

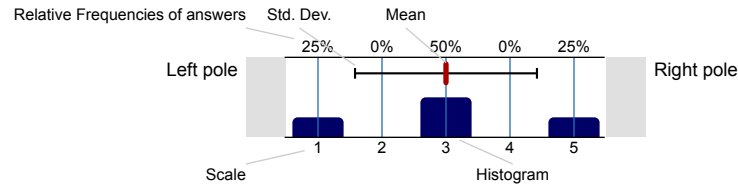
Patrick Frierson

Western Philosophy Trad:modern (PHIL-202-A-15fall: Western Philosophy Trad:modern (PHIL-202-A-15fall))
No. of responses = 17

Survey Results

Legend

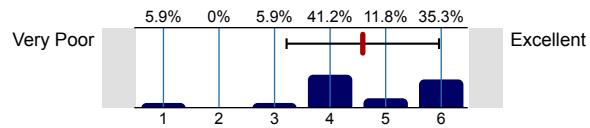
Question text



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

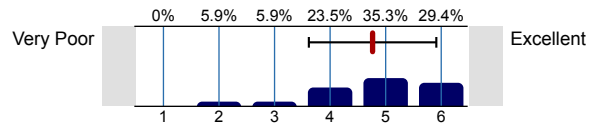
1. About the Course:

1.1) This course as a whole was:



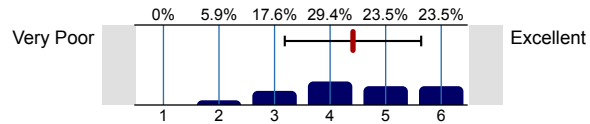
n=17
av.=4.6
dev.=1.4

1.2) The course organization was:



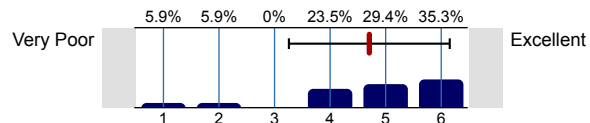
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dev.=1.1

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



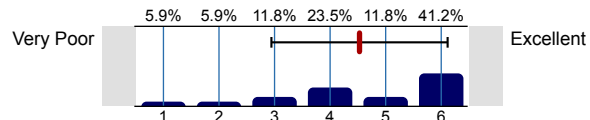
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dev.=1.2

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



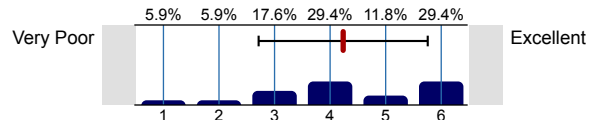
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av.=4.7
dev.=1.4

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



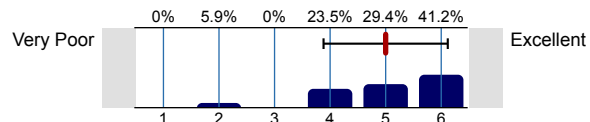
n=17
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dev.=1.6

1.6) The value of the assigned work was:



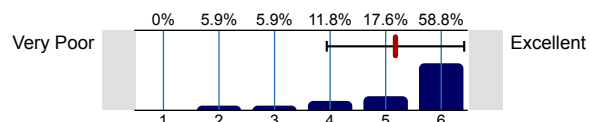
n=17
av.=4.2
dev.=1.5

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



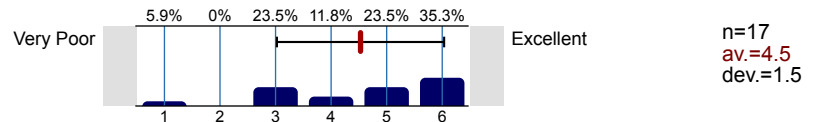
n=17
av.=5
dev.=1.1

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

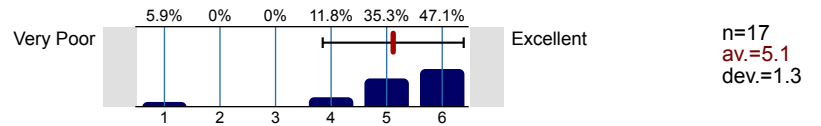


n=17
av.=5.2
dev.=1.2

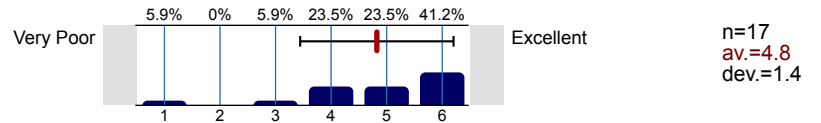
1.9) The evaluation methods (tests, papers, projects, performances, etc) were:



