

Spring 2022 Individual Instructor Aggregated Final for POT4053: Great Polit Thinkers (Glen Billesbach)

Project Title: **University of Florida GatorEvals – Spring 2022 Main Project**

Courses Audience: 34	Instructors Audience: 34
Responses Received: 23	Responses Received: 23
Response Ratio: 67.6%	Response Ratio: 67.6%

Report Comments

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a fundamental purpose of the University of Florida and the dissemination of new knowledge in our classrooms, studios, and clinics enables our students and trainees to fully explore their intellectual boundaries. Assessment and evaluation of our courses are designed to enhance instruction and maximize learning to meet the mission of the university. This report contains the results gathered through the new GatorEvals system. Students were invited to share their feedback on the teaching and course material. We invite every faculty member to examine the analysis in the report and utilize the resources provided in the report. Thank you for your continued great work!

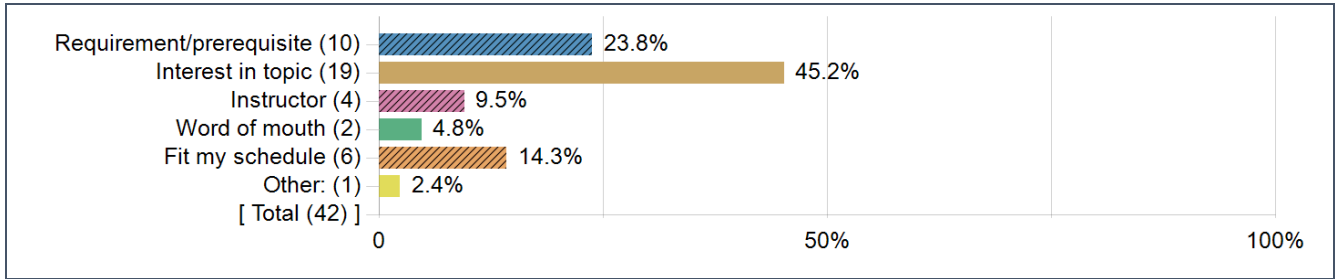
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Associate Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs



Creation Date: **Monday, June 13, 2022**

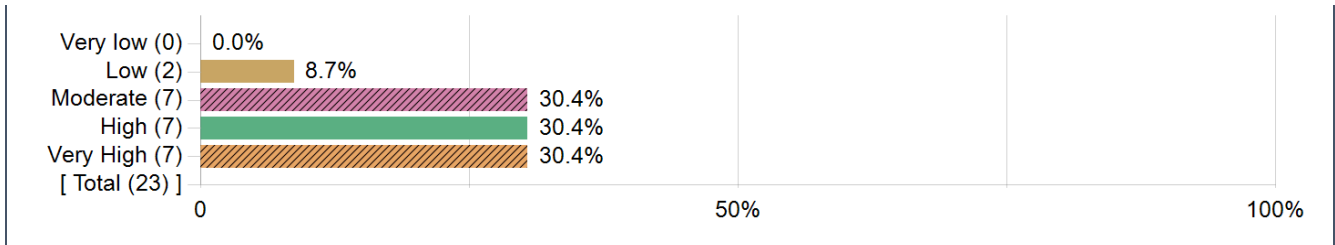
Student Self-Evaluation Questions

Why did you take this course?



How would you rate your own participation (completed readings, assignments, etc.) in this course?

How would you rate your own participation (completed readings, assignments, etc.) in this course?



Comparative Evaluation Results

University Core Instructor Evaluation Questions

	Response Rate	Mean	IM	DPT Mean	DPT IM	College Mean	College IM
The instructor was enthusiastic about the course.	67.6%	4.87	4.93	4.57	4.79	4.46	4.72
The instructor explained material clearly and in a way that enhanced my understanding.	67.6%	4.83	4.89	4.30	4.65	4.22	4.57
The instructor maintained clear standards for response and availability (e.g. turnaround time for email, office hours, etc.)	67.6%	4.91	4.95	4.39	4.70	4.39	4.67
The instructor fostered a positive learning environment that engaged students.	67.6%	4.83	4.89	4.35	4.69	4.34	4.65
The instructor provided prompt and meaningful feedback on my work and performance in the course.	67.6%	4.91	4.95	4.12	4.58	4.17	4.55
The instructor was instrumental to my learning in the course.	67.6%	4.83	4.89	4.21	4.63	4.11	4.54
Overall	67.6%	4.86	-	4.32	-	4.28	-

