Social Sciences Course Evaluation for Kastart, Wynand POL SCI 159 LEC B (67475), Winter Qtr 2020

Responses: 31/34 (91.18%)

COURSE / INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

1. The instructor's ability to communicate clearly in this course was:
   - **0**   0 (N/A or Unsure)
   - **0**   1 (Among Worst)
   - **2**   2
   - **2**   3
   - **5**   4 (OK or Average)
   - **3**   5
   - **11**   6
   - **8**   7 (Among Best)

2. The class preparation and organization was:
   - **0**   0 (N/A or Unsure)
   - **0**   1 (Among Worst)
   - **1**   2
   - **2**   3
   - **2**   4 (OK or Average)
   - **5**   5
   - **4**   6
   - **17**   7 (Among Best)

3. The emphasis on understanding rather than memorization was:
   - **0**   0 (N/A or Unsure)
   - **0**   1 (Among Worst)
   - **2**   2
   - **1**   3
   - **2**   4 (OK or Average)
   - **2**   5
   - **9**   6
   - **15**   7 (Among Best)

4. The instructor's ability to stimulate thinking and interest in the subject was:
   - **0**   0 (N/A or Unsure)
   - **2**   1 (Among Worst)
   - **1**   2
   - **1**   3
   - **7**   4 (OK or Average)
   - **5**   5
   - **9**   6
   - **6**   7 (Among Best)

5. The match between stated course objectives and actual outcome was:
   - **0**   0 (N/A or Unsure)
   - **0**   1 (Among Worst)
   - **0**   2
   - **1**   3
   - **5**   4 (OK or Average)
   - **2**   5
   - **7**   6
   - **16**   7 (Among Best)

6. The instructor's ability to express his/her knowledge and understanding of the course's concepts, theories and information was:
   - **0** 0 (N/A or Unsure)
   - **0** 1 (Among Worst)
   - **0** 2
   - **0** 3
   - **6** 4 (OK or Average)
   - **2** 5
   - **4** 6
   - **19** 7 (Among Best)

7. The instructor's ability to teach content that I will remember after the final was:
   - **0** 0 (N/A or Unsure)
   - **1** 1 (Among Worst)
   - **2** 2
   - **1** 3
   - **5** 4 (OK or Average)
   - **6** 5
   - **5** 6
   - **11** 7 (Among Best)

8. When requested, I received feedback on my work that was:
   - **3** 0 (N/A or Unsure)
   - **0** 1 (Among Worst)
   - **1** 2
   - **0** 3
   - **1** 4 (OK or Average)
   - **4** 5
   - **9** 6
   - **12** 7 (Among Best)

9. The fairness of the grading criteria used by the instructor was:
   - **0** 0 (N/A or Unsure)
   - **1** 1 (Among Worst)
   - **1** 2
   - **0** 3
   - **2** 4 (OK or Average)
   - **3** 5
   - **10** 6
   - **14** 7 (Among Best)

10. *Using the above criteria, overall I would rate this instructor as:*
    - **0** 0 (N/A or Unsure)
    - **0** 1 (Among Worst)
    - **3** 2
    - **0** 3
    - **5** 4 (OK or Average)
    - **3** 5
    - **10** 6
    - **10** 7 (Among Best)

11. *Overall, the value of this course was:*

      0   0 (N/A or Unsure)
      0   1 (Among Worst)
      1   2
      2   3
      5   4 (OK or Average)
      5   5
      9   6
      9   7 (Among Best)

12. The usefulness/effectiveness of labs or discussion sections (if any) was:

     23   0 (N/A or Unsure)
      0   1 (Among Worst)
      0   2
      0   3
      1   4 (OK or Average)
      0   5
      2   6
      5   7 (Among Best)

13. The usefulness/effectiveness of the course readings was:

      0   0 (N/A or Unsure)
      0   1 (Among Worst)
      2   2
      0   3
      1   4 (OK or Average)
      8   5
     10   6
     10   7 (Among Best)

14. The usefulness/effectiveness of teaching assistants in this course was:

     24   0 (N/A or Unsure)
      0   1 (Among Worst)
      0   2
      0   3
      1   4 (OK or Average)
      0   5
      2   6
      4   7 (Among Best)

