



WashU Fall 2018 Instructor Report for FL2018.L30.Phil.120F.01 - Problems in Philosophy (Chris Dorst)

Project Title: **WashU Fall 2018 Course Evaluations**

Project Audience: **30**

Responses Received: **28**

Response Ratio: **93.33%**

Report Comments

Welcome to your Instructor Report for WashU Course Evaluations. Below you will find response data from the specified course section. Responses to personalized questions appear at the bottom of the report.

The intention of this report is to provide feedback, and also to prompt improvement in areas that may be lacking. This report is accessible to appropriate department level and school level users, as determined by your school. We appreciate your dedication to our learning community at Washington University.

If you have questions about this report, please contact evals@wustl.edu

Creation Date: **Tue, Jan 08, 2019**

Course and Instructor Evaluation

Past research shows that the students' answers to any one question can be noisy, more prone to biases, and provide less useful data for evaluating courses and instructors. Since interpreting individual questions, including their relative highs and lows, can easily lead to inaccurate conclusions due to low reliability, individual question responses are not available in any standard report.

However, combining students' responses to several questions aimed at measuring the same underlying attribute can improve the quality of the measures. Therefore, the statistics displayed for each attribute (mean, median, mode, and standard deviation) are calculated from the grouped responses to all the questions in each topical block.

All questions below use a 5-point response scale: 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree

Learning

Competency Statistics		Value
Mean		3.89
Median		4.00
Mode		4
Standard Deviation		1.09

1. I have found the course intellectually challenging and stimulating	2. I have learned something which I consider valuable
3. My interest in the subject has increased as a consequence of this course	4. I have learned and understood the subject materials of this course

Organization

Competency Statistics		Value
Mean		4.18
Median		4.00
Mode		4
Standard Deviation		0.81

1. Instructor's explanations were clear	2. Course materials were well prepared and carefully explained
3. Proposed objectives agreed with those actually taught so I knew where the course was going	4. Instructor gave lectures that facilitated taking notes

Enthusiasm (Chris Dorst)

Competency Statistics		Value
Mean		3.94
Median		4.00
Mode		4
Standard Deviation		1.02

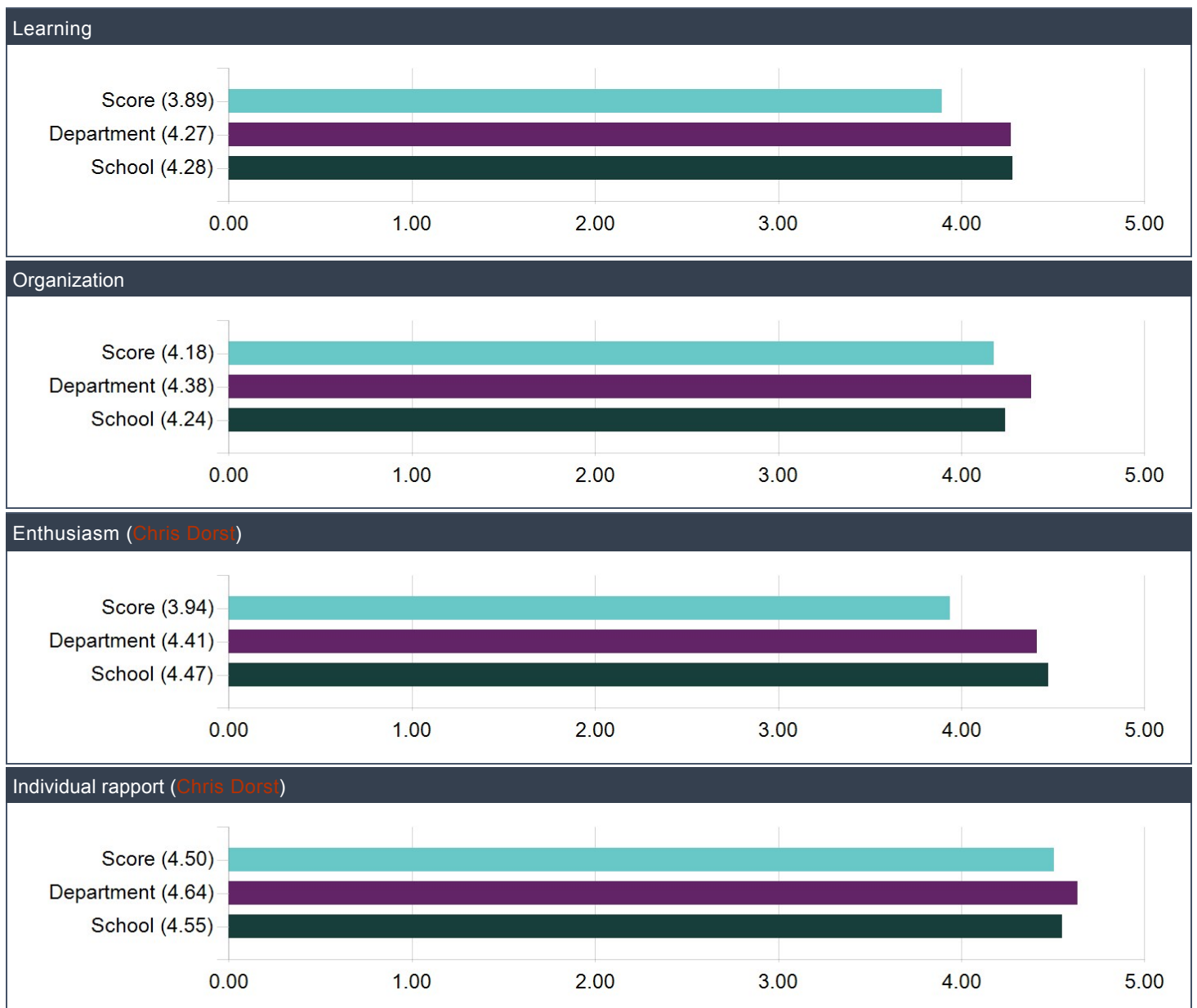
1. Instructor was enthusiastic about teaching the course	2. Instructor was dynamic and energetic in conducting the course
3. Instructor enhanced presentations with the use of humor	4. Instructor's style of presentation held my interest during class

