

Spring 2008: 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:

“Engaging professor with lots of energy and enthusiasm for the subject. Precepts in particular were quite useful in showing specific objections to specific theories. Prof. was very open and accessible.”

“Very clear presentation without any oversimplification. Precepts were good at encouraging critical thought (rather than BS), by tying discussion to specific articles and methods used by the studies.”

“Very clear presentation of the material with good corresponding powerpoints.”

“Very good lectures. Good presentation of material – very clear and organized”

“Excellent professor, well organized, interesting material, learned a lot.”

“Good readings and evaluation of them in precept. The class really increased my understanding of political science in general as well as congressional politics.”

“Very interesting lectures. Professor Clinton is very approachable.”

“Informative class, interesting professor, subject matter is made relevant to current events, good precept discussions, come out with a great understanding of what is going on in Washington.”

“Intriguing lectures. Professor was very helpful when you asked for help or in asking a question. EXCELLENT professor.”

“This was one of the best-planned, best-presented classes I have taken at Princeton. Precepts were run with the obvious goal of both eliciting student input and helping us understand what political scientists do. Lectures were a pleasure to attend and Clinton obviously had our interests in mind – both for enjoyment and for learning.”

“Very interesting and informative. I really learned a lot, stuff that every American should know.”

“Lectures were well thought out. Interesting topic.”

“I liked having the lecture slides online. It was easier to write notes that way.”

“Precept discussions.”

“Good grounding in political science. Very analytic. Helped with politics independent work.”

Please comment on the weaknesses of the course:

“At times, lectures seemed a bit too detached from the readings, as if they were going on in an entirely separate environment from the class. However, not really an issue bc they were interesting as well.”

“Participation in precept was low (probably due to PDF-ers). Problem Sets would be more useful if shorter, more frequent, and more quantitative and/or objective (I.e., MVT was good, essay on vulnerability of home district rep was less so).”

“Somewhat excessive readings.”

“As a non-politics major, I think he focused too much on the nitty gritty details – I would have enjoyed more overviews of more subjects.”

“...”

“Problem sets could have been better integrated into class. Perhaps more inclusion of current events in Congress.”

“Some long winded readings.”

“There is a lot of reading that can be complicated/technical that is never discussed in precept and doesn’t appear on the tests, so one wonders why one did it in the first place.”

“There was a lot of reading for the course, and some of it was hard to understand.”

“P. set was quite long – maybe divide them up (as there should have been 2) into four shorter assignments? I would have liked more quantitative subject matter, but it is a POL class...”

“Can’t think of any”

“More broad participation in precepts would have been helpful. Got too mathematical for a politics class I thought.”

“...”

“Analysis of written work was thin.”

“Sometimes got too technical, so didn’t see the forest through the trees.”