

Katharine Aha

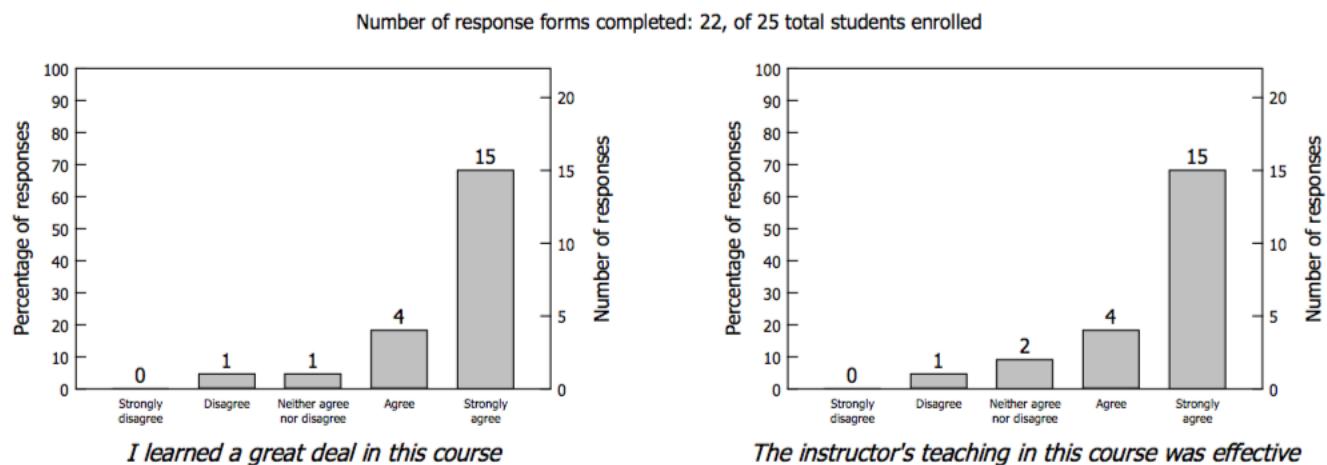
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Summary of Teaching Evaluations

This document presents student course evaluations from the 2018-2019 academic year at Middlebury and the 2017-2018 academic year at UNC-Chapel Hill. The evaluations are from Introduction to Comparative Politics (Middlebury), East/Central European Politics (Middlebury and UNC), and West European Politics (Middlebury and UNC). Instructor rating compared to department averages at UNC is included (data not provided at Middlebury).

West European Politics, Middlebury



LEARNING: What have you learned from this course?

I have learned a lot about European political affairs and organization and the influences of various issues on each other. Furthermore, because Brexit was such an important issue during the time span of the course, I also learned a lot about not only the current happenings, but also about the political background and how it connected to what we were learning in class.

I have learned a lot in this course. Before this, I did not even know what nations belonged to the EU and what the institution's role was. Especially with the recent Brexit issue, this course has given me necessary information and skills to deal with and engage in real world problems and controversies.

I have learned about the current situation in the EU as well as the historical context for its problems. It has greatly deepened my factual knowledge, analytical abilities, and creativity. The simulation in which we acted as a representative from an EU country was not only informative but also fun.

I learned so much about the current state of the EU and European member states. I absolutely loved the obscure European facts that we had at the start of each class, it was a creative way to get everyone involved, engaged, and warmed up at the start of class.

In this course, I learned about political institutions in Europe. I also learned a lot about current events, namely the refugee crisis, Brexit, and the rise of the radical populist parties.

I have learned a considerable amount about the EU and especially country specific topics and policies.

I've learned a lot about both domestic politics within the EU and the politics of the European Union as a whole. My factual knowledge has increased greatly as a result.

I have acquired a lot of factual knowledge about the European Union, different European government systems, and electoral systems.

I've learned learned a lot more about the EU, and Western Euroepan countries in general. By researching and analyzing situations in specific countries like Greece, I learned a lot about countries take certain actions.

I think I actually learned a lot about European politics and issues in the EU. I also learned a lot about Italy specifically.

