

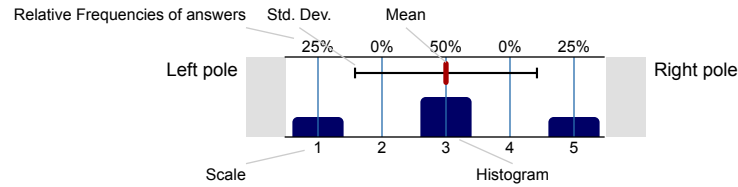
Patrick Frierson

Western Philosophy Trad:modern (PHIL-202-A-19fall: Western Philosophy Trad:modern (PHIL-202-A-19fall))
No. of responses = 15

Survey Results

Legend

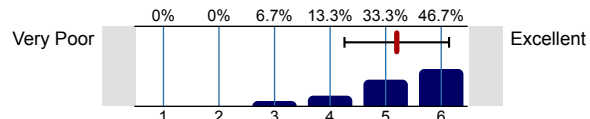
Question text



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

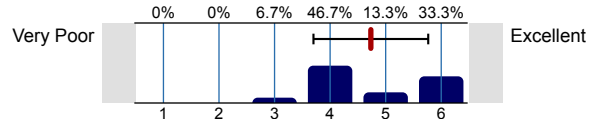
1. About the Course:

1.1) This course as a whole was:



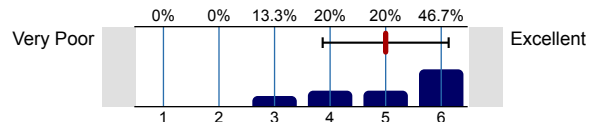
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av.=5.2
dev.=0.9

1.2) The course organization was:



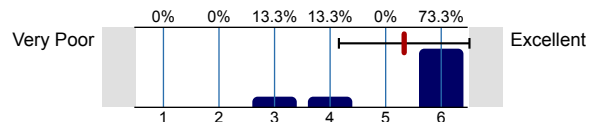
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dev.=1

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



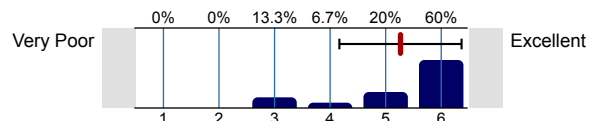
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av.=5
dev.=1.1

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



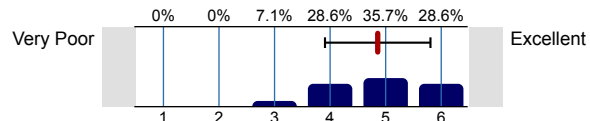
n=15
av.=5.3
dev.=1.2

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



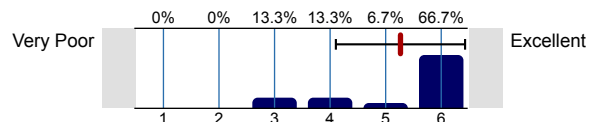
n=15
av.=5.3
dev.=1.1

1.6) The value of the assigned work was:



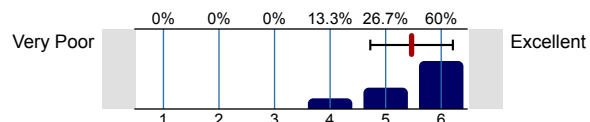
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dev.=0.9

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



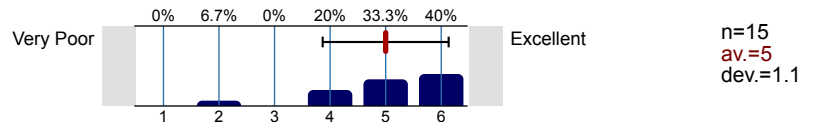
n=15
av.=5.3
dev.=1.2

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

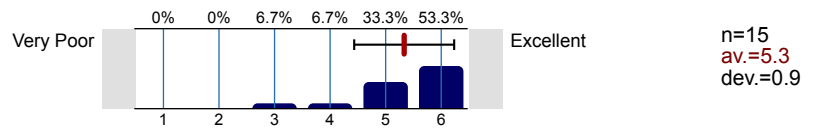


n=15
av.=5.5
dev.=0.7

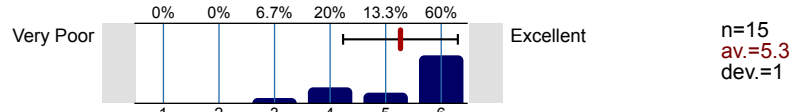
1.9) The evaluation methods (tests, papers, projects, performances, etc) were:



