



PPHA 32736 1, PLSC 32736 1 - Economics, Politics and African Societies - Instructor(s) James Robinson, Raul Sanchez de la Sierra

Project Title: **Graduate Course Feedback - Spring 2021**

Number Enrolled: **30**

Number of Responses: **20**

Report Comments

Opinions expressed in these evaluations are those of students enrolled in the specific course and do not represent the University.

Creation Date: **Tuesday, July 27, 2021**

Please review and evaluate your work in this course overall.

Comments

This course is cleverly designed in terms of topics, the instructors bring valuable knowledge and give really interesting lectures. However, it is not organized like a typical course, and what you get out of it is primarily the readings, the lectures, and the TA discussions. There are no typical assignments or in-class participation for you to engage with the course material in a typical fashion.

This was a great course which challenged my notions of African political development and society.

This class was excellent. It was a kind of a strange format, with so many perspectives sometimes competing for attention in the Zoom chat, but on the whole I thought it added a lot of value. I think people tended to want more discussion, rather than running through a 200-slide deck, but I actually thought that the professor's perspectives on both development broadly and practicing social science were valuable in their own right.

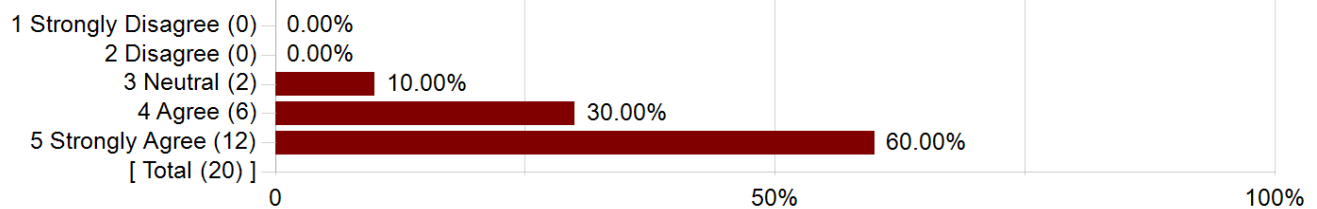
Excellent course

- Great Course.
- Great Course content.
- Offered an important eye-opening perspective to my learning that will impact my work.
- Will use the concepts from the class in my work.
- Professors were humble and willing to learn from Africans and include their perspective.

- Will definitely use the concepts from the class in my work.
- Professors were humble and willing to learn from Africans and include their perspective.

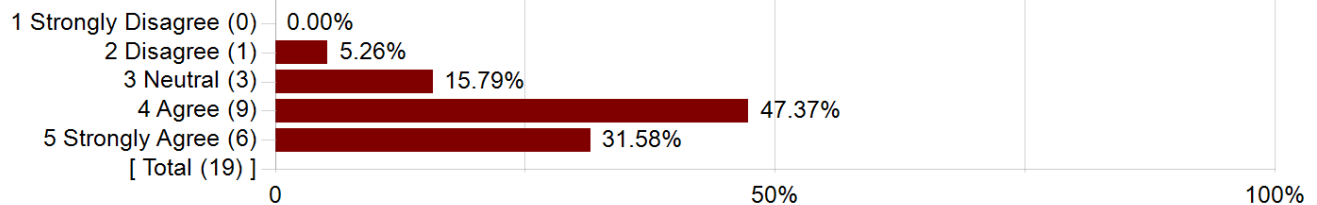
Please review and evaluate the course on the following:

