

SUMMARY OF TEACHING EVALUATIONS

Anastasia Artemyev Berg

Below I have summarized and presented schematically the data from student evaluations for a variety of courses I have taught or assisted in teaching at the University of Chicago. I'm presenting them in the order of relative autonomy (and chronology). There are:

- I. Spring 2016: primary instructor in a self-designed advanced undergraduate seminar, titled "The Emotions: Philosophy and Psychoanalysis."
- II. Fall 2015, Winter 2016: primary instructor in two courses in the "Philosophical Perspectives on the Humanities" sequence of the Humanities Core Program: Introductory Courses to Ancient and Early Modern Philosophy with supplementary readings in literature.
- III. Teaching Assistantships in the Philosophy Department: "Intro to Ethics," Spring 2015.
- IV. Teaching Assistantships in the University of Chicago Core Program:
 - a. Humanities Core: three "writing internships." Responsibilities include designing seminars on academic writing for first-year college students, in conjunction with a Humanities Core course, holding Office Hours and grading student papers.
 - b. Social Sciences Core: Two Teaching Assistantships in Classics of Social and Political Thought.

The summaries of quantitative evaluations in each section are followed by student comments. I include *all* comments for the most recent self-designed course. For the rest I provide a representative sample of comments, unless otherwise noted. Copies of original response forms are provided in an appendix.

- I. **Self-Designed Course, Standalone Instructor:** advanced undergraduate seminar, titled "The Emotions: Philosophy and Psychoanalysis," Spring 2016. 14 responses/17 students enrolled.

General Instructor Performance					
How well was the instructor able:					
	Excellently	Quite well	Adequately	Poorly	N/A
To explain the course material:	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%

To conduct discussions:					
To respond to questions and comments:	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
To respond to written material	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%

Detailed Instructor Performance						
The instructor	N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Organized the course clearly.	0%	0%	0%	14%	43%	43%
Presented clear lectures.	0%	0%	0%	0%	64%	36%
Held my attention and made this course interesting.	0%	0%	0%	0%	43%	57%
Stimulated and facilitated questions and discussions.	0%	0%	0%	0%	21%	79%
Responded well to student questions.	0%	0%	0%	0%	21%	79%
Was available outside of class.	14%	0%	0%	0%	21%	64%
Was helpful during office hours.	21%	0%	0%	0%	27%	57%
Motivated independent thinking.	0%	0%	7%	7%	21%	64%
Overall:	N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course met my expectations.	0%	0%	0%	14%	36%	50%
This course provided me with new insight and knowledge.	0%	0%	0%	7%	21%	71%
This course provided me with useful skills.	0%	0%	0%	21%	36%	43%
The content of this course was presented at an appropriate level.	0%	0%	0%	14%	36%	50%

I put my best effort into this course.	0%	0%	0%	21%	36%	43%
The class had a high level of morale/enthusiasm.	0%	0%	7%	36%	43%	14%

**Student Comments for “The Emotions: Philosophy and Psychoanalysis”
Self-Designed Course, Primary Instructor, Spring 2015**

(Class composed almost exclusively of third and fourth year undergraduate students, all comments included.)

What were the special strong points of your instructor?

- Anastasia was a truly excellent professor, very knowledgeable with a lot of excitement about teaching our class. She has a lot of background in these topics and was therefore able to lecture and explain difficult concepts very well.
- Anastasia brought in an incredible enthusiasm and excitement for the material. She was very engaging and related some of the lofty and abstract concepts to real world examples in an excellent way. She also facilitated discussion in a flexible yet focused manner.
- She was very energetic about the material and you could tell she had a good understanding of it. She also never made you speak if you didn't want to. It was a very nice low pressure environment.
- Animated, excited and passionate.
- Very enthusiastic about the material. She also structured class in a way so that if you didn't understand the reading we would thoroughly go over it first before discussion. This was very useful.
- Very knowledgeable about the relevant topics and well-equipped to respond to questions outside the scope of the reading, always energetic and did well to keep discussion moving.
- I appreciate the difficulty of the class and how it allowed me to learn so much more about topics I had little background in. Anastasia facilitated discussions quite well and always provided detailed examples to help us understand the material more concretely.
- Very approachable, good discussion leader, friendly, clear, understanding.
- Enthusiastic and willing to answer questions and clarify points of confusion, also she's clearly brilliant.
- Anastasia allowed students to ask questions and also allowed for other students to attempt to answer the questions. She clearly summarized the readings and made them more manageable / accessible.
- Very enthusiastic about the material, good at making class interested in discussing.
- Very clear speaker, often funny, and very open to help.
- Anastasia is very knowledgeable and cares about the students. I really enjoyed the class.