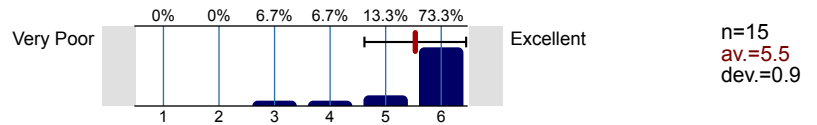
1.10) The value of the instructor's comments on tests, papers, projects, performances, etc were:



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 in class discussion and lectures were great
- I learned an incredible amount in this class, both related to modern philosophical thought and about writing and presenting in philosophy classes. I like the organization of the class being surrounded around 3 philosophers, as I get very little opportunities in philosophy classes to go really in depth into the works of specific philosophers. I also appreciated that every paper prompt had a different scope/required a different approach - I thought this made the structure of assignments more interesting
- I liked doing only 3 philosophers and getting really in depth with them. I also liked that there was a good mix of metaphysics/epistemology/ethics. The variety of assessment styles (papers, presentations, exam, email responses) was nice as well.
- I really appreciated that we only read three main philosophers and so were able to develop a deeper understanding of their philosophies. Thanks for a great semester, Patrick!
- I really liked focusing in more depth on a few philosophers.
- I thought even with the focus being on 3 texts, the breadth of content we covered was still quite broad and seeded some wonder if whether spending another day or two on a new philosopher would, in hindsight, have caused more understanding or retention. I feel like I am pretty familiar with Descartes and Hume, likely to an extent I wouldn't have been without spending much time with their texts under a microscope.
- Sor Juana was really cool. I wish we'd spent more time on her. The first and the last paper were my favorites, the second was difficult because I think it is a lot to ask a student to articulate their own philosophy and that of another and put them in conversation with each other, all in less than 1200 words. I think most students, or at least myself, have rather underdeveloped philosophies, so I don't know that it is useful to use it that much. But I definitely improved my writing, which I think is cool given my year and the number of courses I have already taken.
- Sor Juana's reading
- The philosophers studied were very interesting and offered a nice breadth, especially the part with Sor Juana expanding beyond the traditional philosophers that are enormally studied.

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

- 12/10 teaching. Clearly super knowledgeable. Helpful comments on papers. Very engaging class discussions. Accessible, friendly, and helpful in office hours.
- Discussion leading
- Frierson is a smart dude. I had a lot of trouble understanding what was going on though. I assume this is because first years are not supposed to take modern.
- He does a really good job of explaining the material in a way that is engaging and makes difficult readings sense.
- I found the 2x weekly emails that we had to send to be SO helpful in engaging with the texts. Please keep doing this, I think it forces people to read and reread things which they might not have understood otherwise.
- I loved reading Sor Juana and I loved the visit from the Spanish professor
- I thought the class discussions were far too short. The amount of clarity gleaned from simply reading then showing up was immense and also a tease because of the short duration. Office hours were fantastic as well, both of which are extremely invaluable because of how complex the course content is for (what is likely) a good few of the students.
- Prof. Frierson was always really great at making himself available for students and providing a lot of support during office hours. While the class was quite challenging for me, I always did feel like Prof. Frierson was invested in helping students and in dedicating time to talking with us.
- Professor Frierson is really attentive to students, an entertaining speaker, and offers lots of feedback throughout the semester.
- Really strong ability to teach complex ideas of philosophers and make them accessible, and does so in an engaging way. Also very helpful during office hours and provides space both in and out of class for engaging with people's personal philosophical interests.
- The content and the rigor were great. It was just at my level, I felt. I was challenged by the amount of work but never to the extent that I was overwhelmed. It was just enough that I was always really motivated, and I feel like I learned a ton. My only regret is that I didn't take the course sooner.

