

Fall 2004: 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:

“Lectures were awesome, interesting and provided a lot of material. Problem Set # 1 was good because it let us independently apply what we had learned in class to real situations within our home districts”

“I love the problem sets. I wish this course had focused even more on the science, rather than the politics, of political science. I also thought the readings were interesting and quite manageable.”

“Details of procedure. Less qualitative theory, more quantitative.”

“The lectures were clear and informative. The professor always focused on the relevant material. Precepts were active and fun because we always addressed both the key and controversial issues.”

“Lectures were interesting and fun. Class exercises made work more applicable. Liked the problem sets.”

“Excellent, interesting lectures. Current subject matters, interesting mix of current issue applied to broad themes.”

“Lectures are entertaining and informative. Assignments are relevant to actual occurrences in our home districts, make it very useful. Problem sets force contemplation of many course materials.”

“Extremely interesting course. It took a view of politics that I had not before considered. Truly a course that enhanced my overall understanding of the subject.”

“Prof. Clinton is a good lecturer and he presents the material very clearly.”

“The course provides a great overview – the lectures are interesting and easy to understand.”

“Powerpoint presentations in lectures very clear. Helpful to have access to lectures online. Variety of assignments: problem sets, policy brief, take home.

“Interesting subject matter. Good relationship to practical contemporary issues in assignments – more of that would be great!”

“Not a lot of work.”

“Good theoretical framework of congressional politics.”

“The lectures were always very well prepared. It was obvious that Prof. Clinton cared a lot about this class as well as his lectures. I enjoyed the lectures very much because of the way he prepared himself and the information presented. Prof. Clinton is extremely professional and this class was one of the best I have ever taken.”

“Amount of information provided. Office hours of preceptor. Prof. Clinton’s lecturing style.”

“Lectures were interesting and informative. Good mix of political theory and practical applications. Precepts were also useful in explaining theories.”

“I enjoyed the lectures, and I learned a lot.”

“Lectures were great and very interesting (loved the humor). The Congressional simulation was a very cool idea.”

“Professor Clinton as a professor, clear presentation of material, Prof. Clinton’s style and approachability, the theoretical readings.”

“Interesting lectures. Thought-provoking problems set. Congress simulation.”

“Prof. Clinton obviously put a lot of effort into the class trying to make it exciting and fun. I really appreciated his enthusiasm. I also really enjoyed the readings. Although there were sometimes a lot of them. They contributed very well to the overall understanding of the course.”

“Well-taught. P-sets and essays were interesting and varied. Simulation was interesting.”

“We are blessed with an amazing professor who had a great sense of humor. It was a clear, concise and organized really well.”

“The lectures were good.”

“Interesting analysis of the workings of Congress and political theory. The theory is not extraordinarily difficult to understand but profound.”

“Prof. Clinton was a very entertaining lecturer however he was also very informative. His unique approach in both lecture and precept made the class enjoyable, interesting and I learned a lot.”

“This course is very intellectually structured and focuses well on points of interest. It gives students a great appreciation of the subject and the depth of possible study. The professor is very caring, passionate and engaging.”

Please comment on the weaknesses of the course:

“Precepts were often off-topic and more time was spent talking on theoretical generalizations rather than social analysis, which was why I signed up for this course. We discussed more real life political situations in my political theory precepts than in this one.”

“Lectures were very interesting but did not add much to the already comprehensive readings”

“Readings didn’t seem to link with the rest of the course.”

“Some of the readings didn’t seem to be very important.”

“Some of the readings were very dry. Quantity of reading become overbearing at times.”

“Tremendous amount of reading at times, sometimes confusing.”

“Need a more set agenda and deadlines further in advance. Don’t have group projects assigned near vacation periods.”

“Sometimes got a little bogged down in statistics, but overall there were no major weaknesses.”

“I found the subject matter somewhat dry – Prof. Clinton takes a quantitative approach to analyzing Congress and it is often somewhat technical.”

“The amount of reading can be overwhelming.”

“The reading was not incorporated into precept that often.”

“Too many readings, although some were great.”

“Readings were way too much. Gotta cut them down if you expect us to actually do them.”

“Not engaging.”

“The problem sets were long and tedious for a class that is in the politics department. I would have appreciated being given more time to complete them.”

“Powerpoints were sometimes hard to follow.”

“Some of the assignments were rather long (first problem set and paper over Christmas). 12 pages is a bit excessive to write over Christmas when you have a 10-15 page final due within a week (give or take). I loved this course, only problem was length of papers vs. time to do them.”

“Perhaps there was too much information and the readings were too long.”

“The simulation and electoral allocations were a bit hard to coordinate because they fell during breaks.”

“Professor Clinton as a preceptor. Maybe too many CQ articles.”

“Problem sets were at time a bit too math/logic oriented.”

“I felt that in precept some enthusiasm was lacking on the part of the students. Discussion lagged at times, and it would have probably been more enjoyable if everyone participated.”

“Krabel.”

“Problem Set’s were ridiculously long and tedious. Sometimes the graphs in lecture weren’t clear. Krabel sucked.”

“Problem Sets!! Not overly challenging (expecially the first one) but took up a lot of time.”

“No critical weaknesses.”

“There could have been more information on what was expected in the first problem set and paper in order to prepare students instead of just going by well-written comment after the fact.”

“Not everyone participated.”