1. I took away useful tools, concepts, knowledge, or insights from this course.



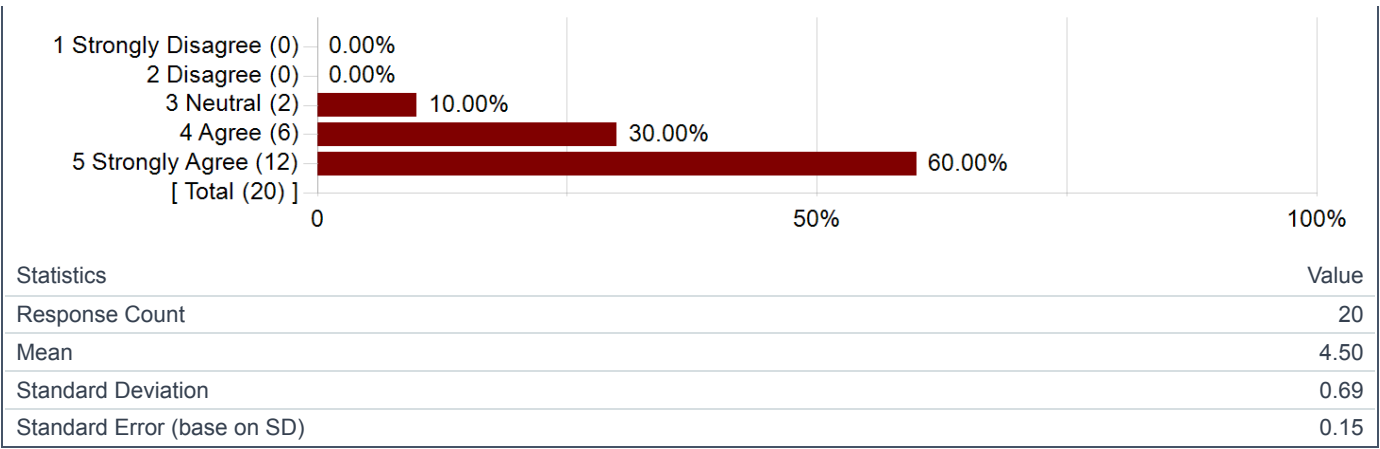
Statistics	Value
Response Count	20
Mean	4.50
Standard Deviation	0.69
Standard Error (base on SD)	0.15

2. I received regular, effective feedback to help me understand where I was in the learning process.

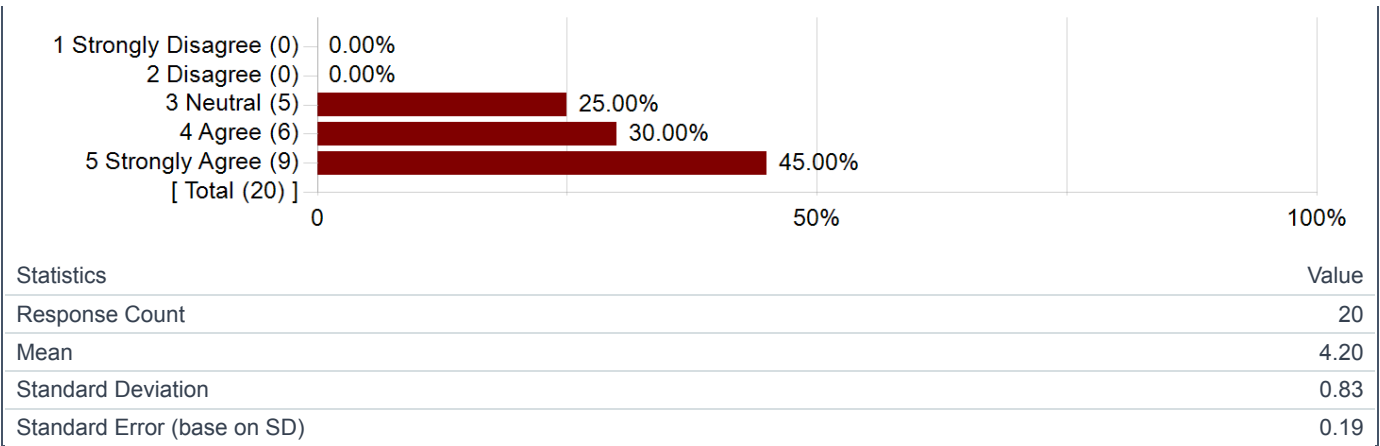


Statistics	Value
Response Count	19
Mean	4.05
Standard Deviation	0.85
Standard Error (base on SD)	0.19

