

**ROBIN PHINNEY**

**TEACHING EVALUATIONS AND STUDENT COMMENTS (BROWN UNIVERSITY)**

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The following document contains teaching evaluations from two courses taught at Brown University's Taubman Center for Public Policy and American Institutions in the Spring of 2011. The first course was an undergraduate course called "Social Welfare Policy" (pages 2-5) and the second course was a graduate course called "Political Advocacy" (pages 6-10).

Course Evaluations for Robin Phinney, Spring 2011 semester at Brown University (Undergraduate)

Term

Spring 2011

Department

PPAI (Public Policy and American Institutions)

Get Results

PPAI1700B-S01 (Course = PPAI 1700B: Social Welfare Policy (Undergraduate))

**Student Information** (Note: 10 students total in class, 9 completed a course evaluation)

Please indicate your reason(s) for taking this course (check all that apply).	Pre-requisite for other course(s)	Requirement for concentration	Elective within a concentration	Elective outside concentration	Reputation of instructor	Interest in topic
PPAI1700B-S01	0( .0%)	6( 67.0%)	3( 33.0%)	0( .0%)	1( 11.0%)	3( 33.0%)

Please indicate how often you attended class.	Always(1)	Frequently(2)	Less than half of the time(3)	Average
PPAI1700B-S01	8( 89.0%)	1( 11.0%)	0( .0%)	1.11
Group Total	8( 89.0%)	1( 11.0%)	0( .0%)	1.11

Please indicate the number of hours per week you spent on this course outside of class.	0-2 hours(1)	3-4 hours(2)	5-6 hours(3)	7-8 hours(4)	9+ hours(5)	Average
PPAI1700B-S01	0( .0%)	2( 22.0%)	4( 44.0%)	3( 33.0%)	0( .0%)	3.11
Group Total	0( .0%)	2( 22.0%)	4( 44.0%)	3( 33.0%)	0( .0%)	3.11

Would you recommend this course to other students	yes(1)	no(2)	maybe(3)	Average
PPAI1700B-S01	9( 100.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.00
Group Total	9( 100.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.00

How difficult was this course?	very difficult(1)	somewhat difficult(2)	not very difficult(3)	Average
PPAI1700B-S01	0( .0%)	7( 78.0%)	2( 22.0%)	2.22
Group Total	0( .0%)	7( 78.0%)	2( 22.0%)	2.22

### Effectiveness of Course

What knowledge or skills did this course help you develop? Please comment on your own learning and intellectual growth. Show\Hide Answers
PPAI1700B-S01: prior classes in sociology and political science
PPAI1700B-S01: I know a lot more about the welfare system in the United States.
PPAI1700B-S01: How to develop and analyze causal frameworks within public policy History of social welfare policy to understand our current policy
PPAI1700B-S01: Knowledge of the social welfare system, particularly in relation to direct poverty measures and programs.
PPAI1700B-S01: This course helped develop understanding the pathways of welfare policy-making, as well as the conceptualizing the problem-solving context of that policy-making. I think I learned to better connect policies with the understanding of the problem that those who wrote the policy had.
PPAI1700B-S01: general overview of social welfare policy and history, policy writing
PPAI1700B-S01: This course helped me develop new insights on antipoverty policy on the US, especially what considerations go into designing and implementing policy and the different effects that program components have on welfare recipients. I also learned to develop a framework in which a particular program or policy can be evaluated.
PPAI1700B-S01: This course helped me to strengthen my skills in policy analysis and in determining how to link problems with policies.
PPAI1700B-S01: professor phinney is very good at helping students learn how to frame policy problems and take a comprehensive approach to solving them.

