

## Student Evaluation of Teaching, Fall 2020

### Samuel Schmitt, POLI 271-002 MOD POL THOUGHT

Raters										Students				
Responded										20				
Invited										30				
Response Ratio										66.7%				
						Mean	Median	SD	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Overall, I learned a great deal from this course.						4.75	5.00	0.44	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%
2. The instructor treated all students with respect.						5.00	5.00	0.00	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
3. The instructor encouraged students to participate in this class.						4.70	5.00	0.57	20	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	20.0%	75.0%
4. The instructor saw cultural and personal differences as assets.						4.85	5.00	0.37	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.0%	85.0%
5. In this course I had multiple opportunities to express my viewpoints and questions.						4.80	5.00	0.52	20	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	10.0%	85.0%
6. The course challenged me to think deeply about the subject matter.						4.80	5.00	0.41	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%
7. The design of this course (e.g., its format, selected materials, assignments, exercises, quizzes, etc.) helped me better understand the subject matter.						4.75	5.00	0.44	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%
8. Overall, this course was excellent.						4.80	5.00	0.41	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%

## Department Specific

### Political Science Undergraduate: Instructor Ratings

	Mean	Median	SD	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Demonstrates enthusiasm about teaching.	5.00	5.00	0.00	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2. Communicates clearly and logically.	4.75	5.00	0.44	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%
3. Promotes a climate of mutual respect.	4.95	5.00	0.23	19	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	94.7%
4. Encourages student questions.	4.90	5.00	0.31	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	90.0%
5. Emphasizes critical thinking.	4.89	5.00	0.32	18	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	88.9%
6. Uses teaching strategies that promote active involvement.	4.70	5.00	0.57	20	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	20.0%	75.0%
7. Clearly communicates expectations for student performance.	4.70	5.00	0.57	20	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	20.0%	75.0%
8. Regularly provides constructive criticism of student performance.	4.85	5.00	0.37	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.0%	85.0%
9. Provides timely feedback on student performance.	4.85	5.00	0.37	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.0%	85.0%
10. Provides a fair evaluation of student performance.	4.85	5.00	0.49	20	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	5.0%	90.0%
11. Is available when needed.	4.89	5.00	0.32	19	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.5%	89.5%
12. Is well-prepared for instruction.	5.00	5.00	0.00	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
13. Overall, considering both the possibilities and limitations of the subject matter and course, I would rate this instructor as "excellent."	4.85	5.00	0.37	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.0%	85.0%

### Political Science Undergraduate: Course Quality Ratings

	Mean	Median	SD	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. Course goals and objectives are clearly specified.	4.65	5.00	0.49	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	35.0%	65.0%
15. Requirements (e.g., assignments, attendance, student responsibilities) are clearly specified.	4.95	5.00	0.22	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	95.0%
16. Course assignments are clearly related to the course objectives.	4.85	5.00	0.37	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.0%	85.0%
17. Instructional methods in the course facilitate my learning.	4.75	5.00	0.44	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%
18. In general, the course is well-organized.	4.80	5.00	0.41	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%
19. Course materials stimulated critical thinking.	4.80	5.00	0.41	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%
20. I know significantly more about this subject than before I took this course.	4.84	5.00	0.37	19	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.8%	84.2%
21. Overall, considering its content, design, and structure, I would rate this course as "excellent."	4.80	5.00	0.41	20	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%

## Open-Ended Responses

### 1. In what ways did your instructor try to make learning possible for you during the Fall 2020 semester?

#### Comments

He really did everything he possibly could to help us try and engage with the material in class. It's tough over zoom but his lectures were pretty informative and the classes where we could pose questions in the google docs helped me a lot

Very accommodating and gave great constructive feedback on assignments.

Discussion sessions were very good! I enjoyed prerecorded lectures and the in-depth syllabus

Sam was an outstanding resource in and outside of class and he went above and beyond to provide extra materials to help us better understand the course material

Sam focused on making this class structured in a way that helped the student learn and thrive. Readings and homework was not overwhelming and was specifically focused on important material that was necessary to learn. Sam helped to accommodate student needs, providing extensions on essays, valuable feedback on assignments, or days off just to reset, particularly during stressful times. Overall Sam was great at focusing on helping students learn and achieve in his class, particularly in a method of instruction that was not in person.