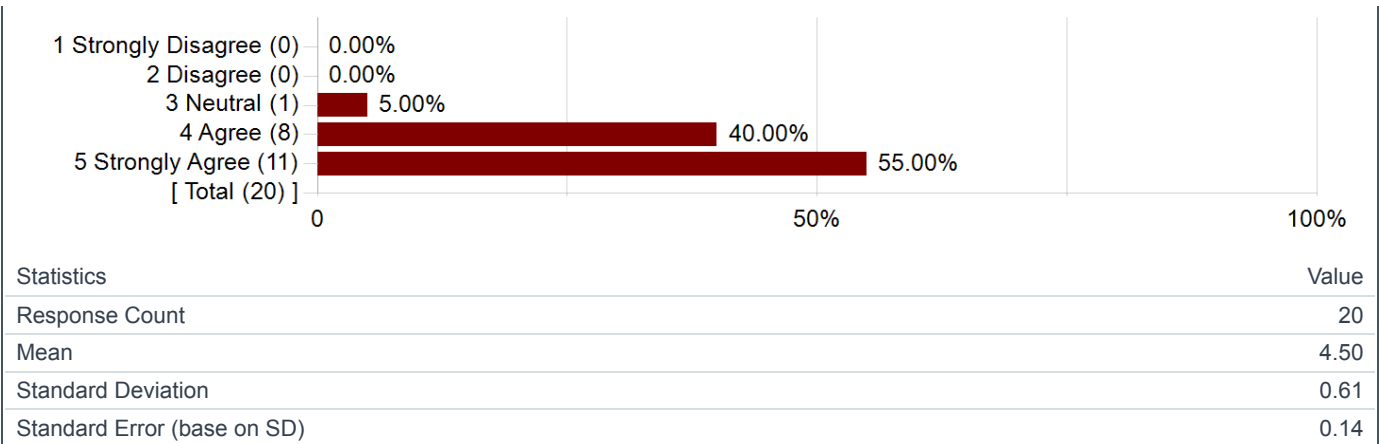
3. I would recommend this course to other students.



4. The material in this course was constructively challenging.

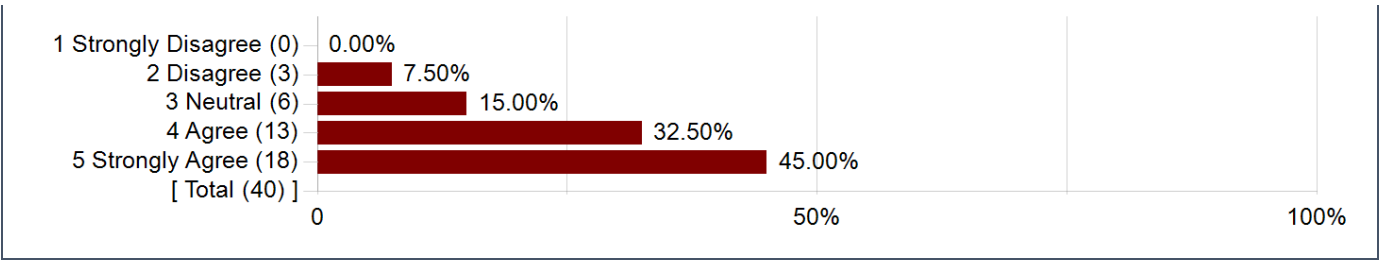


5. I felt that the classroom was an inclusive learning environment for me.

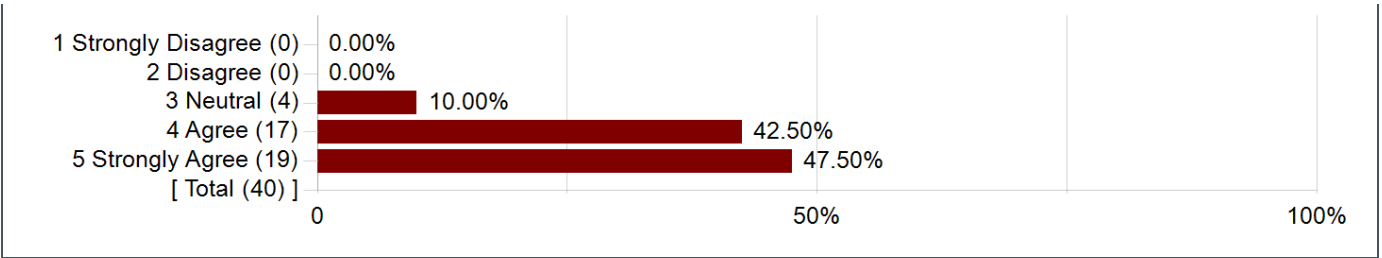


Please review and evaluate the faculty on the following:

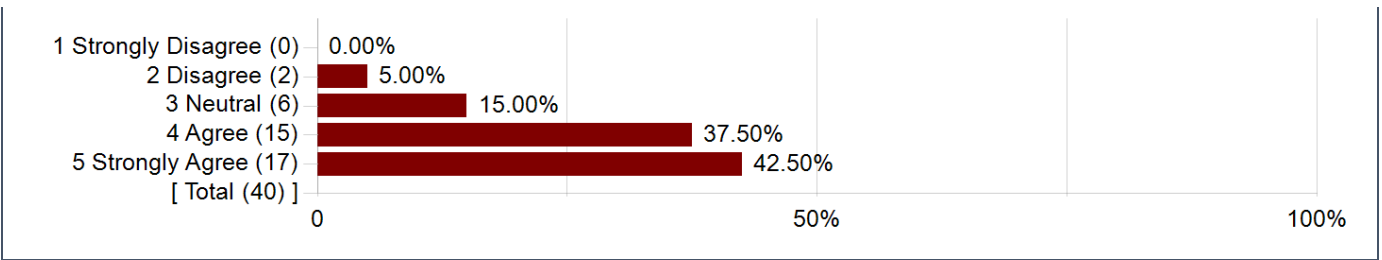
1. Conveyed the course material clearly and in an organized fashion.



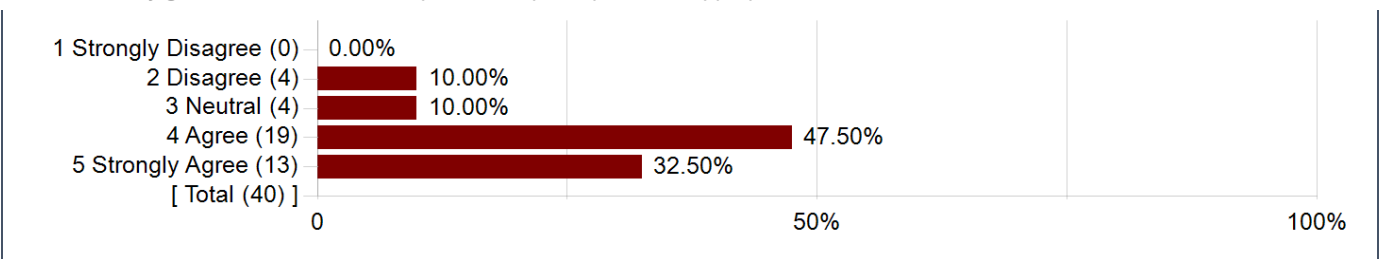
2. Communicated learning objectives effectively, including on the syllabus.



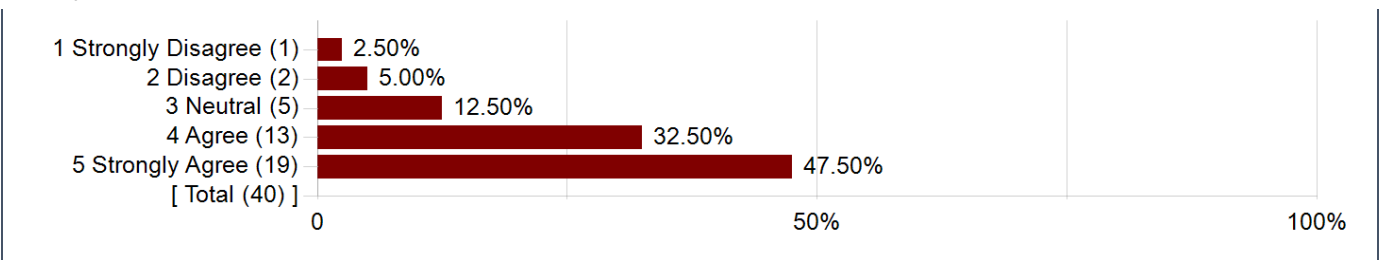
3. Made effective use of class time, remote learning resources, and/or supplemental materials that enhanced learning.