Individual rapport (Chris Dorst)

Competency Statistics	Value
Mean	4.50
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.69

1. Instructor was friendly towards individual students	2. Instructor made students feel welcome in seeking help/advice in or outside of class
3. Instructor had a genuine interest in individual students	4. Instructor was adequately accessible to students during office hours or after class

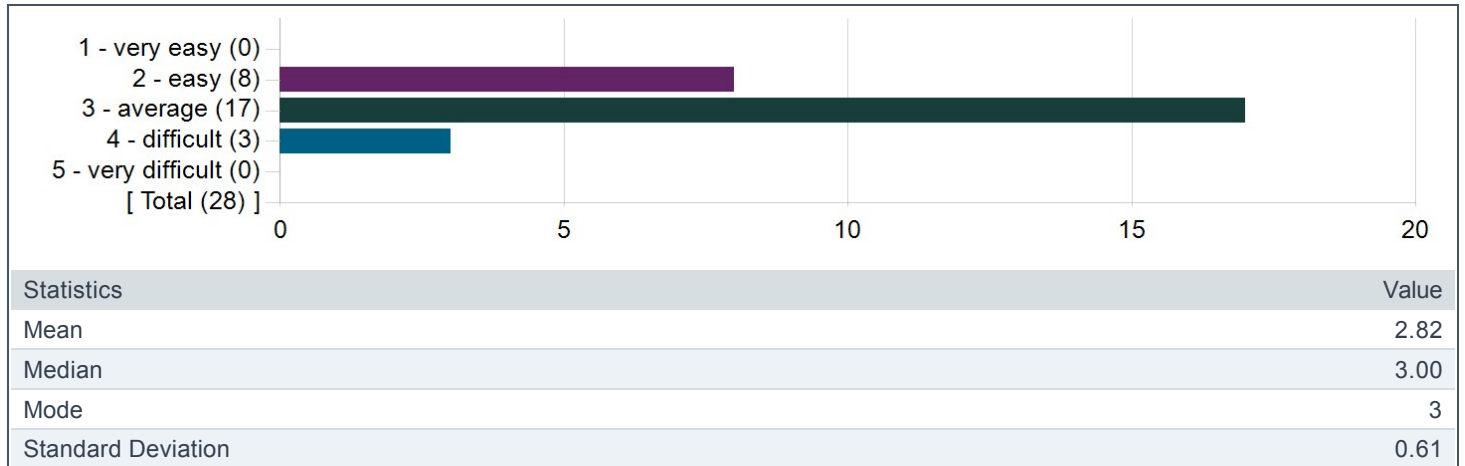
Comparison Detail for Course and Instructor Evaluation



