

Student Evaluations

“Ben,

I have already filled out the course evaluation, but I wanted to send a personal email as well. Up until you sent the most recent announcement, I had no idea this was your first time teaching, and I would have had no idea based on the way you ran the class.

I thoroughly enjoyed your class from start to finish. You didn't shy away from controversial topics and you made me think harder than I ever have about topics like morality. I loved that the writing assignments forced me to come up with my own opinions on things. In class, I think you had a really good balance of lecturing and hearing our own opinions. You made having to walk from Wildwood to Diffenbaugh three times a week worth it.

I just wanted to tell you that I really enjoyed your class and I feel like I learned a lot.”

–[Redacted]

“Benjamin Hause is an absolute legend. Not only does he look like a young Keanu Reeves, but his laid back and relaxed manner made this class seem fun and entertaining. Allowing students to openly ask questions and reject certain philosophies allowed for some intense debates and hot takes during class that really made the class much more enjoyable. Ben made the topic of philosophy, something that could easily be seen as boring, into something fun with his lecture slides featuring memes, jokes, and clear and easily understandable material.”

–Anonymous

This document summarizes student feedback from the courses I have taught. First, I provide a table summarizing my overall ratings as an instructor. Second, I provide a summary of the qualitative feedback I have received from students.

<i>Summary of Quantitative Feedback.....</i>	<i>p. 2</i>
<i>Summary of Qualitative Feedback.....</i>	<i>p. 3-5</i>

Summary of Quantitative Feedback

Question: Overall rating for Benjamin Haise from Poor (1) to Excellent (5)

	Benjamin Haise	Philosophy Department Average	University Average
<i>Fall 2023,</i> Environmental Ethics, PHI 2620	4.55	4.17	4.34
<i>Fall 2021,</i> Introduction to Philosophy, PHI 2010	4.10	4.03	4.33
<i>Spring 2020,</i> Introduction to Philosophy, PHI 2010	4.24	4.07	4.36

My ratings, in bold, are above the relevant department averages. My most recent course is my most highly rated. The introductory philosophy classes were large lecture halls (100-150 students); the environmental ethics class was smaller (45 students). The majority of students in all three classes were non-philosophy majors. All three courses satisfy the university's general "Ethics" requirement.

The Spring 2020 class was taught in person, as normal, except for the last few weeks. The Fall 2021 class had the option of watching lecture recordings instead of coming to class, though the course was not officially listed as a "hybrid" course. The Fall 2023 class was a normal, in-person class.

You can find the full reports for each class here:

[Student Evaluations Public Folder](#)

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1O37-YRxtP5d1zSp_IExqRjgk0CdPil9f?usp=sharing

Summary of Qualitative Feedback

In my experience, I have found it difficult to parse and draw conclusions from curated lists of qualitative student feedback. So, I am trying a different tack. Rather than enumerate a selection of student feedback, I have instead summarized *all* the course feedback I have ever received, both positive and negative, through 2022. Well, actually, that would be too difficult for me to do. So, I enlisted an artificial intelligence to do it for me. I used the AI tool Vault, which is designed to analyze large volumes of text. It is powered at the back end by OpenAI's GPT4. I asked Vault to summarize all of the student feedback I have ever received—uncurated, unedited, from all sources, positive or negative, through the year 2022. In particular, I gave Vault this prompt:

Prompt: The copied text contains all of my student feedback in no particular order. Please provide big picture summary of my student feedback. What does it say about me as a teacher? Do not prioritize positive or negative feedback.

You'll find the results below. The raw input data—that is, all of my student feedback from all sources through 2022—is available in the public folder linked above.

Two points will help to contextualize the generated results. First, the input does not include feedback from my most recent two courses in which I began employing in-class group work. I expect this to be a permanent fixture of my future courses, class size-permitting. This helps to address one of the stated areas of improvement. In general I have learned a lot over the course of my teaching and I'm excited to redo this analysis with my most recent student feedback. Second, one of the courses was taught during the pandemic. During this time, I provided video recordings of my lectures as a courtesy to my students. However, now that the pandemic is over, I no longer provide this accommodation. (I do not want to disincentivize my students from coming to class!)

Without further ado, here is over 30 pages of student feedback, summarized:

Summary of Student Feedback for Benjamin Hause as a Teacher:

- **Overall Teaching Skills:**
 - Students appreciate Benjamin Hause's teaching style and find his lectures engaging and informative.
 - He is praised for his ability to explain complex concepts in a way that is easy to understand.

- Students appreciate his use of relatable examples and real-life applications of philosophical theories.
- Benjamin Hause encourages open discussion and debate in class, allowing students to voice their opinions and learn from different perspectives.
- **Effective Instructional Methods:**
 - Students find the study guides provided before tests helpful for exam preparation.
 - The breakdown of writing assignments is appreciated, as it helps students understand the requirements and expectations.
 - Lectures are in-depth, cover exam material, and are easy to follow.
 - Class material is uploaded for individual review, and optional readings are provided for further exploration of topics.
 - Live recordings of lectures are useful for reviewing content.
- **Positive Classroom Environment:**
 - Benjamin Hause creates a positive and inclusive classroom environment where students feel comfortable expressing their opinions.
 - Students appreciate his willingness to answer questions and provide feedback.
 - The use of humor in class is praised for making the learning experience more enjoyable.
- **Areas for Improvement:**
 - Some students suggest providing clearer instructions for writing assignments.
 - A few students mention that discussions can sometimes go on for too long, causing loss of interest.
 - A few students suggest incorporating more class activities or interactive elements to enhance engagement.
 - Some students find the pace of lectures fast and suggest posting lecture slides in advance.
- **Positive Personal Qualities:**
 - Benjamin Hause is described as kind, attentive, and understanding.

- Students appreciate his quick responses to emails and availability for one-on-one discussions.
- He is commended for being approachable and creating a relaxed and stress-free learning environment.
- **Overall Feedback:**
 - Students express a high level of satisfaction with Benjamin Hause as a professor.
 - The majority of students find the course interesting and enjoyable.
 - They appreciate the opportunity to explore various philosophical topics and engage in thought-provoking discussions.
 - Students express gratitude for the effort he puts into teaching and creating a positive learning experience.