

CrCrTh 670, Thinking, Learning, and Computers, Spring 2018 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.

- All in all, this course had clearly defined goals, clearly defined subjects and assignments, and would always give the necessary time to complete each assignment. Each subject covered a different aspect of both technology and critical thinking, and as the course went on, I learned more and more about how technology has been a great help in many sections of society. The instructor was very easy-going and easy to meet with and understand, and not once was I ever confused about what was required of me. This course is both fun and easy to dive into, and I personally found the work in both the assignments and the Expert Project to be very informative and engaging.
- If you want to evaluate your relationship with technology, and develop principles that help you devise a framework for how you, your family, your work and your community work with emerging digital technologies then this is a great place to start. I think that one thing would be to stress the dialogue process at the start of each lesson - as we are doing it all online you need new techniques to talk and learn online. Overall content - I would have liked less reading - there were a few key articles that were great and I would have preferred more time to read them rather than having to quickly read lots of material, much of which I probably could have done without.
- This has been one of few courses I've taken that I'd like to repeat. It is occasionally taxing of your time and ego, but all for the better.
- This course sets itself a huge task, given how much the digital world has changed in a short time, and given the changes that lie ahead. As experienced with my specific cohort, the structure and content led to major rethinking of assumptions and an almost universal development of a set of personal ethics around digital literacy. I can imagine that this might not happen with every version of the course. Despite the constraints of working online, my team enjoyed the three collaborative wiki projects and, I think, produced good work. There were weeks with multiple different kinds of assignments, and that was a little hard to manage (read articles, post to slow dialogue book club, work on expert project, etc). The progression of the units made curricular sense. We did not use mentors to support the learning in this course.
- "Using the internet has become as second-nature as inhalation and exhalation, it seems. This course helps you unpack the complexities surrounding life and learning in a digital age. You will explore many interesting topics and be given plenty of space to have conversations with

your classmates about these topics. The freedom offered to you in your expert project (where you explore some related theme that you find particularly interesting) is very liberating and also a little intimidating.

- The instructor is very thoughtful, and respectful, and in conversation I never felt like they had an agenda (the class feels like a really safe space to say what you're thinking). The technology supporting the class has very few glitches and I found it quite user friendly. I learned a lot in this class, and themes discussed contributed to me seeking a career change and creating a project I will continue to work on after finishing the class. Solid A!"
- I enjoyed the class as a whole (4.5 out of 5). The hybrid formate made it less formal which promoted a more relaxed environment that i believe encouraged more critical and creative thinking. I felt challenged in my thinking and liked the blend of individual, group and collaborative activities/ assignments. I would be interested to see if this class would be able to have a guest speaker form another institution or an alumni.. etc.
- I found this course very relevant to our lives today. We are living in an age of ever changing technology, but do we ever stop to think critically about these new developments. This course allowed students to open their eyes to the positives and negatives of technology and how they affect us in our daily lives. It was great that this course allowed us to explore all views so that we could have a well-rounded image. This course included a lot of group collaboration, which allowed us to work with students who may be different than us. These projects took some additional scheduling and meeting because we were all online. It helps to be organized and use apps such as slack to communicate quickly. Also, for the expert project it is important to work on an exhibit for the project each week and develop each from there. Make sure to gather sources and information from all sides of the argument to stimulate creative thinking.