Please indicate your overall evaluation of the quality of the course.	Excellent(1)	Good(2)	Satisfactory(3)	Poor(4)	Very poor(5)	Average
PPAI1700B-S01	7( 88.0%)	1( 13.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.13
Group Total	7( 88.0%)	1( 13.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.13

Please elaborate on your responses above, or on anything else you wish to discuss about the course design and content. Show\Hide Answers
PPAI1700B-S01: course design is clear and easy to understand
PPAI1700B-S01: The readings and papers all helped me understand the course very well
PPAI1700B-S01: This was a great class. A lot of room for discussion. Professor is a great facilitator. The only thing that could have made it better was more enriching dialogue from students.
PPAI1700B-S01: The readings were diverse and interesting, and were particularly helpful in presenting the different perspectives toward poverty and social welfare policy. The assignments were effective in helping me develop my own perspective on policies and in constructing a convincing argument for or against a program.
PPAI1700B-S01: design was great, she really helped aid the conversations in class but students talked for a lot of the time so it was very interactive. great class!

What advice do you have for improving this course? Show\Hide Answers
PPAI1700B-S01: none
PPAI1700B-S01: Case studies led by professor rather than just presentations by students (which can be inaccurate)
PPAI1700B-S01: I think response papers might be effective to ensure that all students do the reading.
PPAI1700B-S01: I liked the course very much as it is, and do not have much to recommend.
PPAI1700B-S01: None. The course was well-structured.
PPAI1700B-S01: none
PPAI1700B-S01: shorter presentations, presentations took too much time away from class materials

Which readings or assignments did you find worthwhile? not so worthwhile? Show\Hide Answers
PPAI1700B-S01: the readings on defining poverty (the intro readings)
PPAI1700B-S01: Understanding Poverty was very dense, often hard to read, but had a lot of good statistics. William Julius Wilson books were repetitive-- When Work Disappears was sufficient to read. Short articles were very interesting to read to get quick statistics and compare between authors.
PPAI1700B-S01: All of the readings assigned were interesting and helpful.
PPAI1700B-S01: All readings were worthwhile and very informative, but the historical literature was relatively dry.
PPAI1700B-S01: The majority of the readings, although at times very lengthy, were worthwhile.
PPAI1700B-S01: most all of them were worthwhile, although i found myself (sometimes) skimming through parts of some readings because it seemed a bit redundant. but the assigned reading was great overall and looking at each piece was worthwhile.

### Effectiveness of Instruction

Please indicate your evaluation of the instructor's overall effectiveness.	Very effective(1)	Effective(2)	Somewhat effective(3)	Ineffective(4)	Very ineffective(5)	Average
PPAI1700B-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P)	7( 78.0%)	2( 22.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.22
Group Total	7( 78.0%)	2( 22.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.22

Please elaborate on your responses above, or anything else you wish to discuss about the teaching in this course.  
Show/Hide Answers

PPAI1700B-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
She was very good at giving the class interesting things to discuss and there was never any silence.

PPAI1700B-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
Excellent facilitator Encouraged discussion Very knowledgable Always got at deeper causal frameworks of policies Had insightful questions Tied together comments from students very well

PPAI1700B-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
Robin was an excellent facilitator of discussion, and was able to gauge the class well to know how active to be in that facilitation. She was also fair and very receptive to feedback.

PPAI1700B-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
She was very enthusiastic about the material and was always welcoming of all students' opinions. Her amiability created a positive environment for learning in which all students felt comfortable participating in discussion. However, she sometimes had trouble presenting certain material with clarity, which is one area for further improvement. Overall, I would definitely recommend Prof. Phinney to other students.

PPAI1700B-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
Professor Phinney was very knowledgeable of the subject area. She did a great job of asking for our feedback and offered great advice. She challenged us to think more critically and was always available outside of class hours.

PPAI1700B-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
she is great at organizing lectures but in a way that facilitates student participation. she is a great instructor and i will miss her a lot!

PPAI1700B-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
Professor Phinney does a good job explaining class concepts and is very helpful outside the classroom.

