



# WashU Fall 2018 Instructor Report for FL2018.L30.Phil.235F.02 - Introduction to Environmental Ethics (Taylor Cyr)

Project Title: **WashU Fall 2018 Course Evaluations**

Project Audience: **42**

Responses Received: **38**

Response Ratio: **90.48%**

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## Report Comments

Welcome to your Instructor Report for WashU Course Evaluations. Below you will find response data from the specified course section. Responses to personalized questions appear at the bottom of the report.

The intention of this report is to provide feedback, and also to prompt improvement in areas that may be lacking. This report is accessible to appropriate department level and school level users, as determined by your school. We appreciate your dedication to our learning community at Washington University.

If you have questions about this report, please contact [evals@wustl.edu](mailto:evals@wustl.edu)

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Creation Date: **Thu, Jan 03, 2019**

## Course and Instructor Evaluation

Past research shows that the students' answers to any one question can be noisy, more prone to biases, and provide less useful data for evaluating courses and instructors. Since interpreting individual questions, including their relative highs and lows, can easily lead to inaccurate conclusions due to low reliability, individual question responses are not available in any standard report.

However, combining students' responses to several questions aimed at measuring the same underlying attribute can improve the quality of the measures. Therefore, the statistics displayed for each attribute (mean, median, mode, and standard deviation) are calculated from the grouped responses to all the questions in each topical block.

All questions below use a 5-point response scale: 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree

### Learning

Competency Statistics		Value
Mean		4.23
Median		4.00
Mode		4
Standard Deviation		0.70

1. I have found the course intellectually challenging and stimulating	2. I have learned something which I consider valuable
3. My interest in the subject has increased as a consequence of this course	4. I have learned and understood the subject materials of this course

### Organization

Competency Statistics		Value
Mean		4.49
Median		5.00
Mode		5
Standard Deviation		0.69

1. Instructor's explanations were clear	2. Course materials were well prepared and carefully explained
3. Proposed objectives agreed with those actually taught so I knew where the course was going	4. Instructor gave lectures that facilitated taking notes

### Enthusiasm (Taylor Cyr)

Competency Statistics		Value
Mean		3.93
Median		4.00
Mode		4
Standard Deviation		0.93

1. Instructor was enthusiastic about teaching the course	2. Instructor was dynamic and energetic in conducting the course
3. Instructor enhanced presentations with the use of humor	4. Instructor's style of presentation held my interest during class

## Individual rapport (Taylor Cyr)

Competency Statistics	Value
Mean	4.55
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.63

1. Instructor was friendly towards individual students	2. Instructor made students feel welcome in seeking help/advice in or outside of class
3. Instructor had a genuine interest in individual students	4. Instructor was adequately accessible to students during office hours or after class

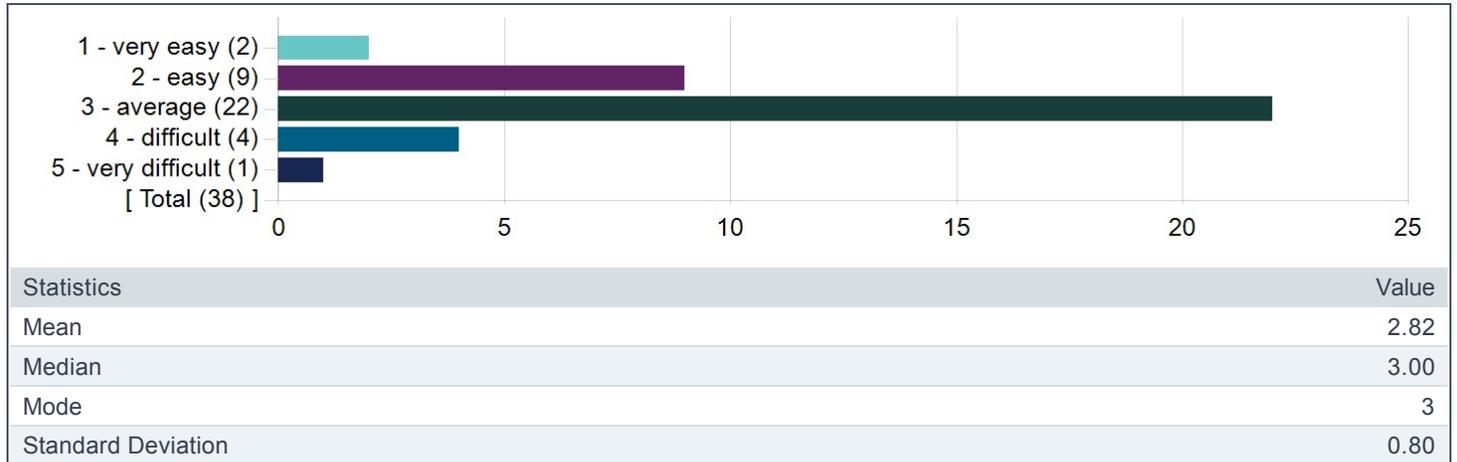
## Comparison Detail for Course and Instructor Evaluation



