
Report Comments

The Faculty Individual Module Report contains the results gathered during the last week of the AY2018/19 Semester 2.

Students were invited to share their feedback on the teaching and the course material, ultimately to help improve the overall quality of education at our institution.

Response Rate for YHU4245: Perception

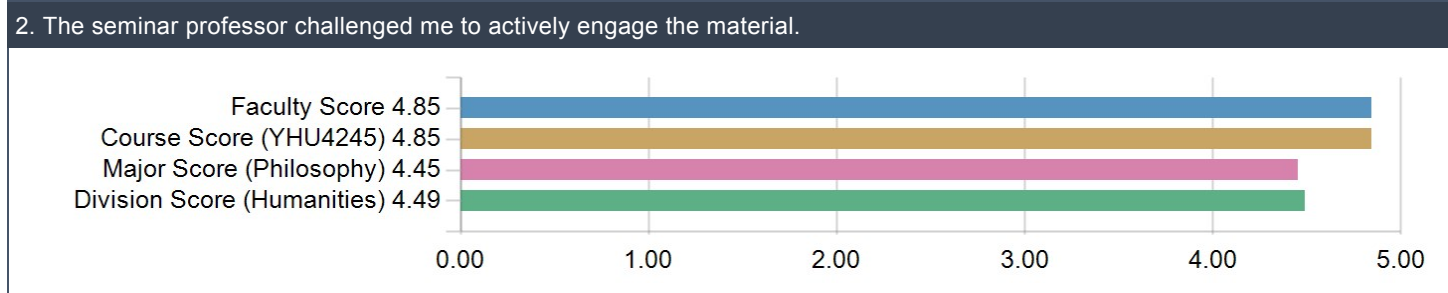
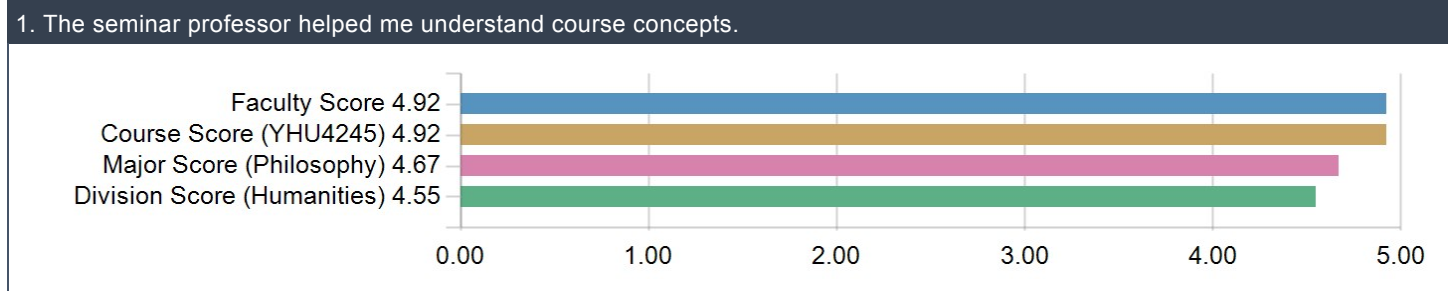
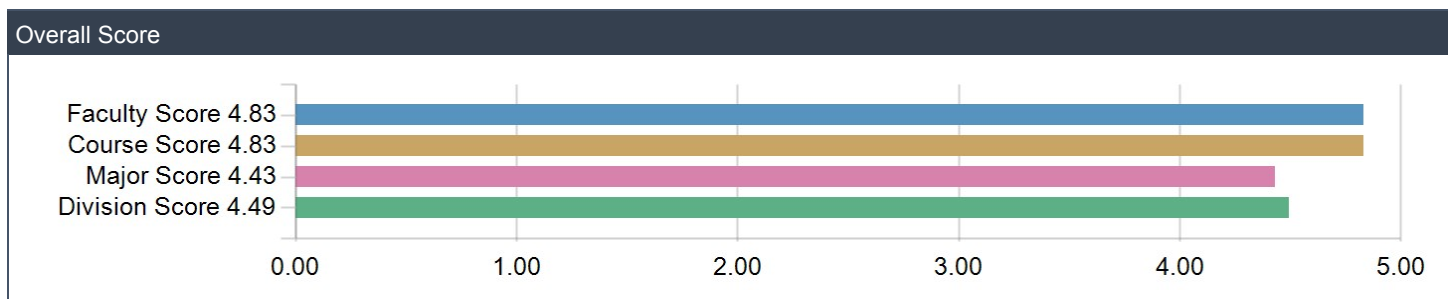
Raters	Students
Responded	13
Invited	14
Response Ratio	92.86%

