a massive presentation due right before finals. It was just a lot packed into a short amount of time.
Grading of the group project, did not like the way sanctions were set up! Made it difficult to work together at times because if you punished someone you still had to continue working with them on the project and they knew, I believe this needed to be anonymous!
The course is pretty heavily dependent on a lot of reading and active participation by the students which can be difficult when there are peers who don’t do the reading or don’t want to discuss it.
There is a lot of reading. That means on rare occasions we have to move on to a new topic even when we would rather stay on a specific reading. However, nothing can be done about that.
While I listed group work as one of the strengths of the course, it was also a weakness based on how much of our grade was dependent on the group's overall performance (40%). I think moving forward, the group work should be worth less of the grade and midterms should be worth a bit more. With the two midterms each being only 5%, there is not much incentive to study and do well on those except that it will help you out in later parts of the course. Also, having a significant portion of the grade be based on other people was very daunting, even if we put rules in place to try to avoid people slacking off.
Some of the readings were long, I know this is inescapable but there it is.
Sometimes it felt like we covered material really quickly and didn't go into so much depth about it. I liked that we spent one entire week on someone like Krause but other times it felt like it was so quick it was difficult to go into a lot of depth.
The limitations of the course are the time constraints. We could have kept learning about some of the material for weeks, but had to move on. Similarly we could have kept working on our projects for years, but had to wrap them up before the semester ended.
I do not have anything to comment
nothing
Sometimes a bit more information rather than discussion during lectures would be nice.
–lots of reading –deep thinking for a tired brain
I think that there were a lot of readings, which is fine, but I would have enjoyed fewer readings and more discussion on others. For example, although I think that we discussed Fishkin a considerable amount (enough to be knowledgable of the content), I think spending even more time on Fishkin and having more peer discussions on the topic would've been really interesting.
Too little time to work. The group paper in particular felt very rushed.
Some parts are harder to understand and given the number of topics and projects, not enough time is given to topics that need longer to be understood
In my opinion, there are very few limitations to this course so I'm having a hard time identifying one.
I think the material of second half of the course was limited by the group project. After using the perspectives from the first half of the course on the project, and then focusing on finishing the group project, the material from the second half wasn't able to get the full attention and study as the first half.
None. I really enjoyed this.

Please comment on the strengths of the instructor.

Comments
He pushed students to think critically.
Sam was obviously very passionate about his job and what he was teaching. It was clear that he cared about us as students and made sure that no one was left behind. He always encouraged us to speak with him, even if it wasn't pertaining to the class, which definitely made us all feel closer to him as an instructor. He also always gave constructive criticism on our papers/projects which it seems many instructors are afraid to do. The constructive criticism helped us all learn how to do better.

Comments
Very understanding and engaging
He's very charismatic and clearly cares about the source material. A lot of grad student teachers I've worked with didn't seem to care much.
Communicates clearly and great teacher. Energetic, and knew the material well.
Sam is compassionate, encouraging, and he makes himself available to answer questions.
His enthusiasm and "realness" translated very well. He could read the room on student attention and involvement, and would actively try to help was when we weren't doing so hot.
I think Sam is super engaging and encouraging with the students. He provided a really fun learning experience because he related to all of us and made it an environment where we felt comfortable and at ease. He also translates the readings and the work in a way that makes sense for the students and often uses humor to do so, which I really appreciated and valued as a way of learning.
Was very energetic and engaging during class discussions.
Sam is very charismatic, approachable, and explains things in a very kind and sympathetic manner. He is very receptive to student feedback and constantly encourages it. He is able to create a classroom dynamic that is enjoyable to be a part of and clearly has an intense passion for that which he is teaching. He’s certainly one of my best instructors, and given that he is a grad student I think that says a lot.
Professor Schmitt is knowledgeable in his subject field and demonstrates a true passion for teaching and learning. He is engaging in class even in the morning and gets the best out of his students.
Very passionate and engaged with the material; created an environment where all students views were respected; Wanted all of us to succeed
Throughout the course, it really felt like Sam cared about our success as students. Even when faced with obstacles regarding group work, he made sure that everyone's work was recognized appropriately and that everyone's voice was heard. He also plays good music.
very enthusiastic, explains things well, seems to genuinely care about students' questions
Sam is an excellent instructor. He is an engaging lecturer. He gives good feedback on assignments. He makes himself available for questions and never makes you feel like you have a bad question.
Sam is motivated and shows that he deeply cares about the material and people. He is a sharp thinker, and one learns from seeing him work through ideas.
hes a great teacher who brings everything he has to the table every class.
Very receptive instructor. Always willing to talk, give feedback, and be there and advocate for his students. Also very knowledgeable and clearly cares a great deal about this course and his students
–very engaging –very passionate –contextualizes –gives examples –uses real world language that is easy to understand
Sam was really enthusiastic and helpful throughout the entire course. It was evident that he put a lot of care and time into the course, which made it much easier for students to do the same. He went out of his way to meet up with students to discuss topics outside of class and office hours, and made himself available to discuss topics such as grad school, which isn't necessarily part of the course, but was still an important discussion that many students needed/wanted to hear.
Really great guy who is passionate and knowledgeable. Helpful but also challenges students. One of the best instructors I have had.
He is bright and passionate about the topics. He clearly understands them very well and is good at explaining.
Sam made the course extremely engaging and interesting, he had great energy and fostered a positive and collaborative environment between all of his students. He encouraged people to express their views and opinions and provided constructive criticism that helped us grow as learners. Excellent professor.
Sam is incredibly energetic, and brings excitement to potentially unexciting topics. His engagement with students helps us think about the material on a deeper level, and his strong understanding of each concept encourages this.

Comments
Sam is a well–prepared, smart, and personable professor. We all really appreciate his dedication to our learning and his own. Phenomenal teacher and man, always enthusiastic to be with us.

Please comment on the limitations of the instructor.

Comments
Lectures were sometimes tough to get by.
Honestly, nothing. I thought he was great.
Sometimes he passes by the slides too fast. But that's about it.
N/A
Not really any I can think of. Maybe answering questions in more layman's terms could help sometimes, especially when students are confused versus answering with the same terms as our readings.
As a professor I do not see any limitations of Sam. As a class I just feel that we crammed a lot into the semester and that at times I felt the work load, such as the group paper/project got to be too much.
None.
I wouldn’t say there are any in particular that bothered me. I could see some people might not want a teacher who is a little more casual and real with them (that being said Sam did make it abundantly clear that he was not our “friend” but our instructor).
The only limitation is the class period length.
Sometimes he would over–explain and think his way into a hole when trying to teach concepts, but I never felt that this was a hindrance especially since he would usually catch himself doing that and take steps to improve.
N/A
He could be slightly more prompt with grading, but considering the scope of the course and other factors, it is really not a big deal. He is still much more prompt than other professors I have had.
Don't change!
none.
None really
–unavailable to give me life advice 24/7 even if I want it because he is a busy and impressive guy
Nothing that I can think of
Not really any come to mind.
Sometimes he makes the student discuss about a topic that we don’t completely understand yet, and more time should be dedicated to explaining the subject
I cannot think of any.
N/A
None.