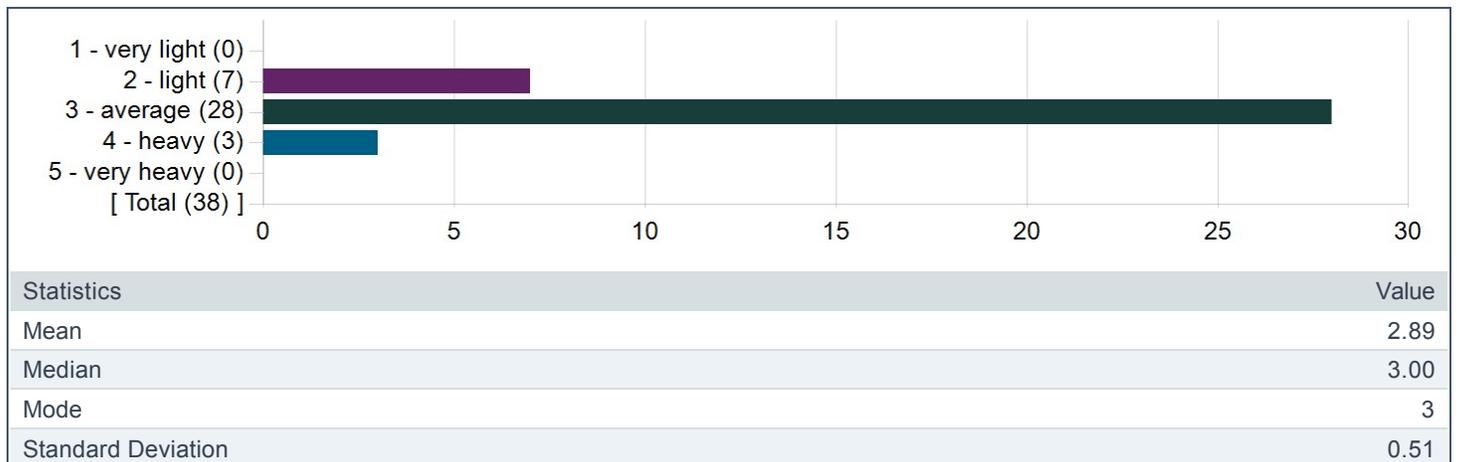
## Varied Rating Scale Responses

The varied rating scale responses are statistically reliable as individual questions.