I have learned many things about the inner workings of the EU and the operations of several of its states. I have also learned about the sentiments of each country toward each other and the future of the EU as a whole.

Broadly speaking, I significantly furthered my analytical skills and gained an introduction to comparative politics. As someone who came into the course knowing a lot about European politics, I feel like my learning increased most through analysis and discussion.

I have learned about Western Europe and the politics within the European Union. I have learned a lot about economic factors and how Brexit affects the entire Union and all member states economically. I had never taken a politics course and this has allowed me to deepen my understanding of politics not only within Western Europe but in general.

I learned a lot about European politics and the establishment of the EU. I really enjoyed writing the two papers and learned a lot about my country's history.

INSTRUCTION: How effective was the instructor in explaining new concepts, in facilitating the development of skills, in raising issues for discussion, and in enabling you to understand the course material and its significance?

Professor Aha was amazing. I really liked how she taught this class. Her lectures were engaging and filled with current day information to peak our interests and maintain our attention. She broke us up into smaller groups quite often which I often find to be an effective way of maintaining class focus, as lectures can lead to wandering minds. Professor Aha was also extremely helpful in office hours and was quick to give us additional resources and advice on assignments.

Professor Aha was extremely effective and very patient during office hours. She always has her door open and responds quickly to emails. You can see how passionate she is about European studies and is excited to share what she has researched. I liked her Power Points and lectures as well. She was very good at raising issues for discussion that related to the readings. I thoroughly enjoyed this class and will hopefully get the chance to take a class with her again.

Professor Aha did an amazing job conveying information and answering questions, and its clear she knows this content very well. She was extremely helpful in office hours.

Wonderful, I would love to take more classes with her. She is passionate about the subject and about making students feel supported and like they have a voice in the classroom.

Professor Aha is a great professor, and she did a good job teaching us new concepts and raising discussion questions that kept us engaged.

Professor Aha is an excellent lecturer, and the readings she assigned were all very helpful as well.

Very effective. Professor Aha was really willing to provide outside help and present the material in interesting ways!

Professor Aha did a very good job breaking up the lectures with discussion questions.

Professor Aha's lectures were very engaging and enjoyable.

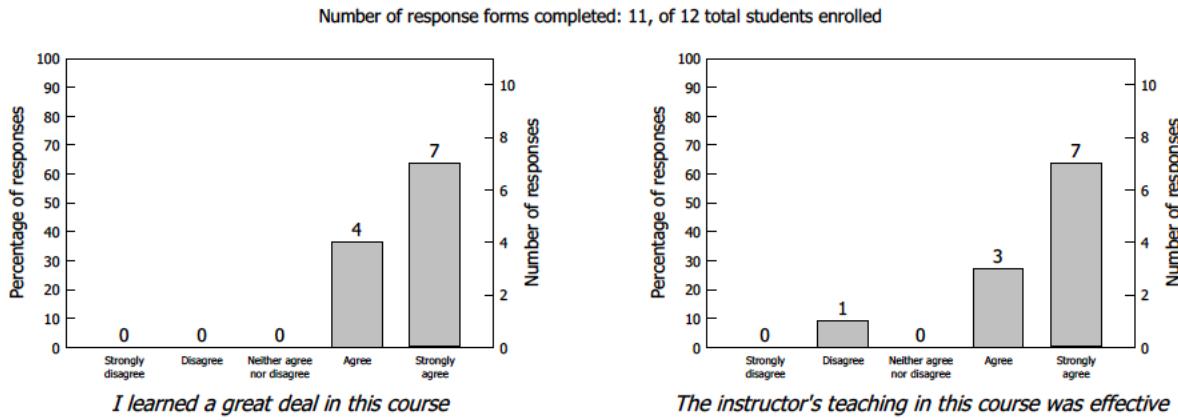
She was very effecting - she explained concepts very clearly with good visuals and raised thought-provoking questions for discussions.

Professor Aha was really good about answering questions and facilitating discussions and the simulation.

The professor was very effective in explaining new concepts in lectures.

