

Complete Student Comments from Courses Taught as Primary Instructor

Below are all student evaluation comments that I have received in courses I have taught as the primary instructor. The comments are complete and are edited only for spelling. (Emphasis added.) - Jonathan Gingerich

Philosophy and Literature, introductory philosophy course, Spring 2018

- Class discussion was helpful and taught me new ways of thinking about happiness/ freedom/ the self. However, it's hard to stay engaged / follow what's going on during long periods of time where you are explaining things. I would suggest more back and forth with the class, then explain your interpretation. And please please don't ruin books/movies/ other things that aren't assigned in class (Jane Eyre) !!
- Grading seemed like it had no structure at all, and is all up to the TAs interpretation. Lecture material was so dense, and tests were graded in a very random way, as there was no way to code what deserves an A, B, etc. I used one wrong word in a question for example, and it marked me down to a B because of it. Lectures were just read off of a script for 1 1/2 hours. So, lectures were not engaging at all, and very boring. Add dense content on top of it, and it makes this class seem like a waste.
- He was a great instructor. I would like to suggest that in future classes he use the Piazza app. I think it would have been very interesting to allow for the students to be able to discuss with one another at any time what they thought of the writings, or to ask questions of the instructor and TA's. Just keep it in anonymous because some people are shy like me.
- **I really enjoyed the readings and screenings of this course. I thought that the lecture handouts and class notes were helpful for getting main points and arguments out of the readings as well.** Sometimes it seemed as though we went off on a tangent simply because it was unclear how a particular point actually related to the novel or the poem, but it was rewarding if and when the ideas were actually connected.
- **I really liked how this professor provided both his own view, and incorporated our opinions and views when talking about the readings. This really allowed us to expand on each other students ideas and look at concepts from many different points of views. I also really liked how he provided a brief summary of the reading material at the beginning of class. This allowed everyone to focus on the important aspects of the book or at least the parts that related to the main concepts.** I also really liked how every concept we seemed to cover seemed to relate to each other in some way or another. One suggestion I would make would be maybe going off a power point, personally I found the outlines harder to make concepts harder to memorize.
- I took the course for a GE. It seems like philosophy is for some people, but not me. I never fully shook off the notion that most subjects are relative. However, the instructor himself showed great enthusiasm and made the class better. He speaks clearly although a little fast at times. **I'm glad he asked for constructive feedback in the middle of the quarter.** I didn't think about it at that time, but I agreed with other students that taking notes by hand was difficult given the spoken pace of the lecture. Even when re-listening to the recordings, writing down all the notes fast enough was difficult. So the online notes were helpful! and

allowed me to write important notes in class at a more reasonable pace. I thought that we could have read and discussed the same pieces without that amount of reading. Also because the description for the commonplace books was sort of vague, it was difficult to start. A given, more explicit list of possible or required subjects could help (ex. the main topics of each week as listed on the syllabus could be possible subjects, or list of main topics for the course: happiness, freedom, self, and their individual relations). I'm still not sure how the commonplace books were graded. Overall, the course was pretty organized and the professor was clear. His arguments were clear and explained. He showed great interest in both the subject and course and helped to make the subject more palatable.