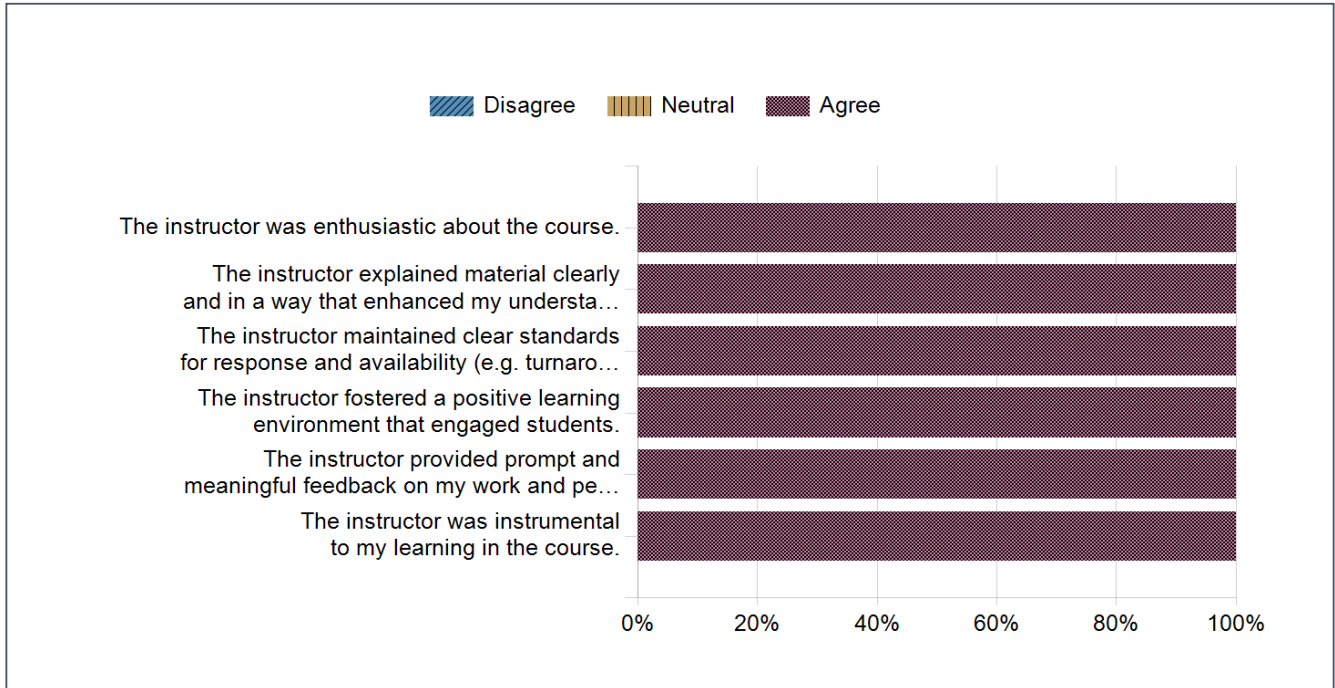
University Core Course Evaluation Questions

	Response Rate	Mean	IM	DPT Mean	DPT IM	College Mean	College IM
Course content (e.g., readings, activities, assignments) was relevant & useful.	67.6%	4.65	4.73	4.32	4.45	4.21	4.32
The course fostered regular interaction between student and instructor.	67.6%	4.65	4.73	4.16	4.42	4.01	4.22
Course activities and assignments improved my ability to analyze, solve problems, and/or think critically.	67.6%	4.74	4.82	4.18	4.41	4.17	4.33
Overall, this course was a valuable educational experience.	67.6%	4.74	4.82	4.29	4.55	4.19	4.38
Overall	67.6%	4.70	-	4.24	-	4.14	-

