# University of Victoria

## UVic CES Instructor Report - Erin McGuire - THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF DEATH - ANTH 397 - A01 (CRN 20098)

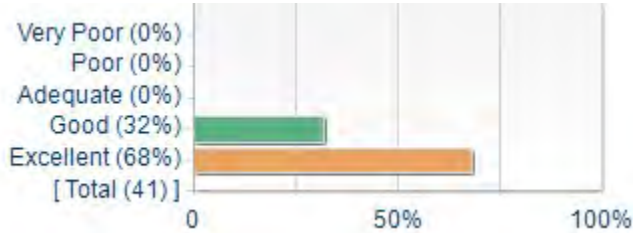### UVic Course Experience Survey - Fall 2014/Spring 2015

Project Audience 49
Responses Received 41
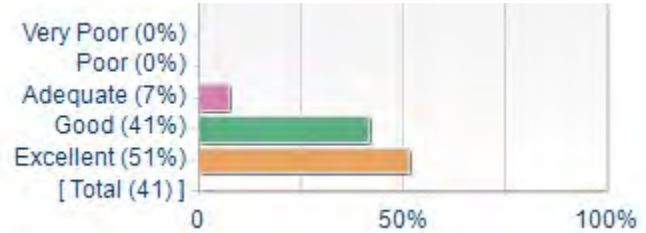Response Ratio 84%

**Creation Date**  Sat, May 30, 2015

# I Instructor's Teaching - Students' Ratings on the Following Statements:
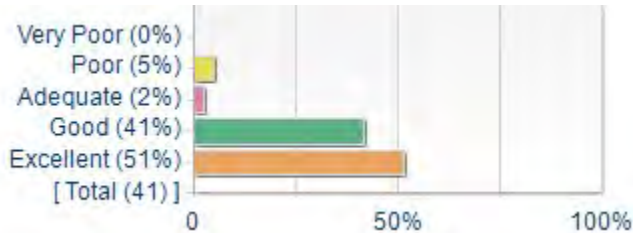
### 1. The instructor was prepared for course sessions



| Statistics | Value |
| --- | --- |
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.68 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.47 |

### 2. The instructor's explanations of concepts were clear



| Statistics | Value |
| --- | --- |
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.44 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.63 |

### 3. The instructor motivated you to learn in this course



| Statistics | Value |
| --- | --- |
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.39 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.77 |

### 4. The instructor was available to answer your questions or provide extra assistance as required
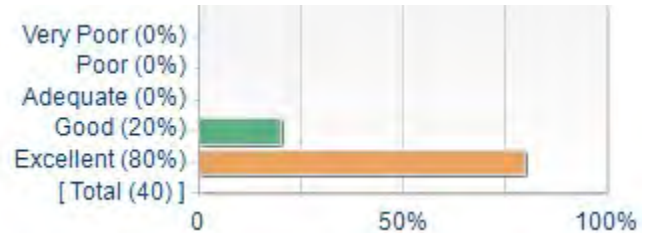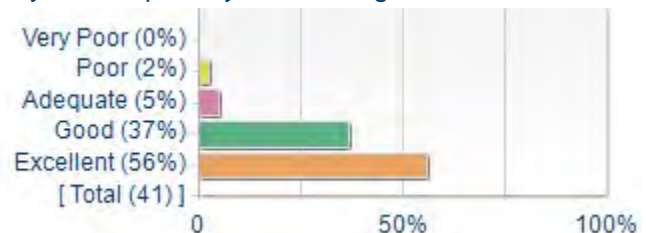


| Statistics | Value |
| --- | --- |
| Response Count | 40 |
| Mean | 4.80 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.41 |

### 5. The instructor ensured that your assignments and tests were returned within a reasonable time
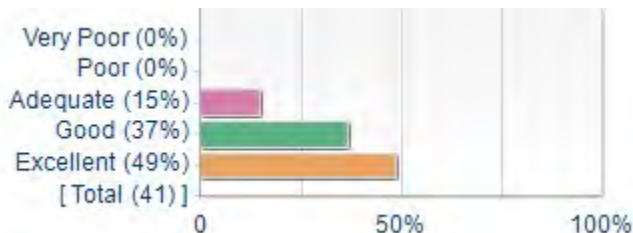


| Statistics | Value |
| --- | --- |
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.34 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.73 |

