

Student Evaluations for Phi 37600: Selected Topics: Philosophy of Language

Brendan Murday

Spring 2008

Ithaca College

Given the nature, level, and size of class, please indicate your overall opinion of the job this teacher did. Check one.

<i>Excellent</i>	7
<i>Very Good</i>	5
<i>Good</i>	1
<i>Merely Adequate</i>	0
<i>Inadequate</i>	0

Please mark each statement with one of the following:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	
1.	The instructor was well-prepared for class.				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i> 12	<i>Agree</i> 1	<i>Disagree</i> 0	<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 0	
2.	The instructor's presentation was well-organized.				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i> 8	<i>Agree</i> 4	<i>Disagree</i> 1	<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 0	
3.	The instructor was interested in the subject matter.				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i> 12	<i>Agree</i> 1	<i>Disagree</i> 0	<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 0	
4.	The instructor was approachable and willing to help (please mark N/A if you did not ask for help).				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i> 7	<i>Agree</i> 1	<i>Disagree</i> 0	<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 0	<i>N/A</i> 5
5.	In courses that require written work, the instructor's comments on my work were helpful (please mark N/A if you have not received comments on written work.)				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i> 7	<i>Agree</i> 3	<i>Disagree</i> 0	<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 0	<i>N/A</i> 3
6.	I would recommend this course to serious students interested in the topic.				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i> 8	<i>Agree</i> 4	<i>Disagree</i> 1	<i>Strongly Disagree</i> 0	

Please provide comments or suggestions about the instructor:

He is very passionate and knowledgeable about the topic. He engages the students in a wonderful way, taking all of our comments seriously and responding to all of our concerns and questions. He's the best professor in the department.

Love the energy, approachability, enthusiasm. Personally, I prefer more explanation of how topics fit into the larger picture (see [second comment in "how could this course be improved"]), but overall I think Brendan is effective and have enjoyed (and learned much) from all 3 classes that I've taken with him.

He loves the material as much as he loves teaching it, which is a lot. Professor Murday makes technical stuff interesting. He presents opposing views very charitably.

Very knowledgeable, but not excellent at dispensing that knowledge. This made learning an already nebulous subject even harder. I feel as if we more so discussed topics than learned.

Brendan is an enthusiastic and well-informed instructor.

Maybe an in-class exercise or two? Besides that you did a great job.

Very good energetic discussions. Extensive knowledge and willingness to play out hypothetical situations.

Prof Murday is a great teacher. He is both enthusiastic and knowledgeable in philosophy of language. He relates the subject matter to other issues in philosophy when appropriate.

Brendan is a great professor. He does an outstanding job of developing a strong relationship with the class. He allows for the students to dictate the pace, always making sure to cover everyone's thoughts / questions.

Very organized, very knowledgeable about subject matter. There weren't many times when the instructor was "stumped" or "confused" by students' questions.

Really energetic and interested in the topic. Really great in office hours, approachable. Knowledgeable and helpful with questions.

I appreciated the intellectual freedom in the class. Professor Murday was open to new ideas and discussions as long as the class's interest warranted. He was receptive to students' ideas and opinions, and is both intelligent and has a sense of humor. He is a valuable resource for those continuing in philosophy.

I thought Brendan did a wonderful job presenting (and defending) different viewpoints on the different topics we discussed. It really led to a nice, broad picture of the theories, their pros and cons, and what other people have had to say about them in order for us to formulate our own opinions about them.

What did you find most educationally valuable about this course?

It's interesting to note how philosophy of language parachutes in and out of so many other fields and areas of philosophy. It was terrific to connect to all the other fields of study, then to plug back into the larger picture of the interconnectedness of it all.

Topic of interest, so everything was valuable as far as learning new info.

Being exposed to new ideas. Invigorated my desire to study language.

Discussing texts we'd read in class.

It teaches an analytic approach to how language works, and develops logic and world-building problem solving skills.

The way phil language is so new and theories change all the time. It shakes one's belief that there are objective truths.

