

SOCIOLOGY 301: SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

SPRING 2005

Question: Please list the characteristics of the course and instructor which have impressed you favorably or unfavorably. Do you have specific suggestions/comments about the works read or topics covered? Would you add or eliminate any? (Why?) Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Comment:

unsure of how he grades participation-seems slightly ambiguous

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Comment:

The readings were helpful in writing the papers that were required. The presentations were helpful but it would help if the instructor went back over it a little bit more. Overall, it was a fascinating class. The instructor was excited and motivated the class to get excited about the work.

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Comment:

I enjoyed this class immensely, and learned a lot through the friendly teaching style of the instructor. His personality made me want to come to class just for the discussions we had. The material was interesting and applied to our personal lives, which made it all the more beneficial.

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Comment:

I think that one of the best aspects of this course is that it is centered on class discussion. The whole topic and the material covered is best learned and applied in this way, and hearing other students share everything from opinions to personal experience has really broadened and deepened the reach of the material we learned in class. I think that the works were very good, but I felt like some were much more pertinent than others. For example, "Traditions" was very interesting, but only about a trend occurring in a small minority of the American population. Also, as much as I loved the class discussion, I feel that there could have been more substance to the course... student presentations only summarized what we'd already read. Overall

though, this course was wonderfully engaging and the material was so interesting and relevant to anyone's life that was really a pleasure to work on and learn about.

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Comment:

everything impressed me this class rocked, hard, just a bit to religious but it isnt a big deal

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Comment:

I really enjoyed the open class discussions. With the exception of the statistics book, I enjoyed the readings. The presentations grew to the point that I sometimes felt my time reading the material was almost wasted, but they did help lead to informationed discussions.

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Comment:

No Comment

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Comment:

I enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of this class, and the freedom to explore different topics in class discussions. I also enjoyed the interview portion of the paper. However, I think it would sometimes have been more effective to break up into smaller groups during class time to discuss topics more in depth, and then come together as a whole.

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Comment:

Dya is the one of the most engaging professors I've had here in 4 years here. The only suggestion I would make is to maybe shorten the paper requirement and supplement with a test.

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Comment:

No Comment

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Comment:

Dr. Yamane is very enthusiastic about the subject and his good personality makes the class an enjoyable place to learn. He actively participates with the class, and encourages discussions about the material and its application to life. I thought the texts were interesting and good additions to the class structure. I really enjoyed the set up of the class and thought that overall it was a very positive experience. I learned a lot and most importantly tied it into my life and the society at large.

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Comment:

He encouraged lots of class participation and the work wasn't too bad. there was pretty good amounts of reading but it wasn't terrible. The fact that the grade was only based on three papers was nice because it was nice to have a class that you could go and interact in but didn't have to worry about big tests or anything like that. It was a pretty chill class and i loved the bow ties but it was also a good place to learn and interact with the other students.

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Comment:

Dr. Yamane is an extremely enthusiastic instructor and encourages class participation. He knows the information well and brings up controversial topics to discuss during class, leaving me thinking about the class after it's done. I think this is a wonderful class, and am thrilled that WFU has offered this class!

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Comment:
No Comment

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Comment:
Although Dr. Yamane is a new professor here, is indeed one of the best professors I have had thus far. Thus, I highly recommend him to any student with a willingness to learn and be actively engaged in class participation. He is very straightforward and down-to-earth person making the calss atmosphere very relaxed and welcoming.

Question: Please list the characteristics of the course and instructor which have impressed you favorably or unfavorably. Do you have specific suggestions/comments about the works read or topics covered? Would you add or eliminate any? (Why?) Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Comment:
I really enjoyed this class, especially the discussion It was very interesting. I was concerned at the beginning of the semester about the class being an hour and 15 minutes, but it never felt like the class was being drug out. Dr. Yamane adapted well to Wake Forest and I think he can be a great asset to this university.