### 6. The instructor was helpful in providing feedback to you to improve your learning in this course
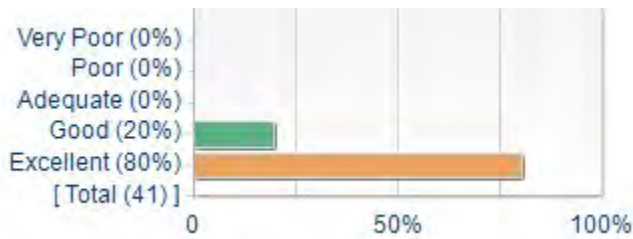


| Statistics | Value |
| --- | --- |
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.46 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.71 |

7. The instructor demonstrated respect for

8. Overall, the instructor was effective in this

students and their ideas



| Statistics | Value |
|---|---|
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.80 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.40 |

course
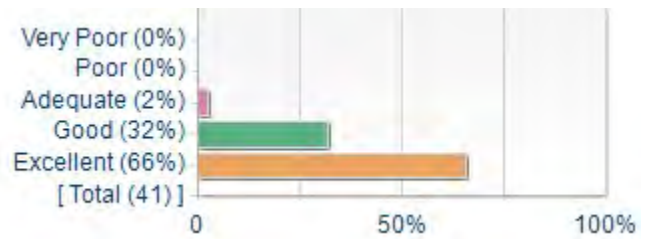


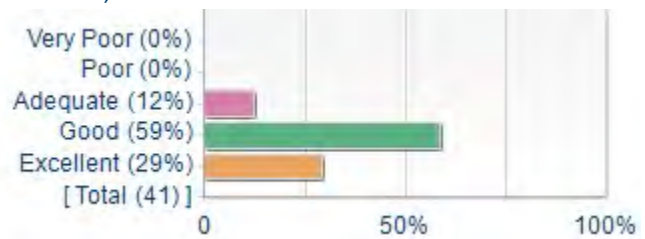| Statistics | Value |
|---|---|
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.63 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.54 |

## II Course Design - Students' Ratings on the Following Statements:

1. The course structure, goals and requirements were clear
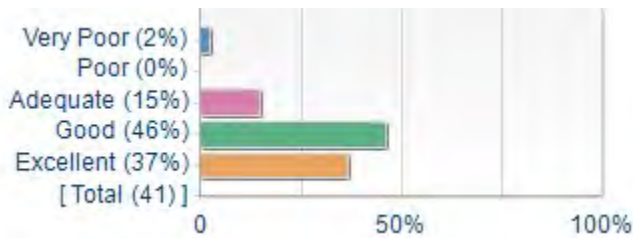


| Statistics | Value |
|---|---|
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.15 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.85 |

2. The materials provided for learning the course content (e.g. handouts, posted material, lab manuals) were clear



| Statistics | Value |
|---|---|
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.17 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.63 |

3. The assigned work helped your understanding of the course content
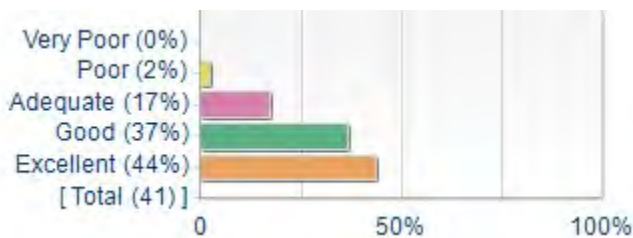


| Statistics | Value |
|---|---|
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.22 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.82 |

