



WashU Fall 2018 Instructor Report for FL2018.L30.Phil.235F.01 - Introduction to Environmental Ethics (Taylor Cyr)

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

Project Audience: **30**

Responses Received: **29**

Response Ratio: **96.67%**

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

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		4.46
Median		5.00
Mode		5
Standard Deviation		0.73

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		4.66
Median		5.00
Mode		5
Standard Deviation		0.54

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		4.24
Median		4.00
Mode		5
Standard Deviation		0.88

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	4.74
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.56

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

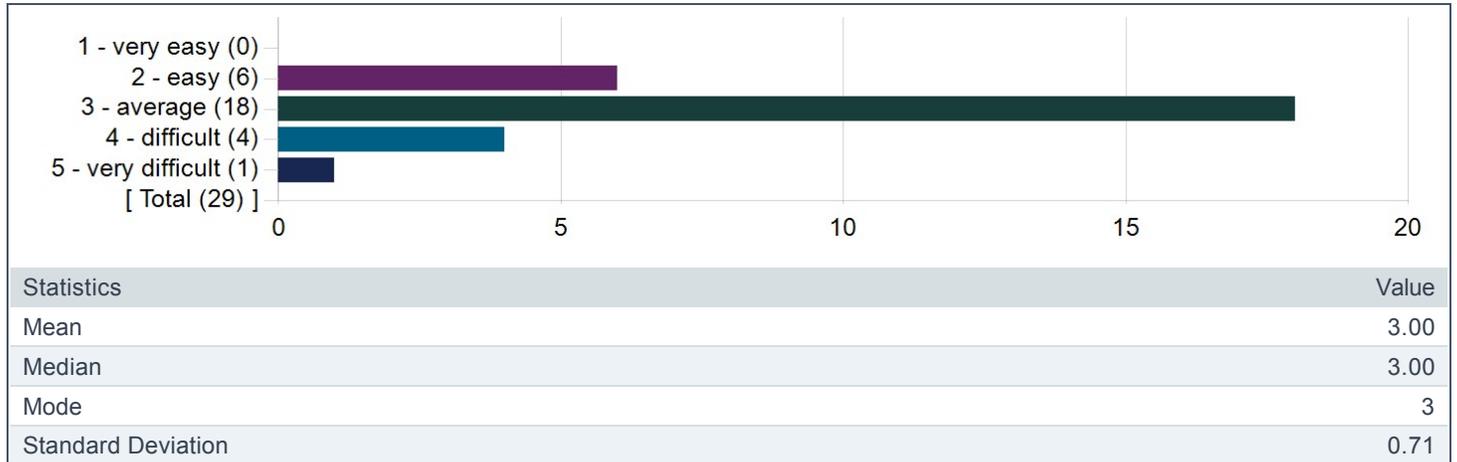
Comparison Detail for Course and Instructor Evaluation