She was great at discussing and explaining new concepts and was always available to discuss class and any confusions I may have which was great.

East/Central European Politics, Middlebury



LEARNING: What have you learned from this course?

I have learned quite a large amount from this class, and the professor is incredibly well-informed within her field. I found that she offered really great political analysis of a number of different developments and thus I was exposed to many of the major important themes for political developments in this region. Not only did I receive a good historical understanding with regard to the historical context, but also learned many new trends and ideas that can be applied to modern political developments in East and Central Europe.

I have learned a great deal in this class. I had little background in Eastern and Central European politics or history so this has been a very helpful course, allowing me to gain a solid background.

I've learned how to draw comparison between countries with similar histories and analyze the causes for their similarities and differences. From a factual standpoint, I've learned about the history of East Central Europe, from before World War I through the present day.

I have learned a lot from this course, specifically a lot of factual knowledge, terminology, and concepts as it relates to the Central and Eastern European countries. I received a great general idea of trends within these countries, and how those trends can be applied elsewhere, as well as information relevant to political science.

I have learned a lot about the background of the direction that politics in what we call Eastern Europe is today. I have also learned about all of the concepts that are used when discussing these countries.

I learned the political situation in Central and Eastern Europe. The learning using the comparative method has helped me become comfortable doing research in the field of comparative politics. The skills I have learned in this class will certainly help me further pursue my interest in comparative politics.

History of East Central Europe from WWI until today's date and how history has affected the politics of the region along with the history of the politics of the region. I have much more knowledge now of the politics in this region and why these East-Central European states act the way they do today after their communist party legacies and the impact of the EU.

This course taught me about the changes in Eastern European politics from the end of the Second World War to the modern day. We explored how these countries survived through Nazi and Soviet regimes, and subsequent decisions over how the governments will function autonomously.

INSTRUCTION: How effective was the instructor in explaining new concepts, in facilitating the development of skills, in raising issues for discussion, and in enabling you to understand the course material and its significance?

Professor Aha was a great professor for this class. She made it easy to understand the information and concepts, explained them well, and made me interested in what they were saying. She asked important questions during the lectures that helped deepen my thoughts on things that we were discussing. At the same time, the material was approachable. I didn't feel lost at any point, or confused by what she was saying. A lot of her teaching had to do with notes on a powerpoint, but it was really effective and the presentation of the material through a book and lecture was quite fascinating.

Great professor, really good at explaining the major concepts and political developments occurring within the countries that we studied, answered questions well and was very knowledgeable on politics throughout the region - learned a lot and though that her in-class activities and lectures raised good discussion questions and facilitated my understanding overall.

Very effective in using articles such as the New York Times and scenes from the CNN documentary series about the Cold War to help provide visualizations combined with highly structured lectures. Throughout lecture Professor Aha would pose questions to the class in order to promote discussion over what was being taught.

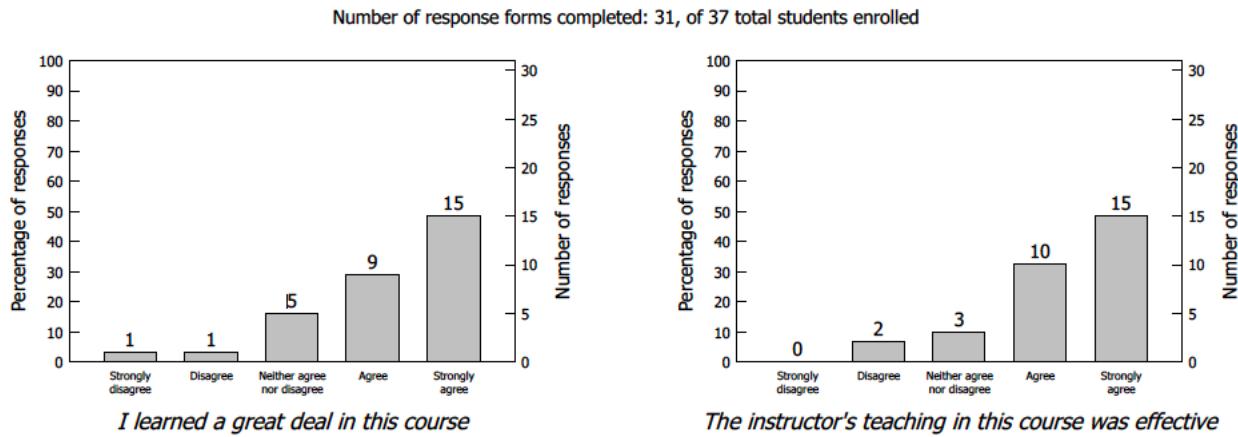
The professor was a great lecturer and did a great job of explaining concepts in a clear and organized way.