Sam had the best online learning experience of all my classes. He made asynchronous lectures to watch if you were unable to attend class and had extremely organized outlines for the learning material. He also graded things very efficiently and effectively.

Assigning readings and then providing very useful videos explaining the readings, as well as talking through the material in class and encouraging students to ask questions.

On midterms and papers, he gave us multiple prompts to answer that way we could choose the prompt that we best understood. He also gave us a chance to revise our first paper of the semester which I found very helpful because I had never written the type of paper that we were required to.

He was extremely understanding of the situation surrounding this semester. he worked to ensure that we could be successful.

Sam was one of the most considerate professors I have ever had. While he is relatively new to his profession, he has all the drive and commitment to his students in the world. Five stars.

Sam did everything in his power to give us the best virtual learning experience possible– he deserves every kind of award.

Intellectual journal assignments kept us engaged on a weekly basis. He was always energetic and accommodating. Clear passion for the content he teaches. Natural teacher.

Simply made it the best class possible under the circumstances. Brought wonderful insights and knowledge about the subject material, and the class gave students the tools and confidence to interact and succeed.

Sam was incredibly understanding this entire semester while still teaching us a great deal of information. He also did a superb job in breaking down tough philosophical concepts.

Sam has been very flexible and receptive to students needs, which has been so important this semester. Class sessions and expectations were well planned and if you attended class, you were able to grasp information. The assignments were also built in a way that we could synthesize the readings we had done so it really helped in my understanding. It was a lot of material to cover in one semester but everything was well-defined and Sam did a good job of articulating things clearly.

Sam was a great instructor for the course. By nature, the course is very reading-heavy, but Sam made sure to use forum posts, class discussion, and papers as a way to make sure we understood the material. I greatly appreciated the work he clearly put into the course, especially with the videos he made to help us understand the readings. I honestly would not have learned as much as I did without them, since sometimes I could not make time to read. He was also very personable and understanding, but also professional and had good classroom management skills from what I could tell for the short time we were in person.

He offered many opportunities to ask questions and access the information from class. He would post video recordings that aligned with the readings, cover the readings in class and address any questions, and post the class recordings for our reference later. He has also been understanding and supportive during a difficult time and considers the well-being of his students as essential to our success in his class.

Sam worked hard to make sure that difficult material was made palatable even during a pandemic-stricken semester. His desire for students to succeed was displayed every class through the efforts he made to create fun, engaging course material from philosophical readings.

Was very open to hearing new ideas and opinions during discussions and always answered all questions.

## Department Specific

Please comment on the strengths of the course.

### Comments

Sam is the most understanding teacher I have ever had of what kids are going through. He finds ways to make the material as interesting and accessible as he can. He is so flexible with everything and it feels like he truly wants us to succeed.

many areas are related to real life events

I enjoyed discussion sessions and break out groups

The strengths of the course were the organization and easy to follow teaching methods that Sam provided.

Pretty good overview of a lot of the most well-known political theorists. Mostly people that I had heard of but couldn't have really explained what they stood for prior to the course.

I found it very intriguing and the discussions in class were a lot of fun.

The class covered interesting theories in a hot political climate, which allowed for many things to be related to today.

Our expectations and assignments couldnt have been more clearly laid out- Sams lectures were engaging and fantastic and the readings were interesting and applicable.

Course structures facilitates cross-analysis of thinkers. Essay prompts were thought provoking and engaging.

Great structure and material built upon itself, engaging students and teaching the essentials of modern political thought.

This course exposed me to new material in a very manageable way.

The course was very well defined and had a clear chronological order to it. The content was also framed in a way that was very engaging, and the lecture sessions really helped with understanding as well. The workload was not too much and so it offered time to really engage with the readings.

The course was well-organized and I feel as though most of the required reading was useful and necessary.

The strengths of the course came through the instructor. It was incredibly helpful to have an instructor who understood the difficulties of being a student at this time and who worked with students to better facilitate their learning. Course material was interesting and detailed and discussion was great despite not being in-person.

This course was very interesting and was always related back to current political climates to better understand the political theories.