4. The course provided opportunities for you to become engaged with the course material, for example through class discussions, group work, student presentations, on-line chat, or experiential learning
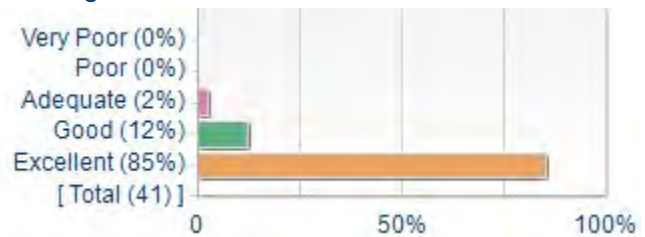


| Statistics | Value |
|---|---|
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.83 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.44 |

## 5. The methods of assessment used to evaluate your learning in the course were fair

Very Poor (0%)
Poor (5%)
Adequate (10%)
Good (51%)
Excellent (34%)
[ Total (41) ]
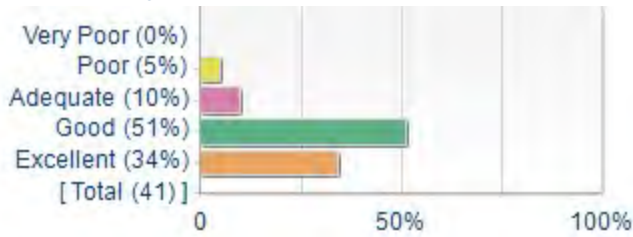
| Statistics | Value |
|---|---|
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.15 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.79 |

## 6. The course provided relevant skills and information (e.g. to other courses, your future career, or other contexts)

Very Poor (0%)
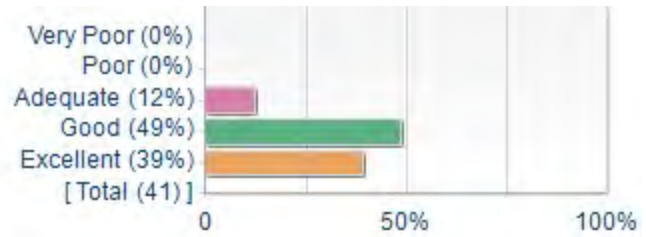Poor (0%)
Adequate (12%)
Good (49%)
Excellent (39%)
[ Total (41) ]

| Statistics | Value |
|---|---|
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.27 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.67 |

## 7. Overall, the course offered an effective learning experience

Very Poor (0%)
Poor (2%)
Adequate (5%)
Good (39%)
Excellent (54%)
[ Total (41) ]
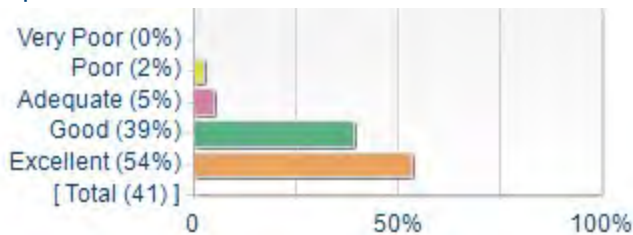
| Statistics | Value |
|---|---|
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.44 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.71 |

# III Statements About The Students:

## My primary reason for taking the course.

Interest (21)
Program requirement (9)
Reputation of Instructor (8)
Reputation of course (2)
Timetable fit (1)
[ Total (41) ]
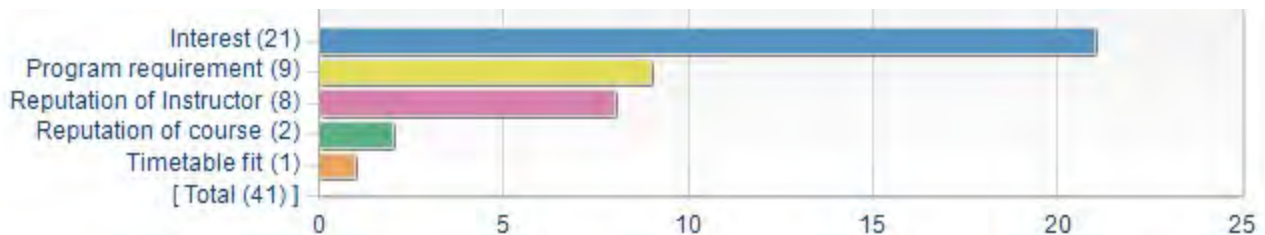
## The approximate number of classes or labs that I did not attend

