

**Colin C. Smith**  
Teaching Portfolio (2023-24)

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### **Courses Taught and Quantitative Evaluation Data**

All complete evaluations available for download at [colincsmith.weebly.com/](http://colincsmith.weebly.com/)

#### **Student Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness (SRTEs), Penn State University Scale: 0 (lowest) to 7 (highest)**

		Level and enrollment	Course (median)	Course (mode)	Instructor (median)	Instructor (mode)
<b>Seminar: Plato's Trilogy</b>	Fall 2023	Advanced: grad & undergrad, 10	(current)			
<b>Ancient Philosophy</b>	Fall 2023	Intermediate, 35	(current)			
<b>Art &amp; Philosophy in Ancient Greece</b>	Fall 2023	Intermediate, 36	(current)			
<b>Symbolic Logic</b>	Fall 2023	Intermediate, 35	(current)			
<b>Symbolic Logic</b>	Sp. 2023	Intermediate, 29	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Philosophy of Religion</b>	Sp. 2023	Intermediate, 32	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Metaphysics</b>	Sp. 2023	Intermediate, 35	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Philosophy &amp; 1960s Counterculture</b>	Sp. 2023	Gen-ed, 33	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Medieval Philosophy</b>	Fall 2022	Intermediate, 31	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Philosophy of Religion</b>	Fall 2022	Intermediate, 35	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Knowing Right from Wrong</b>	Fall 2022	Gen-ed, 33	<b>6.5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Art &amp; Philosophy in Ancient Greece</b>	Fall 2022	Intermediate, 35	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Art &amp; Philosophy in Ancient Greece</b>	Sp. 2022	Intermediate, 35	<b>6.5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Aesthetics</b>	Sp. 2022	Intermediate, 28	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Bioethics (001)</b>	Sp. 2022	Gen-ed, 35	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Bioethics (002)</b>	Sp. 2022	Gen-ed, 34	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Art &amp; Philosophy in Ancient Greece</b>	Fall 2021	Intermediate, 33	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Philosophy of Technology</b>	Fall 2021	Intermediate, 31	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Bioethics</b>	Fall 2021	Gen-ed, 24	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Knowing Right from Wrong</b>	Fall 2021	Gen-ed, 32	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>

## Faculty Course Questionnaires (FCQs), University of Colorado, Boulder

**Scale: 0 (lowest) to 5 (highest)**

Note: Fall 2019 scores converted from 6-point scale

		Level and enrollment	Course: evaluating arguments	Course: thinking across concepts	Instructor: respectful	Instructor: encouraging of further interests
<b>Ancient Philosophy</b> TA: Brittany Vessely	Su. 2021	Intermediate, 25	<b>5</b>	<b>4.86</b>	<b>4.92</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction to Philosophy</b>	Sp. 2021	Gen-ed, 41	<b>4.81</b>	<b>4.78</b>	<b>4.93</b>	<b>4.89</b>
<b>Philosophy &amp; Sports (001)</b>	Sp. 2021	Intermediate, 38	<b>4.67</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.74</b>
<b>Philosophy &amp; Sports (002)</b>	Sp. 2021	Intermediate, 37	<b>4.96</b>	<b>4.67</b>	<b>4.88</b>	<b>4.88</b>
<b>Philosophy &amp; Sports (003)</b>	Sp. 2021	Intermediate, 39	<b>4.85</b>	<b>4.78</b>	<b>4.93</b>	<b>4.89</b>
<b>Ancient Philosophy (001)</b>	Fall 2020	Intermediate, 37	<b>4.73</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.67</b>	<b>4.87</b>
<b>Ancient Philosophy (002)</b>	Fall 2020	Intermediate, 37	<b>4.87</b>	<b>4.91</b>	<b>4.96</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Philosophy and Race (002)</b> TA: Brandon Price	Fall 2020	Intermediate, 60	<b>4.59</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.92</b>
<b>Philosophy and Race (004)</b>	Fall 2020	Intermediate, 19	<b>4.77</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.87</b>
<b>Ancient Phil.;</b> TA: Wen Xu	Su. 2020	Intermediate, 25	<b>4.87</b>	<b>4.73</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>4.87</b>
<b>Intro. to Philosophy (001)</b> TA: Ricardo Simmonds	Sp. 2020	Gen-ed, 37	<b>4.87</b>	<b>4.87</b>	<b>4.93</b>	<b>4.93</b>
<b>Intro. to Philosophy (002)</b> TA: Ricardo Simmonds	Sp. 2020	Gen-ed, 38	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.76</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.85</b>
<b>Intro. to Modern Philos.</b>	Sp. 2020	Gen-ed, 38	<b>4.74</b>	<b>4.74</b>	<b>4.95</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Symbolic Logic</b> TA: Paige Massey	Sp. 2020	Advanced: grad & undergrad, 37	<b>4.81</b>	<b>4.63</b>	<b>4.73</b>	<b>4.88</b>
<b>Ethics</b>	Fall 2019	Gen-ed, 35	<b>4.62</b>	<b>4.62</b>	<b>4.89</b>	<b>4.69</b>
<b>Reading, Writing, and Reasoning (002)</b>	Fall 2019	Gen-ed, 16	<b>4.67</b>	<b>4.67</b>	<b>4.89</b>	<b>4.72</b>
<b>Reading, Writing, and Reasoning (004)</b>	Fall 2019	Gen-ed, 17	<b>4.76</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>4.94</b>	<b>4.70</b>

