



2018S Instructor Report for PSCI 3891 01 - Topics in Contemporary Politics (Allison Anoll)

Vanderbilt University Course and Teaching Evaluations

Project Audience 15

Responses Received 14

Response Ratio 93.33%

Report Comments

The following is a report for an individual section of a class. Please do not distribute, print, or share this report except for administrative purposes.

Project Audience - Total number of students enrolled

Responses Received - Number of evaluations submitted by students

Response Ratio - Percent of enrolled students who submitted evaluations

If you have any questions about the evaluation system please contact course.evaluations@vanderbilt.edu.

Prepared by Vanderbilt University Course and Teaching Evaluations

Creation Date Thu, May 10, 2018



Questions about the Instructor (**Allison Anoll**):

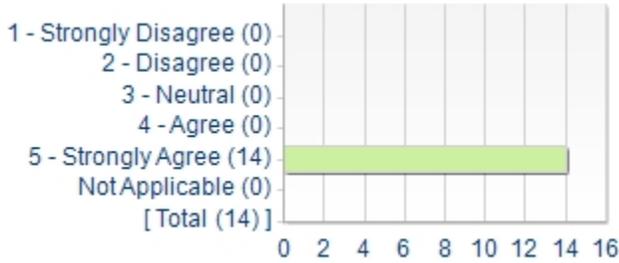
Question	This Class Section		Department (PSCI)		School (A&S)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
The instructor helped me understand the core ideas and issues in this subject.	5.00	0.00	4.51	0.76	4.44	0.86
The instructor explained what was expected of me in the assignments and assessments for this course.	4.93	0.27	4.13	1.06	4.38	0.91
The instructor encouraged critical, original, or creative thinking.	5.00	0.00	4.50	0.79	4.40	0.91
The instructor demonstrated interest in students' learning.	5.00	0.00	4.53	0.76	4.53	0.82
The instructor used class time productively.	4.86	0.36	4.37	0.83	4.34	0.97
The instructor created a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment.	5.00	0.00	4.50	0.81	4.52	0.82
Overall, the instructor (Allison Anoll) was:	5.00	0.00	4.38	0.86	4.31	0.94

Questions about this Course (**PSCI 3891 01**):

Question	This Class Section		Department (PSCI)		School (A&S)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
This course helped me appreciate the significance of the subject matter.	4.93	0.27	4.52	0.78	4.30	0.96
The components of the course, such as class activities, assessments, and assignments, were consistent with the course goals.	4.93	0.27	4.45	0.81	4.41	0.85
The feedback I received during the course was helpful.	4.93	0.27	4.09	1.12	4.18	1.03
I felt comfortable asking questions in this course.	4.93	0.27	4.37	0.90	4.36	0.96
This course helped me consider connections between course material and other areas of my personal, academic, or professional life.	4.93	0.27	4.47	0.86	4.24	1.01
Overall, the course (PSCI 3891 01) was:	4.92	0.28	4.15	0.94	3.98	1.01
Compared to other classes, the amount I learned in this course was:	4.64	0.63	3.91	1.00	3.62	1.04
Compared to requirements in other classes, the workload assigned in this class was:	3.50	0.85	3.39	0.87	3.24	1.00

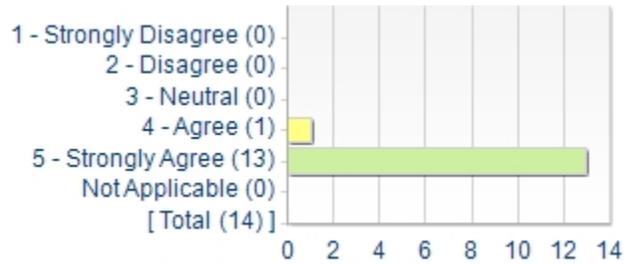
Please respond to the following questions about the instructor (**Allison Anoll**).