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

- Having the presentations taken away from the ability to discuss the assigned reading, especially with Sor Juana. I think everyone doing one presentation would probably be enough, both in terms of time in class as well as the fact that they were a lot of additional work and, while interesting, a relatively small benefit to the rest of the class.
- I think that potentially switching to having students do just one presentation rather than two could be beneficial. I found that, especially towards the end of the semester, presentations took up a significant amount of class time, and weren't adding as much to the class experience (especially given that it took so much time away from talking about Sor Juana). I also think having a class dedicated to talking about writing papers and paper expectations would be really helpful, as writing papers for this class was really challenging for me and I think having a more clear understanding of expectations would be beneficial.
- I think that reducing the number of presentations would allow for more material to be covered in class, and they were not always very engaging but maybe with less the quality would improve. I also think that it would be helpful to cover an additional philosopher or two, and leaving more time for Sor Juana who has very rich ideas but takes more time to process because of her unique writing style.
- I think that there are 2 things which stuck in my mind throughout the course: less time spent on presentations and less time entertaining unimportant questions in class. Although the first is kind of self-explanatory, I felt like a lot of class periods had their focus on investigating extraneous questions instead of aiming to cover the bulk of the reading for class. I don't know how to remedy this, maybe by having a short checklist of points to be covered on hand as the class starts; but, I think it could very well be worth it.
- I think there were too many presentations - or at least they were too long. Perhaps only make people do one or two shorter presentations? I think giving a presentation is a great skill to practice, but for the rest of the class to listen to someone who doesn't know very well what they are talking about doesn't improve our understanding.
- I want to say that it should be easier for younger students. I struggled the most in the class by a mile or two. I would ask for help frequently but sometimes that just led me to more questions about the material. I guess that's my bad for taking a 200 level course. I feel like that is misleading too. I was not expecting the bomb of a class that modern was. I don't know of the level for a class is created but if I were the person who decides that I would just make it a 300 level class to scare away future first years like me who were in way over their head.
- I wish that class discussion had been more focused and productive. We often failed to move efficiently through the readings and would often fall behind or miss some of the most important content in the text. Also, the encyclopedia-style papers were frustrating to me. While I recognize the main purpose was to gain an understanding of a philosopher who isn't on the syllabus, other assignment formats could be similarly informative while also improving liberal arts skills like analysis, synthesis, and speaking. An assignment like an oral about the philosopher in which students are asked informational questions about the philosopher's work, as well as questions that put the author into discussion with other authors in the course or apply them to present-day scenarios could be more interesting and meaningful to the student.
- I wish we had spent more time on Sor Juana and less on Descartes
- I would have preferred to do another significant major modern philosopher rather than Sor Juana, even though she was interesting and different. I feel like Kant is pretty important to modern philosophy, so I think it would be great to spend more than one day on him, maybe adding him in as a fourth major philosopher to focus on would be ideal. Also, although in theory I think that increasing the weight of each paper over time is a good idea, in this course I'm not sure that it really has the intended effect. Because each of the papers is a totally different style of writing a philosophy paper, I never really felt like having written the previous paper helped me be more prepared for writing the next paper in a way that would justify it being weighted more than the last one. Also, I think I would have preferred if everyone only had to do one presentation and we had more time for class discussion.
- Instead of always having full-class discussions, do more small-group discussions. The times we did this it was way more constructive than the full class.
- Maybe cover Kant. That is Frierson's expertise. It's a shame that we couldn't learn of Kant from a true expert. and I think that so many people talk about Kant that I feel weird not being able to talk about him with real knowledge. Of course, I can read him myself, but there is real value in covering a philosopher in class with the help of a professor
- Really like to learn about Kant and Hegel

1.16) Additional Comments

- I now understand the substance of chalk.
- I really enjoyed reading Sor Juana, so much so I had wished we spent more time discussing and unraveling her poem. I think that presentations may have accounted for this, which made me think, it might be an interesting outlet to consider more concise presentations. Ones in which the focus really is to stoke the curiosity of one's fellow peers instead of attempting to present a comprehensive snapshot; the presentations being maybe 10 minutes instead of 15--but I don't really know.
- I wonder if the course should be open to first years. All the first year I knew in the class were very overwhelmed, and I am not sure that they got much from the course. It is definitely rigorous, which I think is a plus, but for a first year in their first semester especially it is a lot. However, I don't think the difficulty of the class should be lessened to make it accessible to first years, so maybe not letting them in is a good idea.
- Thanks for a great class!

- This class shouldn't be a 200, or it should at least should have some prereqs to prevent other freshmen from picking it up.
- ^
- our class discussion with Nico Parmley was one of the coolest/most engaging classes I've had at whitman, and I think if Sor Juana is used as one of the major philosophers again, incorporating more discussions about philosophy & translation would be amazing!