**Please comment on the limitations of the course.**

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Comments

This class good, but it would be so much better in person. The discussions we had would be much more lively if we were all together, and I thought Sam's lecturing and the activities we were able to do in class while in person were very cool. That's not the teacher's fault or anything, but the few classes we had in person were more engaging.

none

Not having in person classes was the biggest limitation, but that was by reason of the university, not anything that could be changed

The limitations of the course were only that I am not super interested in political theorists, but Sam still made it enjoyable.

Nothing really, other than that a lot of the readings could be pretty dense and difficult to comprehend.

Sometimes the reading was a little lengthy but sometimes that just can't be helped.

Being on zoom, the breakout rooms were often pretty crappy, as some people wouldn't participate.

virtual format

Not enough review of material. Could have emphasized certain themes to look out for and connected them across different political thinkers. Intellectual journal assignments felt cursory sometimes.

Other than COVID limitations, none that I could see.

It seemed like a lot of abstract material to cover in one semester but it was still doable.

By nature of a political theory course, there will be a lot of reading. My professor went above expectations with helping us understand the readings, but I feel as though without additional resources, the sheer amount of reading can be overwhelming.

I definitely wished this class was in person because I think the discussions would be a bit deeper.

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**Please comment on the strengths of the instructor.**

Comments

He is really skilled at relating with students and being available for help. He was great at keeping our stress about this class as low as possible which is super helpful. Also the paper prompts he wrote for us were great both in the variety of topics he offered and the ability the prompts gave me to be creative.

different resources and his strong knowledge of the material.

Very good at explaining the theory in understandable ways

Sam is highly adept at using the sakai site to its full potential and he puts in the extra effort to provide the most for his students

Sam was very well organized and knowledgeable. Assignments were clearly explained and expectations were clearly outlined. Feedback on assignments was prompt and detailed and helped students learn from mistakes. Sam was always available for questions even outside of class, feedback on essay outlines was particularly helpful. You could tell throughout the course that Sam was very knowledgeable on the material and that he was excited about teaching the class and sharing that knowledge with students. The course was well organized including a schedule that was clear to follow and changes to course material or schedule were communicated promptly with students. You could tell that Sam cared about the success of students and was invested in helping them throughout the course.

Sam was very good at explaining complex material and had a obvious mastery of the subject.

For one, it's clear that he is extremely passionate about the subject, which is always nice. Went out of his way to make very informative videos explaining the readings, which was incredibly helpful. Always open to answering questions from students in class and actively encouraging students to ask questions.

One of my favorite professors I have had so far. He was very understanding and truly wanted his students to learn and succeed. My favorite thing about Professor Schmitt is that he acknowledged that we all have lives outside of school, and other classes outside of his class. The way he structured the course and taught it showed me that he truly understood this fact and simply wanted us to learn in the midst of this crazy. Whereas other teachers just pile on busy work and act like you are only taking their three-credit course this semester.

I think Sam's knowledge of the subject matter and approachability are strengths.

Sam is an intelligent, charismatic instructor who truly cares about his students and it shows. One of the best I've had at carolina.

Charismatic, knowledgeable, and passionate about the subject he teaches. Makes an effort to connect with students. Very fair grader and clear about his expectations.

One of the most, if not the most organized instructor I have had at UNC. Great knowledge and presentation of the material, I feel like I would not have learned half as much as I did in this class with another instructor.

Sam is one of the best instructors I have had at Carolina and I cannot thank him enough for everything he has done for us this semester.

Sam is a great instructor! He is very open with his students and makes sure that we are understanding material. He fields great questions and is good at explaining the material at hand as well. He is aware of his students needs, which is one of the best parts of his teaching.

previously stated

He was extremely understanding and supportive to the students. He was always available for questions and feedback and made an effort to make sure that students understood the material and would succeed.

Sam worked hard for every class to make sure that his students could succeed to the best of their abilities. He was accommodating, knew the subject matter well, and made sure that he recognized that his students are people first and foremost.

Worked with students on the subject matter and always posted additional lecture videos on concepts if you were confused.

