

# Duke University - Course Evaluations

## Graduate Course Evaluations - Fall 2025

**Course:** POLSCI-703S-01: RACIAL/ETH MINORITIES AMER POL.POLSCI-703S-01.AAAS-740S-01.PUBPOL-845S-01.  
**Instructor:** Allison Anoll \*  
**Response Rate:** 12/14 (85.71 %)

### 1 - Your personal level of engagement with the course was:

Response Option		Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means								
Very low		(1)	0	0.00%										
Low		(2)	0	0.00%										
Medium		(3)	1	8.33%										
High		(4)	3	25.00%										
Very high		(5)	8	66.67%										
					0	25	50	100	Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)		GRAD Overall		
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)		Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall		Mean	STD	Median
12/14 (85.71%)		4.58	0.67	5.00	162		4.38	0.77	5.00	5598		4.15	0.87	4.00

### 2 - What knowledge, methods, skills, insights, or ways of thinking did you develop in this course? Please describe three specific things you learned.

Response Rate	12/14 (85.71%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This course clearly showed how race was built in the US and how it has been maintained over the years.</li> <li>• I very much appreciated the framing of how we should think through reading literature: what are the article's contributions, how does it connect to broader question, and what more would you like to know.</li> <li>• I was able to develop a stronger foundational knowledge in REP literature and main concepts which are extremely useful for the political science pre-liminary exam.</li> <li>• I learned the various methods in which people can evaluate racial identity, salience and political participation in their research. I learned the process of getting research published. I also learned some of the on-going conversations and weaknesses of those conversations when it comes to researching race in America.</li> <li>• Beyond the general knowledge regarding race and the main function of the course, I felt Anoll did a great job of focusing on how we behave and think as researchers. Additionally, the way she made participation a grade, but also supplied the method of how and in which ways we should participate in the class discussions really influenced the way i interact with all the courses I am taking, and pushed me to structure my notes and thought processes in a way that has been more beneficial to learning.</li> <li>• This course was great in teaching practices of balancing reading levels and insights, developing concept maps, and developing our own research questions and pursuing them through a curiosity paper. This background and knowledge building lens was really successful for me.</li> <li>• This course was excellent in preparing me to read and deeply understand methods associated with political science and, by extension, psychology and sociology work. The course work was structured in such a way that the impulse to use any LLM or chatbot to complete it was nullified due to the practice of critical thinking skills that were unique in comparison to the graduate coursework I have taken at other schools.</li> <li>• 1) a general knowledge of the subfield of minority politics in American politics 2) ways of thinking about connections between different flows of literature in the subfield, often from a causal sense (independent variable -&gt; dependent variable) 3) skills of organizing different sections of a paper, especially the theory section</li> <li>• I learned how to deconstruct a research paper, deepened my skills of interacting critically with existing literature, and gained knowledge about the research process.</li> <li>• In this course I developed the skills of reading more intentionally and critically, organizing material and concepts into a system maps all readings under one unit, and can analyze empirical work with more clarity and focus.</li> <li>• I gained a new level of understanding and expertise in the experience of racial minorities in the United States. I learned about the value of and the tools needed to effectively organize my thoughts around a central unit topic through use of concept maps. I have learned to think deeper about the ways academic papers are construc</li> <li>• critical thinking skill, general knowledge about racial minorities, how to better participate in class</li> </ul>	

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### 3 - Reflecting on the overall learning environment of this class, in what ways did the instructor(s) and the structure or components of the course facilitate your learning? Are there specific course components or methods of instruction you'd keep for future years?

