

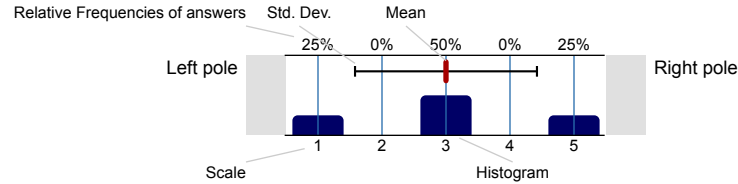
Patrick Frierson

Western Philosophy Trad:modern (PHIL-202-A-14fall: Western Philosophy Trad:modern)
No. of responses = 9

Survey Results

Legend

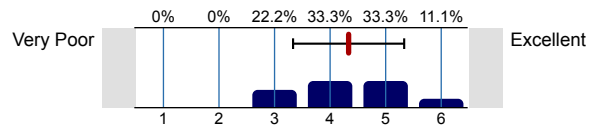
Question text



n=No. of responses
 av.=Mean
 dev.=Std. Dev.
 ab.=Abstention

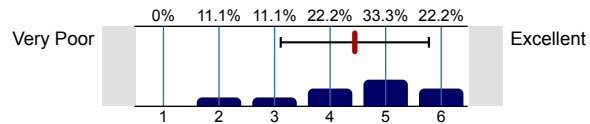
1. About the Course:

1.1) This course as a whole was:



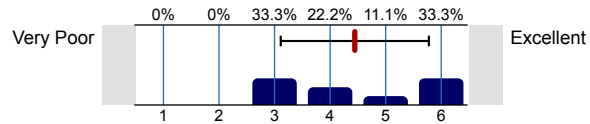
n=9
 av.=4.3
 dev.=1

1.2) The course organization was:



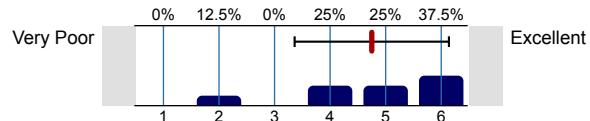
n=9
 av.=4.4
 dev.=1.3

1.3) The clarification of student responsibilities in this course was:



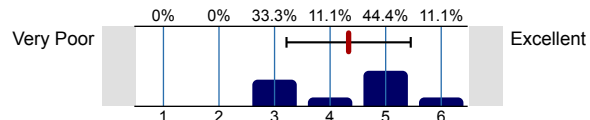
n=9
 av.=4.4
 dev.=1.3

1.4) The value of the course in increasing your analytical or interpretive skills:



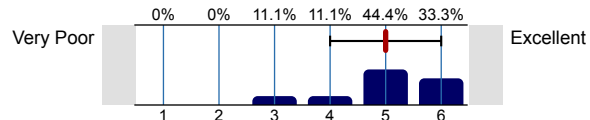
n=8
 av.=4.8
 dev.=1.4

1.5) The extent to which this course stimulated your intellectual curiosity was:



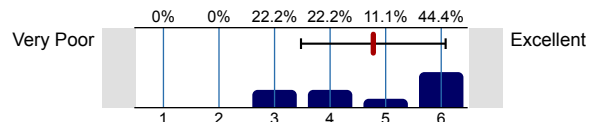
n=9
 av.=4.3
 dev.=1.1

1.6) The value of the assigned work was:



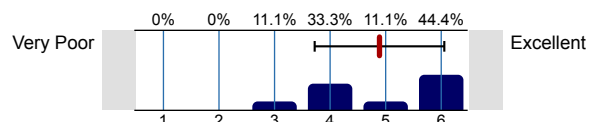
n=9
 av.=5
 dev.=1

1.7) The instructor's ability to present the subject matter clearly was:



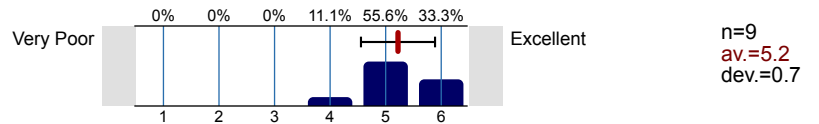
n=9
 av.=4.8
 dev.=1.3

1.8) The instructor's answers to student's questions were:

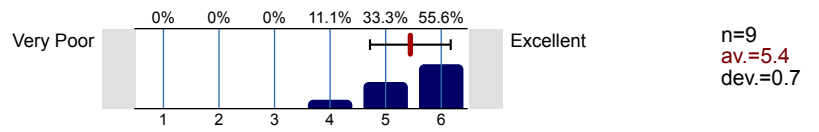


n=9
 av.=4.9
 dev.=1.2

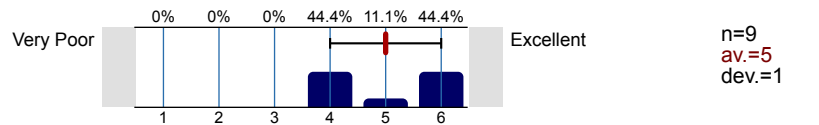
1.9) The evaluation methods (tests, papers, projects, performances, etc) were:



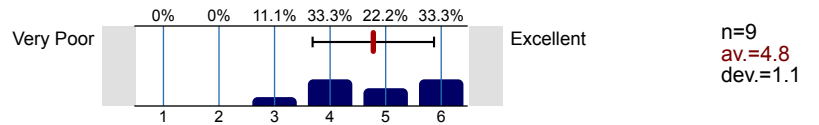
1.10) The value of the instructor's comments on tests, papers, projects, performances, etc were:



1.11) The availability of extra help when needed was:



1.12) The general, overall teaching ability of the instructor in the course was:



Comments Report

1. About the Course:

1.13) What aspects of the content of this course were especially good?