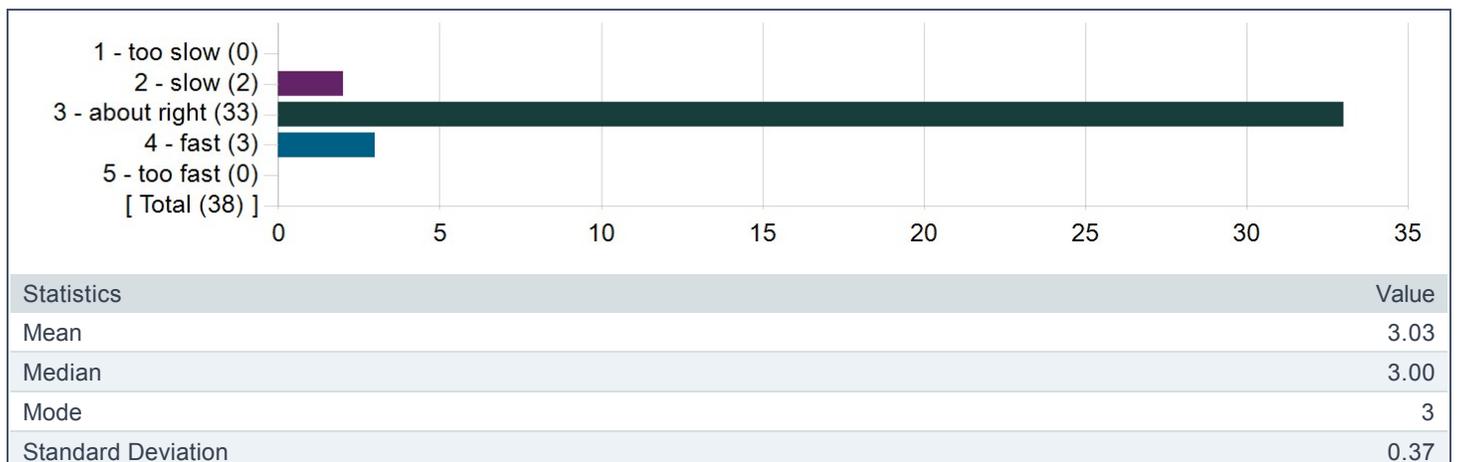
### Course difficulty relative to other courses was



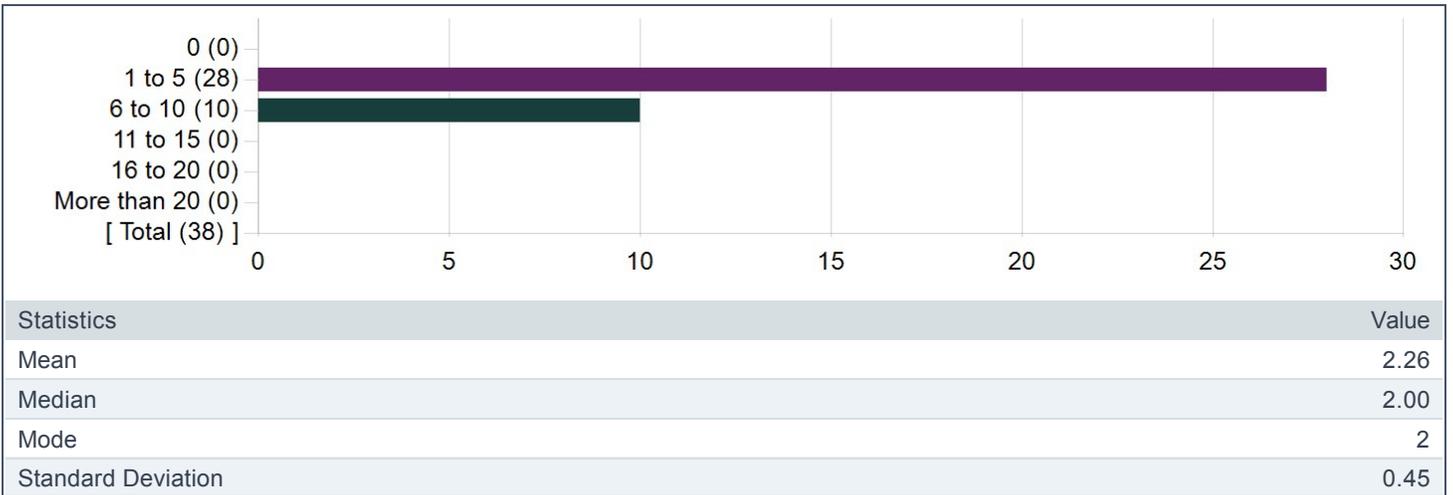
### Course workload relative to other courses was



