

Student Evaluation of Teaching, Spring 2020

Rachel Surminsky, POLI 281-003 DATA IN POLITICS I

Due to the global pandemic, all spring 2020 courses shifted to remote instruction midway through the semester. As a result, these student evaluations of teaching are for the instructor only. It is entirely up to the course instructor if these results and comments are shared during future evaluation or promotion settings.

Raters	Students									
Responded	10									
Invited	30									
Response Ratio	33.3%									
	Mean	Median	SD	N	%(1)	%(2)	%(3)	%(4)	%(5)	
1. Overall, I learned a great deal from this course.	4.60	5.00	0.70	10	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	20.0%	70.0%	
2. The instructor treated all students with respect.	4.80	5.00	0.42	10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	
3. The instructor encouraged students to participate in this class.	4.70	5.00	0.48	10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	70.0%	
4. The instructor saw cultural and personal differences as assets.	4.50	5.00	0.71	10	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	30.0%	60.0%	
5. In this course I had multiple opportunities to express my viewpoints and questions.	4.40	5.00	0.84	10	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	
6. The course challenged me to think deeply about the subject matter.	4.40	5.00	0.97	10	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	30.0%	60.0%	
7. The design of this course (e.g., its format, selected materials, assignments, exercises, quizzes, etc.) helped me better understand the subject matter.	4.20	4.50	1.03	10	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	30.0%	50.0%	
8. Overall, this course was excellent.	4.30	5.00	1.06	10	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	20.0%	60.0%	
9. If my instructor had more time to prepare, I think this course would have the potential to be an excellent online course.	4.00	5.00	1.41	8	0.0%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%	62.5%	

Department Specific

Instructor Ratings

	Mean	Median	SD	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Demonstrates enthusiasm about teaching.	4.70	5.00	0.48	10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	70.0%
2. Communicates clearly and logically.	4.33	5.00	1.12	9	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	66.7%
3. Promotes a climate of mutual respect.	4.70	5.00	0.48	10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	70.0%
4. Encourages student questions.	4.80	5.00	0.42	10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%
5. Emphasizes critical thinking.	4.80	5.00	0.42	10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%
6. Uses teaching strategies that promote active involvement.	4.60	5.00	0.84	10	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%
7. Clearly communicates expectations for student performance.	4.40	5.00	1.07	10	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	70.0%
8. Regularly provides constructive criticism of student performance.	4.70	5.00	0.67	10	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%
9. Provides timely feedback on student performance.	4.60	5.00	0.97	10	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	80.0%
10. Provides a fair evaluation of student performance.	4.70	5.00	0.67	10	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%
11. Is available when needed.	4.90	5.00	0.32	10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	90.0%
12. Is well-prepared for instruction.	4.67	5.00	1.00	9	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	88.9%
13. Overall, considering both the possibilities and limitations of the subject matter and course, I would rate this instructor as "excellent."	4.70	5.00	0.67	10	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%

Course Quality Ratings

	Mean	Median	SD	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Course goals and objectives are clearly specified.	4.50	5.00	0.71	10	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	30.0%	60.0%
2. Requirements (e.g., assignments, attendance, student responsibilities) are clearly specified.	4.70	5.00	0.48	10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	70.0%
3. Course assignments are clearly related to the course objectives.	4.70	5.00	0.67	10	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%
4. Instructional methods in the course facilitate my learning.	4.50	5.00	0.97	10	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	20.0%	70.0%
5. In general, the course is well-organized. Course materials stimulated critical thinking.	4.60	5.00	0.70	10	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	20.0%	70.0%
6. I know significantly more about this subject than before I took this course.	4.80	5.00	0.63	10	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	90.0%
7. Overall, considering its content, design, and structure, I would rate this course as "excellent."	4.60	5.00	0.84	10	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%

Open-Ended Responses

1. In what ways did your instructor try to make learning possible for you during the spring 2020 semester?

Comments

Rachel was extremely helpful in the transition to online instruction. She remained very accessible for office hours both before and after the transition to online classes. She gave constant updates on the class, office hours, and assignments. There was never a moment where I did not understand the expectations for the course, and I always felt like I could reach out and get assistance from Rachel.

She help consistent office hours and would go through the problem sets with us in class.

She gave a lot of lectures during class. We also did assignments in class to reinforce our understanding of the material. The quality of her teaching remained the same when we transitioned to online learning.

Rachel was by far the most effective professor I had during this semester. She upheld our schedule with classes and office hours but created a slightly more manageable course load for us. She taught us during live sessions but recorded them so we could view them later. She also was very available to zoom us individually with questions.