Aggregate Evaluation Results

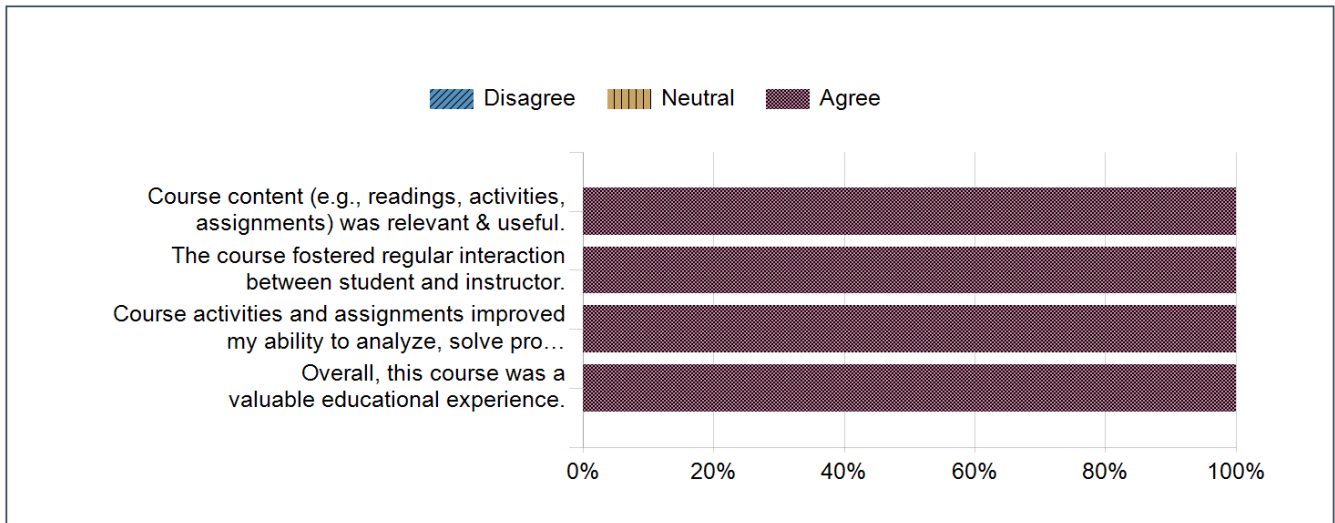
University Core Instructor Evaluation Questions - Aggregate Chart

Note that in the following aggregate chart "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" have been grouped together as "Agree" while "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" have been grouped together as "Disagree".



University Core Course Evaluation Questions - Aggregate Chart

Note that in the following aggregate chart "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" have been grouped together as "Agree" while "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" have been grouped together as "Disagree".



Percentages Evaluation Results

University Core Instructor Evaluation Questions

	%(1)	%(2)	%(3)	%(4)	%(5)	Count	Mean	Median	SD
The instructor was enthusiastic about the course.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	13.0%	87.0%	23	4.87	5.00	0.34
The instructor explained material clearly and in a way that enhanced my understanding.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.4%	82.6%	23	4.83	5.00	0.39
The instructor maintained clear standards for response and availability (e.g. turnaround time for email, office hours, etc.)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.7%	91.3%	23	4.91	5.00	0.29
The instructor fostered a positive learning environment that engaged students.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.4%	82.6%	23	4.83	5.00	0.39
The instructor provided prompt and meaningful feedback on my work and performance in the course.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.7%	91.3%	23	4.91	5.00	0.29
The instructor was instrumental to my learning in the course.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.4%	82.6%	23	4.83	5.00	0.39

University Core Course Evaluation Questions

	%(1)	%(2)	%(3)	%(4)	%(5)	Count	Mean	Median	SD
Course content (e.g., readings, activities, assignments) was relevant & useful.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	34.8%	65.2%	23	4.65	5.00	0.49
The course fostered regular interaction between student and instructor.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	34.8%	65.2%	23	4.65	5.00	0.49
Course activities and assignments improved my ability to analyze, solve problems, and/or think critically.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	26.1%	73.9%	23	4.74	5.00	0.45
Overall, this course was a valuable educational experience.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	26.1%	73.9%	23	4.74	5.00	0.45

For additional information and resources in each of these question areas, please visit the GatorEvals Website at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/resources--policies/question-set/>

Free Response Section

Please identify the instructor's strengths that contributed to your learning in the course.

