

## SPRING 2010 PHIL 1112 END-OF-SEMESTER EVALUATION SUMMARY

Means calculated from all sixteen completed evaluations.

**OVERALL MEAN FOR QUESTIONS 2–33: 1.49** (in the first quartile; median score for Spring 2010 instructors of First-Year Writing Seminars is 1.77)

**OVERALL MEAN FOR QUESTIONS 20–33: 1.33**

*Nota bene:* The mean for questions 20–33 is more relevant for assessing teaching quality, but I have not been given the median score for instructors for those questions.

### INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS:

Question 1) The most important reason I chose this seminar: most students selected: (1) I liked the course description.

**For questions 2–5:** 1 = An appropriate amount, 2 = Too much, 3 = Too little, 4 = Far too much, 5 = Far too little.

	Mean	Question
2)	1.25	How much reading did you do?
3)	1.06	How much out-of-class writing did you do?
4)	1.19	How much time was spent learning about writing?
5)	1.50	How much time was devoted to learning how to revise your essays?

**For questions 6–19:** How much do you agree with the following statements? 1 = Very strongly, 2 = Strongly, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = A little, 5 = Not at all.

In class, in conferences, or in paper comments, the teacher emphasized

	Mean	Question
6)	2.19	choosing the words that best express ideas.
7)	2.25	writing grammatically correct sentences.
8)	2.00	structuring sentences carefully.
9)	1.88	providing appropriate documentation for sources.
10)	1.25	developing a strong argument.
11)	1.38	writing well-focused, coherent paragraphs.
12)	1.88	making transitions from one paragraph to the next.
13)	1.63	focusing an essay on a significant problem, hypothesis, thesis, argument, or idea.
14)	1.44	supporting claims with pertinent substantive evidence.
15)	1.75	incorporating and analyzing source material and quotations.
16)	1.69	editing essays to eliminate flaws of grammar, word choice, spelling, and format.
17)	1.63	revising essays to enhance interest, clarity, and persuasiveness.
18)	1.44	writing in a style appropriate for a particular purpose.
19)	1.69	writing in a style appropriate for a particular audience.

**For questions 20–33:** How much do you agree with the following statements? 1 = Very strongly, 2 = Strongly, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = A little, 5 = Not at all.

In this seminar,

	Mean	Question
20)	1.31	reading and writing assignments formed an understandable progression.
21)	1.63	the level of difficulty of the readings seemed appropriate.
22)	1.69	I learned to read with care in the discipline of the seminar.
23)	1.44	informal/prep. writing assignments helped me understand the readings and write an essay.
24)	1.38	I had opportunities to confer privately with the teacher.
25)	1.13	the teacher was well-prepared.
26)	1.19	the teacher directed discussions well.
27)	1.19	the teacher treated my writing with respect.
28)	1.13	the teacher graded my papers fairly.
29)	1.19	the teacher returned our papers within a reasonable length of time.
30)	1.13	comments on each returned paper helped me improve the next assignment.
31)	1.31	I felt intellectually stimulated.
32)	1.44	I became a more confident writer.
33)	1.44	I became a more skillful writer.

#### WRITTEN RESPONSES:

All comments are reproduced. Minor errors are corrected without note. I have resisted the urge—very strong in some cases—to comment on these responses.

#### What were the best aspects of this course? this instructor?

- Good guy, very smart, interesting. Knows his stuff; teaches/leads class well.
- I liked course discussions in the class. He stimulated intellectual thought and conversations among us. I liked him. :)
- Mr. Penner was great!
- Great guy, great class, deserves promotion.
- I REALLY liked the discussions. They were insightful and funny.
- The essays were on interesting topics. The instructor really loves teaching the material.
- Sydney was interesting as an instructor and interested in his subject matter. The reading was good, but hard to understand.
- I really enjoyed the open discussion [illegible].
- The best aspects were learning the different existing philosophies regarding happiness and the good life. Sydney Penner was helpful in class with the questions he asked and good at helping us understand and think about all aspects of the different schools of thought.
- The readings were pretty interesting. The instructor was great in every way.
- Course: the essay topics—they were all interesting and were enjoyable. Instructor: great!