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Comment:
overall i loved this course. i wouldn't eliminate anything. what i liked most about this course and this may be helpful in planning for next time you teach this, i like the fact that you didn't take on too much. This is not because i dislike reading, but because i feel that courses that try to take on too much lose their effectiveness when trying to cover too much. WIht what we read we had the time to duscuss everything we read and that added to class discussions.

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Comment:

The characteristics of the course that I found to be extremely annoying and useless include the subject material, the lack of material on religion AND SOCIETY. I seem to have learned more in other classes I've taken at Wake about the combination of religion and society. I feel that I don't know much at all from this class about religion in our society. It did not feel of a sociology class so much. I feel that if the instructor provided a more thorough framework for the class, it would have worked much better. We talked about nothing but Christianity and Judaism. I don't think those are the only two religions in our society.

Question: Please list the characteristics of the course and instructor which have impressed you favorably or unfavorably. Do you have specific suggestions/comments about the works read or topics covered? Would you add or eliminate any? (Why?) Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Comment:

I found this class to be great! I really enjoyed the professor, he made the class interesting. The test/paper policy was a great idea. The only thing that I would change is making the paper workshops about a week before papers were due to give us a little extra time to know exactly what was expected on papers. He is one of the best professors I've had at Wake.

Question: Please list the characteristics of the course and instructor which have impressed you favorably or unfavorably. Do you have specific suggestions/comments about the works read or topics covered? Would you add or eliminate any? (Why?) Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Comment:

I really thoroughly enjoyed this course. Dr. Yamane is very upbeat and a refreshing addition to the sociology department. I never missed class because I always looked forward to the lively discussions. My only suggestion would be to make the class size a little smaller to encourage even more class participation and make sure that everyone does the required readings. The format of the class was new and exciting, and I like the direction the discussions took. Dr. Yamane is extremely enthusiastic and very knowledgeable about his subject matter. I learned a lot about religion in America, but more than that he helped me refine my writing skills. Definitely keep this class and him here...I want to take another one of his classes!

Question: Please list the characteristics of the course and instructor which have impressed you favorably or unfavorably. Do you have specific suggestions/comments about the works read or topics covered? Would you add or eliminate any? (Why?) Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Comment:

I really enjoyed the class and the professor. The only aspect of the course that I would change is that the class be more professor oriented, with more classes being taught by the professor. While I learned a lot from the presentations, I think that I would have learned even more from more lectures from the professor. I really liked the assignments and felt that I learned a lot about myself from them. Overall, I really enjoyed the course.

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Comment:

i really enjoyed this class. pro. yamane was a wonderful edition to my class schedule. we had three papers due during the year and the class was mainly discussion. the discussions where always interesting. the readings where at times a little boring but the discussions made up for it.

Question: Please list the characteristics of the course and instructor which have impressed you favorably or unfavorably. Do you have specific suggestions/comments about the works read or topics covered? Would you add or eliminate any? (Why?) Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Comment:

Favorable - Class discussions were great. Dr. Yamane encouraged everyone to participate in an accepting and respectful atmosphere. Suggestion - more class. Optional paper workshops + no class on day of paper + no class day after paper = too much missed class time in my opinion. Although, we did cover all of the material. Maybe add some articles in for discussions on the other days. Or have days where people share their papers with the class, if they feel comfortable doing so.

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Comment:

Dr. Yamane is exceptionally personable and I was impressed that the university hired someone like him. He makes sure that student are engaged in class discussion. The way he teaches the class make reading actually interesting and you want to do it so that you can contribute to class.