Response Rate	12/14 (85.71%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure of the readings, having them listed in the order in which they should be read, and the structure of student requirements, from participation expectations to overall assignment expectations, as well as the unit questions, were beneficial when tracking our learning progression over time.</li> <li>• I really appreciated the concept map assignments. Prior to the first one, I felt very anxious about it given they're quite different from assignments in other courses. However, I came to enjoy how they have helped me structure my thinking and understand relationships between concepts/readings. I also quite enjoyed the curiosity paper. I thought it was a great way for me to apply course readings to my own interests.</li> <li>• Dr. Anoll was extremely helpful in constructing a meaningful and guiding discussion during class; she would add supplemental information when needed and she would also pivot the class to think of broader or deeper. She was always poking at us to think as intellectuals and push us beyond the readings.</li> <li>• It was a very discussion-based class which I enjoyed. I would keep the structured discussion. I liked the discussion questions and unit questions, and that our readings had a specific order and conversation to them.</li> <li>• Participation, as mentioned above is a huge one and really forced me to interact with the readings. Additionally, the class being centered around unit questions and concepts rather than learning the material to be tested - that felt like she actually cared and was interested in our success, rather than trying to "Test" our knowledge.</li> <li>• I really liked the shift toward student led discussion, especially focusing on a few pieces at a time, because I think this helped to break the ice and gets us talking sooner about our ideas. I also like the one, long course meeting style, this also allows us to get into conversation rather than being cut off quickly. The curiosity paper was a really good assignment and I liked the concept maps as well -they helped to connect and synthesize what I learned throughout the units of the course.</li> <li>• I greatly enjoyed the construction of the concept maps to make study material for my future projects. In reading and digesting each piece of work through distillation, I feel more confident about my opportunities for future work.</li> <li>• I would like to see the concept maps being kept for future years, as they are very helpful for me to think about how different components are linked together</li> <li>• Group discussion exposed me to several different interpretations of the same material.</li> <li>• the instructor is very approachable and professional. Always creates an environment that encourages participation as well as challenge. She pushes us out of our boundaries by refraining from speaking for a short time and just allows us to have the floor to ourselves. One specific course components that I would recommend keeping in future classes is the flexibility in assignments. This allows us to always be focusing on our own research while also utilizing the readings and frameworks from class. A second one I really appreciated was the mock comprehensive exam. This is a huge opportunity for us PhD students to get the much needed practice for our own preliminary exams. I like the overall format of the class which included a great balance of lecture and discussion. One thing that is always helpful to me is the use of the whiteboard to help visualize and keep thoughts focused and organized. This small act of using writing rather than slides goes a long way for me in how I can comprehend and remember information.</li> <li>• The most effective part of the class structure in my opinion is the emphasis on unit topics that culminate in the creation of concept maps. This is my first time being introduced to concept maps and I already understand how valuable they are in deepening my ability to think through a complex topic or question. I think this is an essential part of future classes.</li> <li>• I really like the student-led discussions</li> </ul>	

### 4 - What might improve the course? Are there specific course components or methods of instruction you'd change for future years? Did anything in particular impede a positive learning environment?

Response Rate	12/14 (85.71%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I genuinely think this course was exceptionally well designed and laid out!</li> <li>• I'm not sure exactly what it would look like, but I think I'd like more options for the final assignment.</li> <li>• The course requirements were extremely specific and given with ample notice via the syllabus at the beginning of the semester. The only tweak I would have would be to have more specific requirements for the curiosity paper. The paper took me extremely longer than a typical paper would take me since I was having to critically think about something related to my topic. Maybe for undergraduates or master's students this paper assignment would be better, but I did find it harder to do when I had a key question or research question in mind as a PHD student.</li> <li>• I would have appreciated discussion questions being posted earlier so I knew what to look for in the readings. Some were evaluated for content, some were evaluated for structure, and there were a lot of readings on top of my other workload so I would have appreciated some more heads up on what our discussion would be centered around.</li> <li>• I do think the class should be a bit shorter and maybe multiple times in the week rather than just once. A lot of times I leave and think of something I couldn't think about in the moment. The material is so dense that sometimes a lighter, shorter class makes it more manageable and gives more time to think about discussion points and readings.</li> <li>• I do wonder if some small group discussions would be helpful in this class, just as a way to also encourage people to talk to new folks and be able to share ideas more frequently. I wonder if this might help people who were a bit quieter in the course. It would also help us to see more perspectives across the course since we have such an interdisciplinary group.</li> <li>• I think a quick 20-min in the beginning of the first class of how to read at the graduate level was immensely helpful and could be expanded with fewer readings for the first class and a based introduction to graduate-level analysis. While this course is for PhD students, the variety of students that took my class and myself could have benefited from a deep understanding of what was expected for the reading materials, though this course built up my understanding immensely well over time. Also a walk-through of some examples of the curiosity paper would be great.</li> <li>• there could be more "lab" sessions for assignments such as concept maps and curiosity papers, so that I could get a more specific sense of what was expected</li> <li>• I think that lessening the amount of reading for each week might help just to allow more time to discuss reading in each depth.</li> <li>• I think that Dr. Anoll has done everything to foster a positive learning environment. The midterm evaluations shared everything that we would need to know on how to achieve optimal participation in the course. This is something that no other instructor has ever done for me in a class but I found it valuable. No improvements in my opinion.</li> <li>• I think this class might be improved with a re-ordering of our units, I think our last unit on hierarchies and the color line might be valuable earlier on in the course.</li> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>	