15. The usefulness of this course in developing skills for use in my career or future life was:

      1   0 (N/A or Unsure)
      1   1 (Among Worst)
      1   2
      4   3
      2   4 (OK or Average)
      7   5
      9   6
      6   7 (Among Best)

16. The instructor's enthusiasm and interest in the course and subject matter was:

0   0 (N/A or Unsure)
0   1 (Among Worst)
0   2
1   3
2   4 (OK or Average)
4   5
7   6
17   7 (Among Best)

17. The instructor's willingness to meet with and help students outside of the classroom was:
    7   0 (N/A or Unsure)
    0   1 (Among Worst)
    0   2
    0   3
    3   4 (OK or Average)
    5   5
    3   6
    13   7 (Among Best)

18. The instructor's ability to encourage discussion and debate of course topics was:
    0   0 (N/A or Unsure)
    2   1 (Among Worst)
    0   2
    1   3
    5   4 (OK or Average)
    6   5
    8   6
    9   7 (Among Best)

19. The course workload was:
    0   1 (Light)
    2   2
    1   3
    7   4
    11   5
    4   6
    2   7 (Heavy)

GENERAL INFORMATION

20. What is your major school?
    30   Social Sciences
    1   Other
    0   Unaffiliated/Undeclared

21. What is your class level?
    0   Freshman
    2   Sophomore
    11   Junior
    18   Senior
    0   Graduate

22. By the end of last quarter, how many units had you completed?
    0   0 to 20
    0   21 to 50
    5   51 to 100
    14   101 to 150
    12   Over 150

23. What is your approximate GPA?
    - **1** less than 2.0
    - **4** 2.0 to 2.5
    - **8** 2.51 to 3.0
    - **15** 3.01 to 3.5
    - **3** 3.51 to 4.0

24. What is your MOST IMPORTANT reason for taking this course?
    - **8** Interest in subject
    - **18** Need for major
    - **3** Relates to major
    - **1** Breadth requirement
    - **1** Need units

25. Did your instructor encourage you to complete the evaluation?
    - **29** Yes
    - **2** No

26. If applicable, is attendance in your discussion/lab section mandatory?
    - **18** Yes
    - **11** No

27. COMMENTS

    1. A. What were the strongest points of the course?
       - A brilliant political scientist teaches the course. He fluently understands the subject. He is also very pleasant and passionate about political science.
       - Allowing for a guest speaker from one of the countries we learned about come and talk giving us his perspective.
       - An emphasis on how history shaped contemporary Latin American politics using statistics.
       - Covers a wide range of countries and spreads over an acceptable time period so it helps that you can see a countries past history as well as similarities in country politics.
       - Enthusiastic professor, and useful readings
       - I enjoyed the professor enthusiasm about the course
       - I really enjoyed how passionate the professor was about the subject. I learned a lot about the politics of Mexico and South American countries through this course and I really appreciate how the professor would take the time to answer questions and reexplain things when no one was able to answer certain questions. The guest speaker was a really nice addition to the class and I appreciate how Professor Kastart would use the entire class time whether it be through lecture or by answering questions. The extra credit offered is extremely beneficial and getting points for attending class was a really helpful motivator to attend class when I was having a bad day. I really enjoyed so much about this class and really hope to take a class taught by Professor Kastart again!
       - I really liked the guest presentation that we had. It was interesting hearing about Chilean politics from someone who has lived and studied there for a huge part of their life. Besides that, the instructor seemed very passionate about the subject which is always great to see, its better learning from a passionate professional than someone that is simply talking in monotone the whole lecture.
       - I think that he provides plenty of feedback on all assignments which helped me figure out where to focus further study. The explanations for why everything was graded the way it was fair and helped me figure out where I could improve.
       - I think the professor showed a great passion for the course material. He is clearly very interested in the subject and shows it through his extensive knowledge. The coursework was also very reasonable. The professor did not demand much, but everything he assigned

was still comprehensive and provided a great way to review assigned readings. He also made it clear what we had to know through the assignments and provided sufficient opportunities for extra credit. The grading system was fair as well. If I had to boil it down to one sentence, I would say that the course was logistically and organizationally very strong.

