

Katherine A. Dugan
Teaching Evaluations

My teaching evaluations demonstrate my ability to facilitate student discussions and challenge their assumptions about religion while creating intellectually engaged classrooms. I have enclosed data from four institutional evaluations; two where I was the instructor of record, and two where I was the TA. Full reports are available upon request.

Instructor of Record, History of Catholicism in the U.S., Spring 2015 University of Illinois-Chicago, History Department; <i>40 students</i>	Average (high=5)
Rate the instructor's overall teaching effectiveness	4.54
Instructor presented background of ideas/concepts covered in class	4.85
Students were invited to share their ideas and knowledge	4.85
Students were encouraged to question/challenge the course material	4.77
Instructor demonstrate an understanding of issues related to cultural/human diversity	4.77

Qualitative Comments:

- Good course, Great teacher that was clear, responsive, friendly, and understandable.
- Overall, I love Professor Dugan. She is very enthusiastic about her topic and taught it very well. I would not mind taking a course with her again in the future.
- Very enthusiastic for the subject...Students were also encouraged to ask and answer questions like a well-developed discussion every class...Kate is a very welcoming and kind instructor.

Instructor of Record, Contemporary American Catholicism, Fall 2013 Northwestern University Department of Religious Studies; <i>14 students</i>	Average (high=6)
Provide an overall rating of the course	5.6
Rate the instructor's enthusiasm in teaching this class	5.9
This course effectively introduced new ways of thinking about its subject	5.7
Rate how well the instructor encouraged class discussion	5.89
Rate how well the instructor provided valuable feedback on graded material	5.56

Qualitative Comments:

- This was a great course that got me to think about Catholicism from an academic perspective. The class discussions were always so interesting and really focused on topics that were relevant to today. Great class.
- This was a great class and definitely gave me new perspective on Catholicism in the U.S. and worldwide. The reading materials were often very interesting and we covered a large number of topics in the religion. This was one of the better discussion-based classes I've had at NU and Kate really helped facilitate that.
- This is an amazing class to take if you're at all interested in Catholicism, if you're Catholic or not. Professor Dugan is a Catholic but she takes an academic approach. It doesn't feel like 2.5 hours at all. There's a lot of media involved and watching the *Colbert Report*, and it really brings the study of religion to life.
- She gave great feedback on all the papers and was very approachable.

Teaching Assistant: Introduction to Buddhism, Spring 2015 Department of Religious Studies; <i>3 discussion sections of 13-18 students</i>	Average (6=high)
The TA was able to answer the student's questions adequately	5.35
The TA was well prepared for each session	5.48
The TA communicated ideas in a clear manner	5.48
The TA showed strong interest in teaching the course	5.61

Qualitative comments:

- Kate is one of the best TAs I ever had. She really cared about the students and spent the first session learning about each other and our names. That helped the discussion sections have much more active discussions and participation.
- The teaching assistant was amazing—really helped us understand how Buddhist teachings are relevant to modern life.
- [Kate] starts out the sections in a way that makes the students feel very comfortable and she does a great [job] summarizing key ideas from lecture while also allowing students to expand on the ideas and think about them in new ways. She is definitely in my top 3 TAs I have had at Northwestern period.

Teaching Assistant: Methods of Observing Human Behavior, Spring 2014 School of Education & Social Policy; <i>26 students</i>	Average (6=high)
The TA was able to answer the student's questions adequately	5.38
The TA was well prepared for each session	5.75
The TA communicated ideas in a clear manner	5.5
The TA showed strong interest in teaching the course	5.63

Qualitative comments:

- Katherine Dugan was able to deliver the same energy and effort to helping each of us as Professor Shapiro was able to.
- The TA was very knowledgeable about conducting research and communicated very clearly.
- Katherine was great. Very friendly, and she engaged students in a way that didn't pressure them, but really allowed them to open up at their level of comfort.



April 11, 2013

Letter in support of Kate Dugan's Teaching

To Whom It May Concern:

I write with some brief comments about Kate Dugan's teaching, which I observed in December 2012 in the context of her discussion section for Prof. Richard Kieckhefer's Religion in Human Experience course. Several features of her classroom presence made the discussion section a successful one. To begin with, the first thing I noticed about the classroom environment in Kate's discussion section was that she was able to talk with students in a casual manner as they entered the room, which set a relaxed tone for the more formal discussion she initiated promptly when class time began. After opening with some announcements, Kate asked students if they had any questions, which also led to further conversation. An innovative technique she used to get the class focused on the day's topic, which was prayer as represented in a number of readings, was that she asked each student to think about what it meant to them and to stand up and write their thought on the board. This was particularly successful because it got students to stand up and actively participate in formulating knowledge about the day's topic.

After this, she transitioned the class from discussing their own views on the topic to analyzing the class readings. She structured this using a group discussion model in which several small student groups prepared the answers to some specific questions about a segment of the reading. Observing Kate's students I noticed that each group spent their group conversation time on task preparing the answers Kate had asked for. After several minutes, Kate brought the class back together and then proceeded around the room to ask students to share their insights. The time reviewing the readings and speaking with their classmates in the small group context helped them to be ready to present some articulate comments to the larger class when it came time for their turn.

Kate managed to foster a classroom environment in which most of the students spoke at least once during class. All students participated in some way, whether it was writing on the blackboard, speaking with their classmates, rereading key passages in the texts they prepared for the day, or sharing their insights with the larger group. Most students participated in all these activities. The fifty-minute discussion period passed quickly, with no student absorbed in Facebook or otherwise disengaged, which is quite a teaching accomplishment!

Kate seemed confident and informed as an instructor. My one suggestion to her after observing her teaching is that she has a tendency to fidget (cross and uncross her legs, etc.) while she is the center of attention in the middle of the class. This is probably a symptom of nervousness, although her composure speaking and directing students effectively in forming an active learning environment would indicate that she has little reason to be nervous.

My overall impression of her teaching in the discussion section I observed was that she was an effective discussion leader, was well prepared for class, and that she experimented with a series of different techniques for fostering student engagement, all positive signs of her development as an instructor.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah H. Jacoby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Jacoby
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