- Explained difficult material very well and in an interesting way. Very accommodating to students' different levels of experience with philosophy. Created a cohesive curriculum.

What could your instructor have done better? Suggestions?

- I would not have minded a few smaller assignments (maybe a weekly discussion question to post) to ensure that we all remained engaged in each class.
- None.
- She maybe could have facilitated questions to kids who didn't have much to say.
- Guided discussion to make more clear what we should get out of every class.
- I don't think the instructor had any major flaws—the readings were reasonable and discussions lively—but the class perhaps should be two 1.5 hour sessions instead of a 3 hour.
- No weaknesses really. Any troubles with the class—mostly discussions—was the fault of students being unprepared.
- Some texts were challenging, perhaps breaking down important parts so the class discussion would be better, becomes sometimes people were confused. Did an excellent job with the philosophy part of class and illustrating on the board.
- The course could have used a more coherent central narrative to tie the readings together to avoid feeling as though we rushed from one perspective to another.
- More structured discussion might have been nice. Also although it would be more work for students, I think having a weakly response (500 words?) would have given more incentive to read and read carefully.
- I enjoy more lectures, but that is more of a personal preference.
- Would have been nice if the discussions were led on bigger questions rather than on quick questions about details in the reading. Also would have been nice to read a couple authors more thoroughly rather than reading more authors.
- As a teacher, I don't know. Definitely didn't seem like this was her first course. Only suggestion is to be less ambitious with the syllabus. We couldn't done the whole course on one or two of the thinkers, and I would've felt like I learned more and been less scattered that way. (Though some people may have appreciated the survey-nature of the course).
- My main concern for the course was remembering all the material. There were large readings and I feel that it would be helpful to have outlines of the material after we discuss.
- I like having a shorter midterm essay to get a feel for a professor's grading style.

II. Standalone Instructor: in introductory Philosophy courses in the Humanities Core Program.

- a. **Fall 2015:** “Philosophical Perspectives on The Humanities I:” Ancient Philosophy and Literature
- b. **Winter 2016:** Philosophical Perspectives on the Humanities II: Early Modern Philosophy and Literature.

(I taught the same group of students, all freshmen, for both quarters. I received 8/18 responses for Fall and 17/18 responses for Winter. Below are averages for both quarters.)

Detailed Instructor Performance	N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Instructor						
Organized the course clearly.	0%	0%	0%	19%	30%	46%
Presented clear lectures.	7%	0%	0%	18%	37%	34%
Held my attention and made this course interesting.	0%	0%	3%	12%	52%	27%
Stimulated and facilitated questions and discussions.	0%	0%	0%	19%	46%	30%
Responded well to student questions.	0%	0%	0%	22%	30%	40%
Was available outside of class.	0%	0%	0%	0%	22%	73%
Was helpful during office hours.	19%	0%	7%	6%	6%	58%
Motivated independent thinking.	0%	0%	3%	30%	16%	40%
Overall						
This course met my expectations.	0%	0%	3%	19%	49%	24%
This course provided me with new insight and knowledge.	0%	0%	0%	13%	30%	52%
This course provided me with useful skills.	0%	3%	12%	19%	22%	40%
The content of this course was presented at an	0%	0%	0%	15%	34%	46%

appropriate level.						
I put my best effort into this course.	0%	0%	9%	13%	40%	33%
The class had a high level of morale/enthusiasm.	0%	0%	13%	34%	21%	25%