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**5 - The course was intellectually stimulating. It made me think in new ways, encouraged me to adopt different points of view, or challenged me to develop new skills.**

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Poor	(1)	0	0.00%								
Marginal	(2)	0	0.00%								
Average	(3)	0	0.00%								
Very Good	(4)	1	8.33%	■							
Excellent	(5)	11	91.67%	■							
					0	25	50	100	Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)	GRAD Overall
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)	Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall	Mean	STD	Median
12/14 (85.71%)	4.92	0.29	5.00	162	4.61	0.62	5.00	5458	4.29	0.87	5.00

**6 - What made this class stimulating or how could it be more intellectually stimulating if it wasn't?**

Response Rate	12/14 (85.71%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept maps!!!! As stressful as they were in the moment, they were an incredible way for my brain to fully comprehend everything that we had learned that unit and to creatively lay out the way I organized everything.</li> <li>• The combination of course readings, assignments, and classroom discussion made the course intellectually stimulating. I also appreciated how you diagrammed concepts/relationships on the board.</li> <li>• Class discussions, readings and assignments were all structured brilliantly by Dr. Anoll. It is clear and evident she took time and careful planning to develop the course material for the semester. She also provides readings that are within or able to be completed with preparation, other graduate level classes tend to overbear and overdo reading assignments which can take-away the ability of students to synthesize ideas, concepts, and main takeaways.</li> <li>• I think for me the concept maps and the focus on research method was the most stimulating. It helped me put the readings and authors in conversation with each other as well as add myself and my experience to this on-going conversation.</li> <li>• This class is extremely intellectually stimulating. She provided different readings, but beyond just providing them, also gave us (in class) the framework upon which we are learning. I find, often, that discussion based classes lose the context a little and talk in hypotheticals or of the broad discipline without a good idea of the context of the discipline and where the readings are in that context. Anoll did a great job of placing us in that, and allowing us to work around that. Additionally, she had parts of the class where she just let us "discuss" without interjecting, which was really helpful with the flow of the discussion and giving us the option to explore the ideas on our own, as individuals that are seeing this for the first time- rather than a guided conversation with some sort of authority.</li> <li>• Really excellent and thoughtful reading lists which built upon eachother to develop and challenge our understandings throughout the semester.</li> <li>• Touching on every single piece assigned through structured and unstructured discussion was amazing. I continually felt like there was enough space to explore and expand on the works in the associated theories, while aligning to my personal interests.</li> <li>• I especially like the ways Professor Anoll lead the discussion by putting forward various questions and giving general outlines of different units</li> <li>• This class was very stimulating, but perhaps small group discussions would allow students to delve deeper into what they find most interesting. I really enjoyed assignments like the curiosity paper which allowed for individualized exploration of the course material.</li> <li>• Overall set up, organization, and the use of a unit question I feel made this very intellectually stimulating. Helping us answer the big important questions rather than just staying in the weeds the whole time.</li> <li>• This class was stimulating in part because of the unit themes that tied a coherent thread through each class period. It was clear how each individual class theme fit within a unit and this made understanding, interpreting, and discussing the readings less intimidating.</li> <li>• Professor Anoll's teaching method makes this class very engaging</li> </ul>	

**7 - Considering all components of the course (lectures, discussions, sections/labs, assessments, projects, course environment, etc), overall the course was**


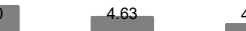
Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Poor	(1)	0	0.00%								
Marginal	(2)	0	0.00%								
Average	(3)	0	0.00%								
Very Good	(4)	2	16.67%	■							
Excellent	(5)	10	83.33%	■							
					0	25	50	100	Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)	GRAD Overall
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)	Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall	Mean	STD	Median
12/14 (85.71%)	4.83	0.39	5.00	163	4.50	0.71	5.00	5515	4.22	0.90	4.00