Very effective. The assigned readings and articles, some of which are very recent, allowed us to apply the theory we had learned to current events.

The instructor was effective in explaining these new concepts to the class. They provided information about the topics in chronological format and tied lecture with the readings. Through their teaching, the professor conveyed the most important aspects of topics in class and asked important questions surrounding the topics we read.

She explained everything very clear. Even though many of her lectures are very informative, she tries to raise discussions all the time throughout the lecture.

Introduction to Comparative Politics, Middlebury



LEARNING: What have you learned from this course?

I learned a lot of the political structures of many countries around the world. I am able to analyze the similarities and differences between them.

I learned foundational concepts of comparative politics. Through different readings of different comparative scholars, we received a lot of varying view points and learned a lot about how to approach comparative politics. The blog posts that we had to do every week really contributed to our critical and analytical abilities, as our knowledge was applied to our own case studies.

I have learned a lot of factual knowledge about modern politics. I was able to give critical analysis and analyze a country's political problems.

This course allowed me to develop my analytical skills, through reading and comprehending information about politics around the world.

On a basic level I have learned the general material taught in this course. In addition I have learned better presentation skills and better writing skills. Lastly through considering the different political theories I have learned my analytical skills have improved.

I have a very solid introductory understanding of what comparative politics is. Through the lectures and readings I was able to gain this understanding and the weekly blog posts furthered my exploration.

In this course, I have learned to take political theory and apply it to different case studies, examples, or geopolitical regions.

I have learned many research techniques and how to create my own website blog. I learned a lot about the different types of governments around the world and how they compare. I did my research on Niger and discovered the democracy status of the developing country. I used past history of how countries dealt with repression and rebellion, and what are

the type of things that lead to democracy. This was a very valuable class.

I learned about how government systems are structured and how they work. This course deepened my understanding of many issues that exist in our world and gave logical reasoning behind them. This course was a great blend of theoretical knowledge and factual knowledge and gave an understanding of how they cause each other.

I have learned a lot in this course. As an introductory course to political science, there were many theories, definitions and case studies in the class. I strongly believe these things help me form a solid and strong knowledge base for political science and for my future study in political science track. Also, the weekly blog and final presentation all helped me to enhance my skills of comparing different aspect of two different countries.

I learned how to recognise patterns and connections between different countries. I also learned more about cause and effect, how to figure out a cause based on previous data or similar situations.

This course taught me a significant amount about relationships between countries and mechanisms of measuring democracy and capacity in certain countries. I know a lot more about political and comparative analysis than I did at the beginning of the course.

This class has deepened my factual knowledge because every session was packed with lots of useful information. This course has enabled me to pursue further work in the subject because I feel very confident about defining key terms and issues of political science such as what is a democracy and how it differs from an authoritarian regime. Teacher also helped my communication skills in terms of communicating earlier rather than later.

I really enjoyed learning about the ins and outs of politics in this class. I was able to think in a more causal manner and learned a lot about the intersection between history and politics.

INSTRUCTION: How effective was the instructor in explaining new concepts, in facilitating the development of skills, in raising issues for discussion, and in enabling you to understand the course material and its significance?

The instructor's explanations are really helpful and effective. She would introduce us some new concepts with concrete examples, which was much easier for us to understand those things. The lecture structure is really organised. She is really helpful during her office hours, too.