Student Comments for Introductory Courses to Philosophy:
(Same group of students for both quarters, all freshmen)

Fall 2015:

- Anastasia is a very good professor. I liked how she handled her class, especially during discussion sessions, she allows for the class to follow their lines of thought but always manages to gently push the discussion in the direction it needs to be going. She draws attention to important sections of the text that helps us when we go to write papers or complete posts on chalk. I also liked the couple of sessions where we would not do discussion but instead take 30-40 min for her to kind of lecture on the text instead which gave us time to focus on learning about the material and not worry about the potential pressure of thinking of something to contribute to discussion.
- Anastasia is very passionate about the texts we read and it shows during the class—sometimes she speaks a little too quickly but most of the time clear and discussions are very interesting and thought-provoking. Going to office hours to talk over graded papers was very useful because it allowed me to see where my writing is weak and where it has its strengths. Reading the comments interspersed within my paper also gave good feedback.
- Meeting with the professor was extremely helpful.
- Professor Berg was very knowledgeable and enthusiastic, making her explanations, both in and out of the class very helpful. At times though she would perhaps spend too much time lecturing, thus taking away from the discussion portion of the class. Much of the time she would “over-lecture” because many students did not do the reading, which is not her fault and handicaps her to an extent. However, I do think more discussion would be a good idea.
- My favorite portion is the discussion which is very useful in exposing the wealth of various interpretations and levels of understanding which respond to important subjects and passages. Having students “pass the ball” or select the next speaker is extremely helpful!
- Last quarter, the discussion posts really helped me expand my thoughts on different readings while also giving me very interesting perspectives. Coming in to see the prof outside of class was incredibly helpful, especially when I missed class. Some of the discussions did seem to go off tangent, but were usually interesting regardless.

- I've generally really liked the class. I didn't like chalk posts at the beginning of the quarter, but once I got used to doing them they were helpful. Meeting about papers (with Anastasia) was probably the most useful thing I did last quarter.
- Baton Passing was especially good, I like that. No complaints, thought everything worked really well. Keep it up I guess?
- Anastasia is helpful outside of class but therefore seems to have high expectations on papers. Very good at maintaining lively class, especially it's a 9am class. Not a lot of reading covered in class; focuses on delving very deep into a small portion of text. Comments on papers helpful and constructive. Very considerate towards students when it comes to deadlines.
- The class is at its best when the focus is on discussion and working through/debating the text as a group, and Anastasia does a good job creating/moderating discussion. The posts (and now the discussion questions) seem to do a good job creating discussion and involving the viewpoints of those who would otherwise be silent. Anastasia is excellent at being available outside of class. Occasionally discussion becomes bogged down on a single point and at these times I think it would be helpful for Anastasia to advance the discussion through lecture.
- Anastasia is very knowledgeable and passionate on the topic of philosophy. She is very helpful when students have questions and always available to meet. I am personally still a bit unsure of how to write an A-worthy paper and sometimes feel lost as to what she expects from our papers. I don't find the chalk posts helpful, but find class discussions to be insightful and enlightening. I like when she guides the discussion because I feel that it elucidates what she wants us to get out of the readings.
- Liked/helpful: going over papers. Anastasia's lecture-like breaking down of the readings. Disliked/Not helpful: discussion maybe could have had more structure.
- Found extremely useful: one-on-one office hours. Likes: prompts always tend to be interesting, relevant and thought-provoking. Comments on papers always helpful. When discussion in class is a debate approach (between students). Dislikes: long awkward silences while waiting for a class response to a questions.
- Over the second half of the class I found that most of the problems of the first half persisted. The major problem was by far that discussions continue to be very one-sided, and most of the time it was left for the students to just follow Anastasia's leading of the discussion. On the other hand, I found out that I was using a text editor that didn't allow me to see the running comments. I read those for my final paper and they were very useful.
- Our discussions never had awkward silences because she kept the topics interesting and engaging. Office hours were very helpful. My writing improved significantly afterwards. She does a good job pausing and explaining the more difficult to understand sections of the text. Every day seem very well laid out. She is very thoughtful. When we divide up into small groups and break down the materials, office hours. The chalk post does not help me.
- I think the discussion-style aspect of the class helped us better understand what we already took from our texts, however we did not necessarily take or understanding all that was in the books and this lead to some problems I think in

terms of the discussion because sometimes we ended up discussing things we did not necessarily understand. So I think that some establishment of what the text is saying, which does not have to be in a lecture style, before the discussion might help the flow of the class significantly.