AY2018/19 S2 - Professor Neil Mehta's Mean Score for YHU4245: Perception

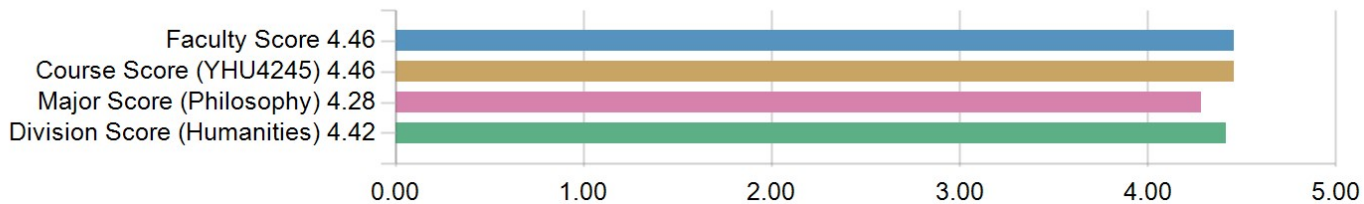
C1: Express your level of agreement with the following statements

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Standard Deviation	Mean
The seminar professor helped me understand course concepts.	12	1	0	0	0	0.28	4.92
The seminar professor challenged me to actively engage the material.	12	0	1	0	0	0.55	4.85
I am motivated to explore beyond the material I encountered in seminar.	10	1	1	0	1	1.20	4.46
I found it easy to obtain prompt feedback from the seminar professor.	13	0	0	0	0	0.00	5.00
The seminar professor's response to my work were valuable.	12	1	0	0	0	0.28	4.92

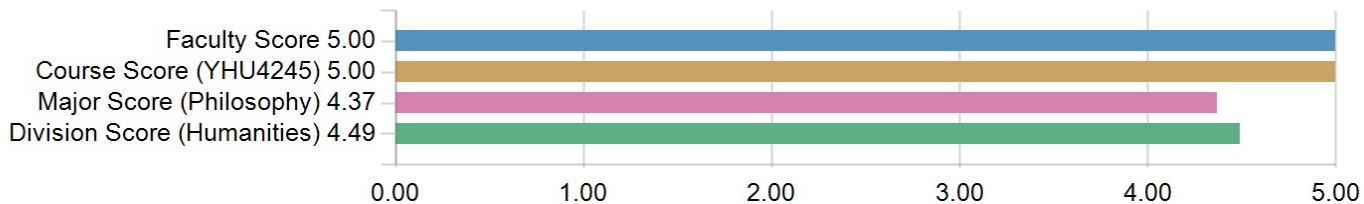
Faculty Mean Score for YHU4245: Perception vs all YHU4245 (if more than one group) vs Philosophy vs Humanities



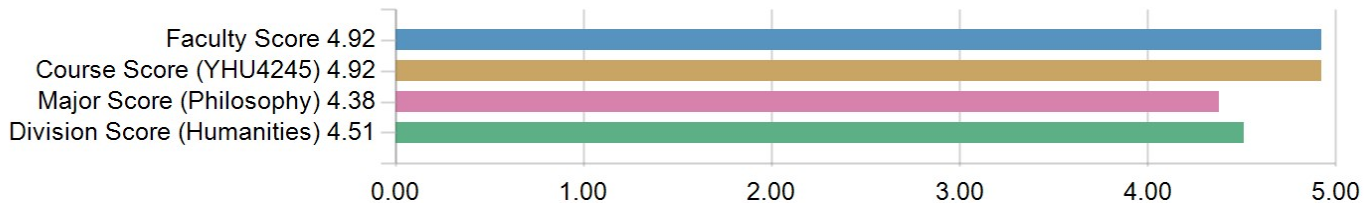
3. I am motivated to explore beyond the material I encountered in seminar.



