

REL4343-40 | Saints, Sages, & Social Reformers | Spring 2021

Instructor: Dr. Chad J. Pevateaux

Course modality: Hybrid

Phone: 817.531.4904

Meeting Times: Tues 4:30-7pm OSH 107

Email: cjpevateaux@txwes.edu

Office: PMC 310 or via Teams

Office Hours: On campus T 3-4:30 and W 11-1:30&3-5 and via Teams M and Th 3-6

Course Introduction

At Texas Wesleyan, we seek to follow the guidance of John Wesley when he said to work toward “doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as is possible, to all.” Thus, the goal of a Texas Wesleyan education is to form you as not only a critical thinker but a compassionately critical thinker—one who strives to make the world a better place. Compassion is empathy put in action to help others. Empathy enables you to feel with others, accurately understanding their perspectives. Critical thinking equips you to analyze those perspectives, evaluating what’s at stake. *Compassionately critical thinking* empowers you to apply your acquired knowledge and skills toward doing good in the world. When you demonstrate compassionately critical thinking in your thoughts, words, and deeds—your whole life—people may deem you a saint, a sage, or a social reformer. This course examines such figures from the past and present who might help us form a better future.

Course Description

A comparative examination of the life and thought of two or more key representatives of differing religious, philosophical, and/or cultural traditions. The organizing theme is how to be a *compassionately critical thinker*.

Course Learning Objectives: Students will	Degree Program Goals
Develop critical thinking skills to apply different theories and methods from their various disciplines to understand key figures, movements, and events	LBS Student will demonstrate ability to apply in appropriate context aesthetic, critical, learning, and/or organization theories appropriate to a variety of disciplines related to liberal studies REL Student will be able to identify and explain key concepts arising from various religious systems
Recognize both commonalities and differences of various meaning-making traditions and practices	LBS Student will demonstrate ability to evaluate research material gathered from a variety of liberal arts, education, social science, and/or business sources for accuracy and relevance REL Student will be able to assess and respond to primary claims, practices and ideas associated with specific global religious systems.
Evaluate and communicate the importance and impact of studying various topics on society and themselves	LBS Student will demonstrate ability to conduct primary and secondary research in a variety of disciplines of liberal studies LBS Student will demonstrate abilities to communicate in a variety of styles and formats appropriate to a variety of disciplines in liberal studies REL Students should acquire and enhance skills in analysis, research, critical thinking and communication, that will support them in further studies in any academic field or professional career.

Required Materials

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*
All other readings uploaded to Blackboard.

Learning Methods and Technologies

The learning methods used in this course include the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion forums and/or wikis | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaborative assignments |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Synchronous (real-time) virtual meetings with peers and/or the instructor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent homework assignments |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Streaming video | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing-intensive assignments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quizzes | <input type="checkbox"/> Clinical or field work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exams | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Digital Portfolio |

Student Workload Expectation

This is a 3-credit hour course, which means that, in addition to the scheduled class times, students are expected to do *at least 5 hours of course-related work each week* during the semester. This independent learning includes tasks like the following: completing assigned readings, preparing questions for class, completing written assignments, and studying for exams.

Course Requirements

Submitting and Returning Assessments

Assessment Submission

- Submit all of your assignments via Blackboard.
- Use the standard Microsoft Office programs such as Word, PowerPoint, and Excel (available to you through your txwes.edu account) to complete your assignments unless assignment directions specify that you should use a different file format.
- Use the following guidelines when formatting your documents:
 - Essays should use double-space, 12-point font, Times New Roman or Arial
 - Do not upload Pages documents or any file formats unsupported by *SafeAssign*

Assessment Feedback

- I will provide feedback on assessments within 14 days after submission.
- My feedback will be provided in the form of notes in Grade Center and, when pertinent, comments directly in the uploaded documents.

Communication with the Instructor

- Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns either by scheduling a meeting with me during my office hours or other times by appointment (cjpevateaux@txwes.edu). I'm happy to talk by phone or over Teams, though email is always the best way to reach me. I strive to respond quickly to emails, but please allow up to two business days for a reply.

Quizzes and Exams

- Any quizzes or exams will be low stakes, counting only for participation

Evaluation & Grading

The course will be graded on five components totaling 100%: (1) class participation and in-class assignments, 15%, (2) a group presentation illuminating a week's reading, 15%, (3) two essays, 40% [15% and 25%], (4) an individual presentation based on your portfolio, 10%, (5) and a final portfolio project, 20%.

