

Summary of Teaching Evaluations

MARY NICKEL

As indicated on my CV, I have served as an Assistant in Instruction for two courses: Ethics and Public Policy in Fall of 2017 with Stephen Macedo and Christian Ethics and Modern Society in Fall of 2019 with Eric Gregory.

As an assistant instructor, I led a fifty minute discussion section weekly for two sections for each course. I held office hours weekly, and offered additional one-on-one conferences in the weeks before essays were due. I also graded exams and essays. Additionally, I was asked to serve as head assistant instructor by Stephen Macedo in Fall 2017, which meant that I had additional administrative duties for the course.

The following table identifies the scores I received as an Assistant Instructor. Further information about my student evaluations is available on request.

	Score I received	Average score for AIs in the course	Average AI score at Princeton that semester
WWS 370: Ethics and Public Policy Section 5 (Fall 2017)	4.56	4.22	4.01
WWS 370: Ethics and Public Policy Section 8 (Fall 2017)	4.80	4.22	4.01
REL 261: Christian Ethics and Modern Society Section 1 (Fall 2019)	4.55	4.28	4.04
REL 261: Christian Ethics and Modern Society Section 2 (Fall 2019)	4.56	4.28	4.04

Comments from Evaluations

Several themes emerge from the evaluations I received. First, students repeatedly assert that I helped them to understand the material in new ways. Second, students share that they found me accessible when they need additional help preparing for an exam or essay. Third, students note my teaching style is engaging and included all students in discussion. Several students claimed that I was the best preceptor they had had at Princeton.

[*Note: at Princeton discussion sections are usually called “precepts,” and Assistant Instructors are usually called “preceptors.”*]

WWS 370: ETHICS AND PUBLIC POLICY SECTION 5 (FALL 2017)

- Mary was great – really knowledgeable, approachable, and energetic.
- Mary's non-linear structures, contrasting with reading and lecture, really helped sell the material.
- She's great in getting us engaged.

"[Mary] is by far one of the best, if not the best, preceptor I've had in my four years at Princeton."

- The discussions in precept really helped me prepare for exams and clarify confusing topics. We were able to relate these to hypothetical scenarios and truly have an environment where we could build off of each other's ideas and learn from each other.
- This was the best precept that I have participated in while at Princeton.
- Mary was very helpful, flexible, and understanding. I really enjoyed precept with her.
- I really appreciated the level of detail my preceptor Mary went into [in her comments on assignments], and how approachable and available she made herself for questions

WWS 370: ETHICS AND PUBLIC POLICY SECTION 8 (FALL 2017)

- Mary is the best preceptor I have had at Princeton. She always made herself available for specific questions and concerns and she did an excellent job of instructing precept. She created a great balance of group discussion/participation and teaching that helped solidify concepts from lectures/readings.
- Mary was very accessible and was fun to talk to when going over the papers.
- I thought Mary was an amazing preceptor, very accessible, always available and ready to talk.
- Mary was an excellent preceptor who helped us grasp a better understand of the material and was willing to spend precept on anything that we, the class, needed help with. She was incredibly supportive of all of our ideas and encouraged us to speak up in every class
- Mary was fantastic as a preceptor. She often gave interesting activities that allowed for a further extension of learning. She allowed all students to voice any concerns or questions. I believe that all students in the precept were able to participate and were able to learn more as an effect of the precept.

REL 261: CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND MODERN SOCIETY SECTION 1 (FALL 2019)

- Precept discussions were very good thanks to Mary.
- Mary was a phenomenal preceptor! I so appreciated how thoughtfully she framed each of our conversations, and she endeavored to know everyone in our rather large precept. She often prepared rubrics/ questions/ activities that helped catalyze conversation.
- Mary was good! Very earnest and knowledgeable [*sic*], and seemed really invested in our success and wanted to help us.
- Mary is wonderful. She is kind, enthusiastic, and very knowledgeable. She let our conversations flow and breathe, she is so great.
- Mary was wonderful! She led such an interesting precept and she is so lovely and supportive. She has been my favorite preceptor at Princeton yet!

"[Mary] always attempted to incorporate diverse voices and frequently prepared creative activities that allowed us to engage with the material"

- Precepts with Mary were wonderful and very inclusive. She always attempted to incorporate diverse voices and frequently prepared creative activities that allowed us to engage with the material presented in readings and lectures more dynamically.
- This is the second time I've had Mary as a preceptor and all I can say is I'm so glad I got to have her as a preceptor a second time. Her enthusiasm for material covered in class is contagious and she never failed to animate discussion in precept with her questions, thought experiments, and mock debates. She is by far one of the best, if not the best, preceptor I've had in my four years at Princeton.
- Precepts with Mary were great! She tries her best to explain tough concepts in a new, fun way. She was also great at encouraging student discussion during precepts.
- Mary was a fantastic preceptor. She was super engaging
- I thought Mary's precepts were amazing ... Mary's energy was infectious, and the way we discussed practical applications of the philosophical ideas we learned about in lecture was excellent. Mary was probably the most responsive to questions, opinions, and criticism I've ever experienced with a preceptor. She was just also so encouraging, even when I was having difficulty with the class.
- Precepts were conducted in a very helpful manner and clarified important or difficult topics. Mary encouraged and gave the chance for everybody to speak. She was lively and put in a lot of effort to make precept interesting and make us think about topics in new ways. This effort paid off. She was also very receptive and understanding to all questions, comments, and opinions.

"Mary was probably the most responsive to questions, opinions, and criticism I've ever experienced with a preceptor."

Improvements based on student feedback

While an AI in Fall 2017, I had students develop clarificatory and critical questions and initiate a discussion on a Facebook-like educational website called Edmodo. Some students found the process of posting and responding to others' posts unproductive. As such, I changed the format of the weekly assignments so that students instead were directed to contribute to a collaborative study chart. I received positive feedback about this approach.

Note: as noted on my CV, I also served as a teaching assistant while a graduate student at Illinois State University, including several sections of Citizenship & Governance, American Political Thought, Introduction to the Politics of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Quantitative Reasoning in Political Science, and Introduction to International Relations. However, I do not have teaching evaluations for my work in these courses.