

Project Title: UNCA SFI - Fall 2019 - Term 2

Survey Audience: 15
Responses Received: 13
Response Ratio: 87%

Report Comments

Instructors, department chairs, program directors, deans, review committees, and other evaluators should keep the following points in mind as they review SFI data:

1. **Results from the SFI survey should be regarded as student feedback rather than evaluation.** The information gleaned from the SFI instrument represents students' feedback about their learning experiences, not an objective evaluation of *learning outcomes*. Moreover, while student feedback is valuable - particularly for informing pedagogy - it is only one data source and should not be interpreted as a comprehensive measure of teaching effectiveness.
2. **Comparisons cannot be made between items on the old instrument and the new instrument.** Because we transitioned to an entirely new survey instrument in Fall 2018, direct comparisons cannot be made between results from this semester and those from any previous semester, even on items with similar wording.
3. **Responses to customized qualitative questions are not appropriate sources of data for faculty evaluation.** Responses to these items should be used solely as tools for instructors' reflection on pedagogy. Instructors should be applauded, never penalized, for creating relevant qualitative questions that provide them valuable formative information about students' perceptions of learning.
4. **Comparisons across courses should only be made when appropriate and meaningful.** For example, while student feedback from two different sections of the same course may be compared, data from a senior capstone course in the major should not be compared to data from a large introductory course geared toward non-majors. Research also indicates that student perceptions may differ across required vs. elective courses.
5. **Universal items - rather than bank items - should be considered the only data sources appropriate for summative assessment or for comparison across courses and instructors.** The primary purpose of bank items is to invite student responses that may inform pedagogical practices associated with the learning goals of particular courses; therefore, bank items are not necessarily valid measures of comparison across courses or instructors.
6. **Neither instructors nor those evaluating them should rely solely on "overall impression" measures to draw conclusions.** While it is tempting to use these items as proxies for teaching effectiveness, doing so ignores potentially useful dimensions of variation and may obscure important patterns, thus limiting instructor reflection and learning.
7. **Qualitative comments should be interpreted with care.** While *patterns* in qualitative student comments are worthy of consideration, neither instructors nor administrators should overgeneralize or draw definitive conclusions on the basis of 1-2 comments. In cases where low numbers of students respond to an open-ended question, instructors might consider what percentage of students overall voiced a particular theme.
8. **Scores on items assessing "student reflections on own learning behaviors and engagement" are not appropriate data sources for summative evaluation of instructors.** The purpose of these items is to encourage students to reflect on how their personal engagement impacts their own learning. Because student engagement is not wholly within the instructor's control, faculty should not necessarily be compared on these student ratings. However, faculty are encouraged to use this information to inform their own pedagogy.
9. **SFI data from courses in which response rates are low should be interpreted cautiously.** This is especially true for courses in which fewer than 8 students are enrolled. Furthermore, as response rates approach 60-65% they may be considered more reliable and representative.
10. **SFIs and bias.** At present, the research regarding respondent bias in student ratings of instruction is inconclusive. However, we urge evaluators to remain alert to potential biases, particularly with respect to gender, race/ethnicity, and age of instructors.

Please don't hesitate to contact SFI@unca.edu with any logistical questions. If you have substantive questions, contact Amanda Werts, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, at awerts@unca.edu.

Creation Date: **Thursday, December 12, 2019**

Evaluation Summary

Student Perceptions of Own Learning

	Invited Count	Resp Count	Resp Rate	1	2	3	4	5	Course Mean	Median	SD	Prefix Mean	Univ Mean
I increased my understanding of major concepts or ideas in this course.	15	13	87%	0%	0%	0%	46%	54%	4.54	5.00	0.52	4.45	4.38
I learned to use principles from this course.	15	13	87%	0%	8%	0%	46%	46%	4.31	4.00	0.85	4.31	4.32

Student Perceptions of Own Learning (bank items)

I developed a greater awareness of societal problems, including underlying causes and possible solutions.

Invited Count	Resp Count	Resp Rate	1	2	3	4	5	Course Mean	Median	SD	Prefix Mean	Univ Mean
15	13	87%	0%	0%	0%	23%	77%	4.77	5.00	0.44	4.81	4.57

I learned to value new viewpoints or perspectives, and reconsidered some of my former beliefs or attitudes.