- Enthusiastic, knowledgeable, encouraged class discussion. However, she felt the need to make sure that EVERYONE understood the reading; coupled with the light workload, that made it easy for some students to take the class less than seriously. As a result, class discussions were often less productive than desired.

Winter 2016 (same group of students)

What were the instructor's strengths? Weaknesses?

- Anastasia is honestly amazing. She kept the class interesting, and she is the reason why I stayed in the class/payed attention/etc. She does a good job making hard texts accessible. I thought she was also very easy to understand. Overall she is probably one of the best teachers I've ever had.
- Professor Berg was very knowledgeable about course material, and showed tremendous improvement in her ability to lecture and lead class discussion.
- Anastasia was an engaging professor. She was enthusiastic when discussing the texts and facilitated class discussions well.
- Strengths: very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the material, prepared
Weaknesses: difficult to understand her point, or philosophy in general.
- Anastasia was pretty good, a little disorganized, but otherwise quite nice.
- Energetic and knows the material really well. Sometimes gets carried away and can be confusing, but explains herself when asked questions.
- Anastasia is very good at interpreting and explaining the texts
- She is good at explaining the reading.
- Very engaging and open to students' questions during class, however sometimes discussions can get derailed and become confusing.
- Anastasia was an excellent instructor who understood the material extremely well and did a good job of presenting it in a regular manner. The grading was a bit random, but the class part was well done. She was very helpful to talk to about essays.
- The instructor explained what we were reading well, answered questions and motivated discussion well. However, a fair amount of reading was assigned for each class, most of which we did not cover as we were reading dense material, so although I did the reading for each class, I often felt unprepared for discussion, not knowing what part of the text we would focus on.
- Her strengths were she was very determined to make the texts and concepts involved in the class understandable to many students who never had to deal with philosophical texts prior to this class. Weaknesses were that she sometimes gave confusing instructions for assignments which led to frustration.
- Very passionate. Prompts for the most part were interesting to write on.
- Very articulate, makes sure to involve entire class in discussion, and more or less assures a reasonable level of understanding amongst students. Always prepared to

pursue material to greater depth, always encourages students to meet at office hours, and is available as often as possible for them.

III. Teaching Assistant in the Philosophy Department, two sections of “Intro to Ethics,” Spring 2015. (Aggregate of both sections, total of 19 responses)

Intro to Ethics with Ben Callard, Spring 2015	Excellently	Quite well	Adequately	Poorly	N/A
CA's performance					
How well was the C.A. able:					
To explain the course material	68%	21%	11%	0%	
To conduct discussions	53%	37%	11%	0%	
To respond to questions and comments	58%	32%	11%	0%	
To respond to written material	72%	22%	6%	0%	

Student Comments

“Intro to Ethics,” Spring 2015 (all comments included)

- Anastasia was likely the best TA I’ve had – she pushed back against your ideas to make sure you have a solid understanding of the material and provides incredible feedback – I learned a ton this quarter.
- Impeccably strong knowledge of the course material. Eager to help and very available after class. Always gives detailed actionable advice on paper writing.
- The CA knew a great deal about the texts and explained them clearly and helpfully. Her comments on papers were extensive and also very helpful.
- Very good at explaining difficult aspects of the texts we’ve read for class, and extremely thorough in giving comments on papers.
- Anastasia’s knowledge of the material and ability to lead discussions from that was excellent.
- Anastasia gives very thorough written feedback on papers, not holding back any criticism and she still grades very fairly. Good grasp of the important topics to cover in our short discussion.
- Anastasia is very enthusiastic during section meetings. Her explanations of the text were clear and thorough. She takes students’ questions seriously and she can

draw students into the discussions. Wonderful TA. She makes herself available outside her normal office hours.

