

YHU4245: Perception

AY2021/22 Semester 1 | Neil Mehta

Teaching Score Analysis

Response Rate

Raters	Students
Responded	14
Invited	14
Response Ratio	100%

Quantitative

Overall Mean Score

Competency	Faculty Score
Overall Mean	4.99

Breakdown Mean Score for each statement

	# Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable	Standard Deviation	Mean
The course was effectively organized.	14	0	0	0	0	14	0	0.00	5.00
The course clearly articulated objectives and expectations.	14	0	0	0	0	14	0	0.00	5.00
The course assignments helped me learn.	14	0	0	0	0	14	0	0.00	5.00
The instructor helped me understand course materials and concepts.	14	0	0	0	1	13	0	0.27	4.93
The instructor encouraged student participation and/or engagement.	14	0	0	0	0	14	0	0.00	5.00
The instructor provided constructive feedback on my work.	14	0	0	0	0	14	0	0.00	5.00
The instructor was helpful outside of class.	14	0	0	0	0	13	1	0.00	5.00

Faculty Mean Score Comparison

Question	Faculty Score (Neil Mehta)		Major Score (Philosophy)		Division Score (Humanities)		Students		College (Yale-NUS College)	
	Response Count	Mean	Response Count	Mean	Response Count	Mean	Response Count	Mean	Response Count	Mean
The course was effectively organized.	32	4.97	78	4.65	400	4.62	14	5.00	2274	4.51
The course clearly articulated objectives and expectations.	32	4.97	78	4.63	400	4.62	14	5.00	2274	4.52
The course assignments helped me learn.	32	4.88	78	4.64	400	4.73	14	5.00	2273	4.58
The instructor helped me understand course materials and concepts.	32	4.94	78	4.65	398	4.75	14	4.93	2249	4.64
The instructor encouraged student participation and/or engagement.	32	4.94	78	4.72	398	4.79	14	5.00	2247	4.64
The instructor provided constructive feedback on my work.	32	4.88	78	4.46	398	4.69	14	5.00	2244	4.55
The instructor was helpful outside of class.	31	4.84	75	4.67	385	4.77	13	5.00	2201	4.64
Overall	-	4.91	-	4.63	-	4.71	-	4.99	-	4.58

Number of hours spent per week, outside the scheduled class meetings. [1]

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

Number of hours spent per week, outside the scheduled class meetings. [2]

Name	11hrs	12hrs	13hrs	14hrs	15hrs	16hrs	17hrs	18hrs	19hrs	20hrs	N/A	Mean
YHU4245: Perception	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.50

Course Comments

What were the main concepts and skills you learned in this course?

Comments
The course covered three major theories in the philosophy of perception: naive realism, representationalism and Neil's own preferred theory, pluralism. Like many of my peers, I found the concepts very difficult but incredibly fascinating. I owe much of my understanding to Neil, who does an excellent job of explaining the motivations and limitations of each theory. His explanations are always concise and precise.
In this course, I also honed many useful skills, like how to listen attentively and write precisely.
Argumentation skills, Discursive Skills. I have also learnt various theories of perception and contemporary arguments in phenomenology.
Clarity in thought and writing.
The different theories of perception.
I learnt about the philosophy of perception, how to write with clarity and precision, and how to effectively use of argument forms
I learnt about the various theories of perception
Beyond the main theories on perception, we learnt about logical argument forms, writing skills, how to identify and target specific premises when offering objections, discussion skills and more. This was the first class for me that formally and clearly taught all of these skills throughout the 13 weeks of the course. The handouts and opportunities to practice the skills each week in the homework exercises were immensely valuable to me. These are skills applicable to other academic subjects and beyond, so I really appreciated this!
three quite compelling theories of perception, as well as writing, reading, and communication skills.
How to perceive. Naive realism, representationalism, pluralism. I also learnt a great deal about how to structure arguments and be more charitable towards other arguments.
Various theories of perception and what they seek to explain. Skills learned: writing and argumentative skills regarding structure, precision, explanation, evaluation etc. Most newly, how to come up with my own novel theory and test it against existing ones or various data.
Over this semester, I have learnt a large number of useful skills and concepts. One of the main ones was the ability to understand philosophical readings and present arguments in the form of premises. Another very useful skill I learnt was how to present my ideas in a clear and concise way.
Concision, precision, transforming complex ideas into ordinary language.
being an active participant in philosophical discussions (or in discussions in general)
Philosophical writing and discussion skills. We learned how to construct arguments in various argument forms, as well as how to present them in writing and in class. Reading closely. Many of the readings involved complex ideas, how to distil them into ordinary, everyday language such that anyone can understand. We understood the phenomenon of perception and how to understand it in multiple ways, as well as the arguments and philosophical problems that arise from it.
We learned about the many different theories of perception held by philosophers, and after understanding some of such theories, we practiced objecting to them and coming up with our own theories.

