

Course: GOVT 2817: America Confronts the World

Instructor: P. Katzenstein

TA: C. Mailhot

Semester: Fall 2017

Please respond to the following statements and questions using a 5-point scale. Unless otherwise indicated, "5" indicates strong agreement, "1" indicates strong disagreement, and "3" serves as the midpoint. Leave blank if the question is not applicable.

Question	Mean	Std. Dev.	Count
I attended TA sessions. (5 = regularly; 1 = never)	4.90	0.3	20
The TA was knowledgeable about the course material.	4.70	0.64	20
The discussion sections were well organized.	4.15	1.01	20
The sections effectively reviewed materials covered in lecture.	4.26	0.90	19
The sections helped me to gain new insight into the subject matter.	4.05	1.11	20
The TA did a good job of attempting to stimulate student discussion.	4.60	0.58	20
The TA was able to effectively explain difficult concepts.	4.40	0.86	20
The TA was available for individual consultation with students.	5.00	0.0	20
Overall, how would you rate the TA? (5 = excellent; 1 = poor)	4.65	0.47	20

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C01. What did you like best about the TA sessions?

67948. he was very helpful for people struggling in the class

67935. It reinforced the content from the readings and gave a forum to discussing the contentious issues presented.

67953. I liked that Cameron sent the questions out ahead of time. He was very organized and this allowed for a more fruitful and thoughtful discussion.

67943. 1. Openness - 5: Cameron did a great job of being open with students and allowing a diverse conversation to flow. It felt as though at any moment I could present a differing viewpoint without being criticized or shut out which made me feel extremely comfortable in section.

I liked that although our discussion sections were too large, he was able to, and always sought to, give everyone a chance to speak up.

67934. -Cameron was open to different ideas

-I enjoyed the group discussion led by Cameron

67951. I thought the big group discussions always helped me learn, or at least gain a new perspective on a topic. I really enjoyed hearing what my peers had to say about particular topics in the material. It made the subject matter less intimidating because I was able to talk about the topics in an environment amongst people of the same age and education level.

67939. - In my 3.5 years at Cornell, Cameron was probably the best TA that I've ever had. He really tried to relate to the students and be supportive of them, while offering constructive criticism and teaching the material in a great way

- I liked the combination of small group and large group discussions

- I liked that he gave us questions in advance about what would be discussed in that section

67937. The TA was definitely open to all viewpoints. I enjoyed the large-scale discussions because the TA had a lot of value to add to the conversations, which I felt was missing in our own smaller-scale discussions. I appreciate that the TA always asked how we were and asked for our feedback on discussion sections so that he could tailor it to our needs.

67940. Our section was too large, there were too many students enrolled. Cameron managed to engage with everyone and help us understand some topics that were foreign to students who do not study government. He did a great job as a teacher, which I do not expect from TA's, He clearly knows what he is talking about. And I also get the impression that he is a very hard worker because he was always very well organized and on top of the material and discussion and communication.

67954. I enjoyed how Cameron was very receptive to the class and knew when to be more of an active leader in guiding conversation and knew when to step back and allow the students to lead discussion.

Cameron was well organized and great about providing individual help and feedback. He was very responsive to emails, too.

I would rate Cameron's openness to new ideas high. He respected people's opinions and points of view.

I really enjoyed the section format of beginning with large group discussion, breaking out into smaller groups, and then coming back together at the end.

Small group discussion worked best when each member was responsible for at least one question per reading rather than having 1 group leader responsible for all readings for that class.

67945. I really liked Cameron's enthusiasm and the amount of effort he placed in the sections. He did a great job reviewing course material and engaging students.

67936. I met with Cameron relatively often, and beyond being an effective TA, he was also always very friendly, and open to suggestions for improvements for section. He also took initiative and reached out to me when he saw that I was upset with how I was doing in the class, which I appreciated. Overall, he was probably the best TA I have ever had, and he did his best when it came to running section.

67949. I think Cameron was very open to different ideas and others' viewpoints (5). While I think he definitely tried to keep steering the conversation towards course material and the main takeaways from lecture, he did not shut down any comments and welcomed and encouraged different ideas within the course material. I think putting us into small groups was also a way to encourage us to share different ideas.

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The format I enjoyed the most was the format towards the end of the semester where we began section with going over lecture material as a class and then broke off into small groups. I liked having the foundation of going deeper with the course material and then further discussing in small groups. Cameron was also very prepared and would give us the questions for section days before.

It was clear that Cameron put a lot of effort into giving feedback, especially on the paper drafts, which was really appreciated. In office hours or through email, he was always willing to help.

67946. I liked how the discussion was facilitated.

67933. I loved Cameron's passion about the material. He clearly cared about the topics we covered and wanted to make sure we understood everything. I would give him a 5 on openness to different ideas and others' viewpoints, even though we didn't have many controversial ideas in section. It was clear that if these ideas were presented then he would be supportive. Generally, Cameron is a natural teacher and I've had few TA's that were as truly kind and caring as he was. Also, his fashion sense is on point!

67947. The TA sessions were a good way to get clarifying information about the topics when needed. They served as an opportunity to dive deeper into the course material and readings, but still allowed room for me to admit that I often didn't understand the concept we were discussing.

Cameron was very open to other people's viewpoints and ideas, and there were certainly a lot of ideas coming from all sides. He did a good job at masking his own biases.