4. I found it easy to obtain prompt feedback from the seminar professor.

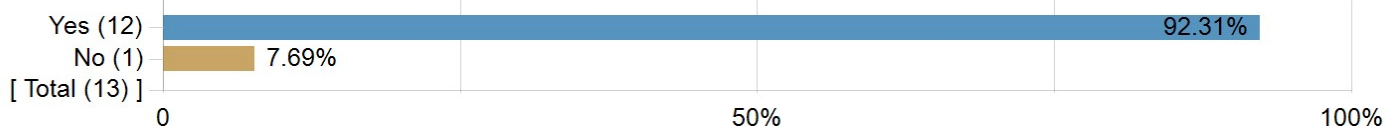


5. The seminar professor's response to my work were valuable.



C2: Did you interact with professor outside of class?

1. C2: Did you interact with professor outside of class?



Options	Score	Count	Percentage
Yes	1	12	92.31%
No	2	1	7.69%

C3: Indicate your level of agreement to the following statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Standard Deviation	Mean
I received constructive assistance.	10	2	0	0	0	0.39	4.83

Student effort in the class

B1: Describe your effort in this course compared to others you have taken at Yale-NUS. It is breakdown by course if faculty taught more than one course.

Name	Much more effort	More effort	Average effort	Less effort	Much less effort	Standard Deviation	Mean
YHU4245: Perception	5	6	1	1	0	0.90	4.15

B2: Please select the exact number of hours you spent on this course in a typical week, not including scheduled seminar or lecture time.

Name	1hr	2hr	3hr	4hr	5hr	6hr	7hr	8hr	9hr	10hr
YHU4245: Perception	0	0	2	0	2	2	1	3	0	0

Name	11hr	12hr	13hr	14hr	15hr	16hr	17hr	18hr	19hr	20hr	Mean
YHU4245: Perception	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.38

Course Overall

A1: What helped you learn in the course overall? (for example, lecture, seminar discussions, seminar professor, readings, assignments, and connections to other courses). Briefly explain why you found them helpful.

Comments
I found that nearly every, if not all, the aspects of this course enabled me to learn something in a different manner. Homework and Warm-ups were effective in highlighting important parts of the paper read and were useful in helping me organize my understanding of the readings in a precise manner.
As I describe in A3, the intention and planning that Neil puts in to each seminar is conducive to cultivate learning at both the level of individual texts/arguments, and also in acquiring general skills. I am exceedingly grateful for the structured manner in which the course is run.
Seminar discussions are the most helpful, and surprisingly helpful are the warm ups and homeworks designed to ensure understanding of the readings. I often come to class surprised at how much I understood the readings because they seemed incomprehensible in the first read-through.
Readings, structured seminar discussions, skill-based hand-outs, precise warm-up and homework questions, structured step-wise frameworks for essay writing, clear expectations, arrangements of tables, mid-seminar breaks of Neil's personal preferences in life, Neil's character.
Seminar Professor : Professor Mehta was an exemplary leader of seminar discussion, whose control of the seminar ensured that every student would be able to take away a basic understanding of the material at the end of class. Seminar discussions: As conducted by Prof. Mehta were invaluable as Mehta involved each student in discussion by calling on them at least once every class. Readings Assignments: Homework and Warmup exercises were useful in practicing the skills we were learning and ensuring that we cognized the material a little better by responding to it.
Seminar discussions were extremely helpful in clarifying the relevant concepts, and drawing out details that I might have missed during my own readings.
Seminar professor, handouts, regular assignments, very highly structured format of seminars. The structured format of the seminars really helped me to understand and practice philosophical conversational skills, especially the skill of keeping ideas organized. Neil spent some time discussing these higher-order skills and helped us to explicitly think about them. For example, Neil taught us to identify the claim we are responding to, and to clearly state what our contribution is. Neil also spent some time connecting what we discussed in class with the overall 'shape' of the philosophical discussion at a macro level. Lastly, despite the focus on all these skills, Neil also reminded us to be patient with ourselves and with possibly slow progress on these tough-to-cultivate skills.
Seminar discussions, seminar professor, readings, homework and warm up assignments. They help me engage more critically with the topic and facilitated my independent thought on the topic. They also equip me the skill set required to deal with the topic.
The most helpful portion of the seminar were the readings and seminar discussions. I thought the outline of the class and the readings was very helpful. By beginning with an introduction to naive realism and representationalism before exploring subtopics related to perception, I felt like I really understood both theories by the end of the course.
Readings, seminar discussions, office hours, discussions with classmates
Almost everything we did was very informative and intellectually stimulating, but I thought Neil's handouts were the highlight of the course. I totally agree that cultivating skills and virtues will turn out to be the most important benefit of this course.
Homeworks and warmups proved an excellent means of encouraging and guiding thinking about the material outside of the course.
Neil is a great professor and our seminar discussions are always helpful. Every class is always so fruitful and rewarding.