**Teacher Course Evaluations (TCEs), University of Kentucky**  
As Graduate Instructor: responsible for all course content

**Scale: 0 (lowest) to 5 (highest)**

Note: Fall 2014--Spring 2016 scores converted from 4-point scale

		Level and enrollment	Instruction	Course
<b>Business Ethics</b> (online)	Summer 2019	Intermediate, 18	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>Philosophy of Religion</b>	Spring 2019	Intermediate, 29	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>Symbolic Logic I</b>	Spring 2019	Intermediate, 32	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>An Introduction to Logic</b> (online)	Summer 2018	Gen-ed, 19	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Philosophy of Film</b>	Spring 2018	Intermediate, 23	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.7</b>
<b>Symbolic Logic I</b>	Spring 2018	Intermediate, 29	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>
<b>Introduction to Philosophy</b> (009)	Fall 2017	Gen-ed, 26	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.7</b>
<b>Introduction to Philosophy</b> (010)	Fall 2017	Gen-ed, 32	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Death, Dying, and Quality of Life</b>	Spring 2017	Intermediate, 24	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>The Individual and Society</b>	Spring 2017	Intermediate, 21	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.2</b>
<b>Death, Dying, and Quality of Life</b> (001)	Fall 2016	Intermediate, 32	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Death, Dying, and Quality of Life</b> (002)	Fall 2016	Intermediate, 30	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Introduction to Philosophy</b> (004)	Spring 2016	Gen-ed, 26	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>Introduction to Philosophy</b> (007)	Spring 2016	Gen-ed, 29	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Introductory Logic</b>	Fall 2015	Gen-ed, 29	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Symbolic Logic I</b>	Fall 2015	Intermediate, 30	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>
<b>Introductory Logic</b> (013)	Spring 2015	Gen-ed, 31	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Introductory Logic</b> (014)	Spring 2015	Gen-ed, 33	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Introductory Logic</b>	Fall 2014	Gen-ed, 29	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.1</b>

## Colin Smith -- Statement of Teaching Philosophy

In Plato's well-known cave allegory, Socrates accounts for philosophy as having the power to liberate. I recognize in this Platonic spirit that philosophy classes give students the opportunity for a transformative experience, thereby offering a gift that could last any college student a lifetime. Such a transformation comes by learning to think critically for oneself, dialoguing with diverse interlocutors, and taking up truth as valuable for living a better life and improving our world. As I will describe, these core values inform my pedagogical method.

Students in my classes meet learning outcomes by *doing* philosophy, that is, actively interrogating the meaning of centrally important concepts for themselves and in dialogue with others, as opposed to learning rote historical facts. For example, in Ancient Greek Philosophy, we consider the central notion of flourishing (*eudaimonia*) by asking what exactly it *means* to cultivate a character that will lead to a happy life while benefiting the community. This question concerns the alleged tension between happiness as a momentary psychological state and living the kind of human life we ultimately would describe as 'happy.' It opens onto a semester-long series of discussion board assignments entailing initial thought experiments, posts engaging with texts by Plato and Aristotle, and subsequent drafts of the initial post in response to instructor feedback. Such an extended process of applying philosophical thinking to an important question allows students to improve their moral intuitions with respect to principles of theoretical reasoning while developing their writing through critical feedback.

Additionally, I teach students to apply philosophical skills of critical analysis across texts from diverse cultural traditions. In Medieval Philosophy, we perform exegetical analysis on culturally diffuse texts like Shankara's *Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita*, Boethius' *On the Consolation of Philosophy*, and Catherine of Siena's *Dialogues* to account for the views of the meaning of human suffering therein. The goal is to understand patterns of thinking across traditions that students can use to shed light on existential conditions like human suffering that consistently emerge in our lives. Such comparative exercises addressing core human concepts help students consider important notions across vastly different instances while informing the development of their own views. The exercises furthermore reflect the importance of a diversity of perspectives in college classes, shown also in my syllabi's spread of readings across race, gender, class, culture, and ability.