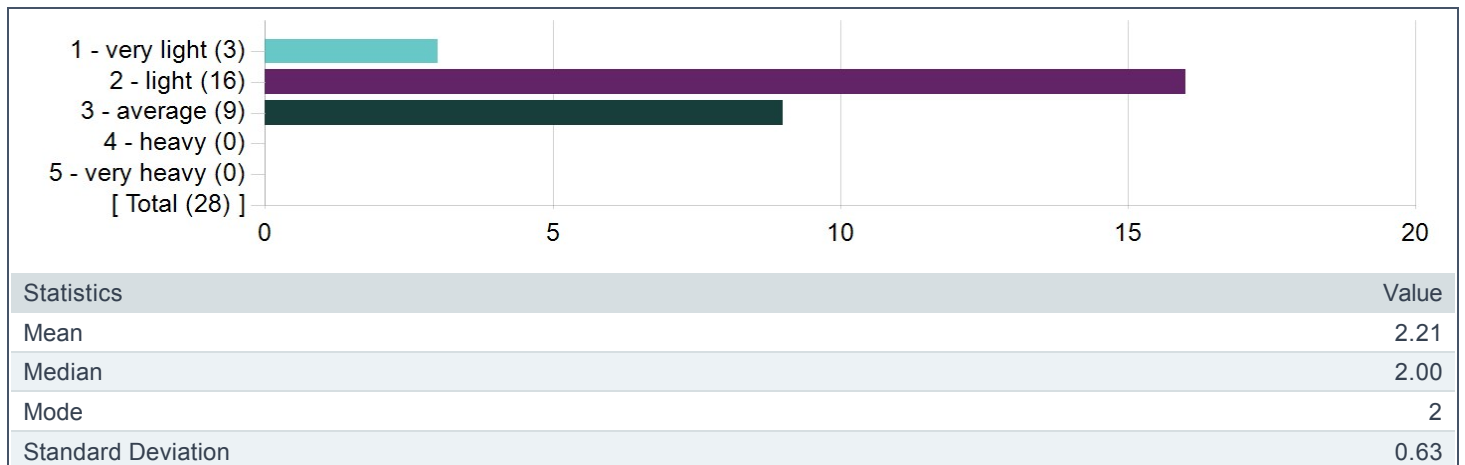
Varied Rating Scale Responses

The varied rating scale responses are statistically reliable as individual questions.

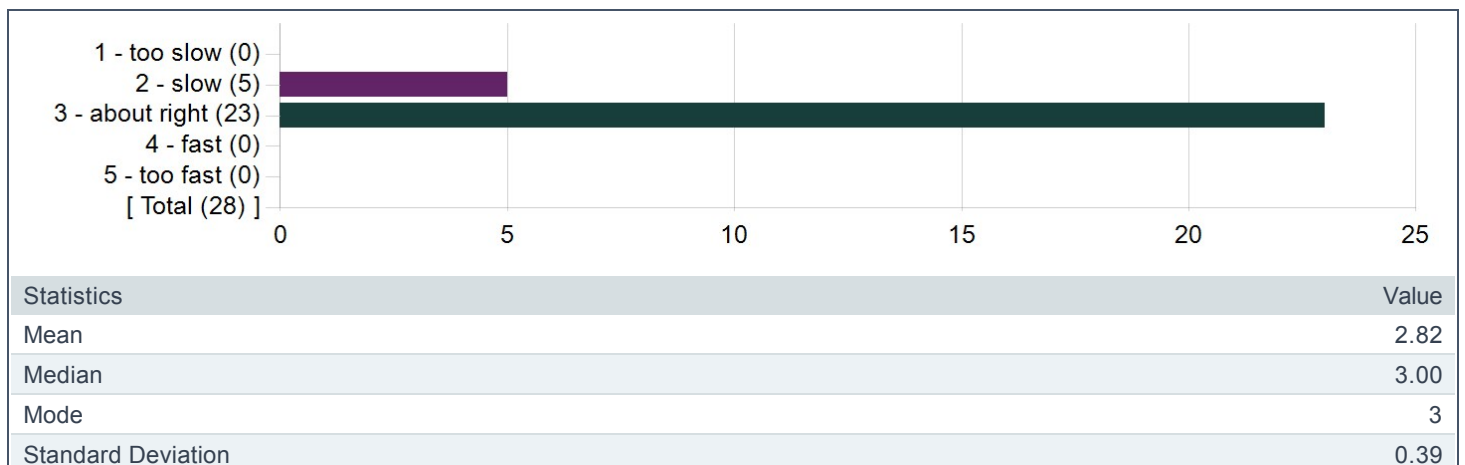
Course difficulty relative to other courses was