Class participation –15%– Students are expected to exhibit a high level of class participation, whether by asking questions, contributing to discussions, or actively listening. As much as positive participation counts toward your grade, conversely anything that distracts from active participation (e.g. texting, social media, or any negative behaviors) will detract from your participation grade. More than one absence may severely affect the student's final grade. Also, an essential aspect of getting a high mark for participation will be respectfully and attentively listening to others.

Group Presentation –15%– In groups, students will present on one week's reading, illuminating the material for the other students and managing at least an hour's worth of discussion. In addition to adequately summarizing the main ideas of the reading, students will demonstrate their own original creative and critical thinking in regard to it. A possible structure could be to summarize the reading material clearly with explication of a few key quotes, followed by a presentation of your own critical thinking in regard to that material, and ending with several well-formed questions (for which you needn't necessarily have answers) and/or discussion of implications for today. Students should utilize the critical thinking resource, "Summarize, Criticize, and So What?". Adequate presentations will succinctly and clearly summarize the reading, whereas excellent presentations will do so creatively, by offering particularly innovative critical insights and questions, and/or by conveying the material in a surprising and entertaining way. See the below rubric for more.

Two Essays (1500+ words, and 2500+ words) –40%– The essays (15% & 25%) cover material from the corresponding sections of the course and have a research component. See the below grading rubric for guidelines on attaining excellence with these essays.

Individual Presentation –10%– In final weeks of semester, students will present on their portfolio project, using the compassionately critical thinking criteria gleaned from our discussion of demonstrating the ability to apply theories from various disciplines reflected in their overall Texas Wesleyan coursework. Goal is to demonstrate how key courses and disciplines empower us toward, as John Wesley said, "doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as is possible, to all."

Digital Portfolio Project –20%– The portfolio consists of a personal website hosting a collection of representative artifacts from the student's total coursework that demonstrate the student's abilities to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate knowledge from their focus area or disciplines. Additionally, the portfolio will have a cover document consisting of an 800 to 1000-word statement (basically a two-page, single-spaced cover letter / may be verbatim from final essay) telling the story of how the student's coursework has formed them into a *compassionately critical thinker*, striving, as John Wesley said, toward "doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as is possible, to all."

Guidelines for Grading Papers

- A paper—This paper contains insightful and original claims facilitated by class discussions rather than merely reproducing a line of argument that has been fully explicated in class. The A paper will have a clearly delineated thesis statement and must be logically organized. Individual paragraphs making up the body of the paper must have topic sentences that relate back to the thesis as well as transition sentences to help the reader smoothly move between paragraphs and follow the line of argument. The A paper makes use of relevant material from the textbook and other course readings. When textual evidence is used in the A paper, it is appropriately cited and its relevance is fully explicated and argued by the writer (i.e., it's not enough to just throw a quote in, you need to demonstrate why it's important to your argument). Few grammatical or other errors.

- B paper—This paper contains insightful or interesting claims facilitated by class discussions and has a clearly delineated thesis statement. There are slightly more problems with grammar, syntax, weak transitions, and there are likely problems with focus and organization. There are fewer instances of textual evidence or the use of less relevant textual evidence. Overall organization is still pretty clear, the argument and writing fairly strong, and properly cited evidence is utilized.
- C paper—This paper’s argument reproduces, without adding anything substantially new or insightful, points already fully explicated in class or has an otherwise insufficiently sophisticated argument. The paper seems to demonstrate a lack of thought and effort as indicated by a deviation from the assignment (e.g., not following the prompt, not meeting page requirements), is technically sloppy (poor grammar, word choice, sentence structure), poorly organized, and tends to employ generalizations versus making specific claims based on textual evidence. This paper is not likely to contain enough supporting textual evidence.
- D paper—This paper either does not present an argument, or presents one that is logically flawed, unoriginal, and unsophisticated. This paper does not use adequate textual evidence and contains serious technical errors including poor organization, lack of topic and transition sentences, poor word choice, and bad grammar.
- F paper—Paper not turned in, contains plagiarism, or is less than ½ of the required length.

