

Fall 2003: Congressional Politics

The following is a verbatim recording of the student comments on the Narrative Course Evaluation Forms that I received. Every response is included (i.e., no “cherry-picking” to include only the best responses) and there is no order to the recorded responses.

Please comment on the strengths of the course:

“Readings interesting. Interesting using spatial models to describe politics. Simulation was great.”

“A very intelligent presentation of material – Prof. Clinton is obviously very bright.”

“Very approachable, casual atmosphere of teachers. Excellent use of powerpoint for lectures. Simple, concise teaching style.”

“Congressional simulation was interesting and fun.”

“My favorite parts of the course were the problem sets and special projects. They were very challenging but fun.”

“Very interesting exploration of a topic matter that I had very little knowledge of. Gained a good working knowledge of topic.”

“The lectures were clear and generally interesting. Prof. Clinton is clearly really interested in this topic and works hard on making lectures flow well. I learned a lot about the topic.”

“It spreads the bulk of the work over a long period of time as well as the readings. Lectures were organized and entertaining. The Congressional Simulation kept things interesting and was good real (sort of) world experience for law, etc. Professor Clinton was great.”

“The professor definitely knows what he’s talking about, and the course is full of information.”

“Great lectures.”

“Good lectures, reading.”

“The material was interesting and the readings, particularly those from newspapers or current events articles, were effective in illustrating the material.”

“Liked learning the intricacies of Congress and the maneuvering which occurs between its key players. Also liked being about some of the nuances of campaigning. Loved mock Congress.”

“I definitely learned a lot in this course, and was very interested in the subject and the readings. The powerpoint presentations were very useful and the lectures always has an element of entertainment, which kept me from falling asleep or avoiding lectures.”

“Easy and interesting.”

“Enjoyed the class, and learned a lot about important Congressional institutions and procedures.”

“Really enjoyed the course. Workload very reasonable but learned a lot. Clinton did a good job of using different methods to keep it interesting.”

“It covers a lot of material clearly and comprehensively. It’s not work intensive, and if you do all the readings you learn a lot. And Josh Clinton is awesome. He’s funny, approachable, a good lecturer, etc., The Congressional simulation was awesome and the oppositional research paper was fun.”

“I really enjoyed the class. I found the material very interesting. I especially enjoyed the Congressional simulation.”

“Lectures were interesting. One of the few lectures I’ve consistently attended in my Princeton career. Byron was an amazing preceptor. I loved going.”

“Great lecture and great assignments. The entirety of the course was “applied concepts.” I learned a lot! And enjoyed it!”

“Well organized.”

“Interesting use of game theory.”

“Lectures.”

“Very interesting. Fun material. Professor deliberately made course material more engaging.”

“The Congressional Debate in Nassau Hall was my favorite part of the course. It was both fun and interesting.”

Please comment on the weaknesses of the course:

“A bit too much repetition in readings.”

“I didn’t enjoy the problem sets – found them too geometric/mathematical.”

“Some of the questions and assignments were a little unclear.”

“Readings were kind of long.”

“Lectures were sometimes slow, precepts often had awkward silence.”

“Precepts. They were horribly painful. Prof. Clinton refused to speak the entire hour so we would just sit in the room waiting for someone to say something. Even when we had specific questions about the lecture or readings he didn’t want to talk.”

“The question posting on Blackboard is ineffective. A lot of times we wouldn’t even discuss what we were talking about on BB..maybe instead just have a topic discussion list from which to focus.”

“There’s a lot of information to be conceptualized.”

“A lot of repetitive reading.”

“Precept.”

“I wish the lectures wouldn’t have been so focused on the slides”

“I missed lecture twice for illness and found it difficult to understand what was covered from the slides. I found problem sets time consuming, tedious and more confusing than helpful.”

“So much reading that it discouraged people from even attempting it all. Didn’t like the theoretical nature of spacial voting.”

“I thought the many of the readings overlapped each other, as far as the 3 texts.”

“None.”

“Spatial voting model emphasized too much.”

“Sometimes lectures were a little dry but on the whole I have no complaints.”

“The readings can be repititive – the chapters in different books pretty much say the same things.”

“The problem sets were a bit boring. I would have preferred to have done more work on opposition analysis and policy briefs than working with spatial models.”

“Too much reading that was overly dry.”

“None.”

“Problem Sets.”

“Sometimes had repetitive reading.”

“Policy Brief.”

“Somewhat disorganized at times.”

“I thought that the problem sets were pointless and boring.”