- She was quite determined to make the texts we read as concrete as possible and she really pushed every student to try out interpretations in discussion. She was quite patient and made it for a moment, even Kant lucid.
- She was very enthusiastic and charitable to students, explains the material well.
- Very specific, incisive comments on papers. Very good explanation of major points and conflicts in specific texts (especially Kant) in limited time. Very responsive and easy to meet / communicate with.
- She gave very thorough feedback on assignments and responded well to student suggestions / comments.

IV. Student Assistantships in the Core Program at the University of Chicago. Averages for:

- Three **“Writing Internships”** in various sequences of the Humanities Core: “Human Being and Citizen,” “Greek Thought and Literature” and “Philosophical Perspectives on the Humanities.” Responsibilities include the design of seminars on academic writing for first-year college students in conjunction with a Humanities Core course, and grading of student papers.
- Two **Teaching Assistantships** in the Social Sciences Core Sequence “Classics of Social and Political Thought.” (45 total responses)

The Teaching Assistant		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Were available outside of class.	2%	0%	0%	5%	19%	74%
Were helpful with assignments.	5%	0%	5%	14%	23%	55%
Discussion Sections, Problem Sessions, Writing Tutorials		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Were well coordinated with this course and contributed to it.	28%	3%	3%	10%	18%	40%
Provided well-designed materials.	30%	0%	0%	10%	25%	35%

II. Sample Comments from TAs and Writing Internships (5 total)

Comments focused on Class Sessions I led myself:

- Lectures were clear and interesting. Captured and presented the key points of the texts well.
- Anastasia is extremely smart and her lectures give insight to how our readings fit into the grand scheme of intellectual history. She was very friendly and supportive, and made herself very available outside of class.
- Anastasia was helpful in explaining things simpler than the professor during class discussions and when she taught.
- Fantastic with grammar, fine details, and critiquing essays in general. Also clearly well versed in Aristotelian ethics (clearly displayed in the one class on the Ethics that she taught).
- Anastasia Artemyev Berg went to the trouble to set up a time to meet with each of us individually at the very beginning of the quarter, and she also cleared up some of my confusion over the final paper when we met at the end of the quarter. *She also offered some good comments during discussions, but she was best at leading discussion during the two classes she taught. No weaknesses come to mind.*
- Anastasia was great. She had a strong knowledge of all the texts she read and would often contribute helpfully in discussions. She was also always willing to meet outside of class to discuss essays and her comments were very helpful.
- Anastasia was great in and outside of class. She was very friendly and open to meeting with students during office hours. During class, she often offered helpful and insightful comments that would contribute to our class discussions.
- Strengths: She was excellent at presenting the material and leading the discussions when she was in charge of the class. Weaknesses: A little intellectually intimidating.
- I think the two discussions she led are well-designed and helpful. She is also very willing to help outside of class.

Comments focused on help with assignments and paper feedback:

- Very helpful outside of class giving lots of feedback on assignments.
- Anastasia was really great. She was really really intense grading and editing papers and would tear them apart but was always available for meetings and would always explain her edits and make sure that our papers were great.
- Anastasia wrote extensive, helpful comments on both of the out of class essays, and explained concepts well during writing seminars.
- Strength: Always available, challenged us, very specific on what she wanted
Weakness: Maybe too challenging...
- Anastasia gave fantastic feedback on papers.
- Anastasia gave great feedback and ideas. She really helped me to improve my drafts and to understand the readings better.
- Anastasia is heavily invested in making her students better writers.

Comments Focused on Availability and Approachability:

- Anastasia was always pleasant and helpful.
- Extremely approachable and available outside of class.
- Anastasia was very knowledgeable about each topic and very willing to help students understand concepts or improve their writing.
- Anastasia was really nice and great about making sure you knew she was reachable through office hours and through email. I thought she was really nice about looking over your outline or whatever and giving feedback, and if you had questions about the text and what it meant she was really nice about answering that too.