Similarly, in Aesthetics, we assess artworks ranging from Renaissance paintings to 21st century hip-hop songs through the four-step art-evaluation process: describe the work, analyze the composition of its parts, interpret its meaning, and evaluate its effectiveness. Here we discuss the contents of artworks with respect to their methods of conveying meaning that uncover valuable truths about human existence. We furthermore consider the material conditions of artistic production, such as the implicitly gendered values of artistic production in Renaissance Europe or the tension evident in the distinction between socially conscious hip-hop and the decadent aesthetics of the modern culture industry. These assessment exercises allow students to evaluate consistent aspects of aesthetic worth across disparate sources, addressing the question concerning art's perennial functions in all societies.

In my classes, students come to understand truth as inherently valuable while developing skills of analysis to assess meaning as informed by important virtues like care, respect, and cross-cultural diversity. This helps them find their way out of the cave into successful lives as engaged citizens by cultivating philosophical insights that will flourish throughout their lives.

## **Sample syllabus: Plato's Trilogy**

Seminar, cross-listed for upper-level undergraduates and graduate students

**Instructor:** Dr. Colin Smith (he/him)

**Course description:** This course will entail a detailed study of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato's three dialogues known among scholars as "Plato's Trilogy": the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman*. After spending four weeks gathering resources by discussing adjacent texts by the Presocratics, Sophists, and Plato, we will spend the latter eleven weeks embarking upon a close reading of the trilogy.

Some questions we will consider are, what is knowledge, and how is knowledge distinct from opinion? Is truth merely "up to the individual," or are some truths shared among all? If so, what are these allegedly universal truths, and how can we be certain of the truth of universal assertions? What sort of metaphysical composition would such universally true assertions indicate? Finally, on the basis of our answers to such questions, how can we live good lives and organize societies that encourage flourishing and care for all? Who should be in charge of overseeing such a socio-political project?

Students will be graded based on demonstrating genuine engagement with these difficult questions. The course will be conducted seminar style, emphasizing close reading of texts and regular participation from all enrolled students. Graded portions will include weekly discussion boards, participation in student-led discussions, and a research paper developed in several stages over the course of the semester.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- To gain a critical perspective on philosophical theory and its history.
- To become familiar with major aspects of Plato's philosophy while also identifying their underlying premises or assumptions and developing critical responses to them.
- To develop critical reading and thinking skills.
- To develop academic and professional writing skills.

**Textbook:** No textbooks are required for this class. All readings have been made available on the course calendar below. Most of these were taken from the university's library webpage.

### **Grading:**

**30% Participation:** This includes (1) regularly demonstrating genuine engagement with readings, (2) leading one discussion and co-leading another discussion over the course of semester, and (3) acting as respondent several times over the semester.

**30% Weekly discussion boards:** Starting in week three, I will set up a discussion board with some critical questions. Each student will owe three posts per week: (1) one **400-500 word post**; (2) **one critical question** about the text or its relation with other

texts and ideas we've discussed; (3) **one 150-response** to another's post or question. **Either a post or a question is due by 12pm Tuesday, and post/question and response posts by 12pm Thursday.**

**40% Research paper:** Students must submit a research paper of no less than 3000 words. The paper will be due in **two drafts** (see calendar below). The paper must **engage with academic research publications**. Students will meet with the professor after submitting each draft.

### **Masks**

Currently, we are not requiring masks in the classroom. This may change. The instructor reserves the right to mandate masks in the classroom, though there is no expectation of needing to do so. Students are welcome to wear masks in class if desired.

### **Technology**

Please send emails to my university email, [cxs5517@psu.edu](mailto:cxs5517@psu.edu), rather than to Canvas, which I cannot check as often. Please check your university email each weekday, and respond within a day. At no point during class may students look at or touch their phones. Failure to follow this policy may result in lowering the course grade by two letters. (If a student has a need to monitor their phone on a given day, they should please let me know *before the start of class* and I will waive the policy for them for the day.) There is zero tolerance for the use of laptops for anything but note-taking.

### **Absences and lateness**

Because the value of the course depends largely on the conversations during the seminars, attendance is required. Repeated failure to attend will result in lower participation grade or, in serious cases, the overall grade, at the instructor's discretion.

### **Accessibility**

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Students with a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course should contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) located in Boucke Building Room 116 at 814-863-1807(V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS, please visit their web site at [www.equity.psu.edu/ods/](http://www.equity.psu.edu/ods/). I request that students notify me as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable academic adjustments.

### **Cheating**

Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for this course shall be grounds for failing the entire course and communication of dishonesty to the College. This includes, but is not restricted to, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment, quiz, or paper. For details on the PSU policy, see [www.psu.edu/oue/aappm/G-9.html](http://www.psu.edu/oue/aappm/G-9.html).

All written work must be the student's own. Use of AI or webpages for writing is not permitted, and confirmed cases will result in a grade of zero (0%) for the assignment and likely the class.

