

College Course Evaluations

SOSC 11100: Power, Identity, Resistance-1

Section 15 - Autumn 2015

Instructor(s): Kumaki, Hiroko; Craze, Joshua

Number Enrolled: 17

Number of Responses: 9

Evaluation Comments

What were the instructor's strengths? Weaknesses?

- Dr. Joshua Craze is an incredible instructor - I think he may be the best I've ever had. He is brilliant, insightful, passionate, and learned. He realizes that every individual has his or her own interests, and if you express them, he will assign a unique essay prompt that aligns with your interests, possibly with some additional reading - that is to say, he recognizes an essay you don't want to write is an essay he doesn't want to read. Never before his class have I seen office hours so crowded - every week, he has tens of students seeing him after class to discuss the material. Take PIR with Joshua - I'm not regretting it, and you won't either.
- Joshua is a very inspiring person who always provokes new ways to think about the text we're reading. He directs discussion really well to enhance his students' understanding of the text. He is that SOSC professor you came to UChicago for. Although his one weakness is sometimes he complicates his explanations when he is trying to explain what is going on in the text, but that is generally because texts read in this course are very dense.
- Professor Craze is the best. He knows his material, is great at facilitating discussion, and is eager to teach. His weekly paragraph assignments can sometimes be a little tedious, but they really help facilitate discussion during class. Really enjoyed taking the course this quarter, and am looking forward to winter quarter.
- The instructor is simply phenomenal. Very profound understanding of the course material and extremely good at understanding and working with students.
- The breadth of Joshua's knowledge on the material was a clear, and greatly appreciated, strength. It was a comfort to know that any questions we might have could be thoroughly explained by him in class or in office hours. However, some of his explanations on the material could be simplified, meaning that sometimes his vocabulary could confuse or impede understanding on a concept if you were not used to it. This doesn't reflect on his ability to lead and teach the class though. He really focused on making sure we understood what we were reading, especially with Marx. Joshua also, which was a bit surprising, was very involved in our writing- where he forced us to have editing partners and gave us pages of feedback on our essays. This was completely unexpected, but immensely appreciated, and really helped in learning how to write for the class and other classes in general too.
- Professor Craze is obviously very knowledgeable about the authors discussed in this course, which makes him good at fielding questions. However, since this class covers material that is both important and pretty complex, I was often very frustrated with Professor Craze's (initial) unwillingness to tell us (or at least hint at) the punchline for some of the arguments being made in *Discourse on Inequality* and *Wealth of Nations*. While I understand the motivation behind wanting a class to reach certain conclusions on their own, in some instances I feel like that can be a shaky bet. In our class's case, I very much feel like that was what happened. Most of the conclusions I realized from the texts would come from independent reading and not from Professor Craze himself, which I personally was a little disappointed by.
- Phenomenal professor who will change your way of thinking if you put enough effort into this class

- Joshua was really strong, particularly when teaching Rousseau and Marx. He was respectful of all of us and generally the class took the format of heavily guided discussion, but he was unafraid to let us know when we were getting off-track or missing something. My only complaint would be that we were assigned far too much reading when we went through Smith. When I went back to write the essay, I faced a simply unmanageable amount of content to sift through. Additionally, probably with good reason, Professor Craze didn't seem to care much for the Smith reading, and I think that this slightly effected the quality of discussion. But, as I said, Marx and particularly Rousseau were covered in a spectacular manner. He was also incredibly open to meeting outside of class. I attended 4 of his pre-essay Q&A sessions, and they were ridiculously helpful. I wish he had done some for the Marx essays as well.

What were the teaching assistant's or writing intern's strengths? Weaknesses?

- N/A
- n/a
- N/A
- n/a
- N/A
- N/A
- N/A

What, if anything, what would you change about this course and why?

- Less readings. More focus on smaller sections.
- Nothing.
- Nothing
- less reading (page-wise) to allow for more discussion of material, especially w/r/t Marx and Smith
- Change the amount of reading to do. It is unreasonable to expect a class to get through 1/2 of Capital in 3 weeks and be expected to retain any information.
- I feel like if there were any way for Professor Craze to preface each reading for the next day (or at least take 5 to 10 minutes to introduce each new text) with a bit of historical context and/or a brief explanation for why we're reading the text, why it matters in the larger scheme of things, or why we should care about it, etc. it would be a lot easier to get a sense of the imperative behind really pushing myself to understand it.
- Cut down the WON reading in favor of another social thinker or a focus on parts of the Theory of Moral sentiments. That book is excruciatingly boring and I'm not sure that it was really a valuable use of class-time to try to cover 700+ pages of it. It doesn't give a balanced view of Smith's thoughts on government, and it's not worth skimming through such a dense, controversial book so quickly.