Some helpful resources:

How To Write a Sentence: And How To Read One, by Stanley Fish

The Elements of Style, by William Strunk and E.B. White

A Manual for Writers: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers, Kate L. Turabian

Final Grade	Final Points/Average
A	90% and above
B	80% - 89.99%
C	70% - 79.99%
D	60% - 69.99%
F	Below 60%

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

- Cheating, plagiarism (submitting another person’s material as one’s own), or completing assignments for another person who will receive academic credit are not permitted. This includes the use of unauthorized books, notebooks, or other sources in order to secure or give help during an examination, the unauthorized copying of examinations, assignments, reports, or term papers, or the presentation of unacknowledged material as if it were the student’s own work. Disciplinary action may be taken beyond the academic discipline administered by the course instructor. [Read the University’s Academic Integrity Policy.](#)
 - More specifically, **plagiarism** is submitting another person’s material as one’s own or even re-submitting your own previous work without proper acknowledgement. This includes but is not limited to failing to cite when quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing someone else’s work without citation, omitting quotation marks from a quote, giving incorrect information about the source of a quote, failing to cite when using another’s ideas or concepts from online or elsewhere, or turning in any portion of someone else’s work as your own. Plagiarism may result in a grade penalty, failure of the course, or more.

COVID-19 Policies

- While the University plans to offer instruction face-to-face, due to Covid-19, some or all instruction for all or part of Academic Year 20-21 may be delivered remotely. Tuition and mandatory fees have been set regardless of the method of instruction and will not be refunded in the event instruction occurs remotely for any part of the Academic Year.
- Students are required to wear masks in the class at all times; should wash their hands frequently, watch and maintain adequate social distance from others.
- For your safety, you should sanitize your desk space before and after use.
- International students enrolled in hybrid courses are required to attend the in-person sections and attendance policies will be enforced.
- The University reserves the right to change the instructional modality of this course as needed in response to concerns related to COVID-19 or other public health/safety issues.

Spring 2021 Attendance Policies

1. For the benefit of students, faculty will record the audio portion of all class lectures and make those recordings available to students.
2. Excluding online classes, all class meetings will either be face-to-face (FTF) or virtual.
3. Students are required to attend all FTF lectures either in-person or virtually with the following exceptions:
 - Some classes, labs, etc., require that students attend face-to-face lectures in-person. These classes are identified in the class schedule by the designation In-person.
 - With faculty approval, students may learn asynchronously. The asynchronous learning option is restricted and only applies to students residing abroad, or, have other circumstances which limit their ability to attend classes in-person or virtually. Approval for this option must be obtained from the faculty member prior to the first day of class.
4. International students should consult with the Office of International Programs and may be required by federal law to attend all FTF lectures in person.

Instruction/Attendance definitions

- **Asynchronous** – students learning asynchronously are not attending class in-person or virtually. Asynchronous students will be provided recordings of class lectures (audio).
- **Face-to-Face** – faculty deliver live instruction in the classroom. Subject to the restriction noted above (#4) students may choose to attend a FTF class in-person or virtually.
- **In-person**- students are physically present in the classroom during the designated face-to-face (FTF) class lecture.
- **Virtual or virtually** – students attend class using an online platform such as Collaborate or Teams. Students are expected to be online and participate in class at the designated meeting time for the class period.

Face-to-face Class Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance at all scheduled classes is expected of all students. University regulations authorize certain absences of students when representing the University (e.g. participation in intercollegiate athletic competitions, and student government, student development, or fine arts events). Absences that may be necessary to fulfill course requirements and are approved by the Provost are also considered to be authorized.

The maximum number of authorized absences during one semester is five for a Monday-Wednesday-Friday class, three for a Tuesday-Thursday class, and two for a class or laboratory meeting once a week. Additional authorized absences may be granted on an individual basis when extreme circumstances warrant (e.g. advancement to and representation of the university at regional or national level intercollegiate athletic, academic, or fine arts competition).

Faculty Initiated Student Withdrawal from a Course. Unauthorized absences may be excused when caused by illness or other emergencies and should be reported promptly to the instructor. When a student has a number of unauthorized absences equal to the number of days the class meets per week AND has not communicated with the instructor about the absences

within 10 calendar days, the instructor must either drop the student from the class or give a grade of incomplete (I) as appropriate. Individual faculty may not enforce a more restrictive policy than what is set by the University. Students are required to notify instructors prior to any missed class and will be held responsible for all class and laboratory assignments.