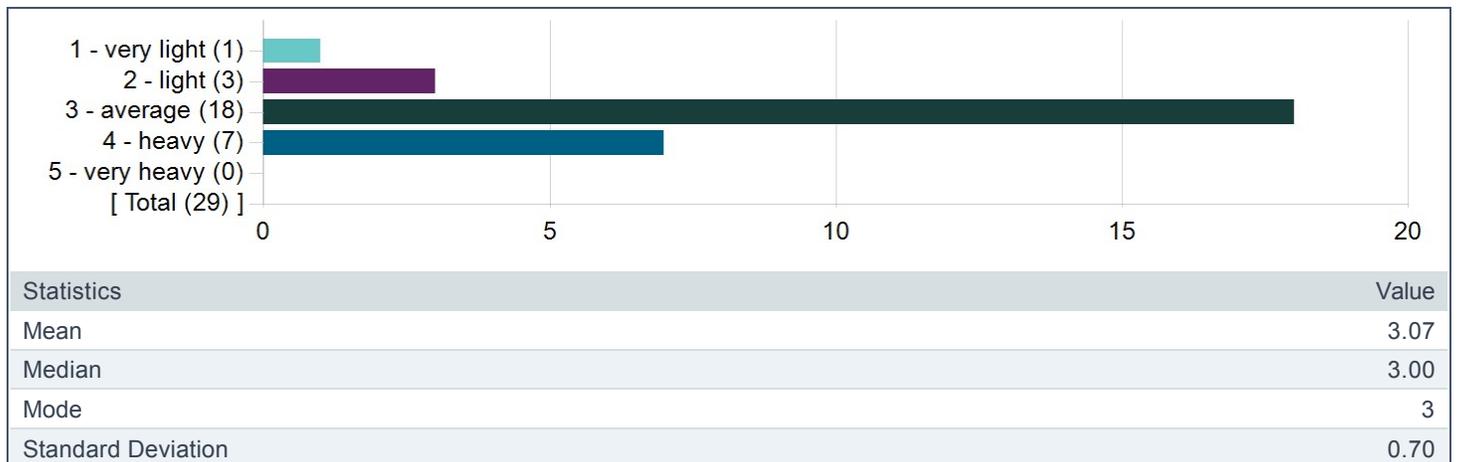
Varied Rating Scale Responses

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

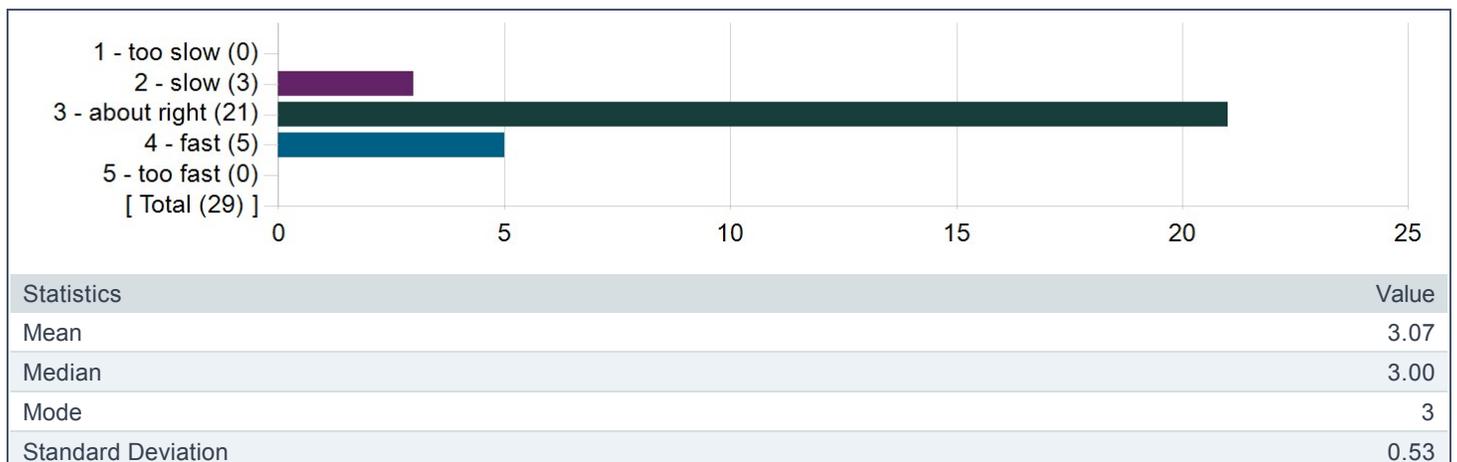
Course difficulty relative to other courses was