**Please comment on the limitations of the instructor.**

Comments

Sometimes it was tough to tell which parts the thinkers' theories we were talking about were important or what I should be focusing on. This might be because it's really difficult to pay attention online but if you teach online again I might would think about what part of what the thinker is saying should students not be able to forget and base the lecture around that if that makes sense.

none

Sam was occasionally limited in his lack of personal opinion in the course. I completely understand and appreciate the need for care in a class that focuses on politics but in issues critiquing some of the thinkers we studied I sensed he was holding back on what he thought. This limitation is more of a personal preference and I understand why Sam couldn't just let loose but I think it might have helped the course in some ways.

None that I noticed.

I really liked doing breakout room discussions because it forced me to pay close attention and try as hard as possible to articulate the material. I feel like towards the end of the semester we drifted away from this a little bit, though. I have nothing against listening to him talk, but sometimes I like to be able to talk through the information in a smaller group as well.

None

none

Could provide clearer answers or at least answers which will support our responses on essays and tests instead of leaving a lot of things open and vague.

None by my reckoning.

The only downside I would say is I wish the expectations for writing assignments were a little more concrete before we turned it in, although the feedback was still very receptive.

We could have used fewer lecture-only/ mostly-lecture class periods, just considering the format of online learning. It's easy to turn off your camera and zone out if there's not discussion. Students shouldn't be required to talk or turn on their camera, per se, but maybe promote a little more discussion. Overall it wasn't a great problem though.

# Schmitt Samuel - POLI 271-002 2209 Instructor Added Questions Report Fall 2020

Project Title: **2020 Fall Student Evaluations of Teaching**

Course Audience: **30**

Responses Received: **20**

Response Ratio: **66.7%**

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## Report Comments

If there is no data below then either you did not add questions to your evaluation this term or no students responded to your added questions.

Responses to the College of Arts & Sciences and Department questions for the term are distributed on a separate report.

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Creation Date: **Monday, December 7, 2020**



## Student Evaluation of Teaching, Fall 2020

### Instructor Added Questions

#### Samuel Schmitt, POLI 271-002 MOD POL THOUGHT

**Instructor Schmitt encourages participation in class discussion from left, right, and center alike.**

Mean	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree/Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
4.75	20	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	15.0%	80.0%	0.0%

**Instructor Schmitt obviously leans left politically.**

Mean	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree/Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
2.70	20	20.0%	10.0%	50.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**Instructor Schmitt obviously leans right politically.**

Mean	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree/Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
2.20	20	30.0%	20.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**What was your biggest challenge in this class?**

Comments

Keeping up with readings and staying focused

My biggest challenge was digesting readings that could often come off as dry or confusing.

staying focused/engaged with the virtual format

My biggest challenge in this class has been that philosophy and political thinking are far from what I usually study. I have found some of the texts and concepts difficult because they are unlike information I have dealt with in the past.

Engaging with the material from a remote setting.

accuracy in my papers, rather than very general.

My biggest challenge in class with a lot of these authors was to understand how their ideas manifest today in a tangible manner. While I was able to understand the theories themselves, applying them to each other and understanding its modern applicability was a little hard for me.

getting adjusted to taking class online

The biggest challenge of this class was preparing for the midterm/final exams.

The readings themselves, being from so long ago, were sometimes difficult to understand before class

(As far as your political beliefs, I think you voted for Biden reluctantly, and you're probably somewhere in the realm between liberalism and leftism. You're probably not super pro-communism but you're not a huge fan of capitalism either. I say this because I have a pretty high opinion of you and would like to believe you aren't a centrist, but you act as if you're at least pretty neutral so you kind of come off as one.)

Biggest challenge was the amount of reading, but I can't really complain because it is a theory course. The videos helped a lot.

I don't think there was pressure from the professor to lean one way, but there was a definite pressure being applied by my peers to lean left, which could be seen in their comments in lectures and conversations in breakout rooms.

Keeping up with the pre lecture videos when we were doing those. Keeping the thinkers straight in my head.

Probably just staying motivated to stay on top of the readings and come to class during an online semester.

My biggest challenge in this class was understanding the readings. That is no knock on the course itself, the reading is just inherently dense and difficult to follow.

My biggest challenge was understanding some of the readings. Some of these older texts are harder to understand just because of their syntax and diction. Once I came to class after the reading, I normally understood what I read a little bit better.

