

Duke University - Course Evaluations

Graduate Course Evaluations - Spring 2026

Course: POLSCI-690S-4-01: ADV TOP IN POL BEH & ID.POLSCI-690S-4-01.
Instructor: Allison Anoll *
Response Rate: 10/11 (90.91%)

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

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Very low	(1)	0	0.00%		4.70	4.31	4.14				
Low	(2)	0	0.00%								
Medium	(3)	1	10.00%								
High	(4)	1	10.00%								
Very high	(5)	8	80.00%								
					Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)	GRAD Overall				
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)	Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall	Mean	STD	Median
10/11 (90.91%)	4.70	0.67	5.00	118	4.31	0.87	5.00	4393	4.14	0.85	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	10/11 (90.91%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout this class, I developed numerous skills. The first is a deeper understanding of methods. I appreciated the thorough examinations of different methods and tests. They were explained in very helpful, digestible manners that boosted my understanding of the material. The second is a more thorough understanding of two complex, messy areas of the literature. The design of the course helped show the different components of larger areas, which helped me work through it in an organized manner rather than bouncing around. The third is to consider the normative implications of what my research and the questions I am interested in carry. Many of our conversations in class highlighted these elements, and they were helpful in my consideration of advancing my research interests. Dr. Anoll's class has helped me learn valuable skills in reading, comprehending, and writing political science papers. I have learned helpful "formulas" to writing an abstract, an introduction paragraph, and theory sections. I learned how to read through papers more efficiently and take notes that build up towards concept maps for future use. I also learned how to write succinctly and deliberately through our short paper assignments. These assignments helped me learn how to write a strong introduction section to a paper. I learned how to refine my writing so that I was using every sentence thoughtfully and showing how papers were in conversation with each other. critical thinking, class discussion, writing I learned a lot about American Politics, and learned to theories related to, which was I can't expect one year ago. Knowledge regarding participation/voting, who is effected, why and when, and the methods surrounding what goes behind a paper or a book. Through this course, I gained a stronger understanding of the American political system through the lens of political participation. We started the class learning about what it means to participate politically and the different forms you can participate politically. Then we moved on to gaining an understanding of why some people participate more than others through the rational choice framework and calculus of voting. Throughout the course we gained insight on how to write our research and interpret our results better as well as what are the best practices in political research. I developed how I approach literature and cultivate skills thinking deeply about debates and the empirics scholars used to prove their argument. I gained a large amount of knowledge on the normative and practical elements of political participation and representation. Namely, how individuals and groups can effectively organize to get responsiveness from the government and representatives and the myriad of factors that influence the political participation of individuals and groups. We also learned more about the professional aspect of working and writing in political science as a discipline. The course helped me develop a framework for organizing major areas of literature in the discipline as well as thinking critically about how to "put pieces in conversation"--an often used but rarely defined skill we are all supposed to have or home in graduate school. I feel better equipped to ask critical questions about what different pieces are doing in terms of building knowledge and how they can be furthered. I also feel I learned how to think critically about what types of advancements or further moves in the literature are useful to the discipline and my own career. Dr. Anoll provides students with the knowledge and skills to understand the production of scholarly literature. Not only are classees utilized to conceptualize the theme of the readings, at the same time we are analyzing how they are written, develop the methods, and understanding what made the paper successful for being produced in a journal. In addition, Dr. Anoll puts an immense amount of attention/effort in her syllabus to connect readings together and synthesize the unit question that allows students to build main points. The unit questions are extremely helpful in sorting through very dense literature and aid us in further grasping the content of the course. 	