### Course pace was



### Hours per week required outside of class

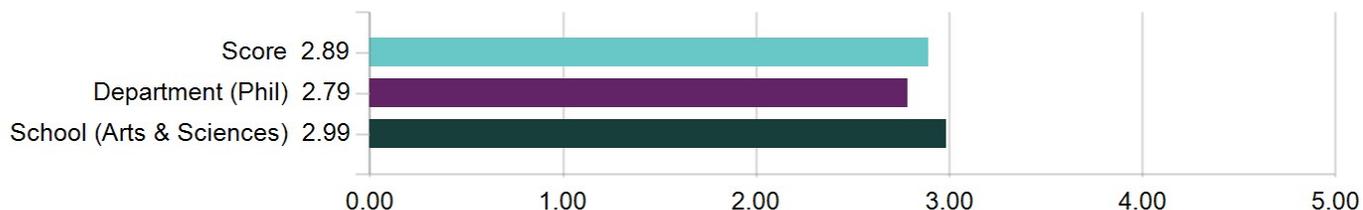


## Comparison Detail for Varied Rating Scale Responses

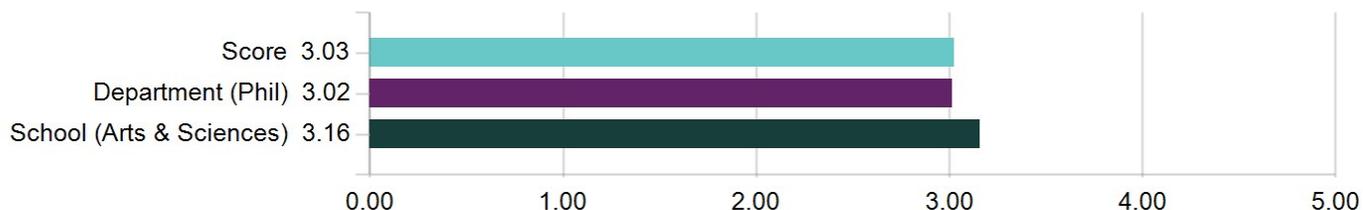
### 1. Course difficulty relative to other courses was



### 2. Course workload relative to other courses was



### 3. Course pace was



### 4. Hours per week required outside of class



## Short Answer Responses

### What would you like to tell other Wash U students thinking about taking this course?

#### Comments

I found it very interesting and helpful; make sure to do the readings!

ALOT of information. Very important to take good notes during class and thoroughly read the readings prior to class because the reading quizzes are not always extremely intuitive. Also, studying for the 2 exams is ALOT of information and professor looks for answers that are pretty verbatim so you should be good at memorization.

This is a great introduction to the philosophy side of the environment

If you truly have a passion in the subject of environmental ethics, or are interested in philosophy, take this course.

The workload was pretty light, and the content was easy to understand. The subject is also relevant to the world today, and the things I learned in this class helped me to think about and discuss issues about the environment in my life.

It is a great way to advance your way of thinking about the environment.

