

Date: October 7, 2016  
To: Mahsa Ershadi & Jill Hogan  
From: Stacy Grooters, Center for Teaching Excellence  
Re: Mid-semester Feedback for 446401

The following report details the feedback generated by 9 students in 3 groups in your 446401 course on October 6, 2016. I have categorized the comments according to themes that arose. Those comments in quotation marks were written on the feedback sheets; those in italics came up in the full group discussion. The number in brackets indicates which group made that comment.

## **What is helping you learn in this class?**

### **Discussion-based class helps them process what they're learning**

- *Debate and open discussion help us better remember what we're learning; like that it isn't just about reviewing the reading but also bringing in new information* 100%
- "Discussions on Tuesdays" [1]
- "lots of good discussions – different perspectives" [2]
- "open discussions – not all on reading" [3]
- "debate – help remember" [3]

### **Guest experts illustrate real world applications**

- *Thursday experts help us apply what we're learning to the real world (we don't always see how it actually functions when we just read about it in a book); good to be able to ask them any questions we have* 100%
- "Experts on Thursdays" [1]
- "experts – make relevant" [3]

### **Having to teach ourselves helps us better understand the theory**

- *Teaching assignment (students leading class) gives us a chance to try out the theory and internalize the knowledge* 100%
- "Presentations on Tues. (student ones)" [1]
- "teaching class" [3]

### **Readings, videos, activities help clarify the theory**

- *Like the readings and videos – they have a clear purpose, nice variety, getting to read it and then see it in a classroom helps clarify the theory* 100%
- "good balance of reading, activities" [2]
- "good choices in readings, videos – classical" [2]

### **Submitting expert questions in advance helps with organizing thoughts**

- *Submitting questions in advance for the expert visits is helping us better keep track of what we're interested in/confused about* 100%
- "Canvas question which asks about what 2 questions we have" [1]

### **Additional comments:**

- *Projects and presentations presented in a time-manageable way so we don't feel overwhelmed* 100%
- *Like being able to show our knowledge in other ways than tests/exams (especially helpful for those of us with test anxiety)* 100%
- "feel confident about each school, good pace" [2]

## **What is not helping you learn? What suggestions do you have?**

### **Would like reading questions to be more in line with the spirit of class discussions (open-ended rather than fact-based)**

- *The fact-based questions we're asked to respond to on Canvas doesn't seem in line with the more open-ended, reflective environment we've cultivated in class; responding to those questions can feel like a burden and aren't adding to our learning/understanding of the topic; I end up reading for the questions and that's all I pay attention* 90%
- [also about question 1 homework] "would like more reflective questions on reading (versus fact-based) as the class is more focused on personal issue/social perceptions" [1]

### **Doesn't think it's fair to grade students on their questions**

- *Would rather not be graded on the quality of the questions we submit* 100%
- "grades for discussion posts" [2]
- "canvas questions graded: we feel we put effort in and told questions are bad; makes us feel our questions are stupid" [3]

### **Timing of Sunday assignment is inconvenient**

- *Timing on when we receive questions & when they are due isn't convenient* 80%
- "Sunday morning homeworks (question 1): getting questions on Thurs. is too late, and like them on Tues instead; 9am on Sunday deadline is a burden, would like them due on Sunday night

### **Some concern about grading system**

- *Seems like one really bad grade can pull your grade down a lot* 60%
- "one poor response pulls down grade too much" [3]

### **Additional comments:**

- *Would prefer to see other people's posts since that helps me better understand the question* 30%
- "Reggio Emilia day: didn't come away with deep understanding of school; too many papers in thought museum" [2]
- "less flexibility of reflections on personal experience" [2]
- "mostly early ed/elementary school ideas" [2]