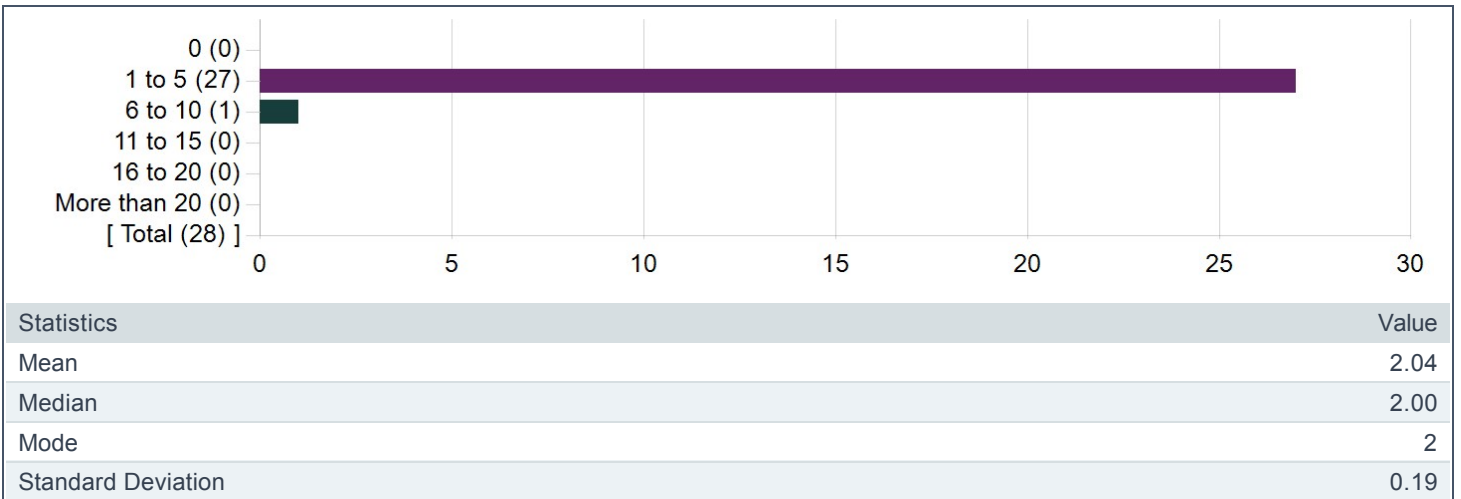
Course workload relative to other courses was