1. The instructor helped me understand the core ideas and issues in this subject.



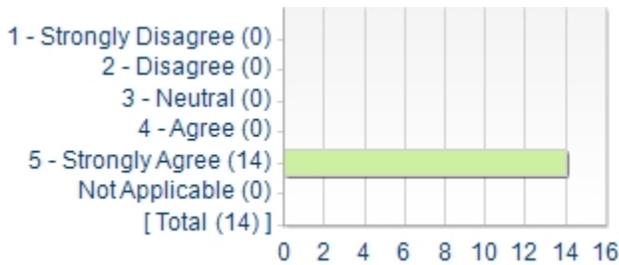
Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.00

2. The instructor explained what was expected of me in the assignments and assessments for this course.



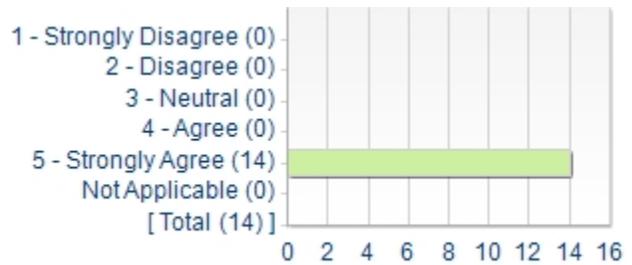
Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	4.93
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.27

3. The instructor encouraged critical, original, or creative thinking.



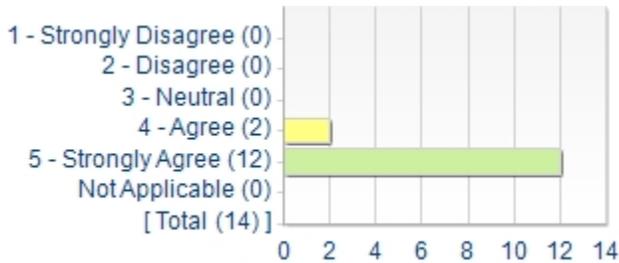
Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.00

4. The instructor demonstrated interest in students' learning.



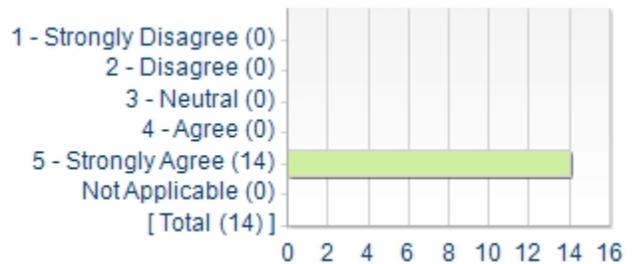
Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.00

5. The instructor used class time productively.



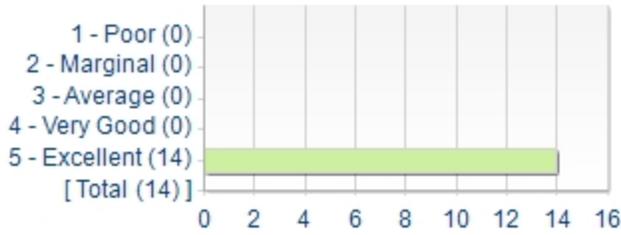
Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	4.86
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.36

6. The instructor created a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment.



Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.00

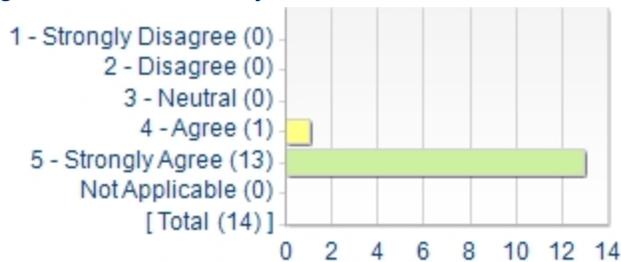
Overall, the instructor (Allison Anoll) was:



Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.00

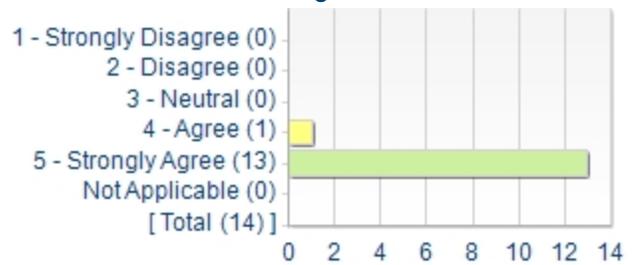
Questions About This Course (PSCI 3891 01):

1. This course helped me appreciate the significance of the subject matter.



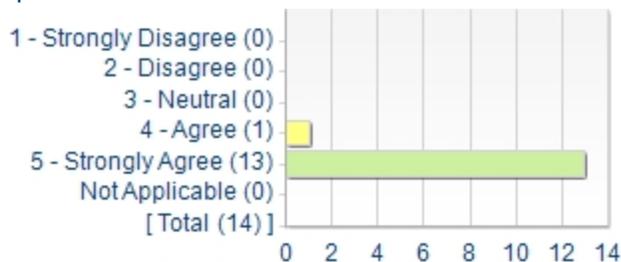
Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	4.93
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.27

2. The components of the course, such as class activities, assessments, and assignments, were consistent with the course goals.



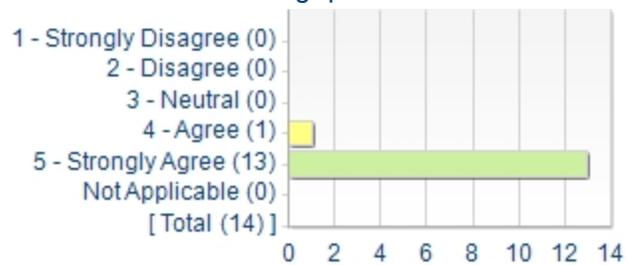
Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	4.93
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.27

3. The feedback I received during the course was helpful.



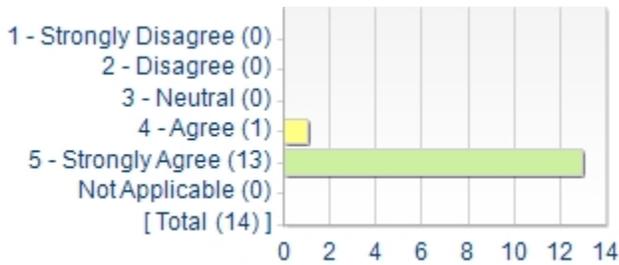
Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	4.93
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.27

4. I felt comfortable asking questions in this course.



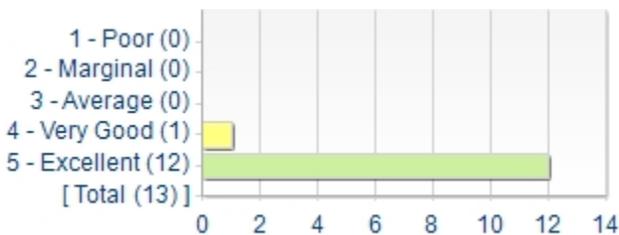
Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	4.93
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.27

5. This course helped me consider connections between course material and other areas of my personal, academic, or professional life.



Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	4.93
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.27

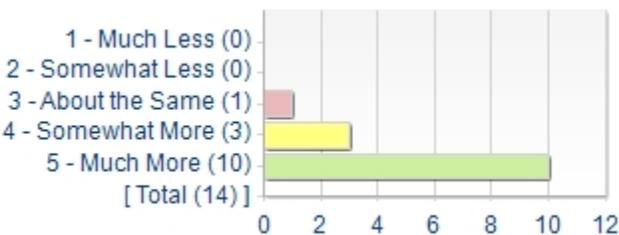
Overall the course was:



Statistics	Value
Response Count	13
Mean	4.92
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.28

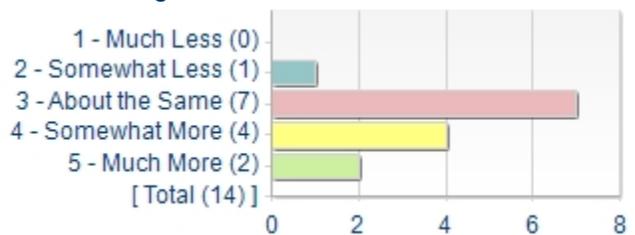
Questions About This Course (PSCI 3891 01):

1. Compared to other classes, the amount I learned in this course was:



Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	4.64
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.63

2. Compared to requirements in other classes, the workload assigned in this class was:



Statistics	Value
Response Count	14
Mean	3.50
Mode	3
Standard Deviation	0.85

What elements of the course (PSCI 3891 01) most contributed to your learning?

Comments

There were are aspects of this year-long course that separate it from conventional "for grade" courses, namely that the cohort understood the course as a lab rather than a class. The material and assignments were organized in such a way that folks felt compelled to work for the sake of the work rather than for a grade, which is a rarity. The professor matched her expectations with a willingness to do her part providing feedback and steering the course towards objectives that everyone felt as strongly about. The professor treated the lab participants as fellow scholars and it was definitely noticeable in the attitude of everyone towards the different aspects of writing the papers. The opportunity to participate in a conference presentation was an incredible experience for all involved and socialized a great many into political science. Receiving professional feedback from those in the field was an education that capped an extraordinary year of methods, writing, and ultimately a final product that reflected the best efforts of 3 co-authors. I think the concept of a "lab" is a wonderful addition to the political science catalog and I would highly recommend this experience to anyone.

Professor Allison Anoll is the best professor I've had at Vanderbilt by a long shot. The structure of this course was a perfect blend of group learning, projects, reading, and writing. This is one of the few classes I've ever had that I always looked forward to, and I'm genuinely sad that I won't be taking it next year. I have grown as a writer, researcher, and student because of this class. My research here is on my resume and I was told a large part of why I got my summer internship/stood out in the applicant pool.

Having the resources viable to actually conduct meaningful and interesting experiments was phenomenal. Also Professor Anoll is by far the best professor I have had at Vanderbilt. She was great at teaching the material, setting us up for doing our won research, and helping us through the whole process. From teaching us R-coding, to data analysis, to LaTeX, the amount I have learned this course has been so much more then any other curse I have taken. Actually getting to go to Chicago and present our research at the MPSA was also amazing. It was so cool to have the opportunity to talk about our research on an academic and professional level around other people who were also as interested.

The r coding exercise.

Prof. Anoll's comments on final paper and poster draft are really helpful.

Professor Anoll is an excellent example of a professor who has both a breadth and depth of knowledge regarding political science, but can also relate to her student. She made it easy to want to do the work, and served as a model of what such knowledge can do for you.

Just as in our class during the fall semester, Professor Anoll has been the best professor I have had in my four years at Vanderbilt. Whether it was explaining the difficult aspects of data analysis, providing exhaustive feedback on my group's writing, including time for discussion of current developments in mass incarceration, or securing funding for us to go to the MPSA conference in Chicago, Professor Anoll always went above and beyond my expectations. No observer of the class would believe that this is the first time she has done it, but it was also an awesome experience being part of a course that was practically being constructed as it went along. This was only possible because of Professor Anoll's attention to pedagogy and ceaseless energy/investment in us as undergraduates.

Everything we learned during this class was incredibly useful. It's one of the best, if not the best, class that I have taken at Vanderbilt. The skills that we learned were very applicable to what some of us may go on to do with our lives.