- Lectures were not interesting despite having interesting subject matter. The lectures were not well delivered and were at times confusing. Maybe using a PowerPoint with key points and images or with quotes from the readings will help make the lectures more bearable.
- Overall I really enjoyed the class. I feel more informed about literary analysis and philosophy. At times, our instructor seemed a bit frazzled, but nonetheless very informed and passionate about what he was teaching. The lectures were very long and this made it difficult to stay focused for that length of time. I'm not sure what is a good way to change that. I really appreciated a laptop free classroom, that helped me not get distracted by what the students in front of me were doing on them.
- Prof. Gingerich is very knowledgeable and does a good job of explaining the readings. However, I found his lectures to be rather dry, especially toward the end. I liked how we had to write in our commonplace books, because in the end I ended up learning a great deal from my own self-reflection.
- **Professor Gingerich is so incredibly smart and I am very glad that I took this class. I feel like I learned so much from this course and would 10/10 recommend it to a fellow student.**
- **Professor Gingerich was honestly one of the most passionate professors I've ever has the pleasure to listen to! Every lecture you could just tell he was immersed in the subjects at hand. He would carefully outline all of the lectures to ensure that students could follow along with the fast pace. I appreciate him for facilitating participations during lectures because I felt like I got to hear so many new perspectives I never considered! Overall this is a professor that is passionate about his career and I hope the best for him as he continues on his PhD journey!**
- **Strengths: SUPER HELPFUL! If I felt lost because of a reading, he would literally explain everything that was confusing in lecture, without me having to ask questions. When he summarizes a text or gives content, everything becomes a lot more clearer. He also lends his knowledge by posting his notes which are amazing for understanding and for studying. He demonstrates deep and intelligent analysis of topics I wouldn't immediately think of; I begin to see all these things like happiness and self because of questions that he prompts during lecture. Super amazing man!** Professor's knowledge is so imminent. Weaknesses: Can talk for extended periods sometimes, this can be disengaging because our mind isn't immediately be stimulated when only one person is talking. I think you can take more pauses to ask questions instead of going on for a long time on a single topic.
- The class lectures and discussions were boring. It was a lot of talking, but if you do the readings it should be easy to follow along.

- **The class subjects are very interesting, the lectures were always fun thanks to the professor. He explained things well and gave important information. The study guides for exams are always very helpful.** However, I feel like the readings were too long for the amount of time we have to do them. We had to finish books in less than a week to be prepared for lecture. One day I was understanding one book and the next we had already started a new one. It was very difficult trying to keep up, but otherwise the books were great and so were lectures.
- The greatest strengths of the professor are that he always had organized presentations prepared for his students that would critically assess the course material. **The presentations are set up to invoke a deep discussion of the course topics and themes found within the material. The instructor truly went in depth with the material and provided an environment specifically for a deep thought process, excellent traits to have in an instructor.**
- The professor touched upon really good ideas and concepts, but during lectures it was a little hard to understand because some topics he covered he didn't really go over the context or explain fully. Often leaving lectures I would feel very confused. In addition, often he would go onto long tangents during class and it was hard to focus because he would go over one topic and skip to another. The class wasn't Bruincasted so once you missed it it was lost, until he started posting lecture notes later on in the course.
- **The real strength of Professor Gingerich was his ability to present a variety of views and takes on certain readings or films and allowing students to discuss which view they believe to be true.** A weakness of this instructor was his pace during lecture. Sometimes it was hard for me to take notes on every point I found important because of how quickly he would make his points and then move on. **Overall, I loved this course and the readings. It provided me with something to think about and consider the way in which I look at the world.**
- **The teacher cared about what he was teaching and that was reflected in how he lectured. He was also able to effectively answer, if not all, most of every question asked during lecture. I though readings could've been spaced out more, but that could just be me not yet being acclimated to North Campus classes, as this was my first non science class of the school year.**
- **There was a real desire for all the students to participate and learn about the relationship of philosophy and the course literature. Jonathan was always well prepared, explained the material well, and could thoughtfully answer any question posed at him.** The random nature of common book collection was my only minor gripe. I feared that if I couldn't attend class I might miss a common book collection.
- **This is a great class and Dr. Jonathan is a great professor. He is very articulate and organized in his lectures. Posting lecture notes is extremely helpful for us as students. The course material was very interesting and I got a very good introduction to philosophy through this class.**
- **This is absolutely one of the best classes I have ever taken at UCLA. Not only was the course a wonderful and true learning experience, the teachers showed as much interest for what they teach, in the students as well. Never take this class or the instructors away from UCLA**
- Very detailed lectures. Enjoyed that the only examinations were essays

- He was good about answering questions and incorporating students' ideas, but sometimes this would cause him to stray from his ideas and he did not return to these, while I respect other students' ideas, I would have liked the instructor to add what he had prepared as well