4. Successfully generated and sustained productive participation as appropriate.



5. Responsive and available via office hours, email, discussion boards, and other tools.



Please elaborate on any of your responses above.

Comments

I think both professors are great but are not as great at the evaluation criteria above. The lectures tend to go overboard and could benefit from conciseness and time in class to engage, and there is sometimes disconnect from theory to practice, or overemphasis on a select group of African states.

this is not a traditional or conventional course that is very structured with group projects and policy assignments. It is more like an advanced seminar for people interested in the topic. It is designed such that you do readings that interest you and you get out of this course as much as you make of it. Although I did not give high ratings in terms of course organization, which was very loosely structured, I would definitely recommend anybody who is a fan of Robinson's work to take this course.

I only wound up attending one office hours session with either professor, partly because of scheduling issues, but that's also on me.

There was a lot of content to be covered. We were encouraged to write in the chat, although few classes allowed for much discussion. However, if there was a pressing question, student could interrupt.

What aspects of the instructor's teaching contributed most and least to your learning?

Comments

Their background knowledge and research, and excitement about the topics

The breadth of the discussion was most useful. The discussion about specific economic studies less useful due to the lack of technical depth.

The lectures provided the bulk of the material learned in this class. It was great to hear about the Professors' own work and experiences on the continent.

TA sessions were very helpful in clarifying key concepts of the lectures.

Their depth of knowledge

The sheer breadth and depth of both of their expertise, both in their own research and across the literature, was invaluable. Even with the relatively heavy focus on the professors' own work, I felt like a healthy variety of perspectives was presented.

N/A

Prof. de la Sierra's lectures were whirlwind tours of the topics – not necessarily in an extremely detrimental way, but in a way that left me a bit disoriented after some lectures.

- Offering real-life field examples.
- Interviews with their research subjects or collaborators was great.
- A lot of reading to be done weekly. That, plus pace of course was challenging to keep up sometimes.
- Given content of the class, the jarring nature of how the course attempted to challenge our perspective, course could have taken a slightly slower pace for some students. At times, it was like drinking from a hose pipe.
- The Teaching Assistance provided to MA/MPP students was great. The TA prepared great slides to summarize course content, discussions were inclusive and inquisitive.

Please suggest any changes that could improve this course (e.g., class material, class structure, assignments, inclusive pedagogy).

Comments
The reading list should definitely be shortened, and syllabus can be made more concise. It would be better to touch in detail less themes, than to try and cover many without connecting them together.
Perhaps a few less example, but spend more time on the ones given. Otherwise it is not effective for learning. Occasionally a little more discussion about technical points of discussed studies would have been helpful (e.g. strength/weaknesses of empirical paper or particular identification strategy).
It was a really interesting overview class! I learned a lot from the reading and lectures. As some people discussed in the middle of class, would have been great to have some more discussion and question time after lecture (maybe making the class time 2 hours instead of 1.5?) But overall appreciated the class.
I would suggest more organization for the course in general. Expectations and preparations for the final exam were not relayed to students until the week before.
the number of readings is very overwhelming. Even the prioritized readings is alot.
More class discussion would be useful
This will obviously not be relevant any more with the return to in-person class, but I think encouraging people who were very active in the Zoom chat during lectures to bring those thoughts to TA sessions or office hours would have made some lectures feel less rushed or chaotic.
N/A
May be encourage more in-class discussion. i understand that remote learning makes this harder but I hope in the future they will do so
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More targeted reading.- Slower pace of teaching.- More room for discussion/debate during class.

Please comment on how respected, valued, and included you felt as a participant in the course.

Comments
Definitely was respected, valued, included. The TA did an amazing job at the discussion sections.
Vincent the TA was great and went over and above to make us feel included and appreciated in the TA sessions. I liked his tactic of taking notes when students talked and then being able to bring out and synthesize our comments and acknowledge good points by name. He is one of my favourite TAs ever, so thank you, Vincent!
The Professors were very respectful of each and every student that joined in class discussions.
All interactions I participated in and witnessed were professional and respectful, and almost all were enriching.
N/A
I was called upon, comments I made in the chat were referenced to in lecture and professor sent a follow email on some of questions and discussion points.