Overall, how would you evaluate this instructor?	excellent(1)	good(2)	adequate(3)	only fair(4)	poor(5)	Average
PPAI1700B-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P)	9( 100.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.00
Group Total	9( 100.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.00

Course Evaluations for Robin Phinney, Spring 2011 semester at Brown University (graduate)

Term

Spring 2011

Department

PPAI (Public Policy and American Institutions)

Get Results

PPAI2660-S01 (Course = Political Advocacy (Graduate))

**Student Information** (Note = 5 students total in class, all 5 completed evaluation)

Please indicate your reason(s) for taking this course (check all that apply).	Pre-requisite for other course(s)	Requirement for concentration	Elective within a concentration	Elective outside concentration	Reputation of instructor	Interest in topic
PPAI2660-S01	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	4( 80.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1( 20.0%)

Please indicate how often you attended class.	Always(1)	Frequently(2)	Less than half of the time(3)	Average
PPAI2660-S01	4( 80.0%)	1( 20.0%)	0( .0%)	1.20
Group Total	4( 80.0%)	1( 20.0%)	0( .0%)	1.20

Please indicate the number of hours per week you spent on this course outside of class.	0-2 hours(1)	3-4 hours(2)	5-6 hours(3)	7-8 hours(4)	9+ hours(5)	Average
PPAI2660-S01	0( .0%)	3( 60.0%)	1( 20.0%)	0( .0%)	1( 20.0%)	2.80
Group Total	0( .0%)	3( 60.0%)	1( 20.0%)	0( .0%)	1( 20.0%)	2.80

Would you recommend this course to other students	yes(1)	no(2)	maybe(3)	Average
PPAI2660-S01	5( 100.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.00
Group Total	5( 100.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.00

How difficult was this course?	very difficult(1)	somewhat difficult(2)	not very difficult(3)	Average
PPAI2660-S01	0( .0%)	5( 100.0%)	0( .0%)	2.00
Group Total	0( .0%)	5( 100.0%)	0( .0%)	2.00

### Effectiveness of Course

What knowledge or skills did this course help you develop? Please comment on your own learning and intellectual growth. Show\Hide Answers
PPAI2660-S01: This was a great course for learning about the theoretical and practice aspects of interest group formation, mobilization and effectiveness. The variety of paper approaches helped balance the class between practical skills and knowledge development and academic learning.
PPAI2660-S01: I only had limited knowledge of interest group activity and lobbying before entering this course.
PPAI2660-S01: The course helped me develop my writing skills. Specifically, I felt that the course helped prepare me to apply theoretical concepts to real-world cases which was very helpful.
PPAI2660-S01: This course helped me to develop an understanding of various lobbying and advocacy strategies through many different classical and contemporary theories.
PPAI2660-S01: This course gave me a strong foundation in political advocacy theory. The paper assignments allowed me to sharpen my writing skills.

Please indicate your overall evaluation of the quality of the course.	Excellent(1)	Good(2)	Satisfactory(3)	Poor(4)	Very poor(5)	Average
PPAI2660-S01	4( 80.0%)	1( 20.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.20
Group Total	4( 80.0%)	1( 20.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.20

Please elaborate on your responses above, or on anything else you wish to discuss about the course design and content.

Show\Hide Answers

PPAI2660-S01: The course was well designed, and the topics from week to week progressed in a logical sequence. It was great to establish a solid foundation of basic theories about interest group behavior prior to delving into some more complex and specific works.

PPAI2660-S01: A wide-variety of texts and articles were incorporated into the course. Overall, the readings were applicable, useful, and approachable. For the most part, I would not make any changes.

PPAI2660-S01: I enjoyed the small class size, as it gave us an opportunity to relate our personal policy experiences with coalition theory.

What advice do you have for improving this course?

Show\Hide Answers

PPAI2660-S01: The course was pretty great as is.

PPAI2660-S01: The 2 short papers, the presentation, the readings, and the final paper are all a lot of work and I dedicated more time to these assignments than any of my other course assignments. Maybe in the future it would be helpful to eliminate one of the short papers.

PPAI2660-S01: Announce the course earlier! I believe this topic is of interest to a wide range of students, and announcing it earlier would allow more people to take part.

PPAI2660-S01: See below.

PPAI2660-S01: I found the material in the second half of the course to be much more interesting than the first. I would almost enjoy a course solely focused on political coalitions. Also, most of the focus was on direct and indirect lobbying, which was good but I would have also liked to learn more about the role of campaign contributions.