Principles of Critical Reasoning, general education course, Spring 2018

- He was a cool guy. I think he managed to stay consistently professional as well.
- **He was one of the few online class professors to actually interact regularly with the class, and he had a large presence during the course**
- **Good professor explained content well during office hours and always willing to help**

Philosophy of Law, upper division course, Summer 2017

- **Jonathan is an excellent lecturer. He does an amazing job facilitating class discussions and organizing the course. He is welcoming outside of class and always helped me understand difficult concepts.**
- He was clear most of the time but would answer to questions very vaguely
- **Gingerich was an excellent lecturer who used facilitated discussions to help students arrive at their own conclusions about the readings.** I personally felt the pace was a bit too fast (we were assigned about 30 pages of dense reading per lecture, often without much specified focus or direction), but I would attribute this to the short summer term. However, **I felt the discussion questions given in lecture were helpful guides to the important points of the readings, especially when I returned to the readings after lecture. Overall, I enjoyed the class and Gingerich's engaging style of lecture.**
- The course plan for this class was far too ambitious for a six week course. The amount of readings and graded material were nearly unmanageable. Essentially, this class was structured such that only the most privileged of students (those with ample time and resources) could expect to succeed without overextending themselves.
- **I enjoyed the class very much. Not only is it a class that applies to what I want to do in the future, it was structured in way as to make it practical, or applicable in every day life.** The only difficulty in the course was the fact that there were three readings a week. Though this is understandable, as it is a summer course, the workload was still a lot.
- **I think that the professor had a very deep understanding of the material which was very helpful because he could thoroughly answer any questions.** I wish the class hadn't been so discussion oriented, I think it would've been better if it was more lecture based.
- While I found discussions in class to be pretty interesting at times, **I found that the parts that were most interesting to me were relating the concepts of the readings to real life situations. For example, when we talked about prescriptive easements and Riggs v. Palmer, that was interesting because we were able to see how this course was applicable to the real world.** While I understand the importance of really delving into the points each author made in their texts in order to truly understand their points of view, I think more application would benefit the class and would further solidify their points. **Otherwise, I found Professor Gingerich to be very lively and led discussions pretty**

well. He really made an effort to make people participate and formulate their own conclusions about the readings.

Philosophy of Disembodiment, freshman seminar, Spring 2017

1) What did you find most interesting about this seminar? What did you find most valuable?

- Ectogenesis
- I found the novels to be the most interesting part of the seminar, and it was cool to get an introduction to philosophy.
- I think the lesson I found most valuable in this seminar is simply that science is an over-arching field and the philosophy behind science is never black and white. **It was incredible to see my peers' input on issues and bring in arguments that I never would have considered on my own. This is a tough seminar to be a part of, but in the end, I'm grateful to have taken the course.**
- I valued hearing other people's opinions on the readings and allowed me to open my mind more and think about things differently. I most valued the feminist readings and theories, more so than the mind uploading.
- The thing I found most interesting about the seminar was the overall debates on ectogenesis and mind- uploading. But I thought that those debates in general went on too long. Are there any other disembodiment examples we could discuss? Most valuable was practicing writing a philosophy paper.
- The topic of this seminar was very interesting. I enjoyed the final essay's flexibility.
- **The topics of this seminar were incredibly interesting and taught me how to think more analytically. I also learned how to write a philosophical paper and support philosophical arguments. This seminar helped me become a better writer and think in a different way.**
- the topics

2) In your opinion, how could this seminar be improved?

- It could maybe be improved if the discussions did not recap the readings quite so much, it felt somewhat redundant to read the readings & then also summarize them in class.
- The TA could do a better job on being clear of expectations. He gave the impression that there was not much expected but still graded harshly. Writing instructions and how to write philosophy papers in general were not adequately given. Reading Responses were graded harshly even though he never gave instructions on how he wanted them to be done. When asked for feedback on my reading responses to see how I could improve, I was never given any. When I went to office hours looking for constructive criticism on my papers, few was given, and I was told that my writing was good, yet I was no given the grade I expected. Grading and expectations seemed arbitrary and unclear overall. The material covered was repetitive throughout the course. We only really talked about a few things and seemed to be exhausted of things to discuss towards the end.
- The books chosen I felt were not very good books in general. I got the impression that the majority of the class did not enjoy it. I think that more of Brave New World or Handmaid's Tale would be better fitting. Overall, I felt like the books didn't fit the class very well and I thought that in general they weren't very good books.
- The seminar could be improved by more media uses such as videos and movies.