- I think we covered a broad range of philosophers in a short period of time, and were able to get a good overview of the thoughts of each one.
- Kant and Hume
- Readings/Philosophers I liked the most: Elisabeth (she wins the award for being the clearest), Berkeley, Kant. I really liked the Berkeley project. Projects in general were much better than the individual assignments.
- The fact that the readings were all in one place was incredibly useful. Otherwise, I really valued working with primary text, and although we had long readings, I liked the exposure to so many different philosophers.
- The main philosophers (Descartes, Spinoza, Conway, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant) seem pretty solid; the selections all seemed carefully chosen and relevant, and while they are really challenging to understand, I appreciated working through each of them. I like the flexibility in the forms of assessment for the course, and I found the group projects especially beneficial to learning about each philosopher. I also appreciated the presentations, although it was a little unclear how much we were supposed to know about the philosophers who we learned about only through presentation. Reading guides are very helpful, though perhaps could be slightly less extensive (the Kant one seemed the best for me to work with, though I'm not sure I could explain why). I'm not sure about the daily quizzes; only works if they are low-pressure, and I'm not sure that's entirely possible given the rigor of the course.
- The student presentations on philosophers that we didn't read much about.
- We went over a lot of philosophers that had different opinions but there was a clear direction that showed how each philosopher gained/argued against the past philosophers. Good mix of women and men philosophers that provided different opinions.

1.14) What aspects of the teaching of this course were especially good?

- Honestly, I disliked a lot of the content enough that it made it hard to appreciate Professor Frierson's teaching.
On the upside, this is the only philosophy course I have encountered that has made it really clear what types of papers are expected. Other philosophy classes expect different types of papers: analytic vs. historical/exegetical, but don't do a great job of explaining exactly what they expect and how those papers will be different from other philosophy papers.
- Professor Frierson is incredibly good at explaining philosopher's viewpoints, concepts, proofs, etc. He seems able to answer any questions knowledgeably and his passion for modern philosophy is contagious.
- Professor Frierson knows philosophy extremely well, and it shows. His explanations reflected a deep understanding of the material, and he did a great job of leading one philosopher into another, so that we would get an idea of how each mode of thought influenced the others and how each was similar to and different from the others.
- Second half of the semester with more lectures, and the over-arching idea days like mind-body day and free will day
- The chalk stuck. I can't disassociate it.
Generally the structure of class discussion assisted us in working towards an understanding of each of the philosophers. Lecture and discussion seemed relatively well-balanced. Professor Frierson clearly has a very nuanced, strong understanding of the subject matter, which made our discussions engaging and challenging.
- The variety of group projects was fun and Professor Frierson was always willing to help during office hours.
- The variety of group projects we could choose from made us apply what we learned in different ways. I also really liked how we could choose what would make up the 50% of our grade so we had more control over the assignments we did.
- Very engaging and clear. Good balance of lecture and discussion.

1.15) What changes could be made to improve the teaching or content of this course?

- Emailing everyone the choices they made for the projects they said they wanted to do.
- I didn't think that the reading quizzes were much help at the beginning of class. The material was hard enough to comprehend after reading once and the quizzes just caused anxiety. Since the material was already hard to understand the quizzes did not benefit the student very much.
- I see this class as having a major problem: There's an immense workload, but the content is very dry. Where does one find the motivation

to complete the workload? This problem could be resolved in 2 ways: (1) Reduce the workload, preferably by reducing the number of philosophers covered. I would have preferred more depth and focus on fewer philosophers. (2) Make it be about ethics, not metaphysics! I never understood why it had to be all about metaphysics.

But generally, the workload should be reduced regardless. It is misleading to call this class Philosophy 202. I had to put in twice as much time in as I put into Ancient to do equally well, and it rivaled or surpassed my 300-400 level philosophy seminars in workload.

Finally, group projects were the same amount of work as papers and presentations, but were worth twice as much. Why?

- I would warn students ahead of time about the high expectations in this course. It seems like it's intended to make you struggle, and it's good to be prepared for that. I also don't think it's reasonable for students to be expected to have thoroughly done the reading twice before class; a little more openness to simple clarification questions and coming to class not having fully understood would have made me feel more comfortable and ready to share thoughts and questions in class, although I know you may not want lowered expectations for the class.

I know there's a lot of information to fit on the syllabus, but maybe some condensing and clarification would be helpful.

Finally, the midterm study guide did not include any of the philosophers we learned about in presentations or shorter readings, and the final study guide did not include Conway.

- Less reading-- a lot of the time I felt like there was so much reading that I couldn't fully understand anything. Less is more with dense philosophy reading.
I also didn't like how much of Kant we were expected to read at the end of the semester when Kant was easily the most difficult philosopher we read.
- More deliberate connections between philosophers, and ways that new theories are responding to older ideas/writers
- The course could be much more organized. Readings were sometimes not posted until very late, study materials were not always available when they were supposed to be, and the overall structure of the course was not very well-explained. A clearer grading system would also be nice. I appreciated the thought behind a number system (as opposed to letter grades), but I was (and am) unsure what the numbers really meant, even after reading the descriptions of each score. I think it ended up added to my stress, rather than taking away from it.
- The mid-semester evals took care of this, but I felt that the daily quizzes didn't really accurately represent my understanding of the readings, because I often needed in-class discussion and clarification along with the readings.

^{1.16)} Additional Comments

- How Professor Frierson can devote his entire career to modern philosophy, I have no idea. Our brains must just work completely differently.
- This course is very difficult. The material is hard to comprehend from just the reading and class discussion sometimes did not help very much in clarifying the reading.