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Comment:

Dr. Yamane always brings a positive attitude to class and maintains a laid-back feeling in the classroom while still fully engaging the students in the course material. We examined religion in society through personal experiences as well as observations about contemporary norms in the United States. Dr. Yamane adopted the course objectives to fit the students' interests nearly each and every day, and I would argue that it was rare that students ever found themselves entirely disinterested in the material. The semester's project of compiling a religious autobiography was not only enjoyable but also creative in using the course

knowledge in a non-traditional way, challenging the students to move beyond their usual paper-writing skills. I think that while the books we read for the class were interesting, it might be useful to compile a reader, using excerpts of the books, possibly adding excerpts from other books, as well as newspaper articles. The class presentations could change to incorporate current events related to religion in America, as the class is intended to help evaluate religious society. This would also increase the incentive for students to do the reading, as it would in most cases be slightly shorter, but even if the same length, more varied. I think that if the course were to cover a broader, more diverse group of topics, students would be able to take their personal experience and more closely relate it to religious society as a whole. Overall, I enjoyed the class thoroughly.

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Comment:

I was very impressed with Dr. Yamane. For his first semester teaching at Wake Forest I think he did a wonderful job getting to know the students and making them comfortable in the class atmosphere. He is helpful and considerate and extremely knowledgeable in his field. The books read and topics covered were all very interesting and current. The whole class participated and seemed very excited to discuss the topics. I really enjoyed the class, and as far as suggestions for improvement, I would say that there could have been a bit more structure to assignments. The guidelines for the large course paper have been a bit ambiguous. But overall, this is an excellent course.

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Comment:

I really enjoyed Dr. Yamane's class. He is incredibly personable and humorous while also being extremely knowledgeable about the subject matter. Sometimes I wish Dr. Yamane would share more of his own knowledge with the class instead of just letting us talk. However, since one of the course objectives is to "apply a sociological imagination to our own religious lives and developments," I think he was successful in completing his goal. Through the papers and class discussions, the class encouraged much reflection about our own experiences with religion. My only complaint is about the weight of class participation in the overall grade. I think it was good because it caused us to be sure to participate, but many classes I felt we were discussing subjects with which I had no experience and could not discuss. I only hope that our willingness to participate is taken into account, rather than just how often we participated.

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Comment:

i think this class and the instructor of this class was awesome. im going to look forward to taking this instructor again and will suggest other people to take it as well

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Comment:

Dr. Yamane definitely connects with his students. He bends over backwards to help and accommodate his students. Class atmosphere was lively. I did not think the structure of student presentations and questions was beneficial. My greatest concern was that the class did not challenge students views. I feel like most students are leaving the same as when they came in. Because Dr. Yamane wanted students to participate, he added little to discussion and I would have liked it to have more structure to challenge students.

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Comment:

Positive: I enjoyed the instructor's unique ability to relate to the students. This positive interaction was effective in promoting class participation and a communal learning environment. The readings covered interesting topics. Negative: The instructor used very little of the class time. Many scheduled meetings were canceled, and the remaining time was dominated by low level and unstimulating student presentations. There was little pressure to excel or relate critically to the course material. The result was a class that, while fun, was unchallenging and filled with little actual content. Given his obvious talents, and his compromising personal situation as a new professor, these the potential is obviously there to improve. The class would benefit from more lecture, and perhaps a midterm. There needs to be a concrete reason to learn the material. There was much uncovered by the discussion, it would be easy to get further into the complicated religious fabric of the nation. A historical trendline of the last 60 years would be a great finale.

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Comment:

I really liked the topics covered in the class. It was a great experience to learn about the change in religion and spirituality in America over the years, as well as an opportunity to reflect upon one's own religiosity. I felt that the books read outside of class were very reflective of the course objectives. I felt that the instructor was

fair and open to the student's view and ideas. I liked the aspect of having papers only, and no tests, however the one thing i would change would be having so much of an emphasis on participation. Although it may be an important part of the college experience, some individuals are not comfortable with this and I don't feel that this should be conducive of their grade in such a big way. The job of the professor is to lecture....not to just sit back and let the students talk. Overall, I really enjoyed this class as well as the professor; only minor changes should be made for future classes.

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Comment:

This was my favorite class but not really my favorite subject. He came to class very excited about the material which created a better atmosphere. I enjoyed this class very much.