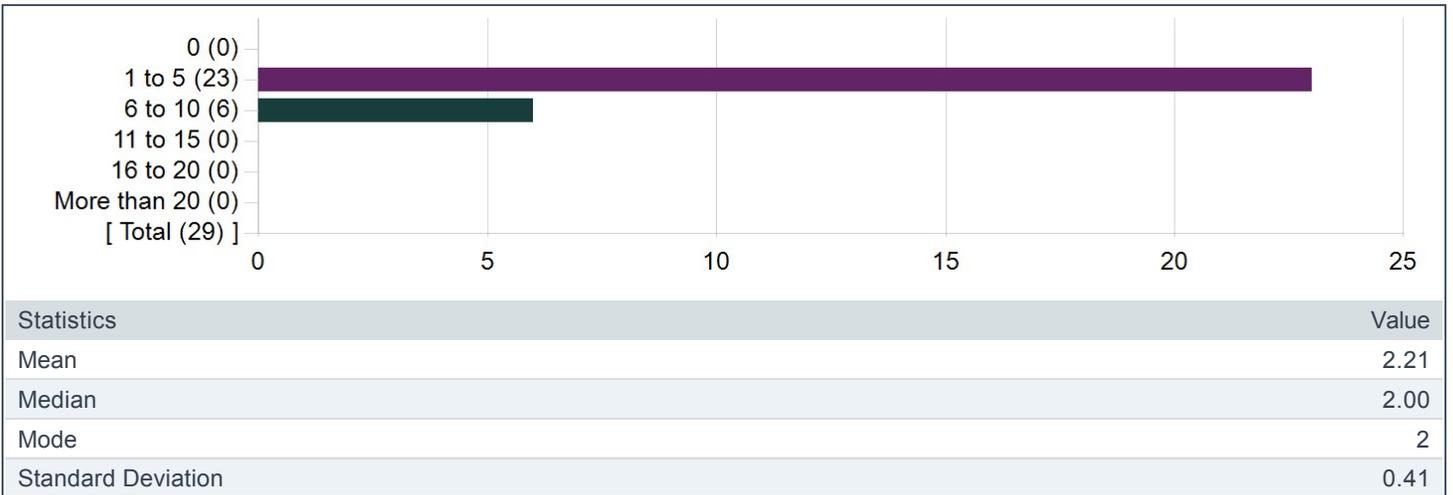
Course workload relative to other courses was



