

Report: **Graph Distribution**

Course:	INTRO TO AMERICAN POLITICS (POLSW1201_001_2012_1)
Evaluation:	A&S Course Evaluations: 1 Instructor & 1 TA Default Form (spring 2012)
Dates:	April 23, 2012 - May 03, 2012
No. of Respondents:	71
No. of Students:	86

TA Effectiveness - David Joseph O'Connell

1: TA's ability to raise challenging questions

n = 38

Poor	3%(1)
Fair	0%(0)
Good	11% (4)
Very Good	3% (1)
Excellent	84% (32)
Not Applicable	0%(0)

2: TA's ability to help clarify course material

n = 38

Poor	3%(1)
Fair	0%(0)
Good	0% (0)
Very Good	5% (2)
Excellent	92% (35)
Not Applicable	0%(0)

3: TA's ability to encourage student participation effectively

n = 38

Poor	3%(1)
Fair	3%(1)
Good	3% (1)
Very Good	5% (2)

Excellent  87% (33)

Not Applicable  0%(0)

4: TA's responsiveness to student questions, opinions and criticisms

n = 38

Poor  3%(1)

Fair  0%(0)

Good  0% (0)

Very Good  11% (4)

Excellent  87% (33)

Not Applicable  0%(0)

5: TA's feedback on assignments and examinations

n = 38

Poor  0%(0)

Fair  3%(1)

Good  3% (1)

Very Good  5% (2)

Excellent  87% (33)

Not Applicable  3%(1)

6: TA's ability to communicate effectively with students

n = 38

Poor  0%(0)

Fair  3%(1)

Good  3% (1)

Very Good  3% (1)

Excellent  92% (35)

Not Applicable  0%(0)


7: Overall effectiveness of the TA

n = 38

Poor  3%(1)

Fair  0%(0)

Good  3% (1)

Very Good	3% (1)
Excellent	 92% (35)
Not Applicable	0%(0)

Report: **Comments**

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Evaluation:	A&S Course Evaluations: 1 Instructor & 1 TA Default Form (spring 2012)
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Percent Completed:	83%

Comments on TA effectiveness - David Joseph O'Connell

1. David was the most amazing TA ever. It is because of him that I am as interested and engaged in the class that I am. I truly feel that if you do not have him you are at a HUGE disadvantage in the class. I really could go on and on about how amazing David is but I am sure whoever is reading this will get that from the other reviews...

2. David was overall great! Very helpful.

3. Completely wonderful in every way. Presented material with such clarity and relevance to the students. Genuinely wanted to help the students and inspired us to do better. Absolutely wonderful.

4. The best TA I've ever had at Columbia. This school is losing one of its best. Have a great time at Bard David!

5. Camillia was not an effective TA. For most of the semester, she solicited questions from the class instead of actually teaching anything. This strategy could have still worked well, but she did nothing to stimulate any interesting discussion that could have sprouted from the questions, and the discussion section ended up being a boring and fairly useless rereading of lecture. Often class ended half an hour or more early because she ran out of material. Near the end of the semester, Camillia started making powerpoints, which were more useful perhaps in the future she could do that for the whole semester. Her email communication and sparse comments on papers and exams was also fairly unhelpful. While Camillia seemed to know the material well, she was not effective at sharing it with her students or teaching it in section, and I feel that that had a negative impact on the class.

6. David was incredibly helpful and committed. Whenever needed, he was available to meet and his drafting workshop for papers was an incredible asset. What the lectures lacked in focus and clarity, David's sections fixed. His clarifications of the readings and presentation of the big ideas was much needed.

7. Most amazing TA I have ever had! He has a strong understanding of the course material and exemplifies it through our weekly sessions. He answers questions, opinions, and criticism with critical enthusiasm. Very, very, very effective TA.

8. The best TA I have had at Columbia. He always comes prepared for our discussion section with not only review of the material but also his own insight. He begins discussion sections very well with some anecdote or video to introduce and frame the topic of that particular discussion

section. He also is very effective at getting the class to speak up, whether it is through asking us about the readings or asking our opinion about a question or even talking about how football relates to presidents.

9. David is very dedicated to his students and did an amazing job of being available to us all. I really appreciated being in his section for the clarification of lecture material he provided us. Instead of discussion, however, we spent most of section attempting to learn the entire previous two lectures, condensed into one 50 minute period, because David realized it was more important to impart the basic material to us, something Russell could not do, than to discuss. This hindered the discussion section but was not David's fault.

10. David was honestly the best, most knowledgeable, most accommodating TA I could have asked for.

11. David was great! He was consistently available to answer my questions and was also very interested in getting to know his students personally as to be able to better serve them.

12. Best TA I've ever had. Much more involved than I'm used to experiencing. Always makes sure the students in his section understand everything that's going on in lecture. Provides great feedback. Extremely accessible, and available.

13. Hands down best TA I have ever had. David was extremely dedicated to all of his students. He was timely and responsive to all of my questions, inspired me to explore material outside of class assignments, and (most importantly) really helped clarify class material that sometimes got lost during lecture. I genuinely looked forward to discussion section because of him!

14. David was amazing- by far the most engaging, helpful, and approachable TA that I have ever had. His weekly sections were enjoyable and informative thanks to his easy-to-understand Powerpoint presentations, friendly demeanor, and skill in stimulating class conversation. Further, he displayed a willingness to meet with students outside of class unlike any I have ever seen or heard of. His review session and office hours before the midterm exam were also extremely helpful. I have talked to other students in Professor Russell's class, and it is clear to me that the students fortunate enough to have had David as their TA have had a much more positive experience. David's students next year are extremely lucky, as he is an instructor of the highest quality.

15. best TA by far. clarifies course material, cares about students. Effective teaching style.