I think the professor was very effective - she was always able to provide examples and clarify concepts during lecture and discussion.

Professor Aha was very good at introducing new material. She explains the differences in regions and political trends in ways that are understandable.

The instructor was very effective in explaining new concepts and very prepared with a plethora of powerpoints that broke down the concepts.

I believe she was highly effective and explained the content very well without over complicating it.

Professor Aha made a lot of the events and concepts relatable, so they were easier to comprehend. She clearly had a passion for this course, so that also made it a better environment.

The instructor was really effective, I enjoyed her teaching style a lot.

Professor Aha was excellent at teaching us new concepts throughout the entirety of this course and facilitating quality discussion in our weekly discussion groups.

The instructor was effective in explaining new concepts and facilitating the development of skills.

The instructor was quite effective in her teaching as she really challenged us to seek the knowledge instead of providing it.

She explained things in a way that was very easy to make sense of.

My instructor was very effective in facilitating my education and my absorbance of knowledge in this course. Her discussions and slides were very helpful in her assignments.

Professor Aha was extremely nice and really knew how to make the material understandable.

Prof. Aha was very good at explaining info and articulating and simplifying difficult and jargony theories.

The instructor was very effective. She taught well in lecture and prompted discussion in our discussion class.

Introduction to European Government, UNC

	Inst. Rating	Dept. Avg.
Overall Instructor Ratings	4.60	4.30
Overall, this instructor was an effective teacher	4.57	4.32
Demonstrates enthusiasm about teaching	4.67	4.38
Communicates clearly and logically	4.71	4.38
Promotes a climate of mutual respect	4.81	4.53
Encourages student questions	4.81	4.44
Emphasizes critical thinking	4.52	4.43
Uses teaching strategies that promote active involvement	4.67	4.18
Clearly communicates expectations for performance	4.57	4.17
Regularly provides constructive criticism of performance	4.24	3.90
Provides timely feedback on performance	4.65	4.10
Provides a fair evaluation of performance	4.52	4.15
Is available when needed	4.70	4.36
Is well-prepared for instruction	4.81	4.63

Table 1 – *Continued from previous page*

	Instructor Rating	Dept. Average
Overall, I would rate this instructor as “excellent”	4.33	4.23
Overall Course Quality Ratings	4.68	4.32
Course goals and objectives are clearly specified	4.62	4.33
Requirements are clearly specified	4.67	4.39
Course assignments are clearly related to the course objectives	4.76	4.48
Instructional methods in the course facilitate my learning	4.67	4.18
In general, the course is well-organized	4.67	4.29
I know significantly more about this subject than before	4.81	4.45
Overall, I would rate this course as “excellent”	4.57	4.10

Responses on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)

Please comment on the strengths of the course

This course taught me a lot about European politics. The instructor was extremely informative and made the course interesting.

This course was great, well organized, and easy to succeed in if you put in the effort.

My favorite part of this course was the EU simulation at the end. I think that was the perfect way to end the semester, and really talk about the issues that are facing the EU. Also, I really liked how we got to focus on a country of our choice for both papers as well as for our blogs and simulation. This was a good way to allow students to learn more about a country they are interested in more in depth, in addition to the overall course material.

Well organized, assignments related well with lecture material

I found the content interesting and engaging. I really enjoyed the EU simulation at the end of the class as a capstone of everything we have learned this semester. This was my favorite class of the semester.

There is a good balance of depth and width that allows enough details about some countries without being too much like a list of countries in Europe. I enjoyed learning about Europe through the focus on the EU, particularly the model EU class activity. The activity and blogs helped me to think rather than just memorize.

The course was clearly designed and logical. One of the strengths of the class was the EU simulation we did towards the end - it wrapped up our knowledge of the EU, and provided students with the ability to provide specialized information to the rest of the classroom. It was interactive, engaging, and also informative.

Please comment on the strengths of the instructor

I could not praise her enough, she is an extremely strong instructor. She communicates the information clearly, yet also holds discussions that directly relate to the course and also bolster information. Also, she is easily available. I have e-mailed her about papers or questions, and she responds very promptly.