Comments
Make sure you take good notes and use the study guides for the exams
Reading-heavy, but a class that all should take, since the environment and our actions/consequences are such an important issue right now.
This course was very intellectually stimulating and is a great introduction to philosophy if you haven't had one yet. It really makes you think about things that you might not have thought of before.
Be prepared for dense reading and the need for a lot of self-teaching and self-initiated review.
I would say that if you are looking to discuss environmental ethics with other students then this might not be the course for you. However, if you are merely interested in getting a general introduction to the topic, I believe this course accomplishes this.
I would recommend the course. it is unlike anything I had ever taken, and it really helped me to think in a different way and learn a lot about a new area of study (philosophy). Also, Dr. Cyr is very warm, welcoming, and knowledgeable. I attended his office hours a few times and corresponded through email a few times, and he was extremely helpful and took interest as me as an individual.
This course is well organized and exams are fair and not excessively difficult if you complete the study guide.
It requires a lot more reading than I expected, but now that I understand exactly what a philosophy class is, it makes sense.
The professor is great, but the class just summarizes the readings. I wish that there had been more discussions or comparisons to things outside of the readings.
I would tell other WashU students that they should definitely take the course because it has a manageable workload, an enjoyable lecture environment, and the potential to apply to many different interest areas ranging from philosophy to STEM.
It is a fantastic class, and if you're interested in learning more about the environment and our responsibility you should take this course. It is a very dense class for an Intro class, but that is because it covers so many subjects.
It's a very good course! For people like me who are interested in the environment, it gave a useful framework for thinking about climate change.
Its pretty interesting if you care a lot about the environment and it doesn't require too much outside knowledge of either philosophy or climate change.
Fairly easy, do the readings and you should get an A. Professor Cyr takes the time to explain all concepts thoroughly in lecture and provides study guides for exams.
It is super interesting, not too challenging, and helps you rethink about issues we all face in different ways.
Make sure to stay on top of your reading because it can pile up really fast. Also, use office hours or email the professor whenever you feel even slightly confused about something. Prof. Cyr is extremely welcoming and is always willing to help, so definitely use him as a resource.
The material is very interesting. You should do the readings before class so you come in prepared for class discussions, if you don't you will be very lost during the duration of the period. Take good notes that go beyond what the professor lectures on. Write down clear examples and definitions you will be able to reference later.
Cyr is really nice but also really mediocre. The subject matter is interesting and I like the way he wove the course material together so they were all coherent. However, the class itself was not very interesting or stimulating. Cyr spent most of the lecture just reading off of the Powerpoint slides instead of actively explaining the material.
The course is reading intensive and classes review the readings. A lot of memorization.
This course has some really interesting content, but remember that it's a philosophy course. If you're just looking to sample some environmental courses, a different class would be better to start with, because this class spends most of its time discussing the ethical frameworks of issues about the environment instead of the issues themselves. If you're interested in philosophy or are experienced in environmental issues already, though, it's a good class.
The course was interesting and fun and a good introduction to philosophical thinking.
It is one of the better ethics courses.
The daily readings are quite long but are necessary to be successful on quizzes.
Get ready to read!
Its a good introductory class and I found I had learned some of the material for this class from a wide range of other courses

## Describe at least one thing about this course that helped you learn.

Comments
The different philosophical approaches to issues I consider very personal and emotional. That detachment was a good skill to learn.
Very interesting and philosophical issues were covered that made me think about things in a different way than I ever had previously. Great introduction into ethics and philosophy!
The daily reading quizzes helped keep students on track with the materialk
The many examples and hypothetical scenarios, albeit sometimes ridiculous, helped me grasp some of the more difficult concepts.
The PowerPoints/lectures were well-organized and very clear. Everything was easy to follow.
The lectures are great at clarifying the readings.
I learned more about the different perspectives in addressing an ethical issue, rather than relying on the beliefs of just one.
This course helped me learn more about what's going on currently in the news, as well as the history of climate change and the effects humans on it. This course has also helped me understand why global warming is highly debated in this current world.
The lectures were helpful in reinforcing the reading/clarifying things that were confusing.
The midterm and final study guides.
I think discussing objections to the theories/arguments helped me understand them more deeply.
The reading quizzes kept me on top of the readings, gave me an incentive to do the readings, and ensured I was prepared for class. Also, the readings were extremely complimentary to the lecture and helped me learn the material well.
I enjoyed the lecture style of Dr. Carter and how well organized the class was. Dr. Carter communicated properly if any changes to the syllabus were made and I was never confused as to what was going on in class.
I think that the visuals and antidotes about each little example case helped me remember things more than I would've expected. Having the slides posted on blackboard and having an engaging paper.
This course helped me learn about how to understand and apply concepts in the area of applied ethics. While the course was focused on environmental ethics, I feel like overall the course helped me realize that I am interested in the argumentation and writing style of ethics in general. I also learned more specifically that issues pertaining to the environment have not only a scientific significance but also an ethical significance that is as, if not, more important to understanding the natural world.
I'm interested in pursuing a career in sustainability, and this class has given me a lens to assess current environmental issues. My favorite unit was the Animal Rights unit, and my favorite essay was the Ecofeminism one.
The presentations were clear and allowed me to take good notes. The professor was very knowledgeable about the readings. At the start, we learned about ethics in general and that helped down the line when we brought up terms and schools of thought.
I like how in depth we went into the readings
Study guides for exams
I learned many more arguments for not eating meat.
I really enjoyed having the Powerpoint presentations posted to Blackboard. It encouraged me to pay more attention in class and take notes on what he said rather than what's on the powerpoint.
The many examples that were used to explain difficult concepts. Relating the ideas to several cases really helped with my understanding.
Posting the slides has really helped me learn. Before, my notes alone were difficult to use on the test. However, if not for the reading quizzes, there would be no reason to be in class if he just read off of his slides.
This course has helped me learn about the field of ethics.
Dr. Cyr was great about giving explanations. Philosophical concepts are often really hard to wrap my head around because a lot of them are just thought experiments that don't make much sense in the real world. However, Dr. Cyr would always come up with memorable examples of these thought experiments that I was able to retain and understand well (even if a lot of them also didn't make a ton of practical sense).
Dr. Cyr is a very kind person who was always willing to explain the content until everyone understood it.
The reading quizzes facilitated students keeping on track.
The organization of lectures was very beneficial to developing a strong understanding of the material.
The front row is fun! Prof. Cyr was really perceptive and proactive about the midsemester feedback he received!
The presentations and lectures would very accessible, which was especially helpful for some of the more confusing philosophy in the course