16. David is the best TA I have ever had in my four years of college. He is so willing to help and create a positive learning environment in discussion.

17. No matter what I say here, I will never be able to do justice to David in this evaluation. It pains me to write an evaluation, simply because I find myself praising this man way too much! I say this kiddingly, of course. Where to start with David? Well to answer the question, David's effectiveness is not "excellent," it is perfect. The first time I heard David talk in discussion, I raised my hand to asked if he was real, and to this day, I'm still not sure! As a Teacher's Assistant, David did a wonderful job at clarifying J.Russell's lectures: a challenging task to take on since the lectures were extremely vague, disordered, unintelligible and confusing more than anything. He began discussion sections by clearly presenting the topics he would go over and then further discussed them. Later on the semester, he moved on to power point, which I thought was a brilliant idea. He knew his powerpoint off by heart (obviously) and summarized them very clearly. This was extremely helpful as David tends to talk quickly, mostly because he is so excited about the material he is teaching us. Also, there was a perfect balance with enough information and too much information. In addition, this allowed him to link to videos and broaden the discussions and evidences to prove his points made in class. Speaking of which, David always made an effort to make everything we went over interesting, even the stuff I thought was really boring became extremely captivating thanks to his insights. Finally, he clarified the reading and had a gift to shed light on the most obscure texts. If you think I'm done with the praise. Bad news: we are only half way. David as a TA exceeded all "requirements" expected of him. He always held office hours and encouraged us to visit. Often

extended them. If we couldn't make them, he would gladly meet up with us. If we couldn't do that, he would exchange emails (and would almost always reply within the hour). Honestly, if all this didn't work, I'm sure he'd even meet up during weekends, or give us phone calls even, to make sure he could help us. He held extremely efficient review sessions before the exams, AND stayed in Butler six hours straight (no food, no bathroom breaks) until midnight the night before the exams, simply to answer questions and quizz his students' and other students' even. This is where I shall bring up my only negative point (and it's not even that bad). David is clearly an exceptional TA (if this evaluation and all the others don't convey this fact by now, I've lost all hope in the efficiency of evaluations). However, though it is not his role to do so, I felt like David could have set more of an example for the other TAs (as a leader). All the other students hated the class without David, and to be honest, I felt almost guilty to have been so lucky. It's clearly not his role to do this (rather the professor's), but David has such a powerful impact on others, I felt like he could have inspired the other TAs to be better. "Negative" done. I want to end with the fact that David also brought snacks, cooked and what not for the class every discussion sections. Without asking anything in return but our presence in section. As a person, he simply is an inspiration to all of us. His enthusiasm was contagious, his efforts to go out of his way only encouraged us to do the same (he read all the drafts for the final paper that were sent his way, and even had a five hours workshop). I felt like I could approach David about pretty much everything and he never ceased to amaze me with his wise advice and our wonderful conversations. I'm extremely jealous of all of the students who will get to have David as a professor next year (and the years to come). I wish him the best. David, you are a super man and I will miss you the rest of my time at Columbia.

18. David made this class! He is the reason I am getting an A (hopefully). He is funny, engaging, dedicated. He is everything a TA should be. It is the only positive experience I have ever had with a TA thus far. Columbia is losing a great educator next year since he is going to Bard. I highly suggested he be hired as a professor here at CU. He is truly fantastic.

19. AMAZING TA!!!!!! The very best I've ever had in my college career. He is very passionate about teaching and it shows. Understands the student's perspective and applies that to his TAing methodology (covering relevant points in a practical way). And the food--icing on a cake (an excellent way to bribe students into singing his praises even louder). :)

20. "Excellent" doesn't even begin to describe David. He was by far the most incredible TA I've had Columbia--intelligent, extremely devoted to his students, always available to meet and chat with his students. His discussion sections were always very clearly presented. I thought his use of PowerPoint was pretty effective. David always raised interesting questions and was able to get the much of class involved in the discussion. David is everything that Professor Russell isn't--organized, caring and in general really really devoted. Bard is so lucky for getting him!!

21. David is a phenomenal person and teacher. He is willing to go above and beyond the requirements of what a T.A. is supposed to do. I truly believe that the only reason I retained anything in this class is really because of David and the amount of time he was willing to devote to each of his students in order for them to understand the subject matter.

22. David was absolutely fantastic. Probably the most dedicated, accessible, friendly and genuinely-interested TA I've had and probably ever will have. It's a shame this is his last semester.

23. David is the best TA in Columbia! His sections always clarified any murky material in lecture. He was also able to stimulate very engaging conversation among us students. I will now hold many other TAs to the standard he has set!

24. David tries really hard to be the best. He can be a little aggressively helpful. I think he could be better at getting students to talk more and read more, sometimes I felt like he was just giving out answers, which just made me not want to take the class seriously. Other times he was really helpful at explaining the readings. I don't know I guess its always a balance.

25. David is by far one of the best TAs I have had. He always prepares for discussion sections, and does not waste any time during those sections. He is very efficient and effective when it comes to helping me learn the course materials.

26. David is the best TA I have ever had and probably the best I ever will have. I have never met someone who cares so much about both his students and the subject simultaneously. I not only learned a lot from his lectures but also felt supported with any question or problem I had regardless of how big or small.

27. BEST TA I HAVE EVER HAD. HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE INSTRUCTOR. Always responds to e-mails, always prepared, makes everyone laugh, very knowledgeable. I can't say enough about how great David was.

28. Best TA in Columbia without a doubt, superb!

29. The best TA I've had in my short time at Columbia, period. David will make an excellent professor; he is professional, prepared, punctual, funny, engaging, and is excellent at applying the material to current events, an important skill for a class such as American Politics.