What helped you learn? Please provide examples such as reading materials, activities, assignments, and the instructor's distinctive teaching methods.

Comments

Neil is very deliberate in how he structures class discussions. He calls out students to answer specific, pointed to questions to test their understanding of the course material or provide contributions. I find this guided style of discussion works well. Students are encouraged to speak precisely, and also fail productively. Everyone learns. Evidently, class discussions were always focused and engaging.

Neil also distributes weekly warm-ups and cool-downs, which consists of a handout discussing some specific skill we'll be working on for the week and some questions about the week's readings. These handouts help me consolidate my understanding of the material, and mentally prepare myself for the upcoming class. Neil also places a strong emphasis on actively learning from your past mistakes. Each handout begins with a prompt for us to think about some mistake we made in the last exercise and possible avenues of improvement. I found this practice very useful; I became more reflective and proactive in my learning.

The handouts were quite helpful in figuring out the readings. Neil was very detailed and organised in class too.

Homework, assignments, and question-and-answer in class.

Seminars taught in Neil's style. Step-by-step, not letting students hide behind technical/complicated words.

Seminars gave a helpful overview of the topic and ensured that I really understood the material (well enough to explain it in my own words). It also gave me the chance to explore possible objections or alternative theories.

Weekly assignment helped me develop skills in my on time and pushed me to engage with the texts.

What really helped me learn was the calling on students and the instant feedback that was given

As mentioned above, the handouts given in class and the homework were really helpful materials that I relied on and referred to a lot. What I think aided my learning the most are the seminars themselves. The readings are at times dense and challenging to fully digest on the first read, but Neil's seminars are extremely well-organised: with clear break downs of concepts, which often comes with the opportunity to repeat them in our own words (to let us test our own understanding), and smaller group discussions. I find that going back to the readings AFTER the seminars is always helpful, because I could then follow and understand the points made.

I think the handouts and the homework encouraged me to really sit down and put serious effort into attempting to understand small sections of the text. Where I failed to understand, we were amply rewarded with productive failures and an immense learning opportunity. Indeed, this class, more than any, has by design, made me much more comfortable with trying and failing.

Homework exercises were pretty helpful in clarifying concepts and topics to be covered in class. Didn't like the first two questions about most important mistakes, though. Felt repetitive.

The seminar assignments have been very helpful for intentionally working on the various skills. I really enjoy the way the class is structured as well: first, understanding the material and then raising questions before evaluating or proposing alternatives. Peer review is very useful and productive as well for the papers.

One thing that helped me learn was the regular feedback loop. I enjoyed reading the feedback about my work, which clearly pointed out where I could improve. This helped me improve a lot because I often stall working on my homework when I am unsure if I am on the right track. Another thing I really enjoyed was the professor's use of the phrase "productive failure". It made me feel like I was learning something even when I gave the wrong answer. In addition, it helped highlight when I was wrong. This was important in helping me focus on what the right answer was and where exactly I went wrong. I thought that the professor's responses were great. Neil's constant push for us to reformulate our answers when we got them wrong helped me understand exactly where my classmates and I went wrong in our content and structure of response. This was essential to my notes.

homework assignments, though sometimes requiring more time, always help to consolidate my learning.

neil is amazing at creating a conducive classroom environment that is filled w active participation and interesting discussions that always extend outside of the classroom