Missed fewer than 3 (18)
Missed 3-10 (20)
Missed 11-20 (0)
Missed more than 20 (0)
[ Total (38) ]
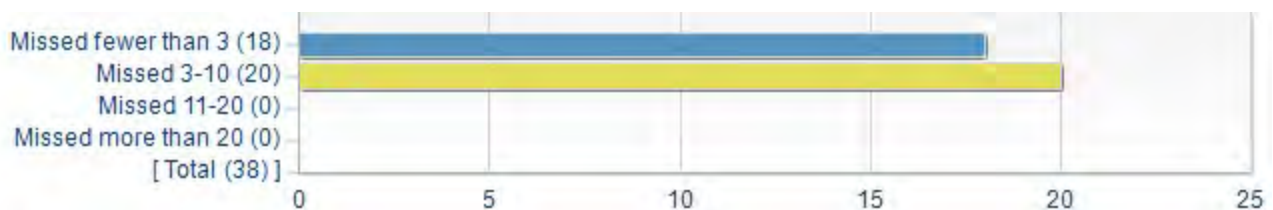
## Relative to other courses I have taken at UVic, the workload in this course was
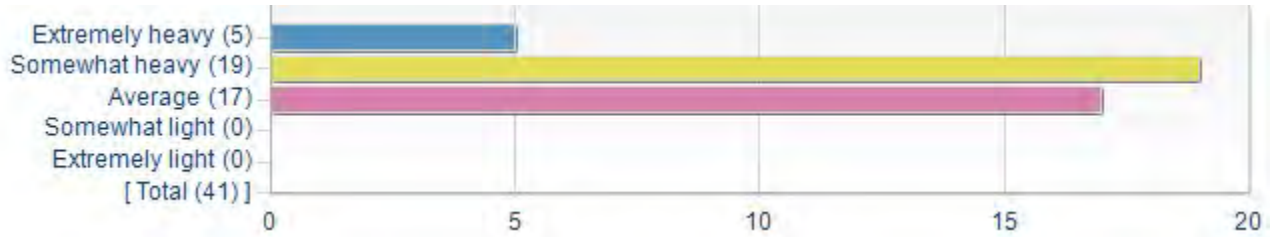


## The approximate number of hours per week I spent studying for this course outside of class time:
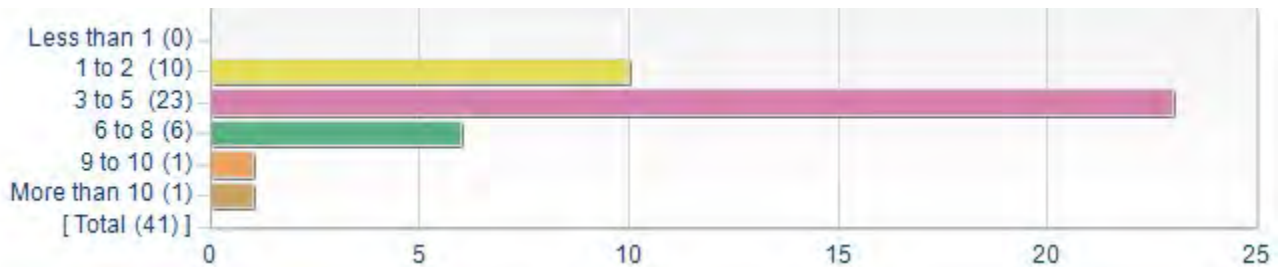