Which readings or assignments did you find worthwhile? not so worthwhile?

Show\Hide Answers

PPAI2660-S01: I found all of the readings to be worthwhile.

PPAI2660-S01: Presentations should be limited to covering one or two of the readings because it becomes too broad and generalized for the presenter if there is a lot of reading for that day.

PPAI2660-S01: The readings were very well chosen. The "classics" of interest group literature were a great way to start for students who don't have a deep background in the subject.

PPAI2660-S01: The class presentation assignment was very challenging. At times, I was not sure that it was the best way to approach all of the course material. Perhaps pick certain weeks that would be more suitable for students to present to ensure that the most important discussions are led primarily by Professor Phinney. Also, the weekly comments were helpful to ensure that I had thoughtfully prepared for each week's class.

PPAI2660-S01: I thought that all the readings were well chosen, though we read too much of the Truman book.

For Graduate Students only: Please comment on the knowledge, skills, and abilities you acquired in this course related to your professional life.  
Show\Hide Answers

PPAI2660-S01: I enjoyed this course and I think it will be helpful for my career path.

PPAI2660-S01: I believe that the course helped me develop my policy writing skills - specifically, the application of theoretical concepts to a current case study.

PPAI2660-S01: This course helped me to be able to manage large amounts of reading and effectively manage my time to ensure that I was well-prepared for a class that meets once per week based upon the structure of the course.

PPAI2660-S01: The chapters from Interest Group Politics gave us practical, tangible skills we can use in advocacy professions like lobbying (I'm thinking specifically of the Kersh article). Also, the ability to focus on our area of policy expertise in the paper assignments allowed us to gain background knowledge that will be useful as we move forward in our careers.

For Grad Students Only: Please provide additional feedback on ways to incorporate assignments or class activities you would find to be professionally useful.  
Show\Hide Answers

PPAI2660-S01: One guest speaker would have been nice to have in class: perhaps a lobbyist who could give us a firsthand account of his/her career. Or maybe someone who works for a nonprofit or an interest group.

PPAI2660-S01: The paper prompts and topics were well chosen and applicable to the interest of the class. Learning to write a brief one page summary of a policy issue for legislators was highly useful.

PPAI2660-S01: Additionally assignments similar to the one-pager for our second paper that are more similar to a product we would create in a professional setting either as a lobbyist or advocate of some sort.

PPAI2660-S01: I think hearing from professional lobbyists as guest speakers would be really helpful.

### Effectiveness of Instruction

Please indicate your evaluation of the instructor's overall effectiveness.	Very effective(1)	Effective(2)	Somewhat effective(3)	Ineffective(4)	Very ineffective(5)	Average
PPAI2660-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P)	4( 80.0%)	1( 20.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.20
Group Total	4( 80.0%)	1( 20.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.20

Please elaborate on your responses above, or anything else you wish to discuss about the teaching in this course.  
Show/Hide Answers

PPAI2660-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
Great facilitator of discussion, fair and helpful in feedback and grading.

PPAI2660-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
We will miss Robin!

PPAI2660-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
Professor Phinney did an excellent job facilitating class discussions, and clearly illustrating concepts from the readings. Her feedback on written assignments was very constructive and helped me to fine tune my writing skills. In addition, she was always available to offer assistance whenever questions arose.

PPAI2660-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
Professor Phinney was very knowledgable throughout this course and very effective at guiding and encouraging thoughtful discussion.

PPAI2660-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P):  
Professor Phinney was very accessible and friendly. I thought she presented the material in interesting ways that made seemingly abstract theories quite concrete and applicable. I enjoyed this class very much.

Overall, how would you evaluate this instructor?	excellent(1)	good(2)	adequate(3)	only fair(4)	poor(5)	Average
PPAI2660-S01: Phinney, Robin L.(P)	4( 80.0%)	1( 20.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.20
Group Total	4( 80.0%)	1( 20.0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	0( .0%)	1.20