- This seminar could be improved by discussing more topics instead of focusing on a fewer number of topics. After discussing the same topic for more than a few weeks, it got a little slow and repetitive. Also, more feedback on the reading responses, replies, and papers would be helpful.
- adding another topic

Topics in Aesthetics: Popular Culture, upper division course, Summer 2016

- Gingerich has a mastery of the course material, and even upon questions that were hard to follow and off the mark, he was able to draw some line of relevance and importance from them and answer accordingly. The downside of this wonderful ability was that it was sometimes the case that class time was taken up answering frivolous questions with no immediately apparent base in relevant material. Otherwise, a very strong instructor. Great in leading the discussions
- **Loved this class! It was a perfect mixture of more classical theory combined with more modern (and therefore more interesting) theory**
- **Professor Gingerich does a good job of teaching through discussion.**
- **Professor Gingerich was as knowledgeable and caring an instructor as I could've hoped for my first philosophy in aesthetics class. I would recommend any peer to take this course with him.**
- **Professor Gingerich was very helpful in lecture; he made frustrating material much easier to understand.** There were two issues I had with the course. As a disclaimer, I'd like to say that I was taking too many classes during this session and the frustrations that follow are things I could have compensated for myself had I been able to invest the energy. The first is that almost all of the reading selected relied on a preexisting understanding of Marxist art criticism, and Professor Gingerich did nothing to prime us for that content. Perhaps other students were already prepared to digest that material, but for me, the experience of reading almost all of our assignments was irritating and largely fruitless. That is, until Professor Gingerich gave a lecture on it, at which point it all made sense. Which segues into the second weakness I saw in the course—the reading far outpaced the lecture. When a lecture was even one reading assignment behind, I found it less helpful because the readings were beginning to get foggy in my mind by the time we were talking about them, and the lecture was almost always more than one lecture behind. I think that a course paced as quickly as this one cannot afford to linger as long on each piece as we did. You could also adjust in the opposite direction by choosing fewer readings. That seems to be the direction Professor Gingerich might lean in, since deep and clear explanation of a text is a strength of his and he began to make readings optional by the end of the session.

Medical Ethics, upper division course, Summer 2016

- Jonathan understands the material very well and clearly summarizes the important arguments of some dense philosophical paper. In addition, he recaps previous material in every class section. It's a good way for us to digest class material. He usually welcomes students come to office hour to discuss about some questions of class materials. The only weakness is that there is not too many students interactions in the class. I think this class

would be more meaningful if we can hear about other students' perspectives of some readings.