I think Katie did a good job explaining the concepts in class and covered everything well. In addition, she facilitated a lot of class discussion when we were discussing topics and during the simulation.

Very organized and can present class material clearly; answers questions well and knows her material

Katharine Aha was a phenomenal instructor that made class fun and interesting every day. She made the class so that students could interact and that always made the class engaging.

Very clear and well-organized. Tests were very clear and based on what we learned in class so very easy to do well if you attend class, take notes, and study those notes.

Katie was available for help when needed and quickly responded to emails. Her teaching style is engaging and she clearly cares about and is knowledgeable about the subject. Starting each class with an interesting fact was really fun.

She was patient, organized, and used techniques to teach complicated information in a clear way.

She is an incredible instructor! Extremely knowledgeable about the topic and is always available to answer questions. She promotes student interactions and interesting ways to learn about the subject.

Katie was really engaging and patient with all of the students and good at teaching the material in a straight forward way. I love the simulation at the end!

She always found time to let us comment and discuss topics. She was a very succinct, direct instructor making everything easy to understand. She was also very friendly and relatable and understood students.

Communicates clearly the expectations for the course, assignment requirements

She is very organized, enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the topic, ready to answer questions and to look up the answers that she does not know. She was always on time and ready with a powerpoint and a “fun fact” type question. In addition, she quickly learned students’ names and was easy to communicate with after class and over email.

She was very accessible when needed.

Politics of East-Central Europe, UNC

	Inst. Rating	Dept. Avg.
Overall Instructor Ratings	4.67	4.26
Overall, this instructor was an effective teacher	4.50	4.28
Demonstrates enthusiasm about teaching	4.30	4.51
Communicates clearly and logically	4.70	4.30
Promotes a climate of mutual respect	4.80	4.51
Encourages student questions	5.00	4.42
Emphasizes critical thinking	4.80	4.42
Uses teaching strategies that promote active involvement	4.44	4.02
Clearly communicates expectations for performance	4.70	4.12
Regularly provides constructive criticism of performance	4.80	3.76
Provides timely feedback on performance	4.70	3.98
Provides a fair evaluation of performance	4.80	4.14
Is available when needed	4.67	4.30
Is well-prepared for instruction	4.70	4.53
Overall, I would rate this instructor as "excellent"	4.40	4.41
Overall Course Quality Ratings	4.60	4.12
Course goals and objectives are clearly specified	4.70	4.28
Requirements are clearly specified	4.60	4.38
Course assignments are clearly related to the course objectives	4.70	4.46
Instructional methods in the course facilitate my learning	4.60	3.12
In general, the course is well-organized	4.70	4.24
Course material stimulated critical thinking	4.53	4.10
I know significantly more about this subject than before	4.70	4.36
Overall, I would rate this course as "excellent"	4.30	4.01

Responses on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)

Please comment on the strengths of the course

I really enjoyed the readings and Professor Aha's ability to achieve class room discussions.

Katie is very helpful one-on-one.

The instructor encourages class discussion about the material. She asks questions that engage us to think more deeply about the material.

Good balance between history and contemporary political analysis excellent structure to taught information and assignments, greatly helps in learning very clear expectations and format

PowerPoints were well organized and informative. Great tools for studying

The course material was very intensive and interesting. I felt like my instructor was very knowledgeable about course material and provided an environment within the classroom that was conducive to learning.

Please comment on the strengths of the instructor

She kept the class engaged, she asked questions that enhanced understanding of the material, she is very understanding and works with students to promote success, and her feedback on assignments is clear and constructive.

She's knowledgeable about the material, provides students with their graded assignments quickly, and is very willing to help students.

She knows the material well and is really good at lecturing about it. She is open to taking questions and gives concise clear answers to them.

Gives helpful feedback during the assignment process and is accessible for questions and assistance communicates clearly and structures lectures in a logical, helpful way that is also interesting

Allows students to actively participate in class

As aforementioned, she was very knowledgeable about course material. She also was very open to questions from students and active in encouraging students to participate in group discussion.