A2: How could this course change in the future to improve student learning?

Comments
I believe this was previously mentioned, but the homework and warm-up exercises on top of the paper had been a little overwhelming when the exercises focused on different topics from the paper. I think that warm-ups/homework targeted at skills useful for our papers during that specific deadline period would have been useful.
I would suggest combining the homework and warm-up into one weekly assignment wherein we practice both the intellectual virtue skills, and specific reading skills altogether. Though the two assignments each week were rarely long or arduous, I found myself spending less time on them, specifically because I knew that I would have another due in a few days' time. Even if a single assignment each week would be longer/more time consuming, I think that I would get more out of a single, concentrated assignment.
This is a difficult question. I think the focus on really understanding a handful of readings instead of being overflooded with readings that everybody skims is already making the learning experiences so rich, I'm not sure what could be changed.
I guess sometimes the seminar discussions get kind of strange and confusing, and in those cases it would be nice to have optional make-up seminars to discuss more about the paper. However, this is a slippery slope because many of the discussions in class could go on for hours.
Can't think of any improvements.
This course is already incredible. Perhaps it could improve by giving students a little more room to develop individual and group-based theories of their own: perhaps a class could be dedicated to the entire class democratically trying to respond to one philosophical puzzle.
-
One tradeoff to the highly structured format is that students possibly speak very few times per seminar (although EVERY student speaks at least once, per Neil's facilitation of discussion). This caused me to panic, sometimes, when it came to my turn to speak since I feel like I have to present a polished contribution.
I found the open discussions at the later half of the course to be very helpful in terms of helping us think through the topic independently and being aware of where we go wrong. This is very useful because we do not have professors there to guide us when we write our essays and so realising where we go wrong by ourselves is useful. I note that this was implemented towards the later half of the course but just wanted to mention it so that it gets kept for future iterations of the course.
Because the course is so theory heavy, it may have been helpful to do a few additional review sessions where we were able to clarify what each theory said about each topic. For example, at the end of the course, we reviewed four "subtopics" of perception. It would have been helpful to do this after we completed each subtopic.
The instructor could be less rigid about classroom participation
I understand that Neil wants to cultivate us as independent scholars, but I thought there were a few times that he should have intervened to bring things back on topic. In particular, sometimes we have clear misunderstandings that need to be cleared up, otherwise letting the discussion continue in a muddled way would just be unproductive for everyone.
Might there be a possibility of including a practicum-style assignment in the course, to encourage more extensive internalization of class concepts? This internalization would be particularly in relation to day-to-day life in the form of a project.
I am personally not very adept at seeing the big picture and making links between different things, so I get confused about the different theories. However, I'm not sure what could be done to rectify this.

A3: Briefly describe how your seminar professor taught the seminar, including any distinctive features or activities.