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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	10/11 (90.91%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allison was amazing! I appreciated the precision and purpose with which she approached the class. I have never been in a class that was so thoughtfully composed and designed. The combination of unit and component questions helped build a framework for approaching the readings. Combined with the concept maps, I left with a thorough understanding of the readings. The methodological deep dives in class were helpful and should definitely be kept in the future! I also liked the mini-lectures and whiteboard moments. Most graduate instructors shy away from actually teaching, but Allison does not, and that was a great aspect of the course! Throughout the course, Dr. Anoll did an excellent job of keeping the class moving at a good pace and keeping us engaged. Her use of the white board to depict charts, write down ideas/key concepts, and stay organized helped show the clear direction of the lesson. Writing things out helps me see the smaller details within the bigger picture and helps me retain the information being taught. Dr. Anoll does a great job of encouraging participation through a graded component as well as moderating discussion time. Some portions of the class are left to us as the students to lead the discussions while she sits out. providing specific feedback and suggestions to discussion & writing, using concept map to illustrate the connections among concepts I think one thing I really appreciate is the professor has a framework to teach each class, so it's relatively easy to follow. The seminar aspect was incredibly helpful - discussing the topics, going back and forth with peers and the professor helped engage us in conversation and master the material. The papers assigned helped us think about what we would do, and personally helped me a lot in understanding the material and the bigger picture of it all. Having clear unit questions and class topics outlined in the syllabus and having readings outlined in the recommended order of reading them helps us establish a mindset of how to think of these questions in a clearer matter. The concept map assignments helped us better understand the connection of the literature in the broader topic of political participation and the mini paper assignments allowed us to practice and better our writing skills. Students engaged deeply both in conversation and personal reflecting in the core mechanisms of much of the literature we engaged with bringing in both the theoretical, empirical, and live experiences to connect debates and support/challenge findings. The class environment was focused on our individual and group understandings of the readings and course concepts. There were two distinct, interesting, and generative units for the class that shaped class discussions. Class discussions were focused around a consistent framing of our unit questions. The unit questions were helpful for thinking through the readings each week. I think that the short writing assignments were also an incredibly effective way of forcing me to use the above identified skills multiple times in the semester. Professor Anoll was great at facilitating discussion and pushing students toward an answer. She has immense patience and provides a welcoming environment for students to ask questions and concerns. She also lectures if necessary to provide a historical or literature review of how some of the concepts connect to our unit readings. 	

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	10/11 (90.91%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some weeks had too many readings, making it hard to digest all the material. However, Allison took our feedback and course-corrected at times when it was too much. Dr. Anoll has an excellent course and provides consistent and thorough feedback on assignments and overall evaluations throughout the course. Nothing stopped us from having a positive learning environment. One thing that might improve the course is to lighten the reading load slightly as I found it difficult to keep up with the number and length of the assigned readings week to week with other courses. - I think the course is good enough. There was not anything that impeded a positive learning environment. I found the papers and the concept map worked well alongside class discussions. I am not sure if there is anything I would change. The only thing I would explicitly cite and "impeding" my learning environment was some students who would spend time talking without making substantive points. N/A. I loved every minute of the course. I think that possibly breaking up the two larger units into more distinct smaller sub-units may help us organize the large amount of materials we read for each. Making more than one concept map per unit would make the content more digestible. I hate to request more work, but I do think that a final longer paper or project proposal could be useful for thinking through during the semester. However, the method of lecture and balance between "lecture" and discussion was appropriate in my opinion. The class structure/format was extremely great. The short papers are a brilliant way to synthesize and conceptually the readings in your own words and push it forward whether it's in your research or other ways the discipline can move forward. 	

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%		4.90	4.48	4.32				
Marginal	(2)	0	0.00%								
Average	(3)	0	0.00%								
Very Good	(4)	1	10.00%								
Excellent	(5)	9	90.00%								
					Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)	GRAD Overall				
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)	Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall	Mean	STD	Median
10/11 (90.91%)	4.90	0.32	5.00	115	4.48	0.71	5.00	4281	4.32	0.87	5.00

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

Response Rate 9/11 (81.82%)