## **Reading schedule:**

**NOTE: Readings should be done *before the start of class on the day indicated.***

### **UNIT 1: Introduction**

Week 1: Introduction: Presocratic philosophy: The Milesians and Heraclitus  
Patricia Curd (ed.), *A Presocratics Reader*: Introduction (pg. 1-7), The Milesians (13-22)  
Patricia Curd (ed.), *A Presocratics Reader*: Heraclitus (pg. 39-54)

Week 2: Presocratic philosophy: Parmenides and the Sophists  
Patricia Curd (ed.), *A Presocratics Reader*: Parmenides (pg. 55-65)  
Patricia Curd (ed.), *A Presocratics Reader*: The Sophists (pg. 144-161)

Week 3: Socrates and Plato: the *Euthyphro* and *Apology*  
Plato, *Euthyphro*  
Plato, *Apology*

Week 4: Plato's theory of forms  
Plato, *Republic* Books 5-7 excerpts: 475e-480a and 514a-520d  
Plato, *Phaedo* excerpts: 95b-106a

### **UNIT 2: Plato's Trilogy #1: *Theaetetus***

Week 5: *Theaetetus* #1: philosophical midwifery and the meaning of knowledge  
Plato, *Theaetetus* 142a-151d  
Plato, *Theaetetus* 151d-160e

Week 6: *Theaetetus* #2: knowledge as perception and the theory of flux  
Plato, *Theaetetus* 160e-177c  
Plato, *Theaetetus* 177c-186e

Week 7: *Theaetetus* #3: knowledge as true judgment with an account  
Plato, *Theaetetus* 186e-201c  
Plato, *Theaetetus* 201c-210d

Week 8: Transition (?): the *Cratylus* on names, flux, and being  
Plato, *Cratylus*: 383a-391c and 396d-397a (and, optionally, 391d-396c)  
Plato, *Cratylus*: 428a-440e (and, optionally, 397a-427e)

### **UNIT 3: Plato's Trilogy #2: *Sophist***

Week 9: *Sophist* 1: Accounting for the sophist through dialectical division  
Plato, *Sophist* 216a-221c  
Plato, *Sophist* 221c-236d



Week 10: *Sophist* 2: Nonbeing and being  
Plato, *Sophist* 236d-242d  
Plato, *Sophist* 242d-249d

Week 11: *Sophist* 3: Structuring metaphysical kinds and true statements  
Plato, *Sophist* 249d-259e  
Plato, *Sophist* 260a-268d

**UNIT 4: Plato's Trilogy #3: *Statesman***

Week 12: *Statesman* #1: Leading the *polis*, shepherding versus care  
Plato, *Statesman* 257a-267c  
Plato, *Statesman* 267c-276e

Week 13: *Statesman* #2: Care through weaving  
Plato, *Statesman* 277a-287c  
Catch up and discuss research papers  
FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE ELECTRONICALLY

Week 14: No class, Fall Break

Week 15: *Statesman* #3: The difficulty of locating the carer  
Plato, *Statesman* 287c-300a  
Plato, *Statesman* 300a-311c

Week 16: Course conclusion  
No reading -- catch up and conclude course  
FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER due during finals week

**Sample syllabus: Ancient Greek Philosophy**  
upper-intermediate undergraduate

**Instructor:** Dr. Colin Smith (he/him)

**Course description:** This course entails a study of the major texts in ancient Greek philosophy, including the best and most influential writing by the Presocratics, the Sophists, Plato, and Aristotle. Questions we will ask include, what is the world made of most fundamentally and where did it come from? Is everything in constant flux, or are some things permanent throughout eternity? Is truth something common to everyone, or instead is truth merely "up to the individual?" What is a good human life? Our goal throughout is to understand how and why Western philosophy began and developed as it did, and to recover its valuable early insights, many of which are lost to us.

**Learning Objectives:**

- To gain a critical perspective on philosophical theory and its history.
- To become familiar with major movements in ancient Greek philosophy while also identifying their underlying premises or assumptions and developing critical responses to them.
- To develop critical reading and thinking skills.
- To develop academic and professional writing skills.

**Textbook:** No books are required for purchase. All readings have been made available on Canvas. These have been downloaded from the university library webpage.

**Grading:**

10% Participation

10% In-class reading responses (average of seven, two lowest grades dropped)

10% Weekly discussion boards

20% Midterm exam

25% Final exam

20% Research paper

5% Annotated bibliography for research paper

**10% Participation:** Students will be expected to demonstrate genuine engagement with and investment in the course content, as well an understanding of the readings.

**10% In-class reading responses:** Seven in-class reading responses will be given on unannounced days. The goal is to demonstrate basic comprehension and show engagement with the assigned texts. The lowest two scores will be dropped.

