

Student Evaluations and Feedback

The evaluation system used at the University of Chicago consists of survey questions that cover different aspects of the instructor's and teaching assistant's teaching style and course material, as well as the classroom environment. For the evaluations, the scale is from 1 to 5, with 1 as strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree. The qualitative feedback was selected to highlight a balance of constructively critical comments. In addition to sample student feedback, complete evaluations are available upon request.

I. Classics of Social and Political Thought II

(Winter 2019 – 15 enrolled, 14 evaluations; I was the instructor of record.)

i. Sample Qualitative Feedback

“The quizzes were a good way of forcing time management and argument, and their incremental difficulty made it so I never felt unprepared. As I read more I had more to say despite having limited time to complete the quizzes. Class discussion was facilitated well and fruitful.”

“The discussions were very fruitful. Alex had an outline for where he wanted the discussion to head so that we stayed on track. Everyone's opinion felt respected without feeling like he was just letting people say whatever they want. The discussion was very open, but he would also push us along when we needed it. We knew what we were supposed to get out of the lectures.”

“Have discussions a little more student led, sometimes discussion was just too structured.”

“Unfortunately, and this I hate to say, because I really enjoyed class time and respect AH a lot as a instructor, there was almost no motivation to complete the reading before class. Because he is so organized and points out passages, if you can read quick, it is easy to skim the text and find something at least semi-intelligent to say.”

“The course was very manageable in terms of work load. Certain weeks were a bit reading-heavy, but they were balanced out by seminars where the readings were ~20 pages. If you fall behind, it is not hard to catch up; but you have to catch up quickly as the last quiz is cumulative.”

ii. Quantitative Feedback

(averages on a scale from 1-5; 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)

Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.7
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve subsequent work.	4.7
The instructor organized the course clearly.	4.8
The instructor presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.4
The instructor facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.9
The instructor stimulated my interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.7
The instructor helped me gain significant learning from the course content.	4.5
The instructor was available and helpful outside of class.	4.8

The instructor motivated me to think independently.	4.8
The instructor worked to create an inclusive and welcoming environment.	5.0
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to my learning.	4.9

II. Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*

(Autumn 2018 – 20 enrolled, 13 evaluations; I was the teaching assistant.)

i. Sample Qualitative Feedback

“Alex was very helpful in office hours, because of his nuanced and communicable understanding of the book. During class, he added a similar voice, one that required close reading.”

“He is a great TA. He led interesting classes when he taught for the day. He also provided helpful feedback on papers. Alex was very accessible always willing to meet with students and talk with them about ideas for their papers.”

“Occasionally he tries to ask veeeery open-ended questions, or just ‘point us to a passage’ in a way that is significantly more condescending than it would be if he would just say what he's thinking. We know you're more of an expert in this than us that's why you're a TA and we're not. Just say the thing.”

“Alex was great at providing clear and constructive feedback on assignments and also led two really interesting classes.”

ii. Quantitative Feedback

(averages on a scale from 1-5; 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)

The TA facilitated discussions that supported my learning.	4.7
The TA gave me useful feedback on my work.	4.7
The TA stimulated my interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.8
The TA challenged me to learn.	4.8
The TA helped me to succeed in the class.	4.6
The TA was available and helpful outside of class.	4.9
Overall, the TA made a significant contribution to my learning.	4.6