Is there any topic in this course that you wished you had had previous background in?

- N/A
- Generally, if I had more prior knowledge about the authors we read it would be at least a bit more easier to understand the material.
- None
- N/A

- No
- Nope
- Basic classical economic theory. I'd have found it useful to know about the tradition that Smith was working in and Marx was criticizing.

Which texts were most useful?

- Rousseau.
- Capital by Marx Discourse on Inequality by Rousseau
- All
- Marx and Rousseau
- Marx
- All of them. The supplementary David Graeber reading was also pretty great.
- Rousseau and Marx.

Which least?

- Smith.
- n/a
- N/A
- N/A
- Rousseau
- N/A
- Wealth of Nations, particularly the section on currency.

How productive was class discussion?

- Good.
- Always very productive and thought productive.
- Sometimes a little hard to work with, but mostly because there are a lot of type A personalities in the class. Not because the professor isn't good at facilitating discussion.
- Somewhat productive; lots of strong opinions flying around.
- Very productive
- It was pretty active. Not that enjoyable to listen to, but at least there wasn't just constant, awkward silence.

- Very productive. It only flagged because people who clearly hadn't done/understood the readings were too eager to speak up. But I suppose that's the price to pay for grading on participation.

How has this course contributed to your education?

- Great supplement to all my classes, especially econ courses. Has sparked an interest for political science/philosophy/the humanities in general.
- This course is a great contribution to my overall education. The writing and analytical skills I've acquired through this course will hopefully stay with me for the rest of my life.
- It's made me think different about some ideas and view the world a bit differently. It has also made me think more about a major in the Social Sciences.
- I probably wouldn't have read these texts as carefully as I did were it not for the need to write papers on the books, so that's helpful.
- It has exposed me to seminal social thinkers and taught me how to work through a difficult text and get something out of it.

Why did you take this course?

Core requirement	7 / 78%
Instructor Reputation	6 / 67%
Faculty member recommended it	0 / 0%
Concentration Requirement	0 / 0%
Meets at a convenient time	2 / 22%
A student recommended it	0 / 0%
Topic interests me	4 / 44%
Concentration elective	0 / 0%

In summary, I had a strong desire to take this course

Strongly Agree	7 / 78%
Agree	0 / 0%

Neutral	0 / 0%
Disagree	0 / 0%
Strongly Disagree	0 / 0%

How many hours per week did you spend on this course?

Low Answer	3
Average Answer	9.6
High Answer	20

What proportion of classes did you attend?

All	8 / 89%
75%	0 / 0%
50%	0 / 0%
25%	0 / 0%
None	0 / 0%

Were the time demands of this course reasonable?

Yes	6 / 67%
No	1 / 11%

The Instructor

	N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Organized the course clearly.	0%	0%	0%	0%	44%	33%
Presented clear lectures.	0%	0%	0%	11%	44%	22%
Held my attention and made this course interesting.	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	67%
Stimulated and facilitated questions and discussions.	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	67%
Responded well to student questions.	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	67%
Was available outside of class.	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	67%
Was helpful during office hours.	0%	0%	0%	11%	11%	56%
Motivated independent thinking.	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	67%

The Readings

	N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fulfilled the objective of the course.	0%	0%	0%	11%	11%	56%
Were reasonable in number.	0%	0%	11%	22%	22%	22%
Were appropriately difficult.	0%	0%	0%	0%	56%	22%

Approximately how much of the reading did you do?

	N/A	None	25%	50%	75%	100%
	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%	44%

The Assignments

	N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
How helpful were the lectures and discussions in preparing for exams and completing assignments?	0%	11%	0%	0%	11%	56%
How appropriately were the requirements of the course proportioned to course goals?	0%	0%	0%	11%	22%	44%
How well did the requirements contribute to the goals of the course?	0%	0%	0%	0%	22%	56%
How timely and useful was feedback on assignments and exams?	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	67%
How fairly were the assignments graded?	0%	0%	11%	0%	11%	56%

Overall

	N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course met my expectations.	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	67%
This course provided me with new insight and knowledge.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	78%
This course provided me with useful skills.	0%	0%	0%	11%	11%	56%
The content of this course was presented at an appropriate level.	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	67%
I put my best effort into this course.	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%	44%
The class had a high level of morale/enthusiasm.	0%	0%	0%	11%	22%	44%

The Teaching Assistant(s)

	N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Were available outside of class.	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%
Were helpful with assignments.	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%

Discussion Sections, Problem Sessions, Writing Tutorials

	N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Were well coordinated with this course and contributed to it.	44%	0%	0%	0%	11%	22%
Provided well-designed materials.	44%	0%	0%	0%	11%	22%