

CrCrTh 694, Spring 2017, Synthesis of Theory and Practice 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 the text of questions 1-3 by choosing any evaluation from this page: <http://cct.wikispaces.umb.edu/CourseEvaluations>.

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.

- This course is an opportunity to put all of the skills acquired during the CCT program to the service of the thing that is most central to yourself. All of the courses have been helpful in different ways but this is where you can put it all together and feel that you have accomplished something.
- Working with a professor who pushes you to be a better version of yourself through reflection is what this course is all about. Oh and by the way, you get to research and write about something important to you at the same time.
- I think that over all I think that this course is a great course. I have learned so much and the instructor is really helpful.
- While I initially wasn't a fan of the course starting to meet a month before the semester officially started, I am grateful that we did because I can only imagine the amount of stress I would be under right now. It was good to have us start reflecting and thinking about our synthesis because I feel like that's what really takes the majority of the time. I appreciated the focus on daily/weekly writing logs although it became a bit cumbersome to keep up with after while. Because we met with our writing groups every week, I felt that was a better accountability system for me to continue writing over the semester. I also appreciated as with many classes the reflective dialogue we would engage in about the writing process. It was helpful to hear where my classmates were in the process and also talk through ideas or challenges we were having or even shared as part of the writing process. Overall I enjoyed the class and feel that I have a direction to work towards well after I finish.
- The design of our weekly meetings may seem to some to start off may seem a little intimidating in that we are the ones steering our own learning but soon become comfortable and natural. I feel that this course did help me learn how to maintain learning outside of the program. Having a support group is crucial to developing as a learner. Support groups helped me to maintain motivation for my project and helped see my work from a different perspective.
- This synthesis course offers students the opportunity to design and implement a project on a topic of their own choosing. This flexibility and responsibility allows each student to find their own voice and become their own advocate for the work they are doing and the change they want to make. The small class size and focus on dialogue allows the class to develop into a

very cohesive and supportive group, which can be incredibly helpful when doing a significant research project and/or deep reflective work. The professor is always available for support and guidance but the onus is on the student to leverage the tools and skills learned within the program, to self-motivate, and to lead the project where you'd like it to go. This is by design as this course is meant to prepare students to continue this type of work on their own going forward. This can be challenging, and at times exhausting, but also very rewarding as you see your project take shape, gain confidence in your work, and discover more insights about yourself and the work you are driven to do. Overall I highly recommend this course as a capstone to the overall CCT program.