**10% Weekly discussion boards:** Each week, half the class will be responsible for asking one substantive question (in a post of about 50 words), while the other half will be responsible for answering the questions (in a post of about 300 words). Question posts are due before the start of Tuesday's class, and answers are due before the start of Thursday's class. Students will alternate responsibilities. A rubric will be provided.

20% Midterm exam and 25% Final exam: Two exams, dates specified below.

20% Research paper: Students must submit a research paper of between 2000 and 3000 words. The assignment must incorporate at least three secondary academic sources from beyond course content. Prompts and grading rubric will be provided.

5% Research paper annotated bibliography: due three weeks before final paper.

---NOTE: Boilerplate syllabus content removed; see previous syllabus above---

## **UNIT ONE: The Presocratic philosophers, and the Sophists**

Week 1: Introduction, Milesians  
The Milesians (fragments and testimonia)

Week 2: Pythagoras, Pythagoreans, and Heraclitus  
Pythagoras (fragments and testimonia)  
Perictione, *On Wisdom*  
Heraclitus (fragments and testimonia)

Week 3: Parmenides and the Eleatics, Empedocles, and Anaxagoras  
Parmenides and Zeno (fragments and testimonia)  
Empedocles (fragments and testimonia)  
Anaxagoras (fragments and testimonia)

Week 4: The Atomists and the Sophists  
Leucippus and Democritus (fragments and testimonia)  
The Sophists (fragments and testimonia)

## **UNIT TWO: Plato**

Week 5: Socrates and Plato  
Plato, *Euthyphro*  
Plato, *Apology*

Week 6: Plato on knowledge  
Plato, *Meno*

Week 7: Plato on death, care for the soul, and the philosophical life  
Plato, *Phaedo*

Week 8: Midterm exam  
No reading -- catch up, review for exam  
MIDTERM EXAM given

Week 9: Plato on justice

Plato, *Republic* Book 1  
Plato, *Republic* Book 2 (excerpt)

Week 10: Plato on philosophy  
Plato, *Republic* 5-7 (excerpts)  
Plato, *Parmenides* (excerpt)  
Plato (or Pseudo-Plato), *The Seventh Letter*

### **UNIT THREE: Aristotle**

Week 11: Introducing Aristotle  
Aristotle, *Categories* 1-5  
Aristotle, *De Interpretatione* 1-4, 7, 9

Week 12: Aristotelian metaphysics #1, basic concepts and the soul  
Aristotle, *Physics* (excerpts)  
Aristotle, *De Anima* (excerpts)

Week 13: Aristotelian metaphysics #2  
Aristotle: *Metaphysics* (excerpts)

Week 14: Aristotelian ethics  
Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* (excerpts)

Week 15: Course conclusion  
No reading -- catch up, conclude course, review for final exam

# PHIL 3000 (001): History of Ancient Philosophy

Summer 2021 | Colin Smith

25 | Students Enrolled  
 14 | Students Responded  
 56% | Response Rate

## Quantitative

<i>In this course, I was encouraged to:</i>	<b>1-Hardly Ever</b>	<b>2-Occasional ly</b>	<b>3-Sometimes</b>	<b>4-Frequently</b>	<b>5-Almost Always</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>DNA</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Q1. Interact with other students in a respectful way.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.14% (1)	92.86% (13)	0% (0)	14	0	0.26	4.93
<b>Q2. Reflect on what I was learning.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (14)	0% (0)	14	0	0	5
<b>Q3. Connect my learning to "real world" issues or life experiences.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	14.29% (2)	85.71% (12)	0% (0)	14	0	0.35	4.86
<b>Q4. Work and learn collaboratively with my classmates.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	85.71% (12)	14.29% (2)	14	0	0	5
<b>Q5. Contribute my ideas and thoughts.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (14)	0% (0)	14	0	0	5
<b>Q6. Evaluate arguments, evidence, assumptions, and conclusions about key issues (be a critical thinker).</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (14)	0% (0)	14	0	0	5
<b>Q7. Connect, synthesize, and/or transform ideas into a new form (be a creative thinker).</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.14% (1)	0% (0)	92.86% (13)	0% (0)	14	0	0.52	4.86
<b>Q8 Consider diverse perspectives (gender, political, ethnic, racial, etc.) during class or in assignments.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.14% (1)	85.71% (12)	7.14% (1)	14	0	0.27	4.92