Invited Count	Resp Count	Resp Rate	1	2	3	4	5	Course Mean	Median	SD	Prefix Mean	Univ Mean
15	13	87%	0%	0%	0%	38%	62%	4.62	5.00	0.51	4.44	4.28

Student Reflection on Own Learning Behaviors and Engagement

	Invited Count	Resp Count	Resp Rate	1	2	3	4	5	Course Mean	Median	SD	Prefix Mean	Univ Mean
I attended class regularly, arriving on time and staying for the duration of the class.	15	13	87%	0%	0%	0%	62%	38%	4.38	4.00	0.51	4.46	4.50
I actively engaged with the class content.	15	13	87%	0%	8%	8%	46%	38%	4.15	4.00	0.90	4.23	4.30
I completed class assignments conscientiously (such as readings, homework, and/or other class-related tasks).	15	13	87%	0%	8%	8%	54%	31%	4.08	4.00	0.86	4.44	4.43

I sought assistance when needed. (Please mark N/A if you did not need to seek assistance.)

Invited Count	Resp Count	Resp Rate	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Course Mean	Median	SD	Prefix Mean	Univ Mean
15	13	87%	0%	0%	0%	77%	15%	8%	4.17	4.00	0.39	4.17	4.22

What grade do you expect to earn in this course? please mark N/A for incomplete, in progress, or audit.

What grade do you expect to earn in this course? please mark N/A for incomplete, in progress, or audit.			
Options	Count	Percentage	Value
A	4	31%	Response Count: 13
B	7	54%	Response Ratio: 87%
C	1	8%	
D	0	0%	
F	0	0%	
S	0	0%	
U	0	0%	
N/A	1	8%	

Student Feedback on Instructor's Practices

	Invited Count	Resp Count	Resp Rate	1	2	3	4	5	Course Mean	Median	SD	Prefix Mean	Univ Mean
My instructor clearly communicated course expectations and requirements, through the syllabus and other methods (e.g. Moodle, email, in-class announcements).	15	13	87%	0%	0%	15%	38%	46%	4.31	4.00	0.75	4.25	4.40
My instructor explained the course material clearly.	15	13	87%	0%	8%	8%	38%	46%	4.23	4.00	0.93	4.31	4.31
My instructor created a classroom environment that encouraged students to be intellectually engaged.	15	13	87%	0%	15%	0%	31%	54%	4.23	5.00	1.09	4.43	4.41
My instructor was available for communication if needed.	15	13	87%	0%	0%	0%	54%	46%	4.46	4.00	0.52	4.58	4.49
My instructor provided clear instructions for assignments and/or tasks.	15	13	87%	0%	15%	0%	54%	31%	4.00	4.00	1.00	4.07	4.31
My instructor provided means for me to understand my progress in the course.	15	13	87%	0%	0%	23%	31%	46%	4.23	4.00	0.83	4.10	4.18

Student Feedback on Instructor's Practices (bank items)

My instructor provided an atmosphere where different and opposing views could be discussed with respect.

Invited Count	Resp Count	Resp Rate	1	2	3	4	5	Course Mean	Median	SD	Prefix Mean	Univ Mean
15	13	87%	8%	8%	0%	38%	46%	4.08	4.00	1.26	4.25	4.33

The course illustrated the need to select and/or evaluate relevant evidence or data to analyze a problem or issue.

Invited Count	Resp Count	Resp Rate	1	2	3	4	5	Course Mean	Median	SD	Prefix Mean	Univ Mean
15	13	87%	0%	0%	0%	31%	69%	4.69	5.00	0.48	4.69	4.37

Open-Ended Questions

What aspects of this course do you feel were most beneficial to your learning?