Other University Policies

Links to selected University policies are available in [Blackboard under the Student Resources tab](#). The current Texas Wesleyan University [Catalog](#) and [Student Handbook](#) contain all University policies. *Note: Course syllabi are intended to provide students with basic information concerning the course. The syllabus can be viewed as a “blueprint” for the course. Instructors will inform students of any changes concerning examinations, the grading or attendance policies, or changes in project assignments.*

Regarding Masks and Caring for the Safety of Each Other

Approved face masks must be worn at all times. Since masks are primarily about protecting the safety of others, purposely not wearing one will be treated as a violation of our University policies on the order of endangering or assaulting other students and will be handled accordingly, possibly resulting in being dropped from the class or suspended from the University.

Concerning Recommendations

As you progress in your college career, which might eventually involve asking professors to recommend you for graduate programs, jobs, or internships, please be aware that professors are not obligated to write references for any student who asks us. I do not write a reference for a student unless I can write a very positive and specific one. Therefore, your job is to become the kind of student professors can rave about in recommendations—hardworking, collegial, intellectually inquisitive, and honest. Consider maintaining relationships over time with professors, so that they know you well enough to write for you. Many juniors and seniors tell me they wish they had thought about such aspects much earlier.

About the Professor

Dr. Chad J. Pevateaux earned his PhD in Religion at Rice University in Houston, Texas (2013). His primary research was in history and philosophy of religions, with a focus on gender, race, class, species, and ethics in relation to comparative mystics. He also earned a MDiv from Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts (2005), where he focused on Christian history and theology in dialogue with Asian traditions and philosophy. He earned his BA from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, another Methodist-affiliated school, with a double major in English and history (1997). Before coming to Texas Wesleyan, Dr. Pevateaux taught for three years as a visiting assistant professor of religious studies at St. Mary’s College of Maryland, the public honors college. Prior to graduate school, he worked for eight years as the director of youth and young adult ministries at St. Michael’s Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas.

Core Values of Student Conduct at Texas Wesleyan

- **Integrity:** Texas Wesleyan University students exemplify honesty, honor, and respect for the truth in all of their actions.
- **Community:** Texas Wesleyan University students build and enhance their community in a positive and healthy manner.
- **Social Justice:** Texas Wesleyan University students are fair, just, and equitable in their treatment of all members of the community and act to discourage and/or intervene to prevent unjust and inequitable behaviors.

- **Respect:** Texas Wesleyan University students show positive regard for each other, for property, and for the community.
- **Responsibility:** Texas Wesleyan University students are extended and accept a high level of responsibility to self, to others, and to the community.

Cultivating a Scholarly, Equitable, and Empathic Learning Community

Because it is integral to the subject matter of the course, discussion of potentially volatile issues such as sexuality, gender, race, class, politics and religion will occur. By signing up for this course and accepting this syllabus, the student understands that this is a critically oriented, academic study of religions, philosophies, and cultures whose reading and discussion content may sometimes conflict with the present understandings of some contemporary adherents of these traditions. This is a crucial point, as the course’s success will depend largely, if not entirely, upon how effectively we can all create together a learning environment of intellectual freedom, critical inquiry, and interpersonal honesty.

You may unavoidably encounter thoughts that challenge or upset you. The goal of the course is to think critically about complicated topics without disrespecting others. Thus, students are expected to maintain a high level of tolerance for other viewpoints and to work to promote mutual understanding wherever differences arise.

Texas Wesleyan students, faculty, and staff value diversity and inclusion. Hate speech is unacceptable. With respect to sex, gender, race, color, age, creed, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, pregnancy status, religion, sexual orientation, and other protected statuses, we strive, in keeping with our core values, not only to not discriminate according to such categories but moreover to promote social justice in regard to them by following the guidance of John Wesley to do “good of every possible sort and as far as is possible to all.” In sum, be kind.

By remaining in this course and accepting this syllabus, you are expressing your understanding of and agreement with these vital conditions of open class discussion, critical thinking, and compassionate living.