**What ways, if any, has this class prepared you to be a better citizen or member of your community?**

Comments

It made me a little more interested in political theory which might lead to me becoming more educated about politics. This is a question I might could answer better in a month or two

This course has encouraged me to apply philosophical concepts to the problems we face today.

many ways– it has given me a bedrock understanding of political theory that I lacked before and am now better informed.

I think this class has encouraged me to think more about the goals and perspectives of others.

This class has helped me understand what political thought and theory has built and developed the democracy that we live in today, and has better prepared me to intelligently critique such a democracy.

I was able to understand a variety of viewpoints that give rise to differing political viewpoints today. Being able to analyze the content in a critical manner has given me lens to do the same in real world.

This class has allowed me to look at the world through varying moral lenses and has led me to become more in tune with moral philosophy.

It was a great way to understand how governments work

It forced me to read theory which I have been meaning to get to, and shapes my understanding of current events and my personal circumstances.

It has taught me that some of the questions we ask ourselves today are the same questions that have interested political thinkers for centuries.

I think this class has expanded my way of thinking about the world, particularly the structure of our society and encouraged me to think critically about concepts and institutions that impact our lives, where they came from, and how we can improve them. I think reading these thinkers helped to expand my horizons and make me aware of issues that I otherwise would not have recognized and exposed me to many different viewpoints on important issues.

This class has given me different perspectives on social contracts and what it means to be a citizen.

## Student Evaluation of Teaching, Spring 2021

### Samuel Schmitt, POLI 271-002 MOD POL THOUGHT

Raters									Students				
Responded									17				
Invited									38				
Response Ratio									44.7%				
					Mean	Median	SD	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Overall, I learned a great deal from this course.					4.71	5.00	0.47	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29.4%	70.6%
2. The instructor treated all students with respect.					4.82	5.00	0.39	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%	82.4%
3. The instructor encouraged students to participate in this class.					4.53	5.00	0.51	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	47.1%	52.9%
4. The instructor saw cultural and personal differences as assets.					4.59	5.00	0.51	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	41.2%	58.8%
5. I could really be myself in this course.					4.47	5.00	0.62	17	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	41.2%	52.9%
6. In this course I had multiple opportunities to express my viewpoints and questions.					4.76	5.00	0.56	17	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	11.8%	82.4%
7. The course challenged me to think deeply about the subject matter.					4.65	5.00	0.61	17	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	23.5%	70.6%
8. The design of this course (e.g., its format, selected materials, assignments, exercises, quizzes, etc.) helped me better understand the subject matter.					4.59	5.00	0.51	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	41.2%	58.8%
9. Overall, this course was excellent.					4.59	5.00	0.62	17	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	29.4%	64.7%
10. How was this course taught?													
N		Mode 1		Mode 2		Mode 3		Mode 4		Mode 5			
17		94.1%		5.9%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%			
11. The instructor held class meetings consistent with the official schedule published for this course.													
Mean		SD		N		Yes		No					
1.00		0.00		17		100.0%		0.0%					

## Department Specific

### Political Science Undergraduate: Instructor Ratings

	Mean	Median	SD	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Demonstrates enthusiasm about teaching.	4.94	5.00	0.24	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	94.1%
2. Communicates clearly and logically.	4.71	5.00	0.47	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29.4%	70.6%
3. Promotes a climate of mutual respect.	4.71	5.00	0.47	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29.4%	70.6%
4. Encourages student questions.	4.76	5.00	0.44	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.5%	76.5%
5. Emphasizes critical thinking.	4.82	5.00	0.39	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%	82.4%
6. Uses teaching strategies that promote active involvement.	4.65	5.00	0.49	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	35.3%	64.7%
7. Clearly communicates expectations for student performance.	4.88	5.00	0.33	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.8%	88.2%
8. Regularly provides constructive criticism of student performance.	4.59	5.00	0.62	17	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	29.4%	64.7%
9. Provides timely feedback on student performance.	4.71	5.00	0.47	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29.4%	70.6%
10. Provides a fair evaluation of student performance.	4.71	5.00	0.47	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29.4%	70.6%
11. Is available when needed.	4.76	5.00	0.44	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.5%	76.5%
12. Is well-prepared for instruction.	4.76	5.00	0.44	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.5%	76.5%
13. Overall, considering both the possibilities and limitations of the subject matter and course, I would rate this instructor as "excellent."	4.76	5.00	0.56	17	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	11.8%	82.4%