- Lectures were very interesting, the professor was funny
- Professor Kastart was well versed on the current and past political events that occurred in Latin America. It is evident that he is very passionate about the subject which was helpful for me as I was able to learn many knew aspects about Latin American politics.
- Really interesting subject matter, carefully selected readings, interested insights given. Overall a very good class.
- The course was able to impart on me a lot of background information regarding the political histories of a great number of countries. It revealed political patterns in Latin America that could help us better understand the political phenomena at work today.
- The in class lectures were very interactive and allowed me to get a better comprehension of the material.
- The professor's teaching skills were really good because he wanted the students to engage, understand, and know with the material. He did put emphasize on memorizing some of the material. However, it was not the most important part. I also think that the overall organization of the class was among the best. He was a very clear and straight forward professor who made, what could have been an incredibly tedious and boring subject, interesting.
- The professor was very enthusiastic & knowledgeable about the politics of Latin America. Course load wasnt too bad and he really wanted us to learn.
- The readings and the lectures all help you gain a better understanding of the concepts and materials needed to know, as well as for the assignments.
- The strongest things the Professor did was to spend a little more time on topics where there was an obvious struggle of understanding from the class. It's good that he encouraged participation through questions, but sometimes they seemed too specific.
- The understanding of how different different regimes across Latin American history operated.
- the way he discussed what was assigned in the reading and then added more to it during lecture
- the way in which it is taught is very easy to understand and cohesive
- Unsure
- Very clear and easy to follow. Instructions are always clear and the same goes for lectures. Never once did I leave the class confused or not understanding the material. Professor Kastart always checks to make sure the whole class understands what is being discussed. Everything is graded incredibly fast and good feedback is given. Professor Kastart's passion for this subject truly shows.
- 7 blank answer(s).

2. B. What were the weakest points of the course?

- An emphasis on history.
- Course was a bit heavy in relation to reading and memorization of final material.
- Despite his efforts & enthusiasm, being in the class was very boring. We know its a political science class but there were too many graphs & charts, it was hard to follow along.
- Getting students engaged in the course more.
- Hard grading

- He is brilliant, but his ability to teach is average. The subject can be very complex, and therefore needs to be taught more methodically and slowly .Furthermore, the slides were way too dense with information (I can't read the information on the slides while listening to 100 words per minute from the lecturer).
- I feel like the pop quizzes mentioned on the syllabus could've been utilized more throughout the course just to get a gauge of how much people are understanding in the class.
- It was hard to fully understand the concepts in person because of the hesitation and constant tripping over his own words :/ I tried really hard but was lost in a lot of things that was trying to be taught. I was also confused in the direction everything was going because I don't think there was a good enough structure for learning. It seemed like a lot of jumbled information about random countries at random times and nothing seemed to connect for me.
- Many of the students in the class did not engage in the class discussions, which limited how impactful the course could have been
- NA
- Sometimes he moved too fast and there were times were there was too much information on the slides and not enough time to write
- the amount of information required for a small amount of points on an assignment
- The profesores writing was a little hard to read sometimes, the vast majority of the class was taught through a PowerPoint so it wasnt too bad .
- The professor, particularly in earlier parts of the course, came off, at times, as condescending. He could be a little bit patronizing when students did not provide exact answers to questions he would ask to engage the class. Though, as the course went on, the professor seemed to be increasingly more at ease with engaging students. I would say that the professor still needs more teaching experience.
- The professor brought a very interesting insight into this course with his interest in statistics, I have not taken a political science course that has relied on statistics this much, which has been interesting but at times difficult to understand the broader timeline of Latin American democracy.
- The reading load was very heavy and possibly focusing more on concise readings would benefit this course.
- There was a lot of information that was given to us. It was hard to keep up with lectures and readings because of this.
- The slides are not very helpful. Theres a lot of verbal information that is given and its sometimes difficult to keep up.
- Too many assignments, and released them only days before it was due. Gave extra credit in Spanish
- Too many assignments. Its good for understanding the reading but there are other classes students take.
- we were only able to spend a short amount of time on each country we analyzed, but thats a limitation beyond the professor.
- 10 blank answer(s).