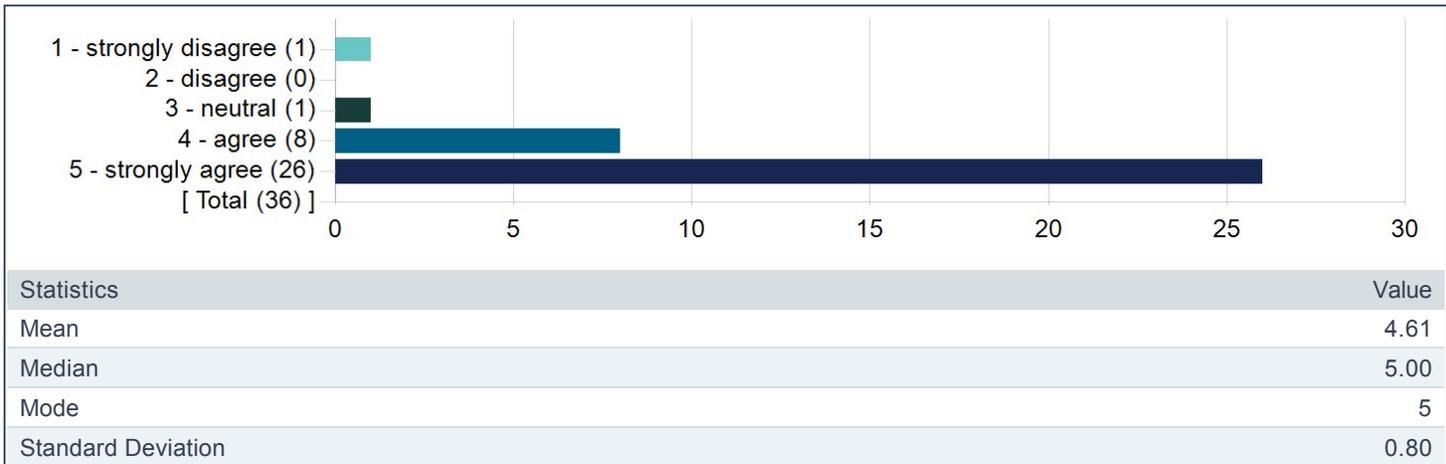
## Describe at least one thing that could be changed about this course to help you learn.