### Political Science Undergraduate: Course Quality Ratings

	Mean	Median	SD	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. Course goals and objectives are clearly specified.	4.76	5.00	0.44	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.5%	76.5%
15. Requirements (e.g., assignments, attendance, student responsibilities) are clearly specified.	4.88	5.00	0.33	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.8%	88.2%
16. Course assignments are clearly related to the course objectives.	4.82	5.00	0.39	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%	82.4%
17. Instructional methods in the course facilitate my learning.	4.71	5.00	0.47	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29.4%	70.6%
18. In general, the course is well-organized.	4.59	5.00	0.51	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	41.2%	58.8%
19. Course materials stimulated critical thinking.	4.76	5.00	0.44	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.5%	76.5%
20. I know significantly more about this subject than before I took this course.	4.53	5.00	1.01	17	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	23.5%	70.6%
21. Overall, considering its content, design, and structure, I would rate this course as "excellent."	4.69	5.00	0.48	16	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	31.3%	68.8%

## Open-Ended Responses

### 1. In what ways did your instructor try to make learning possible for you during the Spring 2021 semester?

#### Comments

Reading with a lecture/discussion. I appreciated the in-person discussion/lecture part of the course. I also enjoyed the recorded lectures just in case I needed a refresher.

Sam is one of the best professors I have had at UNC. He constantly encouraged participation and gave multiple opportunities for questions and comments. The variety of assignments and journal entries also allowed for me to expand on my thoughts and receive helpful feedback. Sam remained enthusiastic throughout the entirety of the semester and made political theory seem easy to grasp!

Samuel Schmitt did a great job of making learning possible. First, he did a great job of holding regular class meetings and encouraged participation throughout the classes. He did a great job of encouraging class discussion to make sure that students actually engaged with the material and thought about it critically. He also did a good job of keeping attention by including several interactive activities including to make the information more interesting and engaging. Samuel Schmitt also did a good job setting aside time in class after different parts of discussions to allow students to ask questions, and also provided office hours to encourage students to ask questions outside of class. He also did a good job accommodating students in hard times by establishing lenience in attendance and exceptions to deadline when needed which created a very safe and encouraging learning environment.

He was super creative. Made the classroom a fun and easy environment.

Sam gave us multiple opportunities and plenty of time in class to discuss the readings of the day. He was also reasonable and lenient with the due dates of the papers.

He made learning interactive as well as easy to understand through his ability to explain.

He did a great job boiling down lengthy, dense readings into key ideas both in terms of theoretical and historical significance. He did a good job keeping students engaged despite the obstacles of this semester. He was a great resource for discussing paper topics. He did his best to answer everyone's questions. Admirably, he stressed the indeterminacy of many of the issues that were raised and discussed, he admitted the limits of his own knowledge, and he showed no clear bias in dealing with political theory. He was also very accomodating given the circumstances, which has proved helpful again and again.

He seemed very adaptable to changing COVID precautions: starting online, transitioning to the lecture hall, and eventually holding a few classes outside. I felt like the trajectory of the readings was very well considered, so that each reading built on the themes of the last in some way. I also liked the emphasis on discussing our own views of the readings, making them a little more concrete and applicable to our own time.

He really encouraged participation and connected topics to our lives to make them more accessible. Having class outside was also great and helped a lot.

He always gave amazing lectures that were engaging and interesting. I enjoyed getting the opportunity to meet twice a week in person. It made things feel normal and comfortable again. I'm really glad that we had the opportunities we had this semester.

He went above and beyond with lecture slides, provided bonus classes, and very good and engaging lectures.

In instances when students couldn't attend class, Sam made materials available on Sakai. During times when the weather prohibited our in-person meeting, the class was held on ZOOM. In our on-campus classroom, group discussion allowed us to better understand the course material.

Sam provided excellent explanations of the ideologies of various political thinkers. He also encouraged students to ask questions, seek help in office hours, and discuss material in class. Assignments in the class also challenged students to apply course material in new, in-depth ways.

