

Fall 2013 Course Evaluations - Arts and Sciences and Engineering

Fa13-PS-0188-12-Topics In Intern'l Rel, Fa13-PS-0188-13-Topics In
Intern'l Rel

Michael Beckley

Results of survey

Started: December 2, 2013

Ended: December 11, 2013

Reply rate: 69% (24 / 35)

Fall 2013 Course Evaluations - Arts and Sciences and Engineering

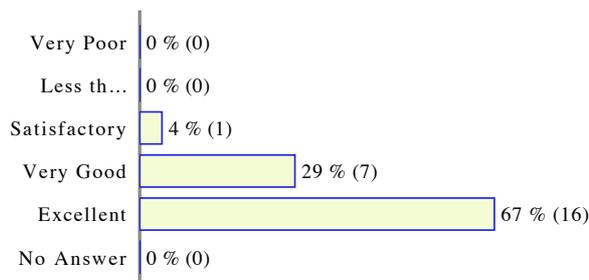
Course Items:

Student Course Evaluations play an important role in the effort to assess and improve teaching at Tufts. Your honest, constructive, and detailed feedback not only is essential for evaluating the courses you are taking now, but also will benefit future students. Responses are confidential, and instructors will gain access to anonymous results only after final grades are posted. Thank you for your participation.

Course Questions

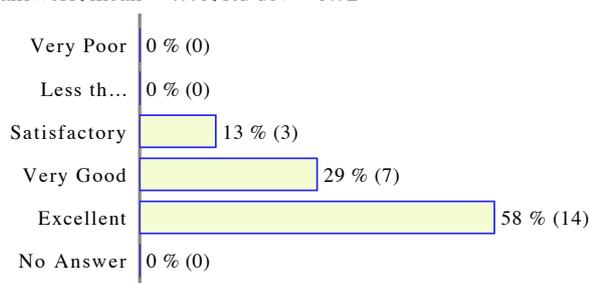
1. How would you rate the success of the course in accomplishing its objectives as stated on the course syllabus?

24 answers, mean = 4.62, std dev = 0.58



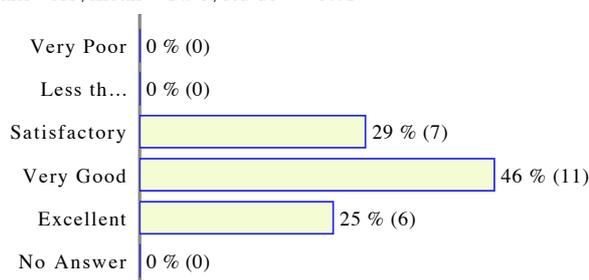
2. How would you rate the use of class time (lectures, discussions, demonstrations, labs, etc.) to promote your learning?

24 answers, mean = 4.46, std dev = 0.72



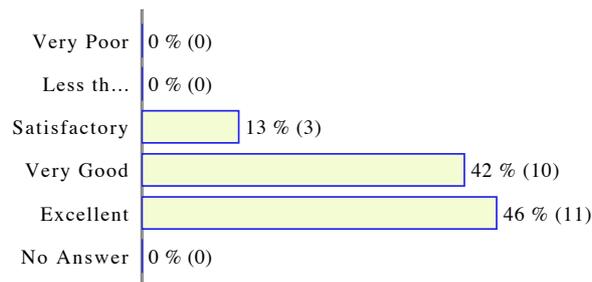
3. How would you rate the use of out-of-class activities (reading assignments, homework, papers, projects, etc.) to promote your learning?

24 answers, mean = 3.96, std dev = 0.75



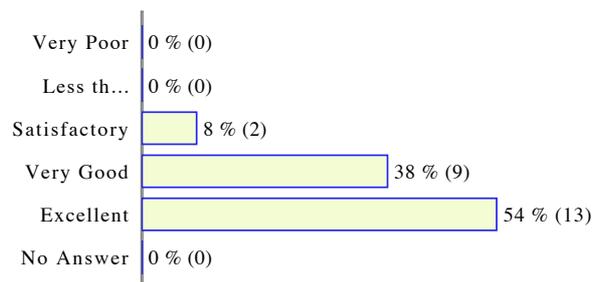
4. How would you rate the way the course engaged your interest?