Course pace was

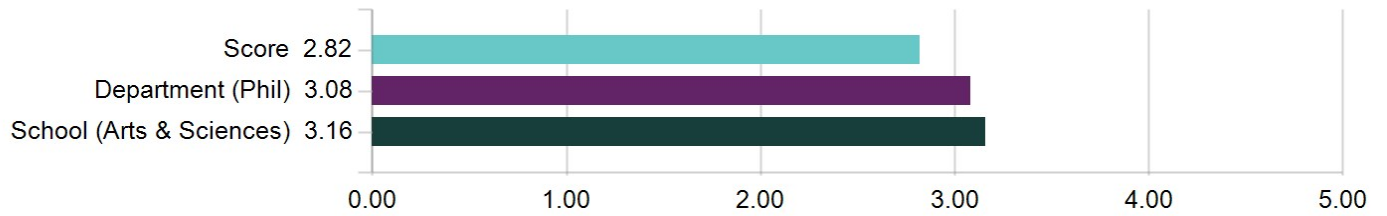


Hours per week required outside of class

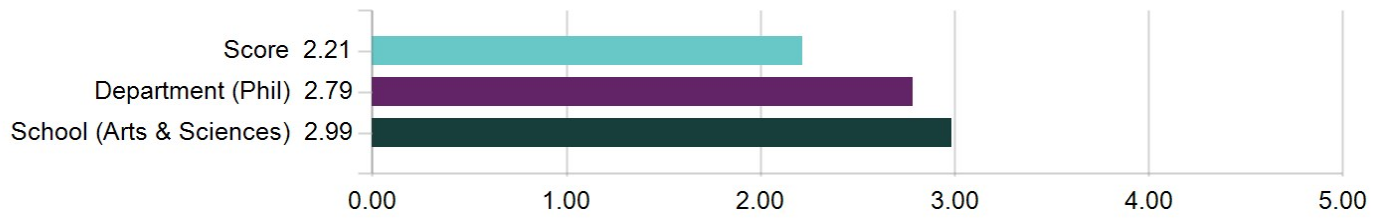


Comparison Detail for Varied Rating Scale Responses

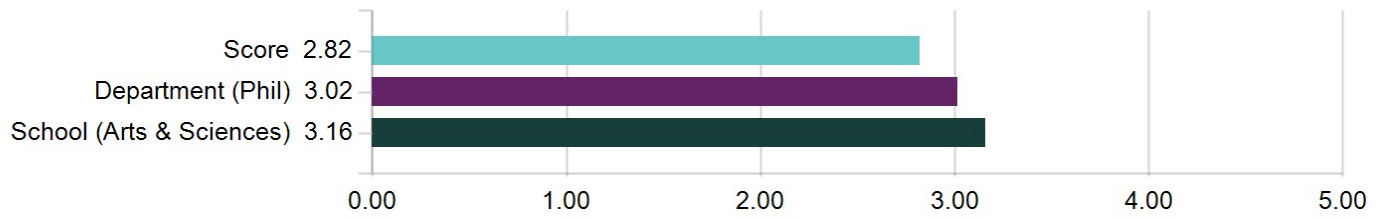
1. Course difficulty relative to other courses was



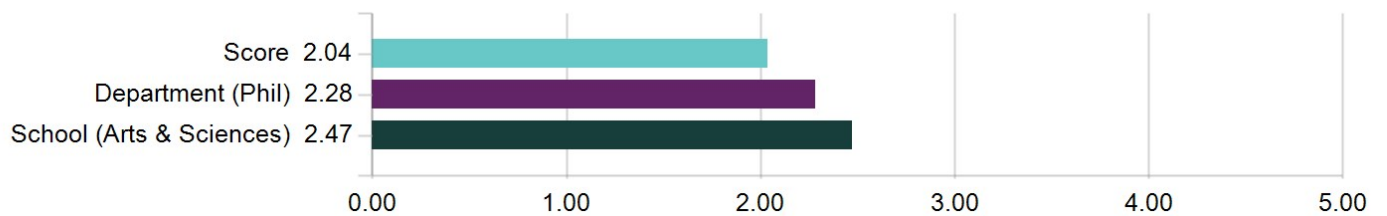
2. Course workload relative to other courses was



3. Course pace was



4. Hours per week required outside of class



Short Answer Responses

What would you like to tell other Wash U students thinking about taking this course?

Comments
There are only 2 major papers (worth 25% each) so make sure you do well on those.
This is a good course.
Dr. Dorst is an incredible person. I did not know what to expect when taking this class and he made me really enjoy it. He always was energetic and the class had really interesting discussions I highly recommend taking it.
Lots of reading, some of which is pretty dense and/or difficult to understand because of the way classic philosophers write. But, the in-class discussions are usually thought-provoking and engaging.
I think that this course is a great course to take if you're not sure about philosophy and want to have interesting conversations. The pace is a little bit slower than most classes, which is nice, and you'll learn about many philosophers and hear your peer's opinions and thoughts as well.
Utilize the office hours, especially for papers. There was not a lot of guidelines given in class on how to write a philosophy paper, but Dr. Dorst was helpful with this during his office hours. Also, the course is not a lot of outside work, and I think it gave me a great basis understanding of philosophy.
I would encourage students considering the course to take it.
Having interest in the content is very helpful! If philosophy is something that does not interest you, this class will drag on throughout the semester for you.
The content was good and the class was overall good, but the professor is somewhat monotone while speaking and that combined with some of the material made it hard to pay attention in class.
Lectures are straightforward and readings aren't really required to be successful.
It is a good intro course to philosophy and covers some fundamental philosophical issues. If you want to see what philosophy is like then this class is for you.
This class is what you make of it: yes you can use it as a class to do work for other classes, but you can learn so many interesting things if you just put the other stuff down and participate.
The course is very complex in it's subject matter. The content is interesting but the lectures are boring so if you want to learn then attempt to teach yourself the material outside of class. It's very hard to pay attention in this class and there are few grades besides quizzes so the course is heavily based off 3 papers.
It is very interesting but the essays are challenging. Go in for office hours because the professor is really helpful and loves to talk about the material.
The class is a fairly good introduction to the Philosophy department, it discusses some modern, as well as older works of philosophical literature. I would recommend the class because Dorst is an engaging and thoughtful lecturer, but I wish that the class felt more challenging.
Great course, at least if Professor Dorst is teaching it (it varies a lot from teacher to teacher).
It is a class I would recommend for everyone to take, it was a valuable learning experience and opened my mind to new ideas and ways of thinking. Some topics are difficult to grasp but it is overall worth it.
I would recommend—this class was great for learning philosophy at an introductory level
There are a lot of readings, and class discussion/assignments is contingent on the readings. Only three major grades (including the final). Professor is very friendly and personable.
Dorst is great, not difficult class and provides background for all of philosophy
More interesting than you might initially think it to be
this is the sort of course that you can get a lot out of if you choose to, while still being a relatively light course work wise. it is not difficult or graded harshly, but it is a fun and intellectually stimulating course that makes you think about things very critically
Have a good understanding of what philosophy is before taking it.
Definitely would recommend this course, one of the highlights of this semester. Workload is very light and reading quizzes are very fair.
great professor, good overview of philosophy
You'll probably get more out of the course if you actually participate in the discussion