<i>In this course, the instructor:</i>	<b>1-Hardly Ever</b>	<b>2-Occasional ly</b>	<b>3-Sometimes</b>	<b>4-Frequently</b>	<b>5-Almost Always</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>DNA</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Q9. Demonstrated respect for diverse students and diverse points of view.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.14% (1)	92.86% (13)	0% (0)	14	0	0.26	4.93
<b>Q10. Challenged me to develop my own knowledge, comprehension, and conceptual understanding.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (14)	0% (0)	14	0	0	5
<b>Q11. Gave projects, tests, or assignments that required original or creative thinking.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.14% (1)	7.14% (1)	85.71% (12)	0% (0)	14	0	0.56	4.79
<b>Q12. Provided opportunities for students to ask questions and initiate discussion.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (14)	0% (0)	14	0	0	5
<b>Q13. Provided feedback on my work that helped me improve my performance.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.14% (1)	85.71% (12)	7.14% (1)	14	0	0.27	4.92
<b>Q14. Explained the grading criteria for assignments.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.14% (1)	7.14% (1)	85.71% (12)	0% (0)	14	0	0.56	4.79
<b>Q15. Was available to answer questions or provide assistance when needed.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.14% (1)	92.86% (13)	0% (0)	14	0	0.26	4.93
<b>Q16. Effectively used available technology to enhance learning.</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.14% (1)	7.14% (1)	85.71% (12)	0% (0)	14	0	0.56	4.79

## Qualitative

**Q17. Please offer constructive comments to your professor / instructor on the most effective and/or least effective aspects of this course. -**

- Dr. Smith has handled this remote Maymester course extremely well. The format of the class is as follows: 50 minute lecture, 10 minute break, 50 minute lecture, 10 minute break, 50 minute lecture, end. This format is very effective since it mimics the arrangement of three consecutive classes under normal conditions; this makes the 3 hour class much more manageable and less mind-numbing. Dr. Smith uses powerpoint presentations which are very useful in guiding the lectures and also captures the main points of the readings; this is greatly appreciated by those who've done the readings and need a refresher during class or when reviewing material afterwards. A full course calendar was provided at the beginning of the course which was helpful in terms of my own planning; this was appreciated since most instructors in the past did not do this and informed us of things the week before (this is not optimal for how I like to plan things). In addition to this, Dr. Smith gave regular reminders about upcoming assignments which was more than enough given the detailed calendar provided at the beginning, as previously mentioned. Dr. Smith greatly encourages discussion which is, in my opinion, necessary in any philosophy class. Students use the raise hand feature on zoom and Dr. Smith promptly stops his teaching (at an appropriate place) to hear what the student(s) have to say. This often leads to many other hands being raised which in turn leads to many elaborate and fruitful discussions amongst the students and Dr. Smith. These discussions, besides expanding on and clarifying class material, also make the remote class very interactive and keeps me engaged. Grading schemes are thoroughly explained and what is expected of us in terms of readings, exams, oral exams, essays, participation etc. is all very clear and Dr. Smith has no problem answering questions regarding those things. Furthermore, exam study guides are provided about a week or so in advance of exams. These study guides are very useful as they allow you to pinpoint what you need to study and it makes identifying weak-points much easier. In addition to this, the last 50 minute lecture period of every class before an exam is dedicated to an exam review where students can ask any questions they'd like and Dr. Smith will answer. This is, again, very helpful as it allows you to reinforce the weak-points which you've identified through the study guide. Overall, Dr. Smith has done a wonderful job in teaching this course and has made it extremely enjoyable. It is very clear that he loves what he does and that he loves teaching. Dr. Smith has left a huge impression over the course of this 3 week session (as is shown by this long essay which I'm writing; this is something which I rarely do). I look forward to hopefully taking more courses with him in the future.
- Colin is one of the best professors at CUI. He is incredibly fair and kind to his students, he is super respectful of different viewpoints, and he always encourages his students to make connections between the course material and anything else going on in the world/ in literature. He's very accessible inside and outside of class, and he's willing to work with students individually to help them succeed. Truly an awesome professor!
- Great class, great instructor! Somehow he was able to keep the content interesting despite the 3-hour classes over such a short semester. Nothing but praise from me, no complaints at all.
- I loved this course. We had an accelerated schedule and Colin kept us on task while also always having answers for questions. Good discussion and participation. Was understanding and made sure students understood the content before moving on.
- Genuinely enjoyed professor Smith's class and his teaching style. I would recommend this class to anyone and everyone. I wish I didn't have such a busy summer so I could spend all day reflecting on this stuff. Just a blast of a class. Let Colin teach a philosophy of music class!
- This was an amazing class. The material was very engaging and thought provoking. Colin is one of the best professors I've ever had the pleasure of learning from. Colin is down to earth and 'accessible.' Everyone and their thoughts are treated equally. Colin always tries his best to make sure everyone has their questions answered and understands the material. Colin is not a professor where you feel great distance- Colin is easy to communicate with and connects with his students. Colin talks to his students like equal humans rather than possessing a 'god-complex' like other professors, while still acting as an effective educator and mentor. I would take another class with Colin if given the opportunity. Colin is also always looking for ways to improve his class and very receptive to his students' feedback to see what does and does not work. There really is nothing that I would change about the class. Colin is exemplar. Coursework: the course workload is challenging, but not overbearing. It is understandable given the condensed format of the Maymester course. Any addition of assignments to the class would be an unfair expectation and difficult to manage. Of course I would have preferred that the take-home essays assignment be excluded, but I also know that it is necessary to gauge student engagement and understanding. What is important is that the essays are only a short 500-words, and on 3 different topics. This allows reflection on different topics covered in the course and does not require an overly excessive amount of work from the student (say with 2000 words each). Most importantly (after reading Colin's comments on the essays), while still grading on accuracy, Colin had a greater emphasis on the student's engagement with the material and ability to critically think. For me, I was able to put difficult concepts in my own words to allow for my better understanding. Colin is very fair without being too "easy." While still important, learning is about so much more than just grades. Throughout the course, I truly felt that Colin placed a greater emphasis in educating his students and making sure we are actively learning, and completed the course with a greater understanding of the material, rather than simply passing or failing students. To not distract from the main point- Colin is an exemplary professor.
- Amazing class and I really liked the topics you chose to focus on. Would love to hear more about the philosophy of music!
- I don't know how a teacher can so consistently keep students engaged for 3 hours, but Colin did this every single day. I loved that so much of the class was discussion based, and we were all encouraged to interrupt and bring up confusions, connections, and ideas. And still, whenever there were long lecturing periods, he was great at keeping it interesting and explaining concepts super clearly. I may just be a huge nerd, but this is my favorite college course I've ever taken, and much of that is thanks to his teaching style.
- This course was really awesome, and I have absolutely no complaints, except that it didn't last longer. I felt Colin gave incredibly clear explanations, was helpful when students needed things explained differently, and made class genuinely enjoyable. You can tell a class is good when you wish your assigned essay had a higher word count. I hope you continue doing the oral examinations in the future as I found that to actually be lower stress than the real exam (not that that was stressful either). Perhaps in the future, a longer chat would be even better, and maybe do it with the mid-term too, because I feel it's also good practice for discussing these concepts.
- Colin is truly amazing!!! I would 10000% recommend this class and will definitely be taking more of his classes in the future.
- Its an open discussion where people can jump in whenever. Occasionally this means a little bit too much time could be spent on one topic, but the topics themselves are interesting and/or help clarify the subject matter.