3. C. How could the course be improved?
   - A better course schedule/ plan of how things are taught. Maybe work in a chronological order for each country, and then sum everything up by putting them in comparison with each other. Professor can practice more with becoming well versed in his teaching material so there's not much distraction happening on the students end.
   - As a visual learner, I wouldve liked to see some videos breaking down some of the concepts in a different way.
   - Certain absences (between 2 and 5) should automatically be pardoned. Beyond that number, absences could be pardoned with sufficient reasons. Not all assignments should

be mandatory. A certain amount of assignments (3 out of 4 total) should be fine, with 1 assignment pardoned or not necessary to complete. A midterm would help break this class material up. This helps to lessen the weight of the cumulative final. Since the reading is quite heavy, and the final cumulative, it would not be easy for the students to revise all the assigned material for this class' final, while studying for other class' finals. A midterm would help avoid this, by not making itself, or final, cumulative, and to alleviate some stress from the students. The midterm could help, or the assignments could, should they be allowed to act as barriers that break up portions of this class.

- Course would be improved by finding new or creative ways to get students to participate. Professor Kastart very much wants his students to engage and participate in class but has not quite found what ways to best do that. I think getting more groups activities such as simulations or discussions could help with this. I think adding a more personal edge to the class could also help. The class is small yet it still felt as if everyone there were total strangers most of the time.
- Everything was fantastic.
- Figure out some way to ensure that the students are consistently completing the readings so that the class discussions are more interesting
- give more time for assignments or post ahead of time, one week not enough time for full time workers
- go over readings more in class that can help answer the questions that will be discussed on the assignments.
- go over the assignments ahead of time
- I believe that the professor has an incredible amount of potential to improve and gain a masterful grasp of teaching and lecturing. He has a good sense of humor and seems to respect his students on a one-on-one basis. Such traits just don't show as often as they could. I would suggest that the professor be more at ease come class time and improve his engagement skills. Instead of telling people that they are simply wrong for imprecise answers, he should work with them to help them get to the answer he's looking for. He could also foster more group discussions and collaborative work during class. I would suggest using either the first or last few minutes of every class to get students to sit in groups and discuss the reading or corresponding lecture. It allows students to get a better grasp of the material and know each other on a more personal level.
- Implementation of the pop quizzes.
- I think that the class would have benefitted from more discussion and group work!
- I think the class slides should have a bit more information. It would just be easier keeping up and catching up if we get confused.
- I would have enjoyed maybe two more guest lecturers. I found the guest lecturer from Chile very insightful.
- Lower the number of assignments, and teach more instead of saying that we have to learn from the books.
- Maybe if this class was year long, or at least a few quarters longer it would be great. Going over Latin American politics in 10 weeks is just not enough time; it's a very rich and interesting subject that I'm sure many other students can benefit from. It's a shame that it's only given 10 weeks–you can only scratch the surface with that amount of time.
- Maybe the professor could slow down a little bit and take more time to focus on longer slides or maybe try to be understanding with readings. One time I did the wrong reading (my fault) but he got upset at the whole class, we all have a lot of stuff to do so were trying our best
- N/A
- Organization can be improved. Especially because of the amount of information that we are expected to take in.
- Overall this course was good.

- Professors have to fill silences, if students arent responding to a question it probably means they dont know the answer and the professor should just move on to lecture on the subject. I know its important to engage with students and I like how we are asked questions to gauge our general understanding but sometimes I feel we spend a lot of time waiting for someone to answer.

- Slow down the speaking speed and simplify the slides.

- The one thing I noticed was that the way you made it seem like the class would be during the syllabus day didnt match up with how the class actually went. The actual class was a lot better than I expected because of this! I would encourage you to somewhat revise how you go through the syllabus so the class doesnt sound quite as daunting and strict as it currently makes it seem, then I believe you would see a huge rise in student enrollment/ retention.

- The timeline of which essay assignment were released made it difficult to meet the assigned deadline. I understand the policy that was later placed to push students to do the readings beforehand, but I think sticking to the pop quizzes to do so would have been more effective. In honesty, many of the students that do access readings can not read it entirely comprehensively especially if the readings are longer. This is requires one to revisit the reading to do so to meet the questions in the prompt. Having a week to do so should be minimum, not 4 days.

- 7 blank answer(s).