## As a result of my experience in this course, my interest in the material:
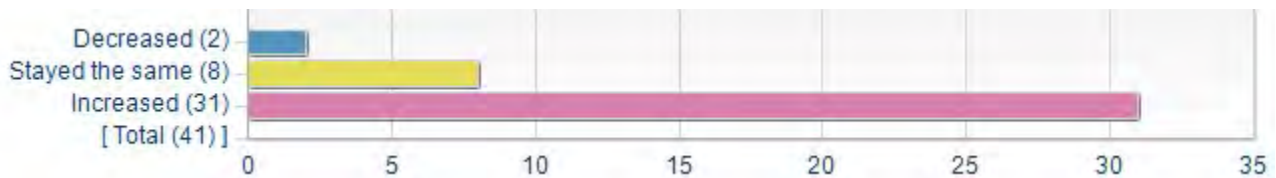


# IV Additional Statments:

## How would you characterize the general quality of the lectures?
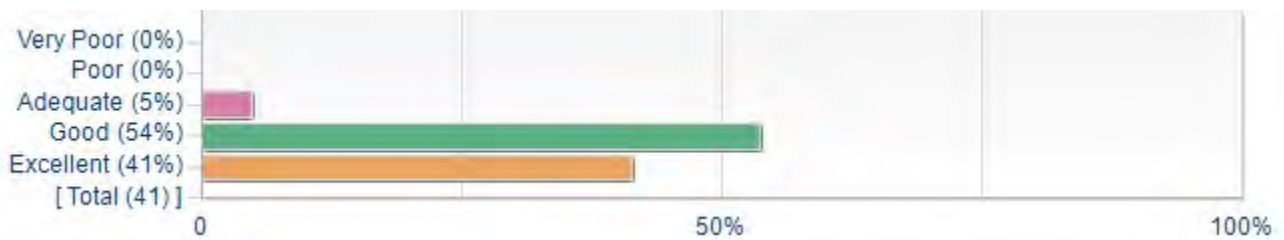


| Statistics | Value |
|---|---|
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.37 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.58 |

## Describe how well the examinations reflected important aspects of the course.
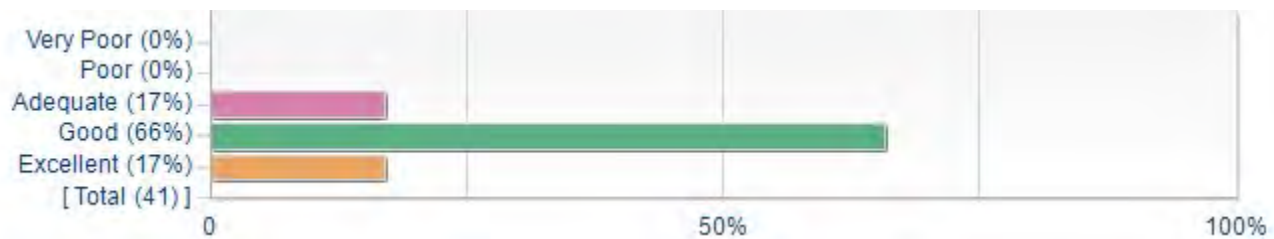
| Statistics | Value |
|---|---|
| Response Count | 41 |
| Mean | 4.00 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.59 |