Describe at least one thing about this course that helped you learn.

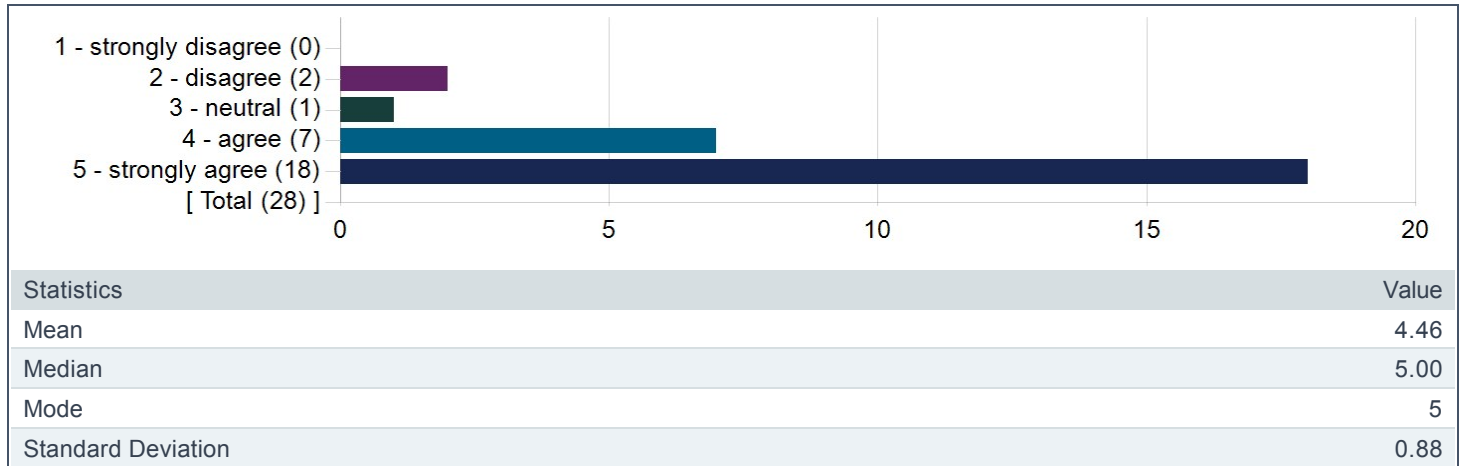
Comments
Note taking, in-class discussions, doing the readings.
The use of discussion in class helped.
Dr. Dorst's little over views before we started discussing the topic at hand.
Different ways of approaching and criticizing established methods of thinking. In other words, how to be critical of popular opinions/theories.
The other people in my class helped me learn the most in this course. Listening to my peers' opinions helped me form my own. Professor Dorst also does a good job at staying neutral and presenting scenarios that cause students to think about previous beliefs more in-depth.
The fact that we had reading quizzes every day was helpful because it really forced me to stay on top of my work and make sure that I understood the readings.
I liked when the readings were explained in class in a way that helped me understand them better, but often the class consisted of people adding scenarios that made the content even more confusing.
The discussions with students in class helped to develop thoughts and objections, which was really nice.
Very straightforward/easy-to-follow lectures
Professor Dorst took his time with each theory or philosophical issue and clearly explained them with examples.
Discussions allowed me to hear other classmates' opinions.
The professor would walk us through the readings while drawing images and writing stuff on the board. Also discussion was encouraged.
The philosophical proofs in the class notes were useful in constructing my essays, and the in-class discussion helped to solidify my understanding of the course material.
The professor, he was friendly and open to questions and suggestions to bettering the course. His utilization of our suggestion of structured notes has proved incredibly helpful and I am so grateful.
the course helped me learn to ask nuanced questions about the material. Rather than taking certain theories at face value, I should begin asking questions to better understand what they stand for
Class discussion and real world applications talked about in class
basic info of philosophy
Dorst used great analogies and taught the material well
the instructor was very good at accurately summarizing and rephrasing people's words so that everyone could understand what individual students struggled to phrase. most instructors ive had misconstrue things they hear to what they expect, however prof. Dorst was very concise and good at communicating with the class.
Detailed essay corrections from the professor.
Professor Dorst loves to dive into the details of any topic, and is willing to seriously engage almost any idea a student brings up to really work out the ins and outs of what was said. This is really important for someone who has to engage a nagging idea if they come across it in their head.
I really liked the discussion based nature of the class as a whole instead of just breaking into discussion sections once a week