24 answers, mean = 4.33, std dev = 0.70



5. Based on your answers above, and any other factors you consider important, please provide an overall evaluation of the course.

24 answers, mean = 4.46, std dev = 0.66



6. In what ways has this course made you think differently or more deeply? Please provide examples.

- By giving me historical context to evaluate the interactions of the United States and Asia, the course has taught me to be more proactive in engaging with some of the pressing issues of our time.
- The combination of history with current events, and the way it was done, was excellent.
- Without much exposure to the history of US contact with Asia or to IR in general, this class provided me with a nuanced understanding of our relations with many Asian countries as well as certain paradigms to the US foreign policy approach in general. I feel significantly more comfortable reading about current conflicts, as I will better understand their context and significance.
- Studies a broad range of aspects of Chinese foreign policy and integrates the regions' perspective on China as well.
- It has given me an excellent framework to understand how the US relationship in Asia has evolved.
- China has a long way to go to become a peer competitor of the United States..... much of the hype is overblown
- I really enjoyed the shift into 100% discussion from 100% lecture. It was awesome to be able to build on the knowledge base that we developed from the first half of the semester in a more engaging way.
- This was a fantastic course- easily one of my favorites at Tufts. I feel like I truly learned a lot, and the

lectures/discussions were great.

7. What aspects of this course worked best to facilitate your learning?

- The two halves both helped facilitate learning, albeit in different ways. The lectures reinforced the dry readings in the first half, and the discussions drew the class into the material in the second half.
- Despite being a high level IR class, Professor Beckley organized it so that you did not need to have much previous exposure to IR or to the history of US contact with Asia. I thought that the way he structured the course was incredibly intuitive, establishing the historical picture because engaging us with contemporary issues.
- Time for discussion questions.
- Really, really loved the class. Really enjoyed the debate style of the second half of the class. And even though Prof. Beckley didn't seem to love straight lecturing in the first half, I do think they were some of the clearest, most efficient lectures I've ever been to.
- I thought the lecture aspect of the class worked best in facilitating my learning, as the seminar portion was roughly guided and I felt that most of the time discussions are roundabout.
- The content was fairly comprehensive, wide ranging but also detailed enough to give a deep enough understanding on a broad range of topics. But honestly one of if not the best course I have taken at Tufts, I would take it again if I could
- The lectures were filled with a lot of information which I enjoyed
- The discussion portions are really great. Opening our ears to different viewpoints on a current topic whose details are in flux is important to promote learning and understanding. It also helps to have the discussions take up the whole class in a structured manner.
- Lectures
- EXTREMELY ENGAGING LECTURES. All of the mounds of history was actually fun and interesting to learn.
- I loved the course structure. Having a solid history of US/Asia relations was crucial to understanding the context of contemporary topics, and was extremely valuable to learn in the first half. I thought the lectures were very useful.

8. What suggestions do you have for improving this course?

- Perhaps a bit more structure in terms of how the second half will be assessed on the final, because it's hard to know what to study when we spend large parts of class discussing opinions.
- This is really a great class. At one point, I would have said

that I recommend not having the final presentation be a paper as well, but after the fact my group did a fine job of collaborating. I suppose I would still recommend reconsidering the group paper, or evaluating what all the students thought of the assignment, because I may have just had an unusually good group to work with. Writing a paper with 7 people in a few weeks is incredibly challenging, whereas making a good presentation is well within a large group's capabilities. Like I said, my experience was actually very positive, so I would recommend pooling the group to see if we were abnormally cooperative/successful.