- Eclectic readings were great. There's an unreasonable amount of work required with regard to the small essays. Too many for a summer session class. I didn't feel that they improved my writing much at all, though others might've found value in them.
- **Gingerich was a great instructor. He was helpful in and outside of class, and was able to offer interesting insights that helped to clarify author positions I didn't necessarily agree with after the readings alone. Many of the readings were really interesting and not something I'd likely have been exposed to were it not for this class.**
- Hard to follow and class was kind of boring but he did an excellent job at explaining concepts.
- Instructor was very knowledgeable about the subject, but the lectures were extremely dense and didn't invite much participation. Readings were interesting but often too long for the length of the course.
- It would have been better if there was a list of (optional or example) final topics to choose from to remove the pressure from the students for whom this may be a difficult choice to make.
- **Jonathan was excellent at choosing the readings. I have learned a lot of new material that I find extremely valuable. He provided outlines for every meeting and his lectures were clear and easy to follow.**
- Not hard enough
- **One of my favorite philosophy courses. Covered so much ground in 6 weeks, it was excellent. great lecture style.** Tips for facilitating more discussion as brought up by classmate, add weekly discussion questions or highlight key concepts to think about regarding reading. Also, Jordan's Socratic method of just calling on people with that set expectation may cause stress on more introverted students, but I think the questions would help accommodate for that. **The group exercise was also a great way to get us involved, it breaks us up into smaller groups and then one person may take on the speaking role and lead to more engagement.** Maybe a few more lectures like that and I think it would make your course even more excellent than it already is. Adding an extra credit point value would be interesting, I've never had a college course where the professor announces points immediately after a participant contributes, Hogwarts style. But I imagine it would be motivating and entertaining to hear "10 points for gryffindor" after I contribute some critique of an ancient philosopher.
- Professor Gingerich is friendly and can explain complex ideas fairly well. The final paper should have been more structured.
- Strengths: He's a genius, very passionate, and personable. And always willing to help!
Weaknesses: I didn't enjoy his lecturing style. I don't know, it was hard to pay attention sometimes. I felt like he was just reading, rather than lecturing.
- The content of the class was really good, but I think the outlines could have had more useful information.
- a knowledgeable and passionate professor

Moral Responsibility and Free Will, upper division course, taught online, Spring 2016

- **The readings were challenging and interesting and extremely well curated and the lectures were clear and organized and helped illuminate the material from the readings and provided occasional context.** The syllabus was an excellent guide, the overviews and handouts each week set a clear focus, the lectures were broken up nicely into manageable chunks, and the homework and paper topics were inspiring. The grading system is fair and motivating. Overall I would say this is a very well organized and well run class, and I for one also find the topic incredibly interesting and important - quite a bit more so now that I've taken this class.
- **Professor Gingerich's lectures were thorough and engaging, and his level of expertise was obvious from the beginning. He made it clear that he was available to communicate in office hours and by appointment, and responded quickly to every question. His comments on homework, though sparing, were insightful and provided good feedback - very satisfying to hear his voice at the conclusion of the discussion among students. His paper comments were more in depth and were edifying and satisfying to read.** I was sorry not to be able to take advantage of office hours more frequently, but when I did, I found Jonathan to be very open and thoughtful in engaging my questions.
- My book had some pages fall out from frequent turning - but I think that is more a comment for the publisher. The online platform is fairly straightforward, although I had a little trouble navigating the communication system (emailing my prof, attending a conference), though I did figure it all out eventually.

Philosophical Analysis of Contemporary Moral Issues, lower division course, taught online, Fall 2015

- **Course was such a great one, it was full of challenging, yet interesting and mind stimulating topics. The set up of the class went great as well.**
- **I loved this class. It made me think about other people's perspectives and see issues from a new light.**
- Great professor, very knowledgeable and explained everything thoroughly.
- Jonathan was great and always there to answer questions when we needed help. I almost never had questions because I think he did a great job of explaining the material in the lectures.

Late 19th and Early 20th Century Philosophy: Nietzsche, Freud, Husserl, upper division course, Summer 2015

- **Before this class got going, I was skeptical about a class where the discussion is the lecture. However, this has been a delightful and engaging learning experience. I will probably look back at my philosophy years back at UCLA and remember this class. It has had a large impact on my ability to decode complex philosophical texts which there is not an encyclopedia that can be easily referenced for perspectives/answers. The success of this course couldn't have been possible without Jonathan's prudent leadership. My only regret is that so many other classes are not in this (obviously) superior format. It's understandable why logic is not, but it's a crime not to have Plato,**

Aristotle, Kant, Leibniz, etc. in this tightly-packed format. **I feel closer to my classmates, as well.**