Comments
I really enjoyed how predictable the format of the course was, in the sense that, every week on Moodle was formatted the same and the expectations for the discussion questions, critical reviews, and annotated bibliographies were all laid out and remained constant throughout the entire semester. However, when something needed to be altered (thinking specifically of when we moved the due date for these assignments from Monday to Wednesday), Dr. Pleites–Hernandez showed to be flexible in working with us.
This is exactly the kind of class that I was hoping for coming to UNCA. Guided discussions through relevant research on the topic is something that is unique to a classroom setting (something you can't just get by watching stuff online) and the flexibility to not have to teach from a book aided in this. In terms of specific learning, this class offered a framework for the important research into the focus areas of the class.
I really enjoyed the discussion aspect of this course. It allowed me to gauge how other students were feeling about certain topics/readings, which also allowed me to better understand what I was thinking.
Many of the readings were valuable in their findings, and I feel more informed about many race related issues.
Class discussions.
class discussion on how the reading applies to current topics
Having to constantly keep up with readings in order to participate in class effectively pushed me to manage my time better and engage with the material consistently. I thought that having to both discuss through clear communication in the classroom setting improved my communication skills and willingness to speak and be incorrect. There was also a significant amount of writing in this course that required me to look deeply into the reading and write analytically and clearly. The most useful for my learning was the experience I gained assessing statistical information and presentations of different types of data.
The number of topics covered helped me learn plenty about political science.
This class centered around group discussions of reading materials. This offered all of us an excellent opportunity to learn from each other's experiences and insights around the material. I definitely learned a lot about critical examination of political science research from the keen insights of fellow students.
I felt that hearing others' opinions in a safe setting was most beneficial to me. I haven't always been able to empathize well, so it helped me to hear other views on things.
The instructor's weekly structure of the course in which different aspects of political science research are explored is a helpful way to cumulatively understand the discipline. The instructor–led discussions were very helpful in painting a clearer picture of the issues at hand. Sitting in a circle was helpful to feel more at ease in sharing. We were not called out for being "wrong" or coining words or for changing our minds.
I think this course accurately represented issues with ethnicity and race within politics. I also really enjoyed the way the class meetings were structured with open debates.

In this course, how did the instructor support your learning?

Comments
I always felt comfortable speaking up in class, and I can definitively state that out of all four courses I took this semester, his was the class I spoke up in the most. Not only did the small class size and how quickly we all got comfortable around our peers add to the atmosphere, but Dr. Pleites–Hernandez brought a non–dominating and understanding attitude to the classroom. I never took advantage of attending his office hours, but I have no doubt that if I chose to take another of his courses I would feel comfortable going.
The instructor supported learning by assigning relevant readings and guiding the in–class discussion so it covered the most important topics and areas.
Dr. Giovanni is an amazing professor. He is extremely supportive of student learning and is always glad to answer student questions. He makes himself accessible before and after class, through email, and during office hours to answer any and all questions students may have. He's also just an all–around nice guy. Awesome professor! I would definitely take another class from him in the future.
The instructor was helpful in answering questions about assignments and content when needed.
Dr. Hernandez was always available to help with any questions I had, and gave very good feedback on my assignments.
providing a safe space to discuss complex issues
Each individual in the class is provided ample opportunity to speak and express their ideas in their own ways. Rather than being criticized for our linguistic approaches or potential lack of clarity, Dr. Pleites–Hernandez would question us on the nature of our arguments and how they relate to the readings we discuss. He also allows us to diverge in order to bring in outside sources and experiences and enjoy our conversations together.
By prompting us to read all the materials.
When necessary, Dr. Pleites–Hernandez would prepare supplemental presentations to help us further understand the readings, but the majority of the class was oriented around engaging us in group discussion and exercises to explore if the current political environment reflected the conclusions of the studies we were reading. His teaching style is oriented around creating opportunities for students to engage directly with the material, and this worked very well for me.
He played devil's advocate well. That helped me to not be short–sighted. It allowed me to consider different points of view.
The instructor conducted daily discussions and led the class through the essays and data through the Socratic method. While not all students participated in the discussions every day, most became more confident in delving into the material. This instructor clearly knows what he is talking about. And while his humility may have prevented it, many of us were interested in his own research projects and publications. I hope he will not be shy about presenting his materials to future classes.
The instructor pushed students to explore their ideas and claims so that they can fully flush out their ideas.

Do you have any suggestions for improving the course or how it was taught? If so, what are they?