- IDs are very vague- too much to prepare for exams. The class can be a bit too historical from time to time.
- My only gripe has to do with the final project. I understand that the timing was fairly impossible to control, but having a huge group paper due the day after Thanksgiving Break kind of sucked.. Required a lot of collaboration toward the end that was impossible to do in person until late Sunday night.
- For the seminar portion, maybe have a couple guiding questions for students to think about as we read the required reading. This would also be helpful in discussion in class.
- Meeting with Prof about final projects should be earlier. Outsourcing group didn't understand the flexibility of the prompt, and therefore didn't take the paper in the direction we wanted.
- Assign groups for the projects earlier, the rush at the very end made it feel like the projects could have been more complete.
- Don't let Tufts kids speak as much. Most of them have no idea what they're talking about.
- I really disliked that we had a group essay/presentation - group work is difficult at the best of times, and the fact that the deadline came right after Thanksgiving break meant that the co-ordination during break was pretty hard.
- I really enjoyed the first part of the class and I think that the structure should be continued throughout. I think it would be good to find a better balance between class participation and not letting discussions become too focused on opinions (ie i feel or i don't really know but i think...) that aren't really rooted in any real concepts, history, or facts. For future classes it may also be best to pick either a cumulative final or a group project but not both. In regards to the group project, I do think that the structure would be improved for the better, if students had some choice in the matter either from topic, to even group members, or the size of the group.
- I recommend adding some factors to the grading beyond two exams and a presentation. It's tough to hinge performance on only three factors. I think counting participation is a good addition.
- perhaps given that its a small class it should have been a seminar rather than a lecture. even if its a lecture i wish there

was more discussion or interaction with the professor. also, a powerpoint or some writing on the board would have helped us immensely with note-taking.

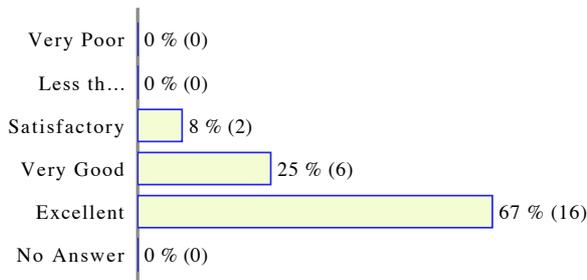
- More discussion!!!
- The group project at the end felt forced and unnecessarily difficult. Either a shorter project with smaller groups (7 is really hard to coordinate) or individual papers would be better.
- The only thing I would suggest slightly changing is the structure of the second half. I felt that sometimes during the discussions it became too much about student opinion and not enough about facts/the opinions of politicians/scholars. I would have loved to hear more from Prof.Beckley and a little less from students (who I suspect oftentimes just wanted to hear themselves speak).

Instructor/Evaluatee: Michael Beckley

Instructor Questions

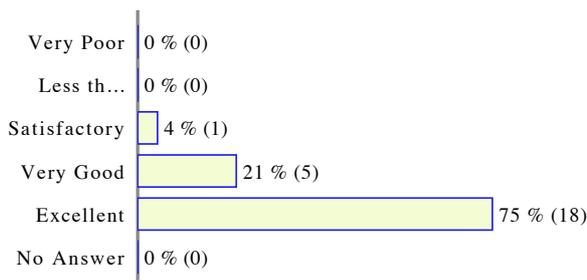
9. How would you rate the instructor's organization of each class?

24 answers, mean = 4.58, std dev = 0.65



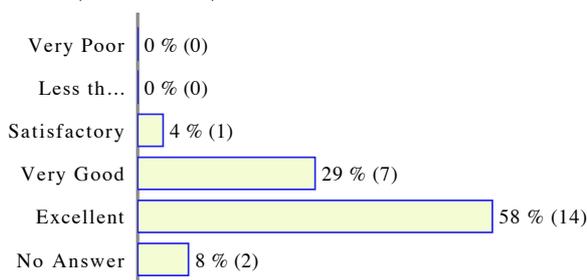
10. How would you rate the instructor's success in explaining concepts and ideas?

24 answers, mean = 4.71, std dev = 0.55



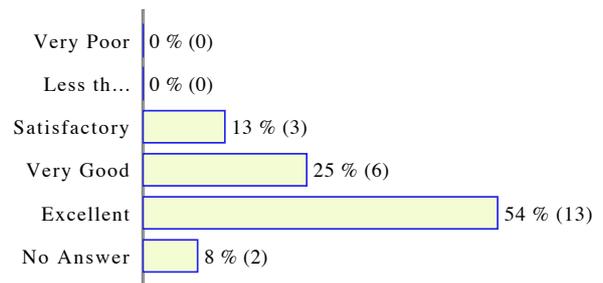
11. How would you rate the timeliness of the instructor's feedback on assignments, exams, and other work?