- The diverse styles and areas of research we read were stimulating! Most professors choose to only focus on the specific areas they study, but the combination of institutional, behavioral, normative, and (early-semester) formal theory readings gave a thorough examination of the topic.
- One thing that made the class stimulating was the deep discussion on the paper, making a point to answer the unit question each week, and balance positive and negative feedback on papers.
- class & group discussion
- Absolutely stimulating - I think maybe a guided assignment in class to breakdown the methods (a chart we can fill out together regarding what the variables are and what they may mean) may help with the empirical aspect of things.
- Being interested in the topic of the course helped stay interested as well as having so many perspectives of the unit questions through multiple hours.
- The readings were in constant conversation with each other both normatively and empirically. I loved the connections between arguments and sometime even simply distilling the mechanism tested between readings. The course was also immensely beneficial in terms of professional development. We gained perspective in what makes the most imperative aspects of the profession successful which was immensely beneficial.
- We investigated new and old questions, engaged in how the scholars agreed or departed. This was very genative,
- This class covered a great breadth of work but clearly connected all of the components in a way that was incredibly stimulating. Again, I do think that the opportunity to think through either methodological or content-based applications to my own area of interest could help just channel all the intellectual stimulation and ideas into one coherent place.
- The class was stimulating by providing literature that made students think critically.

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%		4.89	4.44	4.27				
Marginal	(2)	0	0.00%								
Average	(3)	0	0.00%								
Very Good	(4)	1	11.11%								
Excellent	(5)	8	88.89%								
					Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)	GRAD Overall				
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)	Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall	Mean	STD	Median
9/11 (81.82%)	4.89	0.33	5.00	113	4.44	0.78	5.00	4328	4.27	0.89	4.00

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%		4.90	4.56	4.39				
Marginal	(2)	0	0.00%								
Average	(3)	0	0.00%								
Very Good	(4)	1	10.00%								
Excellent	(5)	9	90.00%								
					Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)	GRAD Overall				
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)	Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall	Mean	STD	Median
10/11 (90.91%)	4.90	0.32	5.00	131	4.56	0.74	5.00	4930	4.39	0.88	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%		0.00	0.00	4.42				
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%								
					Question	Dept/Program (GRAD)	GRAD Overall				
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	Dept/Program (GRAD)	Mean	STD	Median	GRAD Overall	Mean	STD	Median
0/11 (0.00%)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	1780	4.42	0.84	5.00

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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 0/11 (0%)

11 - What would you like to say about this course to a student who is considering taking it in the future?

Response Rate 8/11 (72.73%)

- I strongly recommend taking this course!
- Be prepared to read and be prepared to discuss! No one will get through the course without participating. Dr. Anoll makes it easy to participate because she has thought out lesson plans and asks good questions.
- highly recommended
- It's a good course, and the professor is very kind.
- Definitely take this course! Allison is both a wonderful professor and person, and I have never left a class feeling like I didn't learn anything or benefit in some way.
- Dr. Anoll is not only an excellent scholar but also a kind and compassionate person. As only a masters student trying to find his way in the discipline, I hope to not only be half the scholar, but also the person that Dr. Anoll is.
- This course is absolutely worth it, for those who consider themselves institutionalists or behaviorists, whether you think you have an interest in participation or not. You will learn more than just the content and Allison is an amazing professor. The reading load is perfect and the assignments are varied.
- The course is an amazing way to political behavior by providing different perspectives that are often not considered in other classes.

12 - The course was difficult.

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means								
Strongly disagree	(1)	0	0.00%			3.22	3.50	3.26					
Disagree	(2)	2	22.22%	█									
Neither agree nor disagree	(3)	3	33.33%	█									
Agree	(4)	4	44.44%	█									
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		
9/11 (81.82%)	3.22	0.83	3.00	114	3.50	0.97	4.00	4313	3.26	1.02	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%			6.22	5.91	5.04					
2	(2)	0	0.00%										
3	(3)	1	11.11%	█									
4	(4)	1	11.11%	█									
5	(5)	0	0.00%										
6	(6)	4	44.44%	█									
7	(7)	0	0.00%										
8	(8)	2	22.22%	█									
9	(9)	1	11.11%	█									
10+	(10)	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		
9/11 (81.82%)	6.22	1.92	6.00	115	5.91	2.54	6.00	4345	5.04	2.56	5.00		