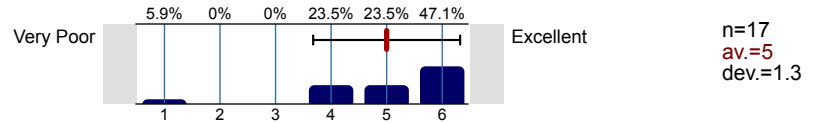
1.10) The value of the instructor's comments on tests, papers, projects, performances, etc were:



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?

- All the readings were tough but interesting, I really enjoyed the content.
- Descartes, Spinoza, and Locke units
Philosopher presentations
Following metaphysics/epistemology with ethics for each philosopher -- it was really cool to see how the ethics build up from the metaphysics for each philosopher
- Everything was interesting, and shown to be historically relevant. All engaging thinkers whose ideas flowed nicely from one to another throughout the semester.
- Hobbes and Locke. They seemed to engage me the most.
- I enjoyed that we included some philosophical discussions in our readings, especially the letter type, where one philosopher criticized the other. It really helped to be able to directly compare two philosophers on the exact same issue and cemented the views of philosophers as clearly and distinctly different.
- I like the progression of philosophers and ideas
- It is comprehensive, there is a vast quantity of literature to cover in a very condensed amount of time.
- Modern is intended to provide a key foundation for all philosophy majors, and Frierson's class was no exception. I enjoyed learning about key figures such as Descartes, Locke, Hume etc. Modern also stretched me to engage with difficult metaphysical and epistemic arguments, which, although I find them challenging and less interesting than other philosophical subjects, nevertheless pushed me to grow as a philosopher.
- Professor's knowledge of the course content was very high, good job of explaining and helping you reach an understanding of the main concepts for the course.
- The authors
- The creative syllabus. Allowing students to pick their projects was something I especially liked, and have not seen so far in other classes.
- The group projects were interesting and creative. I gained much more insight into the philosophers by doing them.
- learning foundational ideas/concepts of philosophers helped connect to the other philosophy classes I've taken

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

- Able to keep students engaged in class
- Even though there were many yellow chalk references, the clarification on many of the complicated ideas was often well presented and made understandable.
- First off, I think it is necessary that I say that Professor Frierson is undoubtedly the best professor I have had at Whitman College. In teaching this course, he has an incredibly unique way of asking probing questions to students to facilitate really productive class discussions without actually leading them himself. When he answers questions, he is always directly to the point, clear, and helpful. The way Professor Frierson grades papers is another really important part of his teaching style. Every paper has a multitude of comments and questions, and really helps facilitate improvement. Over this semester I have noticed my writing is getting more clear and concise, and his feedback on written assignments is a big part of that.
- Given the sheer amount of information piled into this course, I find Frierson's ability to organize all of it in any kind of coherent format rather impressive. I found Frierson's capacity for distilling complex and repetitive passages of, frankly very old, text into concise and compelling diagrams or schematics of historically important problematics, graceful and artful. Frierson is a serious resource and throughout the class I felt as though I was observing the tip of an iceberg of thought that clearly occupied a massive space below the ocean's surface. I would just like to see more of that iceberg above the waters, and less of it lost in a foggy haze of tightly packed readings.
- Patrick expects his students to have thought enough on their own and accordingly does not simply answer easy questions for them, but when there is a genuinely difficult passage, he has just the right mixture of guidance and exploration to help everyone get it. Fantastic.
- The chalk analogies were nice, because we used them for every philosopher, which really helped to bring different ideas together by looking at how different philosophers talked about the same things.
- The instructor brings excitement and passion to every class. He really cares about the material, and enjoys engaging with it. He answers

student questions excellently, and has such a solid understanding of the material that he can adjust to any comments that students make and integrate it seamlessly into his lectures. He also presents philosophers' ideas in a way that is helpful for students to understand.