22 answers, mean = 4.59, std dev = 0.59



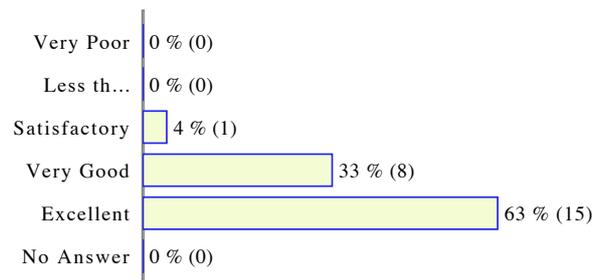
12. How would you rate the usefulness of the instructor's feedback on assignments, exams, and other work?

22 answers, mean = 4.45, std dev = 0.74



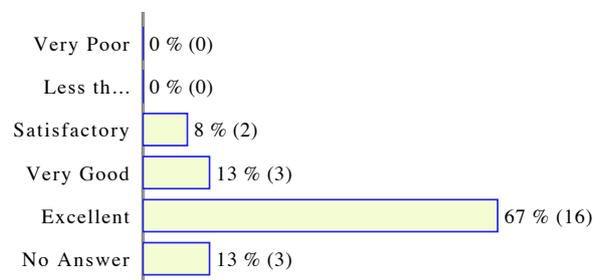
13. How would you rate the instructor's success in creating and maintaining an inclusive class, respectful of all students?

24 answers, mean = 4.58, std dev = 0.58



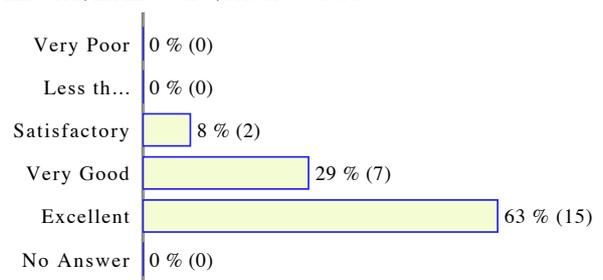
14. How would you rate the instructor's communication with you outside of class?

21 answers, mean = 4.67, std dev = 0.66



15. Based on your answers above, and any other factors you consider important, please provide an overall evaluation of the instructor.

24 answers, mean = 4.54, std dev = 0.66



16. Please provide any additional comments regarding the instructor.

- One of the best professors I've had at Tufts, hands down.
- Professor Beckley gives, without a doubt, the best lectures I

have ever had in my college career. He is concise, precise, and insightful, and brings a wealth of knowledge to the classroom. He is truly an exceptional professor.

- Professor Beckley is engaging, eloquent and hilarious as a lecturer. As a discussion leader, he does a fantastic job of guiding discussion, covering a lot of ground, interpreting students' responses and asking pointed and real-world questions.
- Thank you, Professor Beckley. You are awesome.
- Great professor, really knows what he is talking about. Very open and friendly, capable of making everyone feel comfortable in class.
- By far the best Professor I have had at Tufts, I would take a class with him simply based on his teaching it.
- I really liked the first part of the semester but the second part felt like a waste of time since everyone just repeated what they had read in the readings or pretended they had an intimate understanding of the subject matter. Granted it's not your fault that Tufts kids like to pretend they're experts but maybe next semester limit the amount of time that students speak.
- Michael Beckley ROCKS!
- Fantastic first semester! I'm honored to be a part of the best AmForPol class you've ever taught!
- TENURE!!! Don't let a good one get away!!
- prof beckley is excellent and very helpful both inside and outside of class. again, i wish he would've provided a bit more guidelines or writing down key words and concepts during lectures.
- Professor Beckley packs in a large amount of information into every lecture. I think he should approach each lecture at a slower pace, so that students can take better notes and digest the material.
- Was this really his first semester teaching? He absolutely killed it.
- Tufts is VERY VERY lucky to have Prof. Beckley. He is a phenomenal instructor, very approachable, and extremely intelligent. He is definitely one of the best professors I have seen in my four years here!