

USC School of Cinematic Arts

SAMPLE COURSE EVALUATION

Instructor: Jake Bohrod

Instructions:

This evaluation form is intended to measure your reactions to this instructor and course. Results will be reported to University administrators to be used as part of the overall evaluation of the instructor and course. These evaluations are important for both the University and instructor to gauge course effectiveness and prepare for future classes. Please take them seriously. Your responses will remain anonymous and summaries will not be given to the instructor until after grades have been assigned.

PLEASE SELECT THE BEST RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

1. Course goals were clearly explained	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. The course was organized to reach its goals	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. The course achieved its set goals	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. Difficult concepts and methods were carefully explained	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. Student work was fairly graded and assessed	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. I received constructive and appropriate feedback for my work	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. The course kept my interest throughout the term	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. The course provided a valuable learning experience	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY

9. What did this course do right?

SAMPLE

10. If you were to teach this course, what would you do differently?

11. Do you think this course was a valuable use of your time?

12. Additional comments?

Commentary:

I designed this course evaluation based on USC's General Teaching Evaluation form, which, unsurprisingly, resembles most other evaluations I've filled out or seen. A "template," in the case of evaluations, can be both helpful and constricting in a variety of ways. Having experienced evaluations of this type throughout the course of my own education, I know how quickly and incoherently students may fill them out, thus a reusable template can provide a known form through which students might

best articulate themselves rapidly and coherently. A template evaluation – by way of its own restrictions – might also encourage ambitious or conscientious faculty (those who think a template evaluation just isn't enough) to seek more in-depth student feedback earlier in the semester and apply it to their work. Ideally, this might manifest itself through the course itself, where instructors build feedback mechanisms into the syllabi and allow for this “talking back” throughout the class. Template evaluations also effectively shield student identity and provide a great outlet for their thoughts when they think their opinions may count against them, especially in cases where “ambitious or conscientious” faculty go snooping with the wrong intentions.

However, at the same time, templates can offer an easy out to instructors who don't value or refuse to value student input. They are easily dismissed as obligatory or obtuse – by students and faculty alike – and seem to be taken with an implied grain of salt. Template evaluations also have an air of bureaucratic apathy, the idea being: somewhere there is a warehouse stacked to the ceiling with course evaluations, or an email inbox with 100,000 unread student complaints. This, in part, is why I believe building opportunities for student feedback and evaluation *within the course itself* is a more constructive way to approach the problem. Students are constantly negotiating their “response” to the course through their work, participation, comments, and sometimes general attitude. When more focused feedback is required, which it often is, a midterm or quarter-term evaluation would be useful – an anonymous, open-ended survey that more resembles questions 9-12 on this sample evaluation. Questions would be designed to the course itself so students feel they aren't merely contributing to an abstract administrative objective but are influencing their own education in positive ways. Midterm evaluations are commonly used yet rarely championed or incorporated into our pedagogy. For instructors, they provide an early snapshot of how students are responding to the course and therefore can guide instructors throughout the remainder of the term. For students, more than one evaluation per term or a more open-ended, customizable, and course-specific midterm review can demonstrate an instructor's commitment to student education. Finally, as students fill out template evaluations at the end of the course they would be able to reflect on the last evaluation and judge what's changed, if anything, so as to better critique not just the course or instructor in general but also how the instructor incorporated the earlier feedback.

In conclusion, I chose to replicate a template evaluation because it serves a necessary, end-of-the-year purpose: to efficiently and anonymously ask students for feedback that they may have not yet fully formed. I tried to add colloquial or more relatable language where possible while still designing with ESL/EFL students in mind. I also experimented with repetition, such as in questions 8 and 11, where feedback regarding similar feelings or problems is elicited in two different ways in order to tease nuance from the answers and allow students to vocalize their opinions on multiple levels.

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