

Patrick Frierson

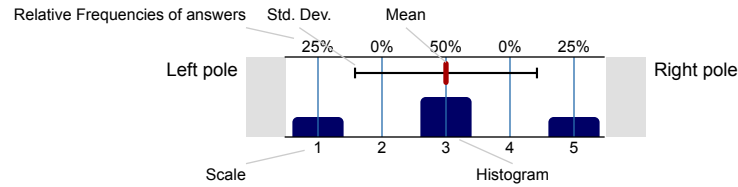
Modern European Philosophy (PHIL-202-A-21fall: Modern European Philosophy (PHIL-202-A-21fall))
No. of responses = 17



Survey Results

Legend

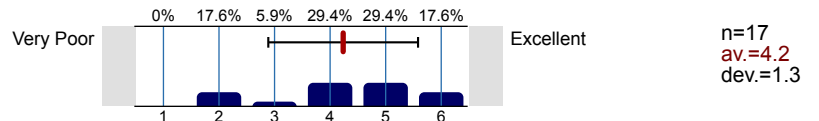
Question text



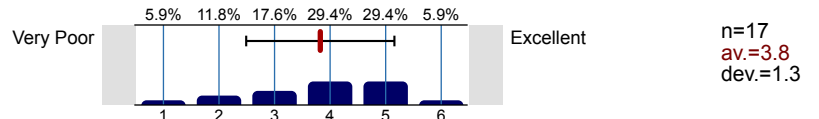
n=No. of responses
av.=Mean
dev.=Std. Dev.
ab.=Abstention

1. About the Course:

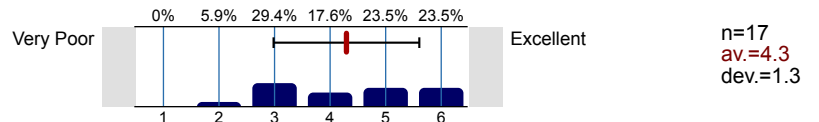
1.1) This course as a whole was:



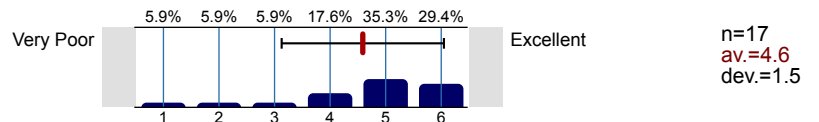
1.2) The course organization was:



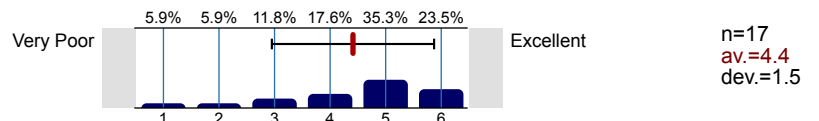
1.3) The clarification of student responsibilities in this course was:



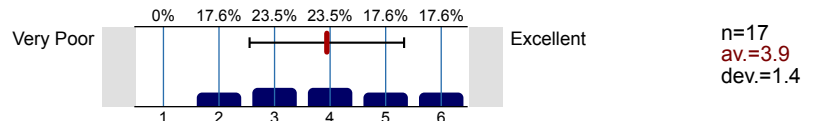
1.4) The value of the course in increasing your analytical or interpretive skills:



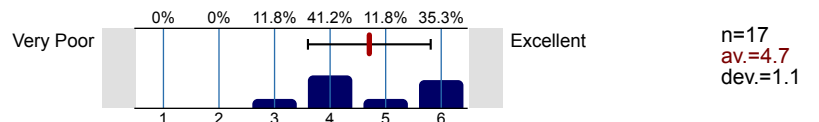
1.5) The extent to which this course stimulated your intellectual curiosity was:



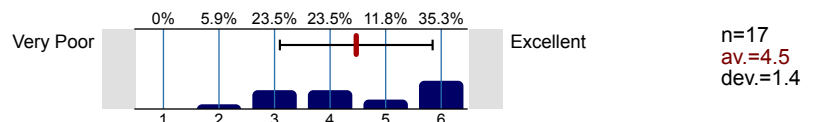
1.6) The value of the assigned work was:



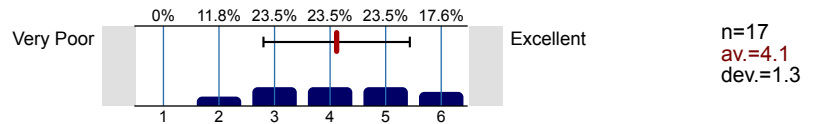
1.7) The instructor's ability to present the subject matter clearly was:



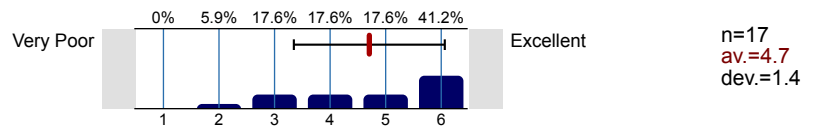
1.8) The instructor's answers to student's questions were:



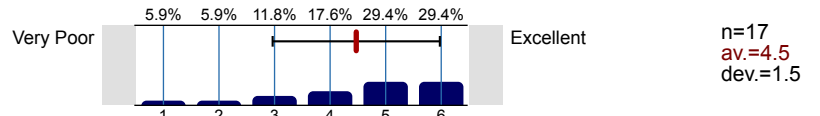
1.9) The evaluation methods (tests, papers, projects, performances, etc) were:



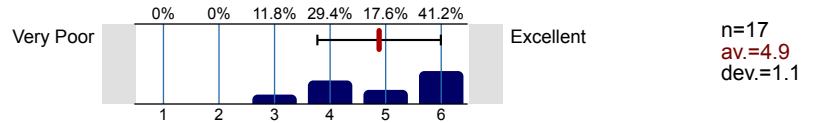
1.10) The value of the instructor's comments on tests, papers, projects, performances, etc were:



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?

- Diverse material and readings from different Philosophers, Sor Juana especially was interesting especially in comparison to famous writers like Descartes and Hume
- I liked the broad range of texts we were able to cover in the course, especially Sor Juana!
- I really enjoyed the presentations, but working on it, which allowed me to go in depth and really understand the philosopher I chose, but also get curious about other philosophers that we wouldn't ordinarily have time to learn about. I also found the student presentations to be very interactive and conversational
- I really loved the topics. Metaphysics and epistemology were not covered very thoroughly in other courses I had taken, and it was super cool to engage with philosophy that is still taken seriously in the field today.
- I think the discussion of the class. Students were able to discuss Philosophy in a very helpful way.
- Selected texts created substantial engagement with modern philosophers in both breadth and depth.
- Sor Juana was a blast.
- Student presentations allowed a way broader coverage of modern philosophy without eating up too much class time
- The selected readings provided a wonderful overview of modern philosophy.
- The student presentations were a good aspect, though I wish they had been better integrated into the syllabus
- Variety of and scope of readings, amount of coursework
- fascinating subject matter, fun to see different students focus on various philosophers and use them heavily throughout class.

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

- Availability of extra help on assignments and course subject matter, professor's enthusiasm and encouragement, professor's willingness to follow interests of the class,
- Frierson is a wonderful lecturer and facilitates class discussion well.
- Good lecture and response to student questions
- I liked when we summarized the readings together and had time for questions. This was helpful because of many of the readings were really difficult
- Lecture was fantastic. Professor Frierson's lectures are always unique, engaging and insightful.
- Presentations were interesting and broke up days of the course that would otherwise be a continuation of Descartes or another author for weeks on end, made pace better
- Prof. Frierson worked hard to make himself available at any time.
- Professor Frierson was very open to what students had to say and it never felt like an intimidating learning environment despite reading tough texts.
- The emphasis for a particular kind of close reading in and out of class was great.
The continuous contextualizing of philosophical points within their arguments, texts as a whole, and the course as a whole was valuable. Questions and discussion points answered and responded to in meaningful ways.
- You are fun and a great person.
I learned a lot from the lecture-like classes.
You came up with some really creative class activities.
- lecture was always strong