### **Sample Comments from Evaluations**

Note: these are selected comments from course evaluations spanning 2014--2023, indicating some recurrent themes in student feedback. Grammar and spelling are lightly edited.

All complete evaluations are available at <http://colincsmith.weebly.com/>

“The hardest part of teaching philosophy is communicating complex ideas to people who are new to the concepts provided. This was exactly where Dr. Smith excelled. This course was interesting, informative, and thoughtfully organized. But, more importantly, it felt genuinely accessible. Complicated concepts were made understandable not by dumbing them down to the point of losing meaning, but instead by Dr. Smith being accessible, helpful, and infectiously interested in the material. This class was a diamond in the rough when it comes to this year. At times, it felt like I was pressing pause on the state of the world, and taking a mental health break by attending class. Given the material of this course, that metaphor alone should speak loudly enough to how good Dr. Smith is at teaching this class. This class felt like a breath of fresh air. I found myself looking forward to the two times a week that I could put my focus towards this class, and have a nice conversation with a group of interested individuals, working along with the teacher to dissect the concepts and ideas of an ancient world.”

“Colin was, by far, the greatest teacher I have ever had during my time at the University of Kentucky. First, he challenged us to do great work. The articles were difficult and the writing assignments that went with them really took some deep thought and critical thinking. This really helped me develop those skills. Second, Colin's ability to engage a class is second to none. I've never been in an atmosphere in which there were so much deep, thoughtful, respectful, discussions between students about some of the most controversial topics out there. That was a direct result of Colin's ability to make you feel comfortable enough to do that while also making sure that your input was not judged. Third, Colin's ability to grade assignments in a timely manner is something I've never experienced. You can tell how hard he works to ensure that his students know exactly where they stand. Our tests consisted of 15 MC, 5 SA, and 2 essays and we got our grades back 2–3 days after the exam. Finally, he did a great job of not throwing in any bias towards any of the subjects covered which really allowed students to understand the content and respond freely to tough questions. Again, he was the best teacher I've ever had and I would/will suggest to anyone/everyone to take his class.”

“I had originally been a bit dismayed on the first day of this course when you told us we'd be focusing on the philosophy of religion, as I had little interest in studying religious topics. However, my mind was quickly changed. This class is interesting, engaging, and challenges me to think outside of the box and discuss my viewpoints with my classmates. I know I don't participate in the class discussions every day, but I actually talk FAR more in your class than I do in any others. I think you have created a classroom atmosphere where people feel comfortable sharing their opinions, which is very awesome. The homework assignments are manageable and the readings are always so gripping. I feel like I've done a lot of intellectual growth in this class. I loved it so much that I'm switching my minor to philosophy!”