- The lectures made difficult readings more accessible. Professor Frierson creates an open space for students to ask questions. He also opens up additional philosophical questions surrounding the readings in class which add to their relevance.
- The professor brought humor into the class even with regards to heavy course material. I appreciated that-- it made for a good learning environment.
- The reading guides were especially helpful.
The lectures/class discussions were really engaging and clarified/built on readings well. Reviewing and discussing the theories of previous philosophers in the context of new philosophers was good.
All assignments were valuable and geared toward enhancing learning, rather than completing them for the sake of earning a grade.
- Variety of assignments
- concise explanation of expectations of students and syllabus

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

- 1) Assume that the class read the reading instead of offering a patronizing quiz at the start of the class asking things like "what metaphor did Kant use in today's reading".
2) Utilize the class in coming up with metaphors and examples other than chalk. Ask us thought provoking questions, not "now how does chalk play into this." I literally lost my mind halfway through the semester when I realized every class involved chalk as a metaphor. It's dumb.
3) Give students more freedom in how they choose to engage in the reading.
4) Expand our discussion of reading past the basic metaphysics and concepts. I understand that this class is also open to non-majors, but class time was devoted to holding our hands and explaining everything about the first two pages of each day's reading. It was one of the most boring experiences I have had at this school, and it bewilders me considering how interesting the readings were. It felt like an AP prep-course with sparknote lectures.
- I have no idea what kind of constraints professor Frierson is working under, but there was just too much content involved for me to pursue any kind of personally fulfilling or enriching inquiry into the literature. I am not under the impression that everyone else in the class had these same problems, but my own engagement with philosophy takes on a much different form than what I was made to do in this class. I don't think the course should be tailored to my own personal whims, that would be silly and there are mountains of reasons why I'm not the one teaching the class. However, if the course could be adjusted so that it was slightly more welcoming for those who prefer a slower, kind of tarrying pace when immersing themselves in course material, I think it would open up the perspectives of many students who close themselves off to the material for the sake of preserving their "process" or whatever it is they call reading, and in the consequently lose the opportunity to grapple with some of the truly insightful and excellent articulations that Frierson very clearly considers to be the milieu of his own body of thought.
- I really did not like having the quizzes for a number of reasons, and also it would be nice if we used metaphors other than just chalk to understand the concepts as it gets incredibly tiring using that one object throughout the whole class
- I think there should be more focus on the implications of the philosophers' work in the time periods they wrote them. It's easy to just accept that the views are good ones, and it would really help people get a picture of why each philosopher we read is important in the evolution of philosophical thought. It would help put in context not only how they're different from their predecessors, but also why thought changed over time.
- I thought the student presentations were unnecessary, nearly every one of them interfered with our ability to more fully grasp the philosopher that we were working on during the majority of the class. You always said you wished the class were longer but I wish we had used those extra 15 minutes to flush out the concepts. It seemed like all too often we stopped in the middle of an idea without actually understanding it and then just had to move on the next class.
- It would be helpful to discuss ideas about the final paper as a class a few times throughout the semester. Maybe some kind of workshop for part of a class period would be helpful, or being required to turn in a draft half way through the semester.
Sometimes the pace of readings and units was too fast. It was really difficult to complete the reading well once, let alone twice, before each class period.
The changes in the course left me rather curious about Berkeley, but I think overall, they worked well. Spending more time on Hume was good.
- One change could be to include more lectures during class days after tough readings. Sometimes class discussions were difficult when people were confused about what we had read. Whenever Professor Frierson used the board and explained the reading, I feel that class discussion was more productive. Also, it might be outside the scope of this course, but I would have loved to learn more about some of the philosophers students presented on each week. (Especially Nietzsche!)
- Slow down the course. It seemed like too much-- too many heavy concepts in too short of time.
- The teaching in this course was very solid, so I don't have any suggestions there. As far as the content, I think that the texts we read do a good job of covering the modern era of philosophy. My only suggestion would be to do less Spinoza, because I found that a lot of his writing has difficult for students to engage with.
- There is a lot of material in the course. Maybe too much. I don't know how well this could be avoided though.

- There were times when those who did not raise their hand to speak butted in front of those who had already waited, and also had the professor engage with them before turning to the person patiently waiting. It is more a matter of etiquette, but something that seems important to the students.
- perhaps less quizzes?

^{1.16)} Additional Comments

- Excellent, excellent course!
- I am a politics major, but the fact that Frierson is in the philosophy department is really making me consider double majoring. I am definitely going to take more classes with him.
- If I have to retake this class, I would rather drop the major then do it over again