# IIV Student Comments:

### What strengths did your instructor (Erin McGuire) demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?

| Comment |
| --- |
| She was always super enthusiastic about the material, and gave really clear explanations, and covered both interesting and important topics. |
| Erin was open and prepared, and expressed an interest in the students success in the course |
| Very enthusiastic and hard working. Well prepared for class. Has a strong outline of what the class will be doing through out the term. |
| Lectures were very interesting and easy to follow. Dr. McGuire has good sense of humour and is enthusiastic about what she is teaching which makes class enjoyable. She is very accommodating to students and happy to help when you need it. |
| Class participation and discussions. Great feedback on assignments and always checking in to see how students are doing with the workload |
| Erin was and continues to be great. She is very knowledgeable and loves what she teaches. One of my favourite Anthropology professors. |
| SHe was very enthusiastic about the course material and made the classes interesting and worth getting up early for! She was helpful when we needed questions answered and listened to students ideas. |
| She was very knowledgeable and open to questions. She also made the course very communicative and gave students the opportunity to interact with eachother and the course work. |
| Exceptional understanding of the course material and a willingness to provide extra help for those that requested it. |
| Probably one of the best professors I have had here at UVIC. This class was a great introduction to the anthropology department here. She is smart, precise, passionate, and approachable which makes learning happen because the student wants to, not because of program requirements. The class was interesting, the discussions were excellent and the environment which Erin created with her students was amazing. Highly impressed and look forward to taking more classes with her. |
| she is well versed in the subject and was enthusiastic when teaching it |
| Dr. McGuire is an enthusiastic and engaged professor, she has been very open to meeting outside of class time if there were students who needed help or who wanted to further discuss something we covered in class. Dr. McGuire's passion for the topic translated into interesting lectures with readings that were relevant and used in in class discussions rather than just supplementary. |
| Professor is passionate about course material which makes the lectures interesting and engaging. |
| I really enjoyed the first assignment where we learned the basics of data manipulation using the Access database system. I thought this was a very relevant and important skill and I am happy to have some experience with this. |
| She was very supportive of the students and was always keen to help. She was very enthusiastic about the material she was teaching and that made the class even more enjoyable. She also had lots of experience dealing with this type of material, making it all the more engaging. |
| She was really helpful when I went and talked to her in office hours about my term project. She provided lots of advice and recommended numerous article to read. |
| Erin was very passionate about Archaeology of Death which made it more interesting to learn. She was very helpful to provide lots of feed back. Awesome Professor! |
| Erin allows the class to engage with the material and creates an interest in the subject and in anthropology in general |
| She is very clear and easy to talk to. |
| Erin is an amazing lecturer, and gives great assignments that really reflect what we're learning. |
| Passion and enthusiasm |
| She provided amazing feedback and multiple out of class and out of office hours to just talk with her students, which |

increased my interest in the course material. She also promoted flexibility during group projects, which was a lifesaver because of my insanely busy schedule. Erin rocks!

She enjoys the subject and brought that to all of the classes. Very knowledgeable and has personal experience in the subject area which made classes enjoyable.

Erin was always ready and willing to give constructive feedback and available for help when needed.

Erin knows what she is talking about. She is approachable, funny, and super on point. The structure of the class really makes you stay on track and interactive with the material.

She is always amazing, such a good prof. She is so engaging and makes you want to actually attend lectures

Dr McGuire is a wonderful professor, she's very passionate about her field which makes learning from her very interesting and easy. She has a lot of respect for her students and it is very easy to approach her and talk to her. Thank you!

Very passionate and engaging. Lots of hands on experience. I really engaged with this course. I do have some things to nitpick, but I want to stress that this was a really good course and I enjoyed it very much.

very passionate

She is very clear in her teaching and provides plenty of examples in different formats to make sure that all learning styles understand the material. She is also readily available for questions and help if it is needed and is easy to approach.

Erin is passionate about the subject.

Erin is a very engaging prof who respects her students. It is because of this that you do not feel pressured in any way and are able to fully engage in her class.

Using case studies to help give context to concepts

Flexibility for group projects

very engaging and interesting, eager to teach, good at choosing interesting case studies

Very passionate and knowledgable. Very helpful in her free time. Nice person in general so she's easy to approach with questions or requirements uncertainties. Always has a good attitude (even when deathly ill) and that makes students want to engage. Great prof, maybe best at UVic because she genuinely cares for her students as individuals

Enthusiasm for the subject. lots of examples used to demonstrate her points, use of many different types of technology/skills in assignments, use of the public memorial assignment was a great chance to use our learning in a practical way

I like that the class seems to focus the assignments around technology and media. It is nice that this class is embracing the change in how information is relayed to the world.