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

- At times, I felt like class could get a little off-track which left less time to go over the texts.
- Better organization and ensuring all material is covered. The course goes over very tough material and a proper explanation of what concepts mean.
- I don't know that this course should be required for the major, but that isn't a critique of the course so much. Overall I thought two aspects were especially frustrating. Firstly, I do not understand why we spend so much time on Descartes. Of the philosophers of the modern period, I think it would make far more sense to spend time with Kant and Hume. I would really suggest making Descartes more of a footnote than a touchstone. Regardless of whether or not he should be in the course, there is little reason to focus on him for eight weeks (half the semester). Secondly, Professor frierson's Feedback in office hours when almost entirely negative, telling me in which ways I had done things wrong without giving me a path forward to fix those things. It's okay to point out damage so long as you are also willing to offer tools. I never left his office hours feeling good about my work or myself, which is something that has made a lasting impression.
- I think the course spends too much time on Descartes, and the readings assigned have an overwhelmingly large footprint even though about a quarter of the content is discussed in class. The presentation method of learning is great, but there is too much responsibility for students to learn about presented philosophers for exams and papers when there is very little readings associated with many and in some cases none provided at all.
- I was not a big fan of the inclusion of Sor Juana. I understand why she is here, but it felt like a strange choice to exclude any of the "canonical" modern philosophers in order to include her. Without meaning to discuss the merits of the work of these philosophers, the canonical ones have had more impact on the field and as such I was somewhat disappointed we did not talk about them instead.
- Professor Frierson's comments on paper are more negative than positive, in the sense that they focus on what is wrong rather than what/ how it could be better. He's also extremely poor at getting back to emails asking for help. The organization and layout of the material needs to be more structured/better. There is also no need for the final exam. Those in the class who seek out-of-classroom philosophical discussions will do so while writing the paper. I think if given more time for the paper, rather than rushing it to get ready for the final, it would prove more fruitful in the end.
- Provide more of a historical context and discuss the connections between the different philosophers to make it all more concrete and not so abstract
- Smaller portions of assigned reading when the subject matter was particularly challenging
- Some of the most informative student presentations put the chosen philosopher's concepts in direct conversation with other philosophers from the class. Maybe an increased requirement/emphasis for this consideration of the philosophies than is already in place could be beneficial.
I thought the class organization throughout the entire semester was very good, but more structure to Sor Juana could be nice.
- There are several aspects of the class that I did not like:
First-- this material can be a bit dull which makes people apathetic about the class.
Second-- a handful of people in that class (possibly all of us) often talked out of their asses, while not really understanding the material. People attach their pride to their ideas and will do what they can to dominate the conversation. That seems like a problem with philosophy as a whole.
Third-- because people didn't always know what they were talking about, and because you often did not correct people's contributions, I didn't know when to believe what people were saying. This is a hard problem to address because the discussions become less inviting when the teacher is authoritative in that way.
Fourth— you had us do massive readings without going over 70% of it in class. Additionally, you discouraged us from using secondary sources. We are undergrad students and our own interpretations of these texts are important and valuable, but they are also bad. We are usually so far from right when trying to understand these complex texts on our own. Additionally, I never felt incentivized to do the readings.

Small group discussions were good when they happened. People are more sympathetic about holes in understanding when talking in a conversation rather than a class discussion. You could introduce more activities that resemble what we did for the innate ideas day where we were each expected to represent a philosopher. That was a great way to incentivize people to actually care about understanding the material.

It might be worth trying to encourage students to approach learning in a more constructive way. Figure out a way so people care about the holes in their understanding of the material. School should not just be a test of our ability to repeat something that someone else says.
- This class should not be required for the major. I thought about dropping the major to get out of this class.
- firmly agree with suggestion to have philosopher presentations all due before thanksgiving break.

^{1.16)} Additional Comments

- Amazing course. One of the best I have taken at Whitman.
- I really don't understand the format of the final exam. If we get all the questions beforehand it might as well have been a take-home exam. feels like the only added gradeable thing was anxiety and memory which don't feel necessary to the grades of a philosophy class.
- I really enjoyed this course!
- Make the syllabus more accessible and legible, specifically, do not have pages with critical information that you have to click on a small

link in order to find. I missed important dates and information because I had thought I was aware of the nature of specific assignments only to see that I did not click on the link to find info essential to the assignment. Partially my fault, but also could be avoided entirely if all the information was laid out on a single webpage