The experience of researching alongside fellow undergraduate students was initially daunting, but Professor Anoll did an exceptional job of guiding us all through the research process. She invests an incredible amount of her own personal time and care to her student's learning, and this dedication has been a distinguishing factor of this year-long course. At each stage in the research process we received valuable critical feedback. From the initial task of getting a grasp on the literature, to discovering the social science questions we were itching to know the answers to, to learning R, to presenting at the MPSA conference and producing a paper worthy of publication, Professor Anoll was an ever present mentor and guiding presence.

Professor Anoll facilitated thoughtful and meaningful discussions throughout the course that I thought were particularly helpful in establishing a solid foundation for our original and independent research projects. While students were allowed the opportunity to explore topics that were particularly interesting to us individually, during the first half of the year she introduced us to seminal literature on the topics of race, policing, and the carceral state that provided a launching ground for our own research. Students were split into small 3-person research pods, which was a highlight of my personal experience. Students were matched based on personal compatibility and research interests, and working alongside others was a huge factor in the success of the class in my opinion. Each individual contributed a different skill to the project and together, we were able to produce work that far exceeded what we, or at least I, would've

Comments

been able to produce in our individual right.

By the second semester we had produced a literature review and data analysis plan that allowed us to delve into the analytics of each of our projects. As a student who has only a very basic understanding of statistics and quantitative social science, the second semester was certainly more challenging from a logistical standpoint. However, weekly scaffolds and coding tutorials kept us on track, and Professor Anoll was incredibly accessible throughout the semester for help, which I found to be particularly beneficial. Throughout the process she walked us through each step and was willing to work through everything from formulating our hypotheses to line editing our code.

In addition to the academic literature we were introduced to, in the second semester students were responsible for presenting the class with articles concerning our research topics. These shared pieces included policy think tank studies, journal articles, and contemporary news articles. I particularly enjoyed the discussion surrounding this more contemporary and topical view of the subject because it can be easy to forget that the academic research you're doing applies to real people and that it affects real policy.

Throughout the course we were also responsible for completing reflections and memos of contribution that asked us to identify our individual and group level strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth. While the daily reflections we completed at the beginning of the semester were a little cumbersome, they also helped us to communicate with our group members, address areas of improvement, and recognize each other's efforts. The less frequent check-ins in the second semester were much more suited to us as we grew more comfortable with the material and each other.

The culmination of the semester was the MPSA conference, where we had the opportunity to share the work we'd been doing with other undergraduates with similar interests while simultaneously getting feedback from scholars in the field. This feedback was invaluable and so was the opportunity to observe others' work, attend panel discussions, and engage with other political scientists.

As a whole, I learned so much than I could've ever imagined in this course. I experienced both academic and personal growth as a result of this experience and I will miss this class dearly.

Working with real data to learn computational skills and have it contribute towards a real paper. Also, spending the first semester gaining a strong base in the literature. Also working in groups and being able to cultivate our collaboration skills throughout the entire year.

This whole research experience has had a huge impact on my political science major and my sense of future plans, particularly in terms of giving me actual research experience and training with tools I otherwise might not have worked with. The chance to see the process all the way through, and particularly this semester, to work with R, attend a conference, and work through the submission process, has helped me feel so much more confident in my political science and social science training and has led me to more seriously consider grad school and research as viable future options.

Doing the work on our own, picking our own topics

I think Professor Anoll was a fantastic resource who made herself welcoming and available.

What improvements to the course (PSCI 3891 01) would you recommend?

Comments

Perhaps there might be a better way to notify participants about the timing of lab reflections. Brightspace was not as frequently utilized during the second semester (for obvious reasons in most instances). Perhaps set the deadlines for lab reflections in the calendar for students to plan ahead. This is a very minor recommendation.

None, except maybe somehow getting department wide R workshops throughout the year? That might be difficult to accomplish, but would be pretty helpful to get extra help and practice.