“Dr. Smith is very funny and extremely engaging. He strikes a very rare balance between discussing students' lives to create a personalized experience and teaching material in a comprehensive way which organically promotes class discussion. It was a pleasure to attend his class. While this is merely speculation, the in class writing assignments seemed to be coupled with shorter readings. The assignments were announced frequently, and as someone with little time who frequently cannot keep up with readings in their entirety, I found the most memorable works to be the ones covered in the assignments. Whether this is intentional, I found this to be very student friendly behavior and encouraged active learning over monotonous study of text.”

“This class completely changed my view on disability and will change how I approach people with disabilities in the future. [...] We talked about some very controversial topics in this class, and even if I had views that differed from what most people think, I felt like I could voice my opinion and feel accepted. Dr. Smith did an amazing job of cultivating a welcoming environment to EVERYONE.”

“Professor was really kind and good with SDR [=disability] accommodations.”

“The instructor has a way of diffusing an argument without lowering either side of the argument and remaining objective. The subject of religion is often too taboo to be brought up in conversation but he acted as a great shepherd who guided conversations in the right direction.”

“My favorite and most interactive class this semester! Perspectives and ideas were constantly challenged each class (in a good way), everyone had a chance to express their point of view on topics and effectively weigh all sides of an area of discussion. Can't stress enough how interactive, personable, and discussion-based this class was, and how conducive that is to learning, (ESPECIALLY since we're via Zoom)! This made the class very engaging and thought provoking, always. Very respectful & mindful professor who genuinely wanted to hear our ideas and who addressed sensitive topics from a highly aware & commendable stance, which is very difficult, given our society's current racial issues of 2020 and the very diverse makeup of the class. I know this is a lengthy review, and truthfully I never bother to even give professor reviews, but this is a professor who clearly puts a lot of time, effort, and heart into his job and loves what he does, and does it really well. Colin is an amazing reflection of CU Boulder.”

“I fondly consider Colin to be one of my favorite professors - if I remember correctly this is his first year and he impresses me every class with his ease and ability to remain very balanced and comfortable when discussing tricky issues. As a Hispanic student he has never made me or, from what I can tell, any student in my class feel confused or unable to speak up. He is a very considerate teacher as well, something highly appreciated by students especially during this time. Professor Smith is amazing. He's a very thoughtful person who respects everyone regardless of who you are. He genuinely wants to make you feel comfortable in his class and around his students. And is always offering help, even - perhaps especially - if it was beyond the scope of what is taught in class.”



"I cannot express how much Dr. Smith impacted my learning this semester. I had a very challenging semester with health and family and he was beyond understanding which made me feel that I could go to him for help on those things. He also made the learning environment in the classroom, amazing, for lack of better words. He engaged every single student and was extremely charismatic. All that aside, he is also an incredible professor and completely captivates his classroom with every lecture. I loved the format of his class and I was excited to attend it and learn more about the material he presented. His assignments over the semester were perfect in teaching his students as well as making the course material fun and stand out."

"Prof. Smith was absolutely amazing, kind, funny, and made class really interesting. I was not remotely interested in philosophy and decided to enroll in this class as there was no waitlist-I was blown away by how interesting and approachable Colin made ancient philosophy."

"I was totally blind about the topics that were related to philosophy because I could not have a lot of opportunities to learn about it in my life. Through him, I had such a good experience in learning about different topics than my major."

"This was genuinely my favorite class I took this semester. The professor had a very adept knowledge of the subject and encouraged every student to involve themselves and participate. While I didn't participate much and mainly asked questions, I still felt a part of every conversation. As an engineering student I have never had a class such as this and enjoyed every single perspective thrown our way, this class was taught in a unique way which caught my attention and helped me to truly learn the subject matter. I went into this class with a decent bit of existential anxiety but the professor taught every subject with care and excitement. Even though I took this as an elective I am very very glad I signed up for it."

"Anyone who wants to go into healthcare will benefit from this class. Its relevance makes you realize that gen eds are important."

"It was mostly group discussions which created a comfortable environment for people to share their opinions. We were simultaneously kept on track because Dr. Smith would guide the discussions and suggest opinions we hadn't yet considered. This course was extremely engaging. The instructor delivered the material in a fun, engaging way, and solicited responses that he would build off of in order to help us understand the course material better. Beyond material, he was able to connect with every student and make the classroom welcoming."

"Colin Smith's kindness and openness to discussion helped me learn a lot. Furthermore, his passion for the subject really did shine through in his teaching, it was contagious."

"Dr. Smith exemplifies what it means to be a phenomenal professor. He is well read and incredibly insightful about all of the topics he covers. The extra dedication he gives to intersectionality within concepts is commendable. Not lost is the personal connection Dr. Smith took the time to develop with each student. As a professor, he displayed mastery in establishing himself as a faculty member that truly cared about his students and their problems."