Comments

While I appreciated how heavy the readings were in class, and I really do think they facilitated class discussions and introduced me to a genre of literature I knew I needed to feel more confident exploring, I felt extremely unprepared to dive into these readings at times. Understanding the data on my own was really hard, as I had very little stats background, and sometimes the readings assigned felt as if they meant nothing if you couldn't comprehend the data portion of the work. I appreciate being pushed out of my comfort zone, however, I wish that at the beginning of the course there would have been a class or two where we focused on understanding even just the basics of the language and common data methods being explored in the literature. Honestly, even just a disclaimer about how scientific journal heavy the readings were going to be at the beginning of the course I feel would have really helped me and a few classmates out; then at least we could, on our own time before we get too bogged down with classwork and other responsibilities, do a bit of extra research on what we should be going into the class knowing if we haven't taken the Political Analysis course yet.

I would have liked an explanation of how to find our own scientific texts. It's good that we saw what the field held, but without the ability to find these types of important resources ourselves, that benefit does become somewhat limited.

None, I really enjoyed this class.

This course has the potential to be very engaging and powerful, but using such specialized readings limits our ability to engage with passion. Many of the students in this class are passionate about racial justice and politics, but the content we based our discussion on was not accessible. I feel using more discussion/opinion based writings that are BASED on hard evidence would be much more invigorating and powerful for students. While I understand the value of reading the research, most of us will be better off reading more accessible writings that actually excite and empower us to discuss America's racial divide. The course content was just not set up in a productive way for students, and I strongly suggest switching to a more accessible reading schedule.

I do not.

the annotated bib. and discussion questions should be restructured on the syllabus. due dates on Wednesday instead of Monday work better.

Allowing for some class time that was less structured would have been beneficial to our learning in my perspective because I think it both brings out the nature of everyone's interests and allows for truly interesting brainstorming and fostering of solutions.

Not having it be so discussion-based. The class would often result in having 3 or 4 students discuss and everyone else is silent.

I would offer 3 suggestions:

1. This was by far the largest out of class work load of any class I took this semester, and it at times interfered with my ability to keep up with assignments in other classes. I would say it would be helpful to dial back the reading requirements by about 10%.
2. In this same vein, I would suggest removing one of the annotated bibliography assignments. Once you understand how to do them they are a bit redundant, especially since students are already required to submit weekly questions on the reading, so the instructor should still be able to reasonably assess whether students are reading the material. Having an extra week to focus on other assignments would be helpful to students without harming the course.
3. Make the rubric for the critical reviews available at the beginning of the semester. Given the large work load for this course, it is theoretically advantageous for students to begin turning in critical reviews as soon as possible. However, I feel that those of us who turned in critical reviews before the rubric was available ended up at a disadvantage given the high standards the professor expects for this assignment. I am confident that I would have done much better on these assignments if the expectations for them had been clear from the outset of the course.

I thought he did a really good job. Maybe a little more of "cold calling" people so that more points of views are shared.

The coursework was a little too ambitious in scope, although as a 300 level course such load of reading is expected. Either keep all the readings and give a higher stake to the discussions while reducing the homework or reduce the readings to two a week. The missed opportunity seems to be this invested group being able to in a led discussion about recent political issues IRL.

I think a way to improve this course would be more closely related readings on the day that they were assigned and maybe more fleshed out themes for this course.