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### 8 - Based on the effectiveness of instruction (clarity, expertise, enthusiasm, rigor, support, inspiration, etc), overall the instructor, Allison Anoll, was -

Response Option		Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means								
Poor		(1)	0	0.00%										
Marginal		(2)	0	0.00%										
Average		(3)	0	0.00%										
Very Good		(4)	0	0.00%										
Excellent		(5)	11	100.00%										
					02550100	Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)		GRAD Overall					
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)		Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall		Mean	STD	Median
11/14 (78.57%)		5.00	0.00	5.00	178		4.63	0.63	5.00	6332		4.39	0.86	5.00

### 9 - Based on the effectiveness of instruction (clarity, expertise, enthusiasm, rigor, support, inspiration, etc), overall the teaching assistant, , was

Response Option				Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means					
Poor				(1)	0	0.00%							
Marginal				(2)	0	0.00%							
Average				(3)	0	0.00%							
Very good				(4)	0	0.00%							
Excellent				(5)	0	0.00%							
N/A				(0)	0	0.00%							
02550100								Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)	GRAD Overall			
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)		Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall	Mean	STD	Median
0/14 (0.00%)		0.00	0.00	0.00	46		4.61	0.62	5.00	1438	4.35	0.88	5.00

### 10 - In what ways did the teaching assistant(s) facilitate your learning and what might have helped even more? Include any constructive comments you'd like to share with here.

Response Rate	0/14 (0%)
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### 11 - What would you like to say about this course to a student who is considering taking it in the future?

Response Rate	11/14 (78.57%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you aren't used to reading this much, take time in the first weeks to organize a system that works for you! Not one that worked for your friend or peer, but one that works for you! Organize yourself before every class and come prepared with quotes or sections that made you more interested in a topic!</li> <li>• I thought this course was definitely worth taking. It challenged me to think more critically about race and its relationship to politics in a way that will help both my research and how I personally think about race.</li> <li>• I would take this course if you're interested in learning about the different ways by which race and ethnicity has changed over time in the United States.</li> <li>• Plan out how you will complete all the readings the week before. Do not try to get it all done like the day before or morning of.</li> <li>• It is certainly reading heavy and requires dedication to the material as well as thinking outside of the material - rather than just reading and discussing what you read. If you are willing and able to put in the work, the reward is high. I felt like I learned so much, not only about the material, but how to have a discussion about materials like this and what it means to be a researcher in that way.</li> <li>• This is a very valuable course for expanding and informing your perceptions of race in the United States.</li> <li>• Take it! It has so many applications in environmental studies, business, public health and more!</li> <li>• Not much background knowledge of the field of minority politics is necessary to follow the course, as it can serve as an introduction; this course can be especially helpful if one wishes to do research in minority politics</li> <li>• To ay student taking this class in the future, begin the readings early and review your notes before class because heavy participation is the expectation.</li> <li>• This is fantastic course to take in all aspects. The subject matter, instruction, class environment, and assignments and material are all intellectually stimulating.</li> <li>• Please take this class. And if you do, do the readings.</li> </ul>	

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### 12 - The course was difficult.

Response Option				Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Strongly disagree				(1)	0	0.00%								
Disagree				(2)	1	8.33%								
Neither agree nor disagree				(3)	3	25.00%								
Agree				(4)	8	66.67%								
Strongly agree				(5)	0	0.00%								
							0	25	50	100	Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)	GRAD Overall	
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)		Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall		Mean	STD	Median
12/14 (85.71%)		3.58	0.67	4.00	160		3.62	0.92	4.00	5511		3.34	1.08	3.00

### 13 - How many hours in a typical week did you spend on this course (outside of class meetings)?

Response Option				Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
1				(1)	0	0.00%								
2				(2)	0	0.00%								
3				(3)	0	0.00%								
4				(4)	3	25.00%								
5				(5)	4	33.33%								
6				(6)	0	0.00%								
7				(7)	1	8.33%								
8				(8)	2	16.67%								
9				(9)	0	0.00%								
10+				(10)	2	16.67%								
							0	25	50	100	Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)	GRAD Overall	
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)		Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall		Mean	STD	Median
12/14 (85.71%)		6.25	2.26	5.00	162		6.50	2.45	6.00	5532		5.41	2.70	5.00