Sam did a good job of encouraging us to think for ourselves about the questions at issue. He focused on clearing up complicated parts of the texts and helping us understand the authors' viewpoints without imposing his own views on the material.

On top of giving us places to discuss our ideas both through responses and call discussions, Sam gave us additional questions for the readings to help us expand our understanding.

## 2. Which aspects of this course, if any, should be kept vs. discarded when students return to campus in fall 2022?

### Comments

Not much should be discarded. I thought the course was sufficient and I learned a lot.

I loved the structure of the course. No changes necessary.

I think this class was great and doesn't need any revisions.

### All kept

This course is great, everything should be kept except for the early start time. Maybe a later time in the day would promote more attendance in class since there was no attendance requirement.

All aspects of online and asynchronous learning should be discarded.

If anything, I would try to shorten certain readings or, alternatively, make key passages for understanding ideas clearer – for instance, so students don't spend hours trying to go through a Burke reading that spends a lot of time on insider politics of his own century when the main ideas of his thought are expressed in smaller sections. This could help students focus in on the important parts and not get caught up in the weeds of longer, less relevant passages. I'd also say, weekly response assignments could be a little more substantive or ask for more in–depth personal reflection on key issues. This is not to say weekly assignments should become papers, but by being a little more in–depth, covering more issues, and being more reflective, they could help students keep track of the progression of the course and both what interests them as well as what's most important.

I liked the group discussions, but I wish more people had done the readings. It can be hard to ensure people are reading, and I certainly benefited from loose enforcement when I was having a few rough weeks — but it can be frustrating/unproductive when only one or two people have actually done the reading in each breakout group.

Even though I showed up to class every week, I do think having an attendance policy would be helpful.

Everything should be kept, it was a great course.

Aspects of the course that should be kept are the in–person classroom setting, the weekly journal entries, and the flexible essay choices for the short papers and critical reflection essay. No aspects should be discarded.

Online office hours should be kept because it makes them more accessible to students.

I would keep the outdoor meetings if possible. It is easier to work and stay focused in the open air.

I think the book list should stay the same since they cover a broad range of ideas and time periods.

## Department Specific

Please comment on the strengths of the course.

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### Comments

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Good content, good variety.

I enjoyed all aspects of the course— journal entries, short papers, and the critical reflection essay. I felt very prepared for the midterm and already feel prepared for the final, even though I have not studied yet. The critical reflection essay fostered thinking from topics throughout the semester, but also encouraged creativity and fun for the end of the semester.

Well organized and very interesting course material. One of my favorite classes I have taken at UNC thus far.

This course covers a ton of material and Sam made all of it make sense. We learned so much.

The ability to actually sit down and learn, to converse about the topic critically was excellent. This type of learning is, in my opinion, is better and more effective than just memorization like most classes.

The strengths of the course are the slides that point to "big ideas" and their details as well as the discussions surrounding key ideas.

I already mentioned these. I'll add that he said he hoped the course would be a "bright spot" in all that was going on where we could connect with other people and have engaging discussions. By that measure, I think the class was very successful.

I think this course was very clear on expectations. The assignments were fair and clear, and I was never confused about how to succeed.

Strengths— lots of writers are covered throughout the course and the student leaves with a solid understanding of writers specially due to the resources provided by Sam

This course is strong because its structure is laid back and facilitates open discussion/critical thinking about political theory concepts. The journal entries and wide range of essay topics allow for deeper investigations into certain theorists.

The array of political theorists presented in this course was excellent. The theorists were presented in an order and method that clearly showed the evolution of political thought over the modern era.

The course was a strong introduction to writers from a variety of perspectives. Material was well—balanced and encouraged students to think about social problems using a variety of techniques.

The discussion based aspects of the course helped me understand the material better.

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**Please comment on the limitations of the course.**

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Comments

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Limited amount of time to cover thinkers.

None.

No limitations.

Some of the students didnt participate much which sometimes made it harder to have a good class.

N/A

The limitations were the difficulty of small group discussion given social distancing. Any course like this is also inherently limited because it tries to squeeze centuries of political theory into a few short weeks with a limited scope of thinkers and a limited body of readings. As previously commented in in detail, the weekly response assignments could also be improved to facilitate deeper, personal reflection.