Additional Personalized Instructor Questions

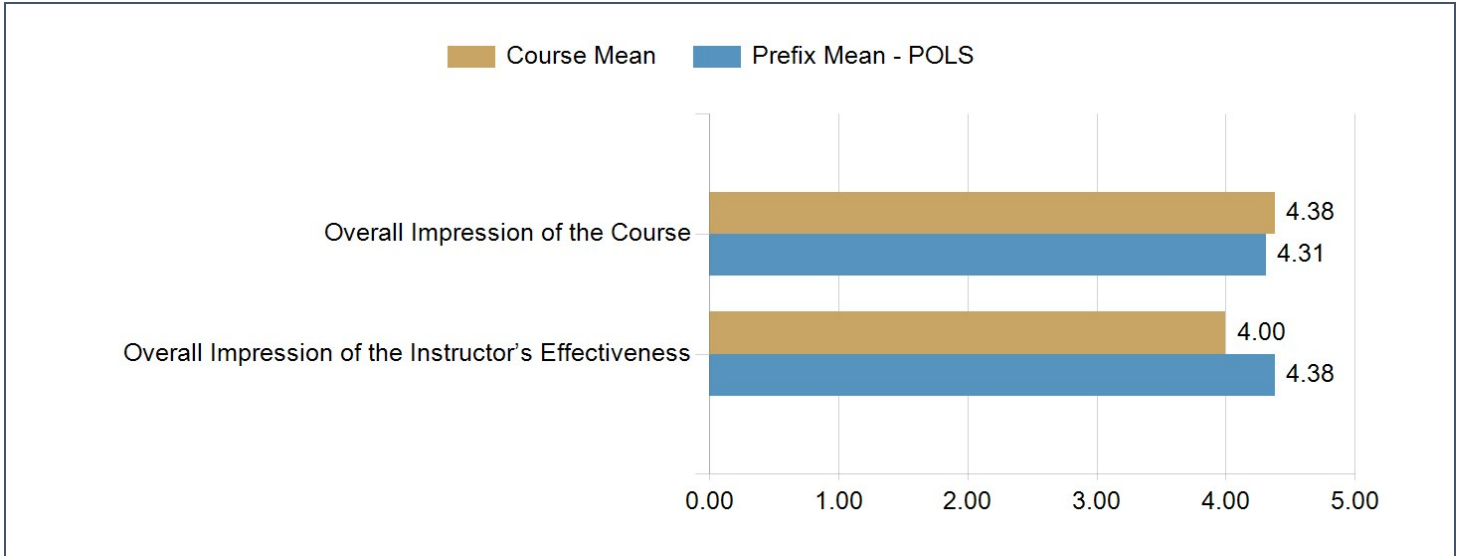
What aspects of this course do you feel were most beneficial to your learning?

Comments
The point of a class, to me, is less about the specifics of what is being covered and more about gaining skills that are useful to future learning. While this class did use specific peaces of text as a jumping off point, the in class discussions as well as the contents of what we read did hit that need for gaining skills. In terms of benefiting learning, the discussions made an incentive for doing the work and coming into class prepared to talk.
Group discussions.
I think discussions were most valuable in this class.
Class discussions and discussion questions.
the reading assigned
Already answered above
The deep digging into the materials covered.
The open forum for sharing insights and questions about the material is very productive and engaging.
This is a repeat question
I think the structure of this course was most beneficial because hearing other people's thoughts on the readings were really enlightening.

Do you have any suggestions for improving the course or how it was taught? If so, what are they?

Comments
I felt that the weekly work was a hindrance to reading and comprehension. I did not see the value of turning everything in as a block. I would have preferred if we had daily, shorter assignments rather than weekly ones. A bibliography every day with triple the required amount. Also, a clear rubric for assignments would have been helpful to build off of when completing work.
N/A
uh. i think i just answered this?
I do not.
taking a break from readings and incorporating more class activities could increase engagement
Already answered above
Different learning techniques that involve activities and not just exclusively discussion-based.
Summary: 1. Dial reading back a little bit 2. reduce annotated bibliography assignments 3. provide rubric for critical reviews ASAP
This is also a repeat question
Besides the suggestions presented early, I have no other suggestions.

Comparative Data



Course Mean vs Prefix Mean

Rank	Competency	Difference
1	Overall Impression of the Course	0.07
2	Overall Impression of the Instructor's Effectiveness	-0.38

Overall Impressions

Overall Impression of the Course

Invited Count	Resp Count	Resp Rate	1	2	3	4	5	Course Mean	Median	SD	Prefix Mean	Univ Mean
15	13	87%	0%	0%	8%	46%	46%	4.38	4.00	0.65	4.31	4.26

Overall Impression of the Instructor's Effectiveness

Invited Count	Resp Count	Resp Rate	1	2	3	4	5	Course Mean	Median	SD	Prefix Mean	Univ Mean
15	13	87%	0%	8%	15%	46%	31%	4.00	4.00	0.91	4.38	4.42