Comments
More interactive parts/discussions
I think that the exams could be more about application and less about memorization perhaps focusing on overall ideas instead of specifics. also, the ability to spend more time on topics and not have the class so note based, maybe more discussions and activities :)
there was a lot of information on slides; there could have been more variation in teaching style
Much of the course consisted of power points that were just summaries of the readings, and lectures that were just readings of the power points.
I would have liked it if the class had been more discussion-based. Issues about the environment are very relevant and controversial, but I don't think the class capitalized on the chance to engage in that debate ourselves. We only read what other people had to say.
The class also would have been better if the lectures provided more information that wasn't just in the reading. I felt like I understood the papers and then went to class and just reviewed what I had already learned on my own. The lectures could bring more info or context to the papers, or the class could be discussion or activity based to reinforce what we read.
more discussion
More discussions/activities involving participation.
I don't like how we aren't given a lot of details about what to expect for the assignments.
I think if the course had summaries, since there are so many philosophers, it would've been easier to learn
The course was very readings-based. The lectures pretty much reiterated the readings. I would have liked to have some material in addition to just the readings.
More concise and readable lecture slides.
I would have liked more discussion or class participation. I think if the course was slightly smaller and maybe at the beginning of class we all spoke about our reactions to the readings it would be more engaging. Also, I think the configuration of the classroom could be changed to encourage more participation.
More discussions
I really enjoyed writing the paper. It was the first philosophy paper I had ever written, and I found it intellectually stimulating. I think more papers, evenly spaced throughout the semester (maybe one per topic), would be good for this class.
N/A
The one thing that could be changed would maybe be to have guiding questions for some of the longer readings so I don't get caught up in understanding the minute details in order to prepare for class.
Quizzes should be less specific before discussions because they can be very difficult to comprehend before discussing the content.
I would have appreciated more feedback about my progress prior to the midterm. The vast majority of the grading takes place late in the semester.
This class covers so many subjects, I wish that the curriculum was cut in half. I feel that the first 2/3rd of the semester could be it's own class. There was just so much material that at studying for tests was overwhelming. Since this was my first ethics class, I would have appreciated focusing on readings for more than one day.
One thing about the syllabus: I missed a class where the instructor talked about an assignment, but the syllabus said we'd be talking about it on a later week, so I didn't think to ask about it until later.
Sometimes, I wish that there was more discussion
More in-class discussion
More engaging lectures. More readings based on case studies or applications.
More discussion in class. Could we sit in a different way that helps us stay focused and discuss with each other?
I think it should be more interactive. This class is very lecture-heavy, and I feel like a lot of people end up getting distracted and doing other things. If there was some way to make it more interactive/discussion-based, I think that that would be extremely helpful.
I believe this class should be more of a paper based class rather than exam based. A lot of the material we are learning would be better comprehended if we had to apply it with our own critical thinking. The exams seemed to be more memorization and that doesn't test whether you actually understood the material or not.
The course itself is very straightforward, and I cannot think of a lot that would help students even more. I think explaining more content OFF of the slides would help, like information you cannot gain by just reading the text. Explaining context of time periods or

Comments
situations in the ethical scenarios would greatly help the classes be more engaging.
The classes should be a discussion of the readings and pushing out from the reading instead of purely a review of the readings themselves. This makes the classes not a great use of time.
One thing that I struggled with was the format of the class. It was virtually only powerpoint lectures, which is ok, but a lot of the time, the slides Dr. Cyr put up had way too much information written on them for me to wrap my head around all of it. It really helped when he started to post the slides after class, so he should definitely keep doing that. Also, it would probably be a more engaging and fun class if we did things other than lectures more often, like more group work (which we did occasionally).
As long as Dr. Cyr is teaching it, nothing should be changed.
Introducing more videos or relevant media to the required reading.
The class could not be exclusively lecture. The in class activities were sometimes cheesy but more extensive debates would have been very interesting.
I don't feel that recapping previous classes at the beginning of each class is very helpful

## Classroom Environment

The instructor **Taylor Cyr** promoted an inclusive learning environment with regard to the diversity of student personal backgrounds and identities.



Where relevant, please give specific examples to explain your answer above.

Comments
NA
He never made remarks regarding race, yet addressed environmental injustice in relevant areas.
As far as I am aware of, Dr. Cyr never made anyone feel uncomfortable based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.
The class often focused on how environmental issues affect marginalized groups.
n/a
I'm not sure how he interacted with other students, but for me, he was really understanding and accommodating when it came to scheduling exams with Cornerstone.
He talked about how different religious backgrounds affected perceptions of climate change. He took many different political and religious opinions into account to how they relate to environmental perceptions.
Everyone had a choice to speak up.
He was always incredibly friendly. I don't recall him ever not promoting an inclusive environment