It often felt like we only scratched the surface of each text and author, although that's partly the point of a survey course. Sometimes, especially with Mill, I wish we had time to go a bit deeper.

It's hard to cover so much history in so little time, so I would have liked to have covered more philosophers, but I also understand that would have been difficult.

Limitations– very fast paced and the amount of writers that we read was a bit all over the place, maybe less books and going deeper in them would be better.

there were no limitations to this course, besides that most due dates for assignments were due in the morning.

None. Excellent course.

None noted.

Some of the readings were dense and difficult to read, but that comes with the territory.

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**Please comment on the strengths of the instructor.**

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Comments

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Smart, explains things well, encourages participation

I was with one of my friends (outside of the course) one day when I joined Sam's office hours. After I left office hours, my friend was raving about how kind, funny, and thoughtful Sam was and she asked what classes he teaches so she could take a class with him. Sam made an effort to learn everyone's names despite the trickiness of switching from online to in person. He also is very patient and never was frustrated if a student asked him to re-explain something or repeat himself. I would love to take another POLI class with Sam in the future and will recommend him to all my POLI major friends.

In addition to the other strength previously mentioned, Samuel Schmitt did a great job with his organization of the course as a whole. He provided a plethora of additional resources to supplement the class structure and material including recorded lectures and notes. He was also very good with communicating with students outside of class by sending informative emails, replying to emails quickly, and providing insightful feedback on several assignments which made students feel much more connected. Overall, Samuel Schmitt was very organized but also personable and engaging. You can tell he cares not only about the material but also about the students which was very encouraging and motivated me to be a better student.

Sam Schmitt is the best teacher I have ever had here at UNC and I mean that. He went out of his way every day to be inclusive, fair, fun, and create a class environment that helped us learn this material. I don't even like political science but I loved taking this class with him.

He was able to engage with the students well as well as provide a comprehensive and flexible learning environment.

He is enthusiastic, focused, unbiased, resourceful, and attentive to student needs and limitations.

Very caring, joyful, and strikingly incisive at times. Sometimes he'll make a strong thematic connection between texts that I never would have picked up on.

He is so passionate about the course material, and that passion really showed in everything he did. It made me very enthusiastic about the readings, and excited to come to class.

Very prepared for class and enthusiastic

Sam was great at facilitating discussion and critical thinking during meeting times. He frequently opened discussion and provided analogies for difficult political theory topics.

Sam provides excellent explanations of political theories. He clearly explains the nuances of these theories and how they compare to other theories taught in the course. He is also very friendly and cares deeply about his students and their learning.

Sam did a good job of keeping students engaged with fairly dense material. He did a good job of opening classes by encouraging us to think about practical problems and then explaining how given theorists addressed those problems. He brought a good energy to the classroom, which was important given the 9:30 start time. He clearly enjoyed and took the time to understand the material beforehand, which made it much easier to learn from him.

Sam is incredibly knowledgeable about the topics and can explain things in many ways to guarantee to understand.

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**Please comment on the limitations of the instructor.**

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Comments

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Sometimes could off a bit of a tangent unrelated to course content.

NONE! Thank you for everything this semester Sam!

No suggestions or limitations for the instructor.

I seriously mean this: if every teacher at this University worked as hard as Samuel Schmitt and cared about their material like he did this would be the best University in the country. He does not have any limitations. And I mean that.

Goes on a bit of tangents with certain topics but not to the point where it is detrimental to the class or learning.

He could do more to facilitate personal reflection on the issues we discuss, most likely via more in-depth, personal response assignments. He could take more time to discuss, ideally with a visual aid, the relationships between thinkers and their idea as well as key themes of the course.

Sometimes the brainstorming activities, like how to relate to our roommates seemed a bit unnecessary or lasted longer than they needed to. I still remember that exercise, though, so maybe those aren't actually limitations at all. I guess they're just a bit detached from the text.

Philosophy is a hard subject to grasp, and most of the time he explained things well, however, there were some instances where I couldn't really follow. I'm not sure how to make things easier to understand because it is difficult material

Expects participation and sometimes students don't have much to contribute

There were no limitations for Sam.

None. Sam is great.

None noted, performance was excellent.

He sometimes rambles in class because topics sometimes prompt his thoughts on other related topics.

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