I enjoyed the small group discussions the best. It was easier for me to get the chance to talk when I wasn't competing with 20 other students (and when I didn't want to ask a dumb question in front of everyone), and it allowed me to ask clarifying questions/get the opinions of my peers.

67950. I really liked that Cameron took our input into organizing section. He was always super enthusiastic and helped facilitate our big class discussions. I also liked that our sections weren't lectures, but rather a mini summary of the key points and then discussions in groups or at large.

67938. They allowed me to gain a better understanding of material we covered in class, particularly in terms of gaining a more nuanced understanding of the different perspectives. They also helped clear up a lot of the more logistical aspects of the class (when papers were due, how to turn them in, what to prepare for the policy forums, etc.).

67942. It was interesting hearing other student's perspectives. When discussion was lively, the subject matter was best explained and analyzed because of the great student participation.

67941. Cameron was very organized and willing to help students outside of class.

C02. Do you have any suggestions as to how the TA sessions might be improved?

67935. They should be smaller and discussion should be less structured beforehand... students should be given flexibility to take the discussion where they want

67953. 5 very open to other viewpoints

I liked large group discussion, I felt I got more out of it and liked hearing everyones input not just 3 people.

67943. Allocating certain sections to be only student group discussions with a brief class introduction. This would help balance out the number of sections that operate as class-wide discussions with those of the groups we were broken into this semester. It seemed as though when we tried to break off into our group discussions we had very little time to actually discuss in detail what we thought about the readings. Doing this would be extremely helpful given the large sections.

67934. -maybe select one reading or certain selections from a few readings to focus on for each discussion. Sometimes I felt like we were trying to cover too much material & thus couldn't go as in depth on interesting topics.

67951. I would have liked for Cameron to explain some of the topics himself. He did a good job of facilitating discussions in the class, but I wanted to hear what he thought about some of the issues as well. I think it would have acted as a baseline, mediating force in the sessions.

TA openness: 5. Cameron was always respectful of what people had to say, even if it was clear that they were misinformed or not as well-read in a particular subject.

Preferred Format: I liked the large group discussions the best because, as I mention above, they were the most enlightening. It was great to hear what my peers had to say about certain topics, and made me feel at ease because I could relate my own perspectives to theirs given our age and education similarities.

67939. - I would rate the TA's openness to different ideas and others' viewpoints as a 5. His political biases never impacted the discussion nor discouraged people from speaking up

- I probably enjoyed large group discussions best because he was good at keeping us on track while informatively teaching us new material
- Going forward, I think it would be beneficial for the TA's and professor to better communicate with each other regarding their expectations of the students, and then better communicate those expectations to the students

67937. Smaller sections, of course :)

67940. The sessions would be improved by having smaller sections with the TA's for discussion, Cameron worked well with over twenty students, but the size encumbered everyone's capacity to engage with the information. Need more sections.

67954. I would make sure that all TAs are on the same page when explaining requirements for assignments and providing due dates.

I also think smaller sections would be better because we ran into time constraints sometimes. With such a large class size we would run out of time to share all the conversations from the small groups with the rest of the class.

67945. More small group discussion time and settling on structure earlier on while also being flexible (a hard task I know).

Openness: 4. While Cameron was open to other viewpoints, at times he also felt very confident in his own and sometimes invalidated that of others.

I enjoyed small group the most since it was nice to see directly other peoples viewpoints and I feel more people were confident in talking with each other openly.

67936. I think that the TA sessions could be improved by having fewer people in each section. They were too large to allow everyone in the class to contribute equally.

67949. In my small group, sometimes I would know who the leader was from the email but the leader wouldn't know because they didn't read it. While we ended up having good conversations, I think there should be a bit more organization for the small groups if they are to be run the same.

67946. I think it would be better if it was smaller.

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67933. It comes across as unprofessional when Cameron asked us to prepare individual small group discussions and then the large group discussion took up the whole class period. It requires extra work to prepare to be section leader and it was frustrating not to be able to demonstrate that preparation. I think that knowing his tendency to want to have long large group discussions is important because then he can better restrict himself from going over time. At least, if he is unsure if the discussion will go on too long, then don't ask students to prepare extra material.

67947. I think allowing more time for small group discussion rather than the large group discussion would have been personally preferable, although I know there was disagreement about that within my class. Even if there were only one or two questions for the large group discussion, they always ended up taking the entire class time to cover, and there was never time to meet in small groups to discuss the topics.

67950. 1: Cameron was super open to meeting and discussing anything, but especially to different viewpoints. He did an amazing job playing devil's advocate when the class was too focused on one side of the argument and he always made sure to include everyone in section.

2: I liked: summary of readings and lecture 1/3 of the class, then 1/3 mini group discussion, then 1/3 whole section discussion.

3: We need bigger sections

4: Cameron was great! I've never had such an open TA who is actually excited to help students out in their own research. When I couldn't narrow down my topic, my chat with him helped me so much, and I felt very comfortable reaching out whenever I needed help/clarification on my research.

67938. We ended up talking about this in the latter half of the course, but finding a better balance between large-group and small-group discussions would have been helpful. Depending on the lecture, it might also have helped to give a quick summary of some of the more dense or convoluted readings might also have been beneficial, but I don't think it would have been necessary for all of them.

67942. Smaller sections! 15-17 students to a section is simply too large. It must be limited to 10 or less.

67941. It would be difficult to improve; he already maximizes what little time he has by sending emails with specific questions to think about before section, and splits the time between large group and small group so we can all have a chance to talk.