Having a more clear division among who does what parts of the assignments for the group. It would have been nice to learn about the other groups projects earlier. While I enjoyed the group work, I wish we had heard more from each other on our projects throughout the year rather than finding out right before the conference.

Nothing. Overall it is a great class.

Group projects are often the bane of college students especially when one member does not hold their own and the others have to pick up the slack. Having some way to test/quiz to make sure everyone is on a standard level of understanding as the class moves forward into tasks that all members do not have to complete would help.

I felt that we spent a bit too much time on the methods/analysis portion and too little time on the discussion/conclusion sections of our project. This is a product of the fact that it's very difficult to teach undergraduates how to do data analysis as we did. However, even if it meant moving some of the things from early in the second semester to the end of the first semester, I think it would be good for us to have more time to focus on interpreting our results and putting them in the context of the literature. I think that my group mates and I were still a bit unclear of how our project fits in, and I think that ultimately the implications we drew from our study were relatively weak compared to the literature review and analysis.

The only improvement that I would recommend would be to have a TA or RA available to assist students during the spring semester as data analysis kicks into gear. Professor Anoll did an incredible job of accommodating our needs and requests, but the frequency of requests for office-hour and after-class meetings surged as we faced the steep learning curve of R. Having an additional researcher to bring our simple and technical questions to might help to alleviate some of the burden on Professor Anoll during that time.

The only minor improvement I would make would be to have our scaffolds

A lot of this course feels like controlled chaos, and I'm not sure how to improve or work around that, but there were definitely some days that felt less productive than others. This was just as frequently the fault of the class itself/individual group members, but figuring out how to split in-class time among the groups might have helped us a little, or perhaps having a dedicated grad student/ta for the course to help manage the lab time. Overall, I felt like things resolved themselves fine and those setbacks/difficulties were valuable in and of themselves as learning experiences, but having more support for Dr. Anoll/any future professor who takes on this course could be helpful as there are just so many divergent questions and concerns to address in any given class period.

Incorporate more discussions about what is going on in world relating to topic. This was really enjoyable when we did it but maybe a little more

I think the group paper style could use some tweaks for overall effectiveness.

Do you have any other comments?

Comments

When people ask me why Vanderbilt or how I feel about the Political Science department, classes like this one and professors like Anoll are the reasons I give.

This has been my favorite course at Vanderbilt, and Allison Anoll is by far the best professor I have ever had.

It was an amazing class! I learned so many invaluable things to help me in the future and help me understand what a career in research would look like. Not only is the content in this class going to help me in graduate school in the future, I have no doubt I will be able to use it during the rest of my undergraduate experience.

I really enjoyed taking this class with Prof. Anoll this whole year. Now I have a much better understanding about social science research. I learned a lot from this class this year. I highly recommend the Political Science department to offer this class again in the future.

I thought the MPSA conference was a great experience and would definitely recommend doing it again.

Professor Anoll is by far the single best professor I have had at this institution. Her intelligence and passion for the subject matter are present at all times and her genuine interest in her students' success has made this experience the highlight of my undergraduate career so far. There aren't many professors who would undertake an undergraduate research lab like this one, let alone lead it with such diligence and enthusiasm, and I am incredibly thankful to Professor Anoll for this experience. Teachers and academics like her are what make universities like Vanderbilt worth attending, and I am absolutely honored to have participated in this lab.

The best course I've ever taken at Vanderbilt, Professor Anoll goes above and beyond to work with us and contribute to our learning experience. The class format makes us more motivated to learn in the best possible way, and we found ourselves wanting to put in more work and always wanting to improve. Thanks for the best learning experience ever.

Entering into a yearlong course/group project/research experience as an undergraduate was somewhat daunting to me, but I am SO GLAD that I did it. Getting to work with Dr. Anoll has been absolutely fantastic, and as stated above, the experience has been such a valuable addition to the other work I've done within the political science department.

LOVED this class!!!!!! It was an incredible learning experience and I feel so fortunate to have been a part of this class.

None.