Course pace was

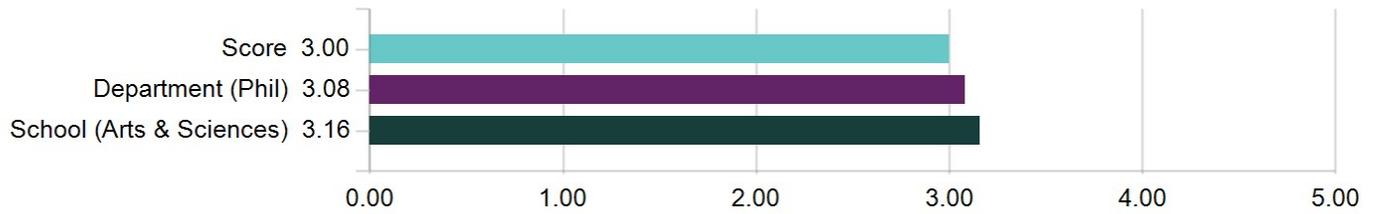


Hours per week required outside of class

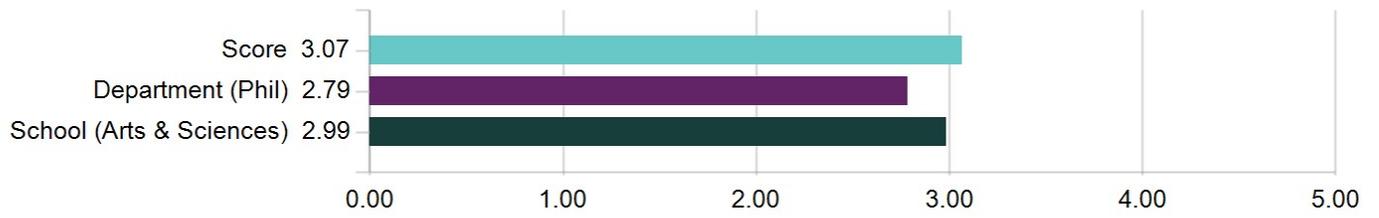


Comparison Detail for Varied Rating Scale Responses

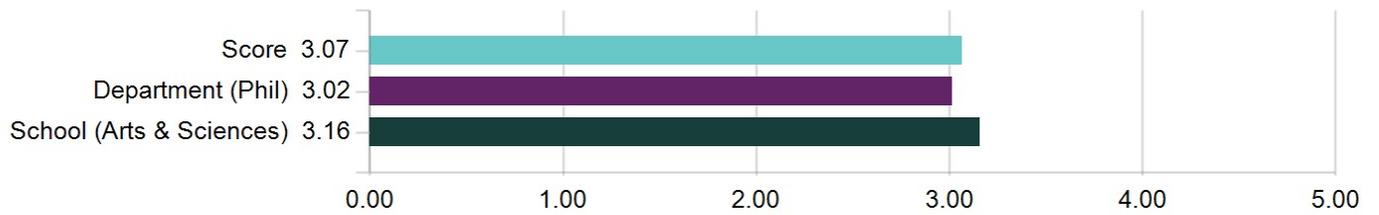
1. Course difficulty relative to other courses was



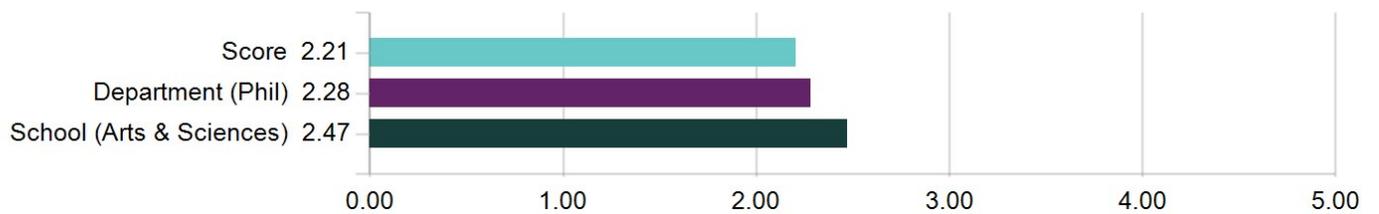
2. Course workload relative to other courses was



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
Be prepared to read a lot of different philosophy papers. While it is not something I expected going in, my ability to understand arguments and read quickly improved as a result of this course.
I learned a lot in this class! The professor explains things clearly and listens to student feedback.
Take it! Really a great class. Dr. Cyr is a wonderful professor and the course is very interesting.
It requires a significant amount of interest in environmental problems to really enjoy it.
Information is really interesting! You do have to do the readings every night but it keeps you on top of your work.
If you're good at read and comprehending long philosophy papers in a short amount of time, you'll be okay. If not, don't take the class, you will suffer.
TAKE THIS CLASS! I had no interest in philosophy before this class, but now I'm extremely interested in it. The material seems dry at first, but if you actually engage with the texts and Dr. Cyr, then you'll get a lot out of the course.
Be prepared for a significant amount of readings throughout the course, some of which are very dense, that you have to understand significantly so you can understand the relationships between multiple readings and perform well on the exams.
Do not be fooled by the title of the course. Even though it says "environmental ethics," the class is much more of a straight philosophy class. This does not make it a bad class by any means, but you will find that most of the first portion of the class is strictly philosophy with fewer ties to the "environment." This class will challenge you to consider moral and ethical dilemmas, and force you to critically think. Although conceptually, the class can be tricky at times, it is overall very manageable and a very worthwhile class.
No background knowledge is necessary for this course.
It interesting but I wished we got to talk about our own opinions more.
If you have any interest in learning about the relationship between people and the earth, climate change, animals, etc. then take this course. The professor is great and the class is organized well to maximize learning and contemplation about these topics.
It's a great class! Would highly recommend!
If you like to read and want to learn about each side with controversial sides this is the right class.
This class is really interesting if you have a prior interest in basic philosophy. Homework is limited to medium to long readings, some readings are more interesting than others. Class can be dry at times but as long as you put the work in this class is very rewarding!
Do it! Ypu learn a lot of things that everyone should know about the environment.
This class is an excellent primer on climate change and environmental issues/concerns. It is also a fantastic introduction to philosophy in general.
Be prepared to read a decent amount.
While ethics is not my favorite thing to study, I really care about learning about the environment, if you're like me, you will probably enjoy this class. But — yes it is philosophy.
Very interesting course that helps to connect many different levels of philosophy and varying subject areas
This class is really interesting! It takes a seemingly abstract subject, ethics, and applies it to very pertinent issues. The lectures were very comprehensive and easy to follow, and it was easy to pay attention because the different views on all the issues were genuinely interesting.
though it is my first time learning philosophy and it is kind of hard, I learn to think in different perspectives
This course is interesting, is definitely a philosophy course and requires reading/a lot of memorization

