

CrCrTh 615 Holistic & Transformative Thinking, Spring 2019 Students' Synthetic Statements, from the Final Course Evaluation

The synthetic statement is the fourth question on formal course evaluations for the Critical and Creative Thinking Graduate Program. See questions 1-3 listed on <http://bit.ly/CCTEval>

Question 4: "Building on your comments from Questions 1-3 in the formal evaluation, compose a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. (Imagine readers who might not be willing to wade through all the answers to Qs 1-3, but are willing to read more than simply the numerical averages of standard course evaluations.) Please make comments that help the instructor develop the course in the future and that enable some third party appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses. Among other things you might comment on the overall content and progression of classes, the session activities, and the use of mentors to support the learning in the course."

Below are the Synthetic Statements from the respondents who gave permission for these comments to be shared on the web.

- My goal in taking this course was to learn about holistic learning and teaching, as part of my introduction to the Critical and Creative Thinking program, and to help me consider whether I would be suited to teaching. I did achieve these goals. The instructor was very careful in constructing the online sessions to enable peer communication and holistic small group work. I also think the technical boundaries of Zoom actually helped to focus attention rather than distract – because it makes everyone pay attention to sharing and taking turns speaking. This course was special because of the unusual subject and structure of how we communicated and learned. It was a holistic course about holistic theory and practice. Like other students I found the level of self-reflection awkward at first, but the instructor enabled an atmosphere of trust. . I feel this course strikes an excellent balance between expectations, guidance, self-discovery and very interesting, fresh content. I would recommend it especially to teachers who may need a boost in thinking about how education and teaching could be different.
- The hybrid design is excellent. I really appreciated being able to attend a three hour course in the comfort of my home. I also like how there was independent work, group work, and whole class meetings. I was skeptical at first on how the course would function, but it turned out to be incredibly efficient. The class materials were obviously all very accessible and organized appropriately. At first it was overwhelming, but it was fairly easy to get used to.
- This is a course that is particularly useful to those who are or have been classroom teachers. The progression of the syllabus is logical and sensible, as is the variety of graded assignments. Some readings are a little long (that's grad school) and dry (again, grad school); most others are immediately resonant and useful, and some are even free of academic jargon. The instructor had a great sense of how to manage a long hybrid session and mixed up the session activities well. I found myself taking a lot of the articles back to my colleagues and telling them about the session activities. I have always had my own students write an educational biography and I now have more language with which to frame it and different goals for the assignment. I never felt that a class meeting was a waste of time.
- The class is full with interesting material devoted to the exploration of concepts concerning holistic and transformative teaching. There is will be plenty of opportunities to reflect in one's own practice and to revise our individual values around teaching and learning. The class is highly interactive and full of activities to engage the participant in active exploration of the

concepts. The work load is relatively high so expect to spend about 3 hours a week in this work separately from the online sessions. Overall a great class to take.

- This is an engaging course with the opportunity for personal reflection and development as well as professional applications and theory exploration. It is an organized and well run course in both syllabus structure and facilitation. All students will feel well supported on their different journeys, beliefs and experiences. Community learning is valued and the opportunity for discussion and growth are fully available for students to dive in.
- I was pleased that this course provided a broad offering of theory and practices related to both disciplines. Our explorations were active and purposeful with many opportunities to tryout new methods and tools in class activities and course work. The instructor's facilitation was skilled and intentional. A norm of shared responsibility for the learning experience was established early on. We all contributed to maintaining an inclusive, respectful, and non-judgmental learning environment. I felt encouraged and supported to participate and to think about ways to improve the experience. Reflective practice is a central theme of the course and an important component of our study. I appreciated peer commentary/feedback, formal and informal, as well as the instructor's timely and thoughtful responses to submitted work. The steady progression of assignments—readings, writing, individual and group presentations, and projects—kept me on my toes. I definitely would have appreciated more class time to process and/or present all of our good work! The online format serves course objectives surprisingly well. With all of its sophistication and accessibility, it still cannot replicate the face-to-face interaction which I prefer. I enjoyed our diverse global cohort and wish we had greater opportunity to explore our different perspectives and get to know each other.