Murday is a reservoir of knowledge on the subject.

It provided a nice overview of the most important readings in Philosophy of Language.

Exploring various aspects of Philosophy of Language. Great readings coupled with clear classroom instruction and elaboration.

The level of the instructor's knowledge helped me learn about a topic I knew nothing about.

Felt able to offer crazy, bizarre, unusual examples / questions that were then taken seriously and discussed seriously. Always felt free to object or get further clarification.

The lectures involve a considerable amount of discourse in which members of the class shared valuable ideas. Professor Murday was receptive to students' ideas, and the structure of the class allowed us to spend as much time on each topic as our interests warranted.

I enjoyed the discussion / debate format. It gave me plenty of opportunities to think about aspects of language I probably would not have otherwise, to consider both sides of each argument, and attempt to argue each in a pretty decent setting.

How could this course be improved to increase its educational value? [For that matter, should this course be added to the set of classes regularly offered?]

I found this class extremely stimulating and would be in favor of seeing it offered regularly. I'm not quite sure how the course would be improved. It was great.

An overview of the big picture of phil language would be helpful – to understand how the topics covered fit into the whole scheme of language. The topic is so broad, that it felt like we “flitted” from topic to topic, but I had difficulty (maybe just my problem) making connections. Although, individually each topic is interesting.

I think it should be regularly offered. No improvements to be made.

This course, if it were to be regularly offered, should be taught by more senior faculty. I felt lost at times. Someone with more experience in the field and in teaching would make the class better. On an aesthetic note, a less dreary classroom would help everyone’s learning process. This class was in DILL 6.

The class could move at a quicker pace, concentrating more directly on larger units of meaning or importance, so as to more wholly contrast and compare them with other units or theories.

This course should definitely be added to the regular phil schedule.

Include Wittgenstein. Topics too closely related; sometimes leads to sluggish pace.

Yes, it should be offered regularly. Perhaps we could learn / study a few of the more current topics in the field.

I was happy to finally see Phil Language being offered, and I believe it should be added to the set of regularly offered classes.

I think this course should be a regularly offered course. Since it’s such a new topic in philosophy, I think students are interested in it.

Could maybe move more quickly through material. The class should be offered regularly, but also advertised to majors other than philosophy (English, writing).

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I believe this course should be added to the regular offering in the department. I feel this was the most educational class I’ve taken during my four years here outside of my major. As for improvements, I feel like perhaps having more supplemental readings available would be good, but even then, that’s just furthering a practice already in use.

Please provide comments or suggestions about assignments / exams / pace of the class.

I really appreciated that we were given several options as to the assignment structure in the class. We were also allowed to set the agenda by leading the professor to the topics we wanted to cover. It was a really nice blend of his leading and allowing students to suggest the direction of the course.

Seems about right, but personally prefer more depth than breadth when the topic is specific (or better yet split into Phil Lang I and II). [I would like to see more of this with all philosophy classes – as it is, there is just too much to cover in one semester to do it justice).

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The pace was too slow through Block I. We covered only one topic, albeit discussing different authors. I would have appreciated greater concentration and focus.

The class might be better suited to small weekly writings or responses than larger unit / term papers.

Perfect.

The pace could move faster.

The pace was fine.

Great class – no complaints. I really appreciate the way Brendan allows the class to dictate discussion. This was my 3rd class with him and he never fails to do a great job. Some phil professors tend to come off dry or dull, but Brendan finds a way to make Philosophy generally entertaining.

I think the pace was a little slow. I like the different grading options but I never got a good sense of how important they were to the class.

It was nice to choose which assignments we wanted, but at the same time the freedom or small amount of assignments made me get behind in reading really easily.

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Pacing is difficult with a discussion-based class, but I think it actually went fairly well. We may not have covered every last topic, but I feel the prolonged discussion more than made up for it.

The main reason I'm taking this course:

- 12_ *Interest in the topic*
- 4_ *Required for major*
- 1_ *Fulfills distribution requirements*
- 2_ *Fits into my schedule*
- 0_ *Other*