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

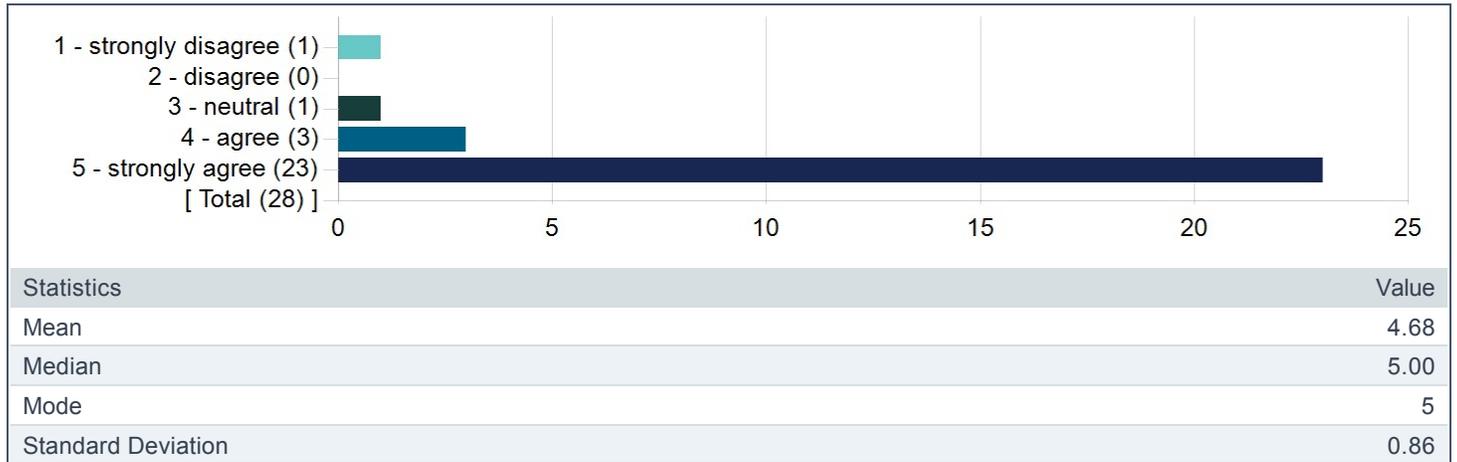
Comments
Asking questions in class and participating during class discussions contributed to my learning of the material.
The professor clearly understood the material, and did a good job of ensuring that students understood the material.
The lectures were very easy to take notes from.
The teacher was very clear and made study materials available that helped tremendously.
Having the quizzes made me do the readings and be actively engaged in the course
This course taught me about ecofeminism, and how to answer the quiz questions
Dr. Cyr was very open to suggestions and opinions. The class was tailored to the needs of the students at the current time, which was really nice. Someone suggested more group work, then the next week we started discussing topics in groups. The flexibility to different learning styles helped me a lot.
I liked the lecture style of going over each reading, which facilitated taking notes in a way that fit the class.
Dr. Cyr was very passionate and knowledgeable about the material, and presented the content in a very clear and concise manner.
Readings outside of class were always relevant and discussed in class.
Going over the readings because sometimes they were confusing
I appreciated the structure of the course in that all of the authors and philosophers whose work we studied in this course seem to be in conversation with each other. There was a seamlessness and continuity to this course that I enjoyed very much in contrast to another philosophy class I've taken which seemed to jump around to unrelated topics every few weeks or so.
Pop quizzes encouraged me to read the readings and really pay attention.
The slide shows clearly state the points made in class
The studyguides prior to exams helped pinpoint where to study.
I learned about the traumatic effects of factory farming.
This class really helped me develop logically sound arguments and rebuttals.
Asking questions in class.
Reading the readings!
it helped me to connect the environment with my International politics class
The class was very well structured and the workload was very consistent. I always knew how much time to expect to spend outside of class each week, and Dr. Cyr does a good job of showing us the format of the course and how it all relates to each other and where the course is going.
the powerpoint is really organized and the structure of the course is clear.
Going through the readings during lecture, posting slides online

