

Student comments- PHIL 210: Epistemology (Spring 2017)

The comments provided below are complete and unedited (except when needed to protect anonymity).

-Robert made this class. He was on time to every class, prepared for our discussion, and really enthusiastic about the material. He incorporated entertaining and helpful demonstrations that both engaged students and illustrated relevant concepts. Even if I didn't feel greatly interested in the particular unit, I looked forward to going to class because I knew that Robert would make the material more accessible and engaging.

-Both the content and the instruction for this course were engaging, fun, and challenging. Robert gave a very enthusiastic and comprehensive introduction to the field of epistemology, and I am very glad that I enrolled in this class.

-The instructor was extremely enthusiastic about the class and employed many interesting ways of teaching. This made the course less mundane and more enjoyable.

-I really like the many short essays aspect of this course. As discussed in class, when you just have one major research paper, it is hard to learn what you can improve. In this case, we had ample opportunity to improve our essays. I think a good aspect of this course was that out of the 7 units everyone could find at least 1 unit that greatly interested them.

-The readings were well chosen from what I could tell, and it was nice to read material by more modern philosophers who I hadn't heard of. The syllabus/requirements were made clear from the start. The professor also notified us of any updates to the course requirements in a timely manner.

-I think this course was run very well and cohesively. The professor did a good job of teaching specific units and tying all of the course material together. He went over specifics as well as broad picture implications and context. I also appreciated the handouts because they were helpful for reviewing material and writing papers.

-Robert was very clear in his assigning papers and readings. He was also very responsive to students' feedback throughout the course regarding the presentation of material and discussion layout. I enjoyed writing the papers for this class and felt that they helped me get a better handle on the material.

-A great course on an interesting topic. I liked the instructor's teaching style, including his sense of humor. I think the curriculum was also very cohesive and the coverage of the topics was good. Overall, the workload was not bad at all. The biweekly readings were very manageable and the 4-essay requirement was reasonable. I hope this course will be available to other students in the future.

-Good class, well-layed out, teacher knew his stuff, was excited about the material, and was a good guy all around.

-I enjoyed this course very much and learned a lot. I wish I put in more time to do all of the readings because I think I could have gotten a lot more out of it. The professor was witty, likable, intelligent, and good at explaining and discussing concepts.

-I thought your teaching style was pretty engaging, but I could not connect with many of the readings, which I didn't particularly enjoy reading. I think this is maybe just the style of philosophy papers, so it might just not be my thing. Overall, I thought we had

some good discussions though, so I would say my in-class experience was much better than the out of class work that was required.

-It was very reading and discussion heavy, more things like quizzes could've been included.

-The course was well-organized and explored many engaging topics. The writing assignments might seem short but they did take some time to get the writing process started. Nevertheless, it was helpful to be able to choose which assignment to complete.

-This course was very clear and informative. The material was very digestible (often philosophy texts are not), and the concepts were broken down in an easy to understand way.

-Approachable and engaging. I would only say it might be useful to sometimes take a step back and look at how the current topic fits into the bigger picture of philosophy.

-Great professor all around. ... I liked his teaching style. The professor seemed very enthusiastic about the course, some topics more than others. Furthermore, he was good at explaining things clearly as well as clarifying questions. As far as preparedness, I think there was only one time where his laptop battery was low (really minor). I appreciated the feedback on my essays, but I would've liked more feedback on the organization or writing style of the essay, since I felt unsure about that. The feedback was usually strictly about the quality of arguments and ideas.

-Great professor. Great class.

-Professor Smithson created a great environment for the class. He was very accepting of every viewpoint, and included many "demonstration" in class (bringing in the two pills, having us guess at the number of items in a jar) that kept the class engaged, made the material more fun, and enhanced our understanding of the material.

-The course had good material but I think much of what we wanted us to know for papers was not adequately explained through lecture. I also think that the papers after each section was too much. Even though we only had to complete five of them, students who may have felt uncertain would have completed more, and especially at the end of this semester, having two papers due plus additional studying for the final was a bit much.

-The professor was great. His class was very enjoyable and interesting. It was very easy to stay engaged and learn. He was very open to helping students, receptive, and prompt with feedback.

-I mainly just wish the readings were more interesting. I don't know if all philosophy papers are like this, but I felt many of them devolved into dense writing and arcane counterpoints. Are there other readings which would be considered more "classic"?