Comments
Warm-up and homework exercises were completed prior to seminar classes. During seminar classes, short reviews of the homework were made, along with extensive class discussion (which includes summaries of the reading, responses, objections/development of arguments).
Prof. Mehta is intentional in his seminar-planning. That he provides an overview for each seminar, and ensures a balance of specific and general skill acquisition is something I deeply appreciate.
Neil teaches the seminar with a kind and guiding hand. I love that the class feels like we are discovering what each author is saying, even though Neil knows exactly what is going on all along. We have the chance to respond to each thought, which is incredibly useful because slowly over the course, I have become accustomed to having personal opinions on philosophical theories, instead of just trying to find the "right" one. The intermissions in class are well-timed and provide a nice dimension to the class.
All features were distinctive features.
Prof. Mehta reserves complete control of the seminar—such that students rarely speak out of turn and are given very specific questions by Mehta to answer. Mehta ensures to call on each student at least once in class—this means that everyone pays attention to the flow of class material because they know they will be called on. Mehta is thus able to ensure great take-away from each seminar because he ensures what content is delivered. This makes his seminars the most valuable of all I've taken at YNC—since discussions never meander and student's attention is earned through precise delivery of valuable content
Mini-lecture with frequent questions to bring out the basic, main points of the reading for the week, followed by class discussion, usually on possible responses to the arguments presented.
Highly structured discussion of readings. He directs questions to students to contribute in some way (e.g. summarize reading, provide a citation, give objections/replies) and he goes back and forth between contribution to contribution by his facilitation. He sometimes opens up the floor for questions or contributions in general.
Sometimes he has group activities/discussion, sometimes he has discussion activities where a few students discuss and the rest of the class watches and thinks about the content + the seminar skills.
Distinctive feature: Intermission halfway through class to speak about something non-academic and fun.
Neil Mehta taught the seminar with great care and effort.
He starts the seminar off by ensuring that we all understand the reading for that week and then delves into our opinions on the claims made in the reading. He does this by calling on students to answer questions and then giving feedback and further questions for students.
This ensures that we think critically about the reading on our own and also helps us understand where we went wrong.
The seminar professor engaged in a direct question and answer style seminar, where students were asked questions about the reading. I appreciate that this year, Neil allowed students to voluntarily ask questions throughout the seminar, more than in past seminars I have been in with him. Additionally, we did some group work during review sessions.
The seminar professor imposed a very strict discussion structure on the seminar and made students take turns speaking, ensuring each student had a turn to speak and selecting one particular student to speak at each turn.
Neil does a great job of engaging students and letting us take charge of our own learning. This is not to say that he does not plan his lessons; it is only by planning so meticulously that Neil is able to engage his students in an effective way in seminar.
Clearly communicated ideas and instructions, great care to equally involve everybody, highly encouraging and nurturing .
Neil is very clear, precise and concise in his explanations. It also helps that everyone gets a chance to speak every seminar, and is called on.

D1: Please use this space to elaborate on your previous responses or to address other issues such as classroom atmosphere; most or least helpful course materials, readings, or topics; or any other specific suggestions or concerns about the course.

Comments
Classroom atmosphere was conducive to learning, and I very much enjoyed taking this course. Thank you for being a wonderful professor.
n/a
Neil is a life-changing professor that I wish everybody could have the chance to learn under.
All is well and good
Professor Mehta's seminar style is incredible and maximizes student learning and attention. I believe that every seminar leader in Yale-NUS will benefit from taking away some tips from Neil's style. Especially Mehta's focus on making the student's time valuable to them by delivering content crisply and labouring extensively to ensure that student's can take away general skills and understanding which will be useful to their lives, no matter how little they engage with the actual material of the course. Thanks Neil!
-
NA
I wish there was more readings on representationalism or even other theories of perception aside from naive realism.
n/a
The course was generally well-structured but I pedagogically disagree with the seminar professor's rigidity in structuring seminar discussions.
Again, my only complaint is that there were times when intervention by Neil would clearly have been helpful, e.g. when we are all missing the point, Neil could help us really cut to the essence of a particular issue. Regarding course material, I think Neil's readings are hand-selected for quality, impact, and accessibility. The contemporary debates in perception are no doubt extremely technical and hairy at times, but Neil succeeded in avoiding all this, introducing us to the topic in a relatively pain-free way.
I greatly appreciated that we were involved not just in the learning of others' philosophy, but also in the act of philosophizing. I greatly enjoyed assignments in particular to identify objections or explain other classmates' contributions in my own words. Thank you for this experience!
I am not sure how much I learnt from the Logue readings. Or perhaps, those readings could be introduced at a later time instead of at the start, where we might benefit more after more background.