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

Comments
I would like to have different components in the lectures. It was a lot of talking/taking notes. Watching videos, using student presentations, or incorporating any activity that promotes student engagement would help me learn more.
I struggled with the reading quizzes. Some of the papers we read were written by people who are terrible writers. Most of the authors had excellent points and were very intelligent, but at times they were also unintelligible. At times it was difficult to tell what exactly some of them meant, especially before they were explained by the professor. If the quizzes are meant to encourage attendance, maybe the quizzes could be over material explained during the previous class? Even if the readings weren't explained in depth during the previous class, it might provide students with more opportunities to ask questions.
More group work/interactive activities please.
I can't think of any right now
More small group work
My main issue with the course was that some of the only grades entered were 10 reading quizzes with only two questions each. These quizzes were given at random and often would be based on details and concepts from the papers that I either didn't notice or didn't understand. I would often read the papers for each class, think I understood the major concepts, only to take a reading quiz where I would get one question wrong and earn a 50%. It was extremely disheartening, especially when the one time I came into class having not read the paper at all and took a reading quiz, I managed to get both questions right. It was a constant struggle, because I would often only have time to go over the papers once before I had to do the work for other classes. If I read the paper too early, I would forget all the less important topics that the quiz would inevitably question me on, but if I waited too long, I risked not understanding the concepts and having no time to try and go online to figure out the major ideas in the paper. It may be beneficial to do a comprehension quiz the class after you cover a topic so that people who may not be familiar with philosophy or may not have understood the paper could be tested on how much attention they paid in class instead of if they could understand the major ideas in a 30 page paper on a topic they weren't familiar with. It may also help to add more questions to the quizzes.
I would've liked to do more projects, papers, and in class assignments as apposed to note taking.
Maybe make some of the classes more interactive.
I still think the class would hugely benefit from some way to engage the students in smaller group discussions. As a 30 person, lecture based class, individual thoughts and opinions are only presented sparingly. Instead, breaking off into 4–5 person groups to discuss the reading before coming back together as a whole class would help to improve the class overall.
More discussions!
about halfway through the course, the professor introduced smaller group discussions during the lectures, and i enjoyed these smaller discussions because I learned a lot from my peers (about both info from the course and other info that we did not cover during the course). Additionally, after these discussions, the whole class was immediately more engaged in the lecture.
More discussions among students
The readings should be shorter or maybe cut some readings so that people aren't overwhelmed with the number of different view points.
Lectures were quite dry, and discussion questions were perhaps a little too applied. I would have liked to see broader questions that relate more to personal opinion than knowledge on the readings.
More exciting lectures.
Less lecture time, more interactive activities
Less reading and more class discussion.
another really convincing documentary
i would try to build more on singers and armstrong's as well as other philosophers concepts and how they connect to eachother/ break them down then build them back up in the right order
After midterm evaluations, Dr. Cyr did change this a bit, but having a bit more active discussion in class could be helpful.
post all the powerpoint online would be extremely helpful
The lecture could be more engaging – it gets really repetitive during class and the slides are really packed, might be more helpful to paraphrase on slides and explain further during class to facilitate note taking

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
The topic of climate change can be controversial regarding ethics and politics. Dr. Cyr did a nice job of acknowledging different perspectives throughout the class by showing contrasting videos and assigning contrasting papers.
Cyr doesn't discriminate.
Dr. Cyr was happy to answer any questions that anyone asked in class and always treated them with validation and respect.
when there are different opinions occur in class, open discussion is always encouraged and welcomed