Comments
The teaching for this course was excellent. The instructor was knowledgeable and always in good cheer. He also encouraged class participation and group revision, which added a gratifying social element to the course.
his attentiveness to his students and addressing all questions
Clear understanding of the material.
Incredible Professor that is clearly passionate about what he does. In the future I hope to take more classes with him. He is among the most caring and well prepared professors I've had. He has a bright future!
– His ability to water down certain topics in order for us to understand better
Every class period, Billesbach had lectures that covered the assigned readings' content and dived into in–depth information about the writers' and writings' backgrounds and different interpretations of their works. He fostered engaging and open–minded discussion with and between students while helping guide students' ideas using his knowledge of the subject. He was very approachable, easy to contact, and receptive to the various needs of every student. The course was well–structured and progressed in a way that made clear how successive thinkers were influenced by previous ones we learned about. He was also flexible with this schedule if circumstances warranted a change in plans. Billesbach has a clear passion for political theory that was contagious and made me consistently look forward to and enjoy this class throughout the semester.
Very knowledgeable and helpful when it comes to the readings. He is also extremely prompt when it comes to emails and addressing issues.
Very good at relating topics and leading discussions.
I found the lectures both enjoyable and very helpful in explaining the complex topics of the course.
He was very knowledgeable about the thinkers he was teaching as well as other works that were not in the syllabus when students would bring them up.
Great instructor. Great at providing explanations of concepts and giving feedback.
Professor Billesbach is a fantastic philosophy/political theory teacher who expresses genuine interest in his students and the subject material. I have heard no complaints about the professor that was not immediately resolved with the professor, and any minor criticism is greatly outweighed by his student's daily, resounding praise.
This instructor did a wonderful job explaining very difficult concepts to the class in an easy way and was always willing to discuss topics during office hours. It is very clear that he has a passion for political theory and is able to share that energy with students new to the subject.
The lectures and study guides were very helpful this semester. He is very enthusiastic about the material and willing to answer any questions that come up during our class discussions.
– Was enthusiastic about the course content – Promoted discussion in class – Nice ambience with TV screens (backgrounds)
Provided great and indepth written feedback on all discussion posts and essays. This helped identify strengths and weaknesses for future papers. Explantations of complex topics made information attainable and the instructor was always happy to answer questions or give alternative explanations.
The instructor explained course concepts in clear ways which enhanced my understanding of the material. He helped spur discussion on interesting and important topics within the course material which helped me better my understanding.
Enthusiastic, flexible, funny, clear in explanations and expectations.
Very personable and willing to expand lecture into group discussion of an idea if there appears to be a lot of thoughts or confusion
The instructor was very knowledgeable and helpful on the topics of the course and was very good at answering questions clearly and effectively. He was very good at answering emails in a very timely manner and was always available to answer the questions of students.
Glen is an incredibly kind soul who has been willing to work with me through a chaotic period of my life. It is very obvious that he is passionate about his work and his student's successes in his course. The material covered throughout this semester, as well as his own teachings facilitated through said coursework, have been incredibly insightful to myself and I'm sure many other students in his class. The course has inspired me to pursue philosophy further, as Glen's course has made the impacts of philosophy in the political space (and not just the political space, but our personal lives) incredibly apparent to me.
I am incredibly satisfied with Glen's work as an instructor; he has shown to me and my fellow students that he cares deeply about his field of research and his student's understandings of it. He was prompt in providing feedback to us on our writings, and the feedback was very constructive, which enabled us to improve our writing skills. Furthermore, Glen has been very willing to work with us, astutely aware of the challenges that many undergraduate students are facing in these turbulent times. I thank him for his efforts, and am confident that he has a promising career in higher learning ahead of him.

What additional constructive feedback can you offer the instructor that might help improve the course?

Comments
I have no complaints.
More of an emphasis on classwork. Maybe short written assignments, and remove the emphasis on just essays and exams.
Nothing
I had bought a few of the assigned texts from the bookstore when I saw the list on Canvas. However, these ended up being made available for free on Canvas. In the future, it might be good to wait to list the required texts until having a chance to clarify this in class.
I honestly can't think of much of anything. The only small thing to make a note of is class discussions can become derailed fairly quickly, however, this is not always a bad thing.
I felt the readings were structured very well but I personally found the varied critiques of modernity section the most overwhelming since we were reading four separate thinkers in a relatively short amount of time. I would have preferred to instead just focus on one or two and feel I could have developed a deeper understanding that way.
I think clearer slides with less words on them would help break down the content even further. Additionally, speaking with a bit better inflection to reflect interest and important points.
The only small thing that could be super helpful for notetaking next semester would be posting the ppt slides to canvas before the lecture. Even if incomplete or incorrect, it would be super helpful to students, and they could take note of whatever changes you have made to the slide after posting.
The course was nearly perfect, however the powerpoint with quotes can be a little wordy and difficult. Although he discussed them and broke them down in class, I think it would be more helpful to break up large pieces of difficult text to make it easier to read. However, he was a wonderful instructor that was crucial to my understanding of this topic.
Being more confident in facilitating class discussions.
Perhaps, more time dedicated to explanations of the some of the more complicated concepts in the course would help improve student's understanding of some of the more difficult ideas present in the material.
n/a
One thing I would like to see improved is the actual lecture structure. Having lots of material on the slide is great and I don't want that to change because it is very helpful for review of the material. However, don't just read from the slide during class have things on paper notes that are available to talk about during class. Also even though it is alright to make the class open discussion have a policy of calling on people if no one is talking. The hardest thing for students who are shy is to be the first person to do something, especially when it comes to talking in class. Picking someone to break the ice would help make the conversation better and more deep in the future and it will also help ensure that people do the readings as they don't want to be caught off guard if they are picked/called on to talk.
As mentioned above, I am incredibly satisfied with Glen's performance as an instructor. Perhaps the one thing that I would have appreciated more was more time to discuss the coursework, but that of course is no fault of Glen himself, given that you can only cover so much in 50 minutes and still have ample time to discuss those ideas.