## Please provide specific instructions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.

| Comment |
| --- |
| The readings (though very relevant to study) are overwhelming |
| Less jargon filled articles that were difficult for beginners. |
| I think the coursespaces page could have been organized a little better. I found it difficult to find assignment guidelines on occasion. |
| Some of the in class activities seemed to be a bit of a waste of time and I would have preferred a bit more of a focused lecture. For instance, the day we were supposed to bring in pictures/markers to plan our assignment was fairly pointless. |
| A few quizzes would have personally helped motivate me to complete the readings, but as its a third year course, that motivation should come from within. Quizzes would have been easier than coursespaces forums, in my opinion. |
| could have had more material/lectures and better assignments that actually reflected what we learned, i didn't particularly feel that the monument analysis or the group project helped me express my knowledge of archaeology of death at all, maybe exams would be better for this kind of course |
| The forum posts were a useful tool, but easy to forget, if there was a way to set up on course spaces a reminder to |

do them, that would be helpful.

It would have helped to go over more concepts rather than so many specific case studies.

The forum assignments and what exactly was needed from the students (ie correct citations, length, amount of time spent working on them, and how many of each type) should have been explain clearly within the first week of school rather than at random points throughout the first month and half after students had already done several posts. Also the grade percentages for assignments In comparison to the workload seemed disproportionate. The cemetery group analysis was only worth 10% but was a huge amount of work which was frustrating as it didn't seem worth it for such a small part of our grade. Overall the workload of this class seemed too heavy, we have four other classes we are also trying to be successful in.

Have a midterm, I learn more by having to memorize things.

Erin taught everything very well! Nothing to suggest.

I would have prefered less group work time and more lecture. I felt the group work time was not necessary. I did like the in class activities though, discussions are always helpful.

While I loved getting in groups for the projects, I would have liked to change things up, and try working with other people on different projects.

I think she's doing an amazing job, and she's improving the courses in her own way even as the semester rolls on.

Some of the assignments seemed confusing at times (assignment guidelines spread all over coursespaces).

Clearer marking errors

Erin was so well organized, almost too organized to the point that the course was categorized and segmented into a difficult-to-follow way.

Everything was great!

The rubrics were not at all an effective way of expressing your expectations. One value to another is very subjective, please re-think them, it was quite stressful trying to guess what would meet these criteria or not. I got a lot of mixed messages about the forum assignments. On the one hand you and Fionn would stress not to spend hours on the posts but on the other hand the two of you had very high standards about citations and content, I was intimidated and confused by it.

Nothing.

Less time needs to be spent in lectures going over project requirements. Details can be posted online where students can access them. We don't need to talk about the projects / forums every class. This is a 300 level course, we don't need to go over in detail what kinship and gender on. Too much time wasted on things like this.

Some of the readings I found were unimportant to the course.

Maybe if we had some more guest speakers, they're always pretty insightful.

Clearer instructions/expectations for assignments

I found that some of the assignment instructions were unclear, with some ambiguous information that was hard to find out exactly what you wanted from it or how to do it.

## Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.

| Comment |
| --- |
| Decrease the number of readings slightly? There's a lot of coursework in this one, and it can be hard to keep up with the readings on top of the weekly forum assignments and the larger group projects. |
| Perhaps less emphasis on readings? |
| Please have a more detailed outline of what is required for the forum assignments. It felt like we only really knew what we to do after we did them wrong. |
| The readings were a little too extensive, with 2-3 readings every week that can be up to 25 pages on top of readings for 4 other classes makes it very difficult to stay caught up. The forums were a good way to keep people motivated to participate, but I felt they were a little stressful and ambiguous in marking. |
| Longer class hours. Squishing topics in a small time frame feels a bit rushed and leaves less time for discussions |
| The forum assignments could have been more clear as to how you were marking us. The rubric was posted after we had submitted one or two and sometimes the forum would close early which was a cause of frustration. Also, it might be nice to have an easy to check form telling us how many forum assignments we have done and what |

categories they were. In general, just take a look at the forum assignment and tweek it a bit.

Maybe put the course files and assessment area in the same spot, or move the course files up to the top so it is easier to access? I often found I couldn't find the information I was looking for.

The forums and there criteria need to be laid out better. I found that I had to spend way too much time on them for the marks that they're worth and I still wasn't sure if I was doing enough. For a student with 5 classes the forums can be a bit of a burden.