- The readings were intellectually challenging and fun to read. In fact, I very much enjoyed writing the essays because the essay topics were the very things I had wanted to write about before. GREAT PROF, SYDNEY.
- The reading was very thought-provoking and I wholeheartedly enjoyed the instruction/discussion.
- The entire course was excellent, and the instructor tried hard to keep the material engaging and interesting.
- Class was interesting. Clearly communicated philosophical ideas. Knew what he's talking about.
- The material was very interesting and thought-provoking, and the instructor clearly had studied it extensively and helped us to understand.

**Do you believe your writing has improved? If so, how did the course promote this improvement? Are there aspects of writing we should have stressed more heavily?**

- Liked the philosophical writing style: nice and concise, very strong, deliberate. Great comments on papers.
- Yes, it has improved. I thought harder and more into the problems and prompts.
- Greatly improved.
- Writing has improved. He helped ALOT!
- Yes, I have learned to structure my papers and arguments more clearly.
- Yes. His comments on my essays helped me write the next one. Perhaps grammar.
- Yes. I learned how to write in a different discipline and write concisely.
- Yes, I never knew how to write a philosophy paper before.
- I believe my writing has improved in the philosophy field.
- Yes—practice and new types of writing.
- Yes. By making me write hard papers. Nope.
- My writing has improved stylistically by helping me structure my arguments extremely strongly.
- Yes. Sydney helped make my writing more concise and clear.
- I believe my writing has improved thanks to all the writing and the feedback I received.
- Yeah. Writing a lot. Grammar and word choice, maybe.
- Yes, my writing improved. The course helped me learn to be more straightforward in my writing.

**Were written comments on papers helpful? If so, why? If not, why not?**

- Yes, very. Explained analysing perils [last two words basically illegible]. Showed where I needed to explain more.
- Yes ⇒ helped me think harder and look into problems better.
- Absolutely. Helped perfect my writing.
- Yes—they pointed out ways I could improve.
- Yes, they were always useful.
- Yes. They were focused on what I should improve and can do differently.
- Yes, brought up points to improve argument.
- Very—detailed and comprehensive.
- Yes.
- Yes. They were not about grammar and more about the logic of the paper.
- Yes. Because I saw where my argument had holes.
- Yes, helped me fix up my papers very well.
- Yes. Comments are always helpful for me because they guide me in the right direction.
- Yes ⇒ knew where your mistakes are to correct them.
- Though minimal, they were helpful.

**How useful were class discussion of the texts we read? of writing?**

- Good for both. Very useful. Texts well explained and reviewed.
- Very ⇒ we thought about new topics.
- Very helpful.
- Very helpful. The readings were confusing, but the discussions helped.
- Very useful, perhaps a few too many though.
- Somewhat. Sometimes they were too difficult.
- Helped better [illegible].
- Very useful.
- Very.
- Very helpful.

- They were extremely thought provoking. Writing—just normal.
- Very and very. Discussions always cleared up the questions I had.
- They were useful and the instructor did an excellent job of clearing up hard pieces.
- Summary/clarification of the philosophy, good because we don't really have much of a background in philosophy yet.
- Very useful. The discussions shed a lot of light on (especially the most complicated) materials we read.

**After taking this course, what do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses as a writer?**

- Strength: clarity. Weakness: editing.
- Disorganization.
- Strength: structure. Weakness: syntax.
- I can structure my papers well, but I ramble . . . a lot.
- Clarity is my strength, grammar is my weakness.
- I write well, in depth, and nice sounding, but not always concisely.
- I am not that strong in grammar, but I definitely developed as a persuasive writer.
- I became better at writing more to-the-point and concise.
- Not sure.
- Strength: logic. Weakness: grammar.
- My reasoning abilities are probably not my greatest strength and my weakness is probably my conclusion.
- My clarity and organization are strong; my argument formulation could use work.
- I still consider style to be my greatest weakness, while grammar would be a strength.
- Strengths: grammar, structure. Weakness: forming clear, strong arguments.