What constructive suggestion(s) do you have for improving the course materials, organization, and assignments?

Comments
The course design was nearly perfect. Significant thinkers were accorded an appropriate amount of readings. Fortunately, this did not result in a failure to address the writings of more peripheral thinkers.
More classwork and a less of word count on the essays
None
Some of the readings were a bit time-consuming. However, this is to be expected for a 4000-level political science course, and putting in the time to read what was assigned was well worth the effort.
The midterm study guide was a bit weak but you addressed this well with the final study guide. Beyond that, the course is organized well and is straightforward for expectations.
I would have preferred if we focused on just one or two different thinkers for the varied critiques of modernity section so that we could more in depth on their ideas.
I think reordering the units so Nietzsche is before varied critiques of modernity would make sense, but I also understand that the latter does not apply to Nietzsche so that may be why it is structured the way it is.
More time for class discussions.
Oh uh.... last post kinda covered that. Uh, maybe briefly mention that Marx is kinda anti-semitic despite his Ashkenazi heritage? Felt kinda ignored, especially considering that we read "The Jewish Question". Can be super brief and just say that some people think that but yeah. It should probably be brought up a bit more since that was a massive argument in the groupme.
The assignments were perfect. They were difficult, but at an appropriate level that should be required for this course and required me to think outside of the box without being too frustrating.
In the course readings, having all texts with the ability to use the find command would be useful for papers and class discussions.
– Having weekly/bi-weekly short quizzes to ensure the understanding of the reading and concepts
The discussion posts were really helpful for this course. I think a few shorter essays over longer essays may have been more useful to cover all thinkers.
Perhaps assigning of less readings and going into those readings more in depth would improve the course. Maybe more class activates or discussion groups would enhance learning as well.
n/a
The course is understandably writing heavy, but perhaps another form of assignment might help with engagement
Everything in this regard was good!
I think the course was organized in the best way it could have been given the circumstances. Furthermore, the materials were thought-provoking, and the assignments were fair.

Please identify the topics and/or skills you learned in the course that you believe will have the highest application for future courses or professional growth.

Comments
The course helped ground my philosophical and theoretical training. Before this course, my readings have been rather haphazard; this course was not exceedingly canonistic in approach, but it did grant me a greater degree of familiarity with the central thinkers of the modern West.
Understanding political thinkers
Analytical
– Analyzing philosophical questions / prompts – Writing a good essay
I learned about a range of political theories that, in some cases, I had not realized were so inculcated in our culture. Seeing the origin of these ideas, and exploring ones I had never read about before, was incredibly interesting and helped me to remember the importance of keeping an open mind and constantly evolving intellectually. Writing about these ideas helped me to digest them further and provided me with more experience writing about new topics, something important in many academic and career paths.
Analyzing different schools of thought and better accepting different points of view I may not agree with.
How to read dense texts in a way that makes the content easier to grasp.
The philosophy helped me sort through some of my own problems, in addition to providing the base information to help expand my current and historical worldview.
I think being able to conceptualize difficult topics with a lot of nuance and being able to compare them in a new way will be extremely helpful throughout my career, especially when encountering opposing opinions I do not understand.
The reflections on freedom and education from the various thinkers
Taking into account multiple thinkers' perspectives from first-hand readings and discussions of the works will be extremely useful for writing papers in future courses and post undergrad.
In this course, I learned to hone my writings skills, which will help pretty much any career. Even more importantly, I honed my ability think critically and express my thoughts about complicated ideas. This will help me in my career and in my further education.
Critical reading of difficult political texts. Argumentative writing. Greater understanding of various political doctrines and their interactions.
Interpreting text to understand the core Ideas being communicated, and comparing them
I gained a deeper understanding of several different philosophies and theories that will definitely help when it comes to understanding certain constructs in government and identifying the possible impacts of certain policies. All the teachings and readings have helped developed my knowledge repository and will benefit my future career path.
I have learned many things through Glen's course, particularly the thinkings of incredibly influential philosophers, as well as how these writings have influenced our political realities. This will prove to be invaluable information for my desired future as a writer.

Free Response Section