Neil's homework activities are exceptional. I have always appreciated how they were more brain-intensive than labor-intensive. What I mean by this is that they often involved short answers which required both brain thinking and understanding of the next day's readings. Doing the homework makes you prepared for class, and thereby students are put in a better position to engage in class discussion. Neil also facilitates question & answer methodically such that no student speaks too much, and every student is given a chance to answer questions. He also moderates the difficulty of the questions for every student, so that everyone is challenged accordingly. One of the best parts about Neil's teaching is that he encourages students that have struggled to answer questions, because it shows that students have thought deeply and earnestly about their answers. That is the kind of Professor that best facilitates a class and cultivates a healthy classroom atmosphere.

The weekly handouts with prompts we had to fill in were extremely helpful to my learning, for they helped me develop many of the skills we have been practicing not just in this class but throughout college, and the handouts were very clear and precise. Seminars were also extremely helpful for my learning, for I found many of the readings difficult to grasp and going through them in class and challenging ourselves to articulate the theories in our own words during class were very helpful.

Please elaborate on your previous responses or address other issues such as class dynamics or atmosphere.

Comments
This class is by far the best philosophy module I have taken. I believe I have grown much, both as a philosopher and as a student, under Neil's guidance.
The short turnover time for the essay between the release of the prompts to the first full draft really didn't allow me much time to think and develop my idea, so it might have been better if there were more time
Prof Neil encourages us to give our answer in a sharp and structured manner, helping me to organise my thought. This has allowed me to do better philosophy.
NA
On the whole, the class very well-paced and focused. But I personally found it quite hard to grasp technical terms at the start, along with the key notions of naive realism and representationalism. Perhaps it'll be good to introduce all these ideas in a very basic way at first; without delving into secondary literature as it felt that it was too dense to start the course on that.
I like how students are called on to answer questions because it makes it acceptable to get things wrong since we are called upon. Whereas if we volunteer to answer a question it feels like we have an expectation to answer it correctly. Also, it's nice to hear everyone how/what everyone thinks.
Nil
I found the class incredibly structured, thus after a couple of weeks I knew what to expect, which helped me follow each seminar better. Note-taking (handwritten) also felt comfortable as Neil both writes down key ideas on the board and ensures the class is well-paced.
I must stress that Neil's approach to class participation has made the course an exceptional learning experience too. He frames incorrect answers as productive learning opportunities, ensures every person in class has the chance to speak, and most importantly, gives everyone a few moments to think about each question as well.
The classroom dynamic was one of curiosity and collaborative learning, and I enjoyed tackling philosophical challenges together.
I thought that this was the hardest class but also the most fulfilling that I have taken in my time in college. The skills and content, as well as the friends made along the way will definitely stay with me for the foreseeable future.
Classroom atmosphere fosters learning for sure, but sometimes feels too structured. I want to see some deviations & more freedom. A nice balance is always the best in my opinion.
I thoroughly enjoyed this class! It was a wonderful experience in learning and thinking together!
I genuinely enjoyed the class atmosphere. Neil emphasised a culture of respect, which he demonstrated for us each and every moment. I felt heard in class, which was key to me enjoying participating even when I was very anxious and unsure about my answers. In addition, he made me feel like I was worthy to be in class even during the worst of my imposter syndrome. I cannot praise how much I learnt from this class enough. Each person in the class embodied the culture of curiosity and respect that YNC values.
neil is amazing! class dynamics never fail to disappoint, i always walk out of each class feeling fulfilled
As a professor, Neil takes care of his students. He offers generous homework and attendance policies, treating us as adults. He has checked in on me when he noticed that I was unwell, and I can tell he really cares for his students. Mid-semester he has often treated his classes to a little something every time, and has his best still despite the pandemic. He is a warm person whose skill and kindness are models to emulate!
I found classes very fruitful overall, although if I had to give any kind of negative feedback, it would be that I wished the class could have been a little more flexible. Sometimes it felt like we were rushing through too quickly in order to get to everything we had to do, and other times it felt like class was going a little slowly, so a more flexible class plan will allow us to have the space to decide whether to give more time to a particularly challenging topic.