- Short responses before classes were a great idea. You're a super fast grader! In discussions, try to explain terms and make sure some kids don't just say nothing using big words. Get them to say it on their own so they and others really get it. Good facilitation of discussion.
- **Jonathan facilitates effective/meaningful discussions. He is engaging & fully attentive to students' thoughts/ideas/questions. He is an especially great instructor because he demonstrates a type of humility by making sure students realize that he too is on the quest for greater knowledge & in that sense united with them in the desire to be an authentic philosopher.**
- I really enjoyed this class. The discussions were extremely interesting and I benefited from hearing different perspectives on all the texts. **Jonathan did a great job of facilitating discussion and the small class size was optimal for this kind of class. Overall one of the best philosophy classes I've ever taken.**
- This course was informative and insightful. I thought the assigned readings were relevant to the course subject and I thought the class discussions helped in explaining philosophical ideas. I felt that there were times when class discussions seemed off track and sometimes we put too much time into interpreting a particular thinker (gets kinda dull). But other than that, this was a worthwhile course. I will recommend your classes to incoming students.
- **One of the most special classes I've ever had at UCLA. Great discussion with fellow philosophy lovers. Very high intensity of discussion!**
- Jonathan is terrific as a discussion leader and eventually as a professor, I assume. The workload felt heavy because of the 6 week course. In a 10 week course it would have been perfect. I enjoyed the class very much.
- **One of the best aspects of the course was the open discussions that fostered a greater understanding of the texts.** The instructor was also good at facilitating discussions.
- Strength: Jonathan helped facilitate excellent discussions that always supplemented the course reading in a great manner. Weakness: Sometimes I feel there might have been too much discussion and not enough lecture on the material.

Moral Responsibility and Free Will, upper division course, taught online, Spring 2015

- **Course was clearly structured. Supporting material was abundant and helpful (overview, handout, lecture slides). Material was well-selected; covered authors with diverse viewpoints but stayed focused on topic around free will, moral responsibility, criminal punishment. Material was challenging, many opposing arguments were evaluated. Homework and paper assignments were clear, required critical thinking and contributed to learning (especially papers)**
- **Instructor was knowledgeable, dedicated, and well organized. Material was clearly explained and expanded in lecture.** Instructor responded to comments and emails, contributed to online discussions, and was available for office hours.
- Student skill level was very diverse. Online discussions did not get off the ground. Lack of participation in video sessions.

Topics in Political Philosophy: Paternalism, upper division course, Summer 2014

- The lectures were great – sometimes I wished more time was spent on the lectures. I found the lecture handouts to be very helpful. The page numbers on the handouts made it easier to focus my studies on the areas discussed in class. **The groups were helpful. I thought that the analogies that the professor presented were funny and made me look forward to lectures.**
- Gingerich did a great job of presenting the material. He was welcoming to any question we had regarding the material. Also he is nice to look at during class.
- **I really liked how organized you were, it assured me that the class was in good hands when it came to guidance on the material.** The handouts were great too, as they helped frame what it was we ought to or can have thought about when we did or do our readings. Maybe next time don't have as much reading due, since in my opinion, it made things too overly complex to think and connect to themes we were supposed to be following throughout the class. All in all though, great class!
- **He is an excellent lecturer and professor who matters in this subject. His legal understanding and philosophic understanding help students to understand material well. I really wish to meet him in other classes as a professor or TA. Thanks.**
- Great coverage, thank you!

Moral Responsibility and Free Will, upper division course, taught online, Summer 2014

- The course material was challenging. The instructor gave detailed online lectures each week, which were necessary due to the complicated theories being presented. Jonathan Gingerich is an excellent speaker which made the video lectures easy to understand.
- **Jonathan Gingerich's instruction of often weighty material was outstanding. His comments attached to grades were thoughtful and helpful. He provided excellent examples of how to read and write philosophical papers.**
- The only area that needs improvement related to Philosophy XL154B is the UCLA bookstore. The course material was unavailable to purchase through outside websites and was unavailable at the UCLA bookstore until after the course was underway. I would have liked an online version of the Course Reader but that wasn't available (at least at the time the course got underway). I hope that you can correct that one glitch with this excellent class.

Moral Responsibility and Free Will, upper division course, taught online, Summer 2013

- Horrible with emails and wasn't very accommodating to students who wanted to finish the course early