Remove the intentionally vague notion of "exceeds expectations" for purposes of marks; this does not help the students in anyway. "Exceeds expectations" does not gauge a students understanding of the material, all it does is create a hidden and arbitrary set of requirements to every submission that determines the students mark, it only serves to punish those that follow the instructions, requirements, and criteria of assignments.

For a personal preference, a quiz or two on readings or discussions. Other than that, the course was excellent all around. Really enjoyed it. Thank you Erin!

though i understand why the teacher did it, i did not enjoy the hand holding throughout the semester with each of our projects, felt more like i was in high school than in a third level university course, there was too much emphasis on the projects and preparing for them than there was on the learning, overall i don't feel i learned much more about archaeology of death than before i took the class

The guest lecture about field schools, though it was interesting, wasn't as relevant in what it covered than it could have been to the course content at the time that the lecture was given.

The work load in this course was quite a lot compared to my other classes and it was sometimes difficult to keep on top of everything.

Perhaps instead of two large group projects, take one out and make a midterm exam or an individual project. Te group projects near the end of term are very hard time wise to complete as everyone in the group has many things on the go and it's very hard to get meet and make sure everyone can put in equal effort

It would be nice if we had to complete less forums.

All was well done and I think the course was good and interesting

Perhaps integrate the readings more into the lectures or discussions, they felt a little pointless and there are a lot of them.

Nothing much really. I was a little frustrated at how much work the monument analysis took, while it was worth very little.

Possible in class time to work on group projects, would only need one lecture.

It would also help to have time deadlines for forums listed (errors in the first half of the forum end times)

There seemed to be a disconnect between the lectures and the assignments although I did find both informative.

I am unsure how it could be improved because it is so well formulated. The only this is that on course spaces, everything is categorized so much that I never really know where to find everything. but it was great.

The course content was quite interesting, but most of the examples centered around Europe since Dr. McGuire specializes in Saxon and Viking burials. Perhaps more information and examples from around the world and different cultural contexts could improve the content and allow students to have a broader understanding of the relationship between the living and the dead. I find that European burial traditions tend to be overemphasized in anthropology, and it would have been really interesting to learn something new from other belief systems and paradigms.

I liked pretty much everything about this class. Normally it's not the case with Dr McGuire's classes but I found with this one that it took a very long time to get anything graded and returned, which wasn't super good. The monument project was fun and it was nice to explore real fieldwork! Not quite as fond of the digital archaeology project, I think I would have preferred a poster, but that's just my personal opinion - everything was good other than that!

I would strongly recommend you reorganize the course spaces page it was difficult to find information. Ideally one place for each project. As it is now things are spread out under the weekly category, course files, the intro page, an assessment page. I spent 20 minutes looking for the guidelines for an assignment. I can understand the layout of the page now, but at the beginning of the course it was extremely confusing.

I would suggest making a change to the 6 forum posts that we did. The idea is good, but with a full course load it is very easy to forget about them or to put other work ahead of them. Either taking them out or changing them to be small comprehension paragraphs/essays with a bit more weight might make them a bit more effective.

Was hoping subject material would extend beyond europe

Less emphasis on the online portion. This class is already very work heavy and both me and my group struggled to complete the online component.

While I understand that why group work is important, I don't think it's fair to have such a large part of the course mark based on the group projects. If someone gets stuck with bad partners, it can easily ruin their grade. That being said, Dr. McGuire mase it clear that she was willing to help out any groups that were struggling, etc.

Nothing really, great course

Readings were hard to keep up with for someone with a full course load and family/work commitments (although they were really interesting), forum assignment had tech issues that made it frustrating

There is a large amount of reading for this class, and I am worried about the take-home final, as I have heard that it includes all of the readings from the entire semester. Readings are a good way to keep us on track with the course info, but between this class, a job, my other courses and trying not to spend every waking moment in front of a computer screen I fell behind on the readings fairly fast. Even if there was a small quiz or something part-way through the semester on the readings to that point it would be better, but trying to stay engaged with the readings for 3 months, while waiting for them to become mandatory to the class is a bit difficult.