Great zoom lectures, demonstrations with R, multiple exposure to material to ensure understanding.

Rachel was an excellent teacher. She taught the class by giving ample examples that made the material easy to digest and understand. She would step through confusing topics and ask for collaboration from the class to make sure we were learning the topics correctly. She held extensive office hours and would spend a lot of effort to make sure I understood the topics she was showing me. She never let an assignment go by without being explained, in full, after the due date. This made me feel comfortable that I was not missing topics.

2. How would you describe your learning experience after the transition from face-to-face instruction to remote instruction? What did you find most helpful to your remote learning experience? In what ways, if at all, did aspects of your learning change?

Comments

The class got more difficult as the class shifted towards using more RStudio, and we shifted to online classes. However, Rachel remained accessible for assistance.

I thought it was difficult at first. The zoom office hours were helpful, but it was difficult for me to digest and retain the information. I thought class went by very quickly and the assignment deadlines piled up quickly. Rachel was nice about extending deadlines, but the course felt overwhelming at the end.

My learning experience was fine. I did not struggle to adjust to online learning at all.

It was challenging to learn coding online, but lectures helped and I think maybe if there were more datacamps or practice activities to help would have been beneficial.

The learning experience in this course was only slightly altered. It was harder to grasp the material without group work and collaboration but our class made the best of it. The most helpful part of remote learning was individual office hours. My learning was less focused, I will admit, but I feel as if I still learned a great deal.

Rachel did a fantastic job – accommodated students with multiple office hours/long hours during the week. Understanding about students' situation so made assignments easier to complete with more time.

I found it much harder to maintain focus when the instruction moved online. It was very hard to stay motivated, and I think this negatively impacted my learning experience.

Department Specific

Please comment on the strengths of the course.

Comments

The course was conducted well both before and after the transition to online classes.

I thought the course was interesting and pushed me to think outside the box.

I enjoyed this course. I wanted to learn R programming which is why I took it. Overall, I feel like I have become proficient in R programming after taking this course.

The strength of this course was that it effectively allowed me to learn a concrete skill. The learning objectives, assignments, and lectures were perfectly set up to master the coding with the right commitment to learning.

I wish we could delve more into the politics side of data. The Congressional Dataset was a great starter though

Teaches hard skills and critical thinking.

Please comment on the limitations of the course.

Comments

The RStudio instruction suffered from the transition to online classes, but I do not think that this has anything to do with the instructor or the class, just the shift to online classes.

I think the course could expand more into the "political science" side, besides just the final project. We worked a lot on coding (such as data camp) in the first half of the semester but I wish we could have tied in more politics to it. I liked the in-class assignments that we did, so more of those would have been nice and better preparation for the final project.

I didn't notice any limitations.

Some of the assignments or material could have been explained more in class time, but overall it was a great course.

This course was hard to do online without other students to collaborate with during class time. I found it to be limiting to not be able to easily ask questions when I was stuck.

We did not use the textbook much and I wish I hadn't bought it. The syllabus said that we would heavily rely on it in the second part of the semester, but I certainly could have gotten by without it.

Please comment on the strengths of the instructor.

Comments

Rachel was flexible, kind, and accessible as an instructor. Her goal was that she truly wanted the students to understand the material. She cared about how all of the students were doing during the transition, not only with the class material, but the entire transition in general. She handled the transition to online learning incredibly well, and I felt like I didn't miss a second of class.

I thought Rachel was clear with expectations in guidelines. I like that she set aside class time to review for the exams and to answer our questions.

She was very enthusiastic about teaching and also had a nice sense of humor.

I cannot speak more highly of Rachel Surminsky. She is passionate, intelligent, and understanding. Her lectures are interesting and informative. She is available to answer any and all questions and she does so in a manner that is always helpful and never condescending. I felt very comfortable asking her for guidance throughout online learning and believe she is one of the best instructors I have had at UNC. She provided us with feedback, graded in a timely manner, and always made sure the course load was manageable for all students.

Very enthusiastic and funny, helpful, answers questions quick!

Rachel is full of energy in class. This energized me as a student, she was a joy to learn from. She gives so much time to students in office hours and genuinely cares about our understanding of the material. I felt like I got a lot of individualized help when I needed it which incredibly increased the benefit I got from this course. I did not expect to like this course as much as I did, but Rachel made it great.

Please comment on the limitations of the instructor.

Comments

Rachel was one of the best instructors I have had at UNC.

I wish we spent more time on regression, error, and uncertainty. I think we could have moved quicker in the beginning because I felt overwhelmed with the material by the end of the course.

None.

I cannot think of a limitation.