Describe at least one thing that could be changed about this course to help you learn.

Comments
More comparisons between philosophical ideas/theories.
More information being given concretely.
Overviews of readings before the time of reading. This started happening at the end of the semester and was super helpful.
Sometimes the class discussion got derailed by hypotheticals and irrelevant digressions. So I'm sure the class would have appreciated if the pace of the discussion was monitored better by the professor
The structure of the class can cause it to feel mundane at times, so if the class had more activities it would help. Granted, it is difficult to create activities regarding philosophy.
I think that the class over all could be a little bit more dynamic and interactive. It was easy for the course to turn into a conversation with the professor and maybe one or two other students, leading to lost attention from the rest of the class.
I can't think of anything
I think it would be very beneficial to have a discussion section with this course, possibly accompanied by shorter class times. It would make the content a lot easier to understand and engage with if we were able to talk about it in a small group setting. Many people in the class had a more advanced understanding of philosophy, and it made it hard for most of the other kids in the class to want to contribute.
The professor could work on being less monotone while speaking, just putting some more energy into the class so it doesn't seem dull
How to construct your own ideas for papers and exams
I think it could be a little bit faster paced so we cover more topics and ethical theories.
Warm-ups at the beginning of class such as a philosophical puzzle/paradox might help to get the juices flowing. That day with the shooting room problem was pretty exciting, and I partly believe it is because of the warm-up.
I wish there were Power Points or something to make the lecture more interesting. It was hard to listen for an hour and a half to a professor just talking about a subject. The whole class was just re-explaining what we had read but I did not always find the explanations very clear.
More essays worth less because I would get so caught up in writing a good essay that I would slack on the topics not covered in the prompt I choose
Occasionally, reel in the discussion more, so we can discuss more of the nuance associated with the subject material.
I think the course could've moved faster—we seemed to get caught up in a lot of nit-picky conversations
A prelude to the next reading assignment at the end of each class would be helpful, as they were often lengthy and challenging.
smaller classes / small group discussion
the papers were pretty good
a little more time spent discussing in small groups would help with synthesis of material before the full class discussion, however overall not having much small group discussion did not hinder learning.
More essays so that our grade isn't dependent on two essays and the final.
notes could be a little bit more structured in order to facilitate studying for the final but outside of that it is very well-run.
The addition of the outlines during the second half of the semester pretty much dealt with any problems I had originally so I can't really think of anything else

Classroom Environment

The instructor **Chris Dorst** promoted an inclusive learning environment with regard to the diversity of student personal backgrounds and identities.



Where relevant, please give specific examples to explain your answer above.

Comments
The class mostly consisted of a few people talking, and many of the other students in the class who may not have inherently understood the material were not particularly engaged.
No complaints here.
Might not be as applicable because philosophical concepts are mostly arbitrary anyway
Professor Dorst is extremely nice to all students and fostered an environment where philosophical discussion was accessed by all.
He is very open and understanding and likes to hear what everyone in the class thinks about the subject.
He encourages everyone to talk and wants to hear different perspectives
The professor used a variety of examples in class to better our understanding of the readings, and open class discussion was strongly encouraged