Schedule

Subject to change as necessary or prudent

Week 1	What Do We Make of Saints, Sages, and Social Reformers?
T 1.19	Discussion of key criteria and examples for <i>compassionately critical thinking</i> Read Pres. Slabach’s 2016 Convocation Speech prior to class
Week 2	Eboo Patel: How Does the American Promise of Pluralism Help Us Form a More Perfect Union? How About Here at Texas Wesleyan?
T 1.26	Read <i>Out of Many Faiths: Religious Diversity and the American Promise</i> , pp. 3-33
Week 3	Fred Rogers: Who Is Your Neighbor? What Does It Mean to be a Neighbor?
T 2.2	In Class: Watch <i>Won’t You Be My Neighbor?</i> Recommended Reading: “Can You Say . . . Hero?” by Tom Junod
Week 4	William James: How Do We Respond to Those Who Ask If Life Is Worth Living?
T 2.9	Read James, “Is Life Worth Living?”

- Week 5 Coldpocalypse!**
- T 2.16 No class due to extreme weather. University closed.
- Week 6 Thich Nhat Hanh and Pema Chodron: How Does Mindfulness Help or Hinder?**
- T 2.23 Read pp. 67-79 of Todd May's *A Fragile Life: Accepting Our Vulnerability*
In class watch *Walk With Me* documentary about Hanh and clips of Chodron
Recommended: Selections from Thich Nhat Hanh and Pema Chodron
- Week 7 King and Cone: Where Do We Go from Here—Chaos or Community?**
- T 3.2 Read James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2011), Ch. 3 "Bearing the Cross and Staring Down the Lynching Tree: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Struggle to Redeem the Soul of America"
Recommended: NYTimes Op-Ed by Barbara Ransby, "Ella Baker's Legacy"
- Week 8 Ta-Nehisi Coates: What If the Goal of Education Is Discomfort?**
- T 3.8 Read *Between the World and Me*, pp. 1-71. Watch HBO special together in class
- Week 9 Spring Break: How Do Rest and Recreation Help Us On Our Way?**
- 3.15-19 No class—Be safe and take care
- Week 10 Ta-Nehisi Coates: How Do We Make Meaning from Struggle?**
- T 3.23 Finish *Between the World and Me*, pp. 72-152
Recommended: Audre Lorde excerpt
- Sun 3.28 **Midterm Essay** due successfully uploaded to Blackboard by 11:59pm
- Week 11 Mary Oliver: What If the Kingdom of God Is Within and Around Us?**
- T 3.30 Read poem "Wild Geese" and prose from *Upstream*, "My Friend Walt Whitman" and "Some Thoughts on Whitman"
Recommended: Anything by Whitman. Rosemary Radford Ruether excerpt from *Mother Nature and the MegaMachine*
- Week 12 Dickinson, Carson, and Fujimura: How Do We Save Our-Eco-Selves?**
- T 4.6 Read Makoto Fujimura, "Emily Dickinson, Rachel Carson, and the New Creation"
Also read Rachel Carson excerpt
Recommended: Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis"
- Week 13 Howard Thurman (and Kendrick Lamar): How Does Our Compassionately Critical Thinking Speak to Those Whose Backs Are Against the Wall? And How Might Affirmation Help Transformation?**
- T 4.13 Watch PBS documentary *Backs Against the Wall: The Howard Thurman Story*
Read: Any one Thurman piece posted to Blackboard—student choice
Recommended: Read Darrius D. Hills, "'We Gon' Be Alright': Kendrick Lamar and the Theology of Affirmation" Supplemental Rec: 13th Oscar-nominated Netflix doc

- Week 14** **bell hooks: How Do We Live as Compassionately Critical Thinkers?**
- T 4.20 Read bell hooks excerpt and Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman?"
 Recommended: Hooks interview. Again recommended: Rosemary Radford Ruether
 excerpt from *Mother Nature and the MegaMachine*
- Week 15** **Dolores Huerta: How Do We Overcome Apathy and Find our Power?**
- T 4.27 Read "A Conversation with Dolores Huerta"
- Week 16** **Toward Compassionately Critical Thinking: Becoming Saints, Sages, and/or
 Social Reformers**
- T 5.4 Review (esp. Hanh and Chodron)
- Week 17** **Individual Presentations: How has your Texas Wesleyan education formed you
 into a *compassionately critical thinker*, prepared for success in your future
 endeavors, and striving, as John Wesley said, toward "doing good of every
 possible sort, and, as far as is possible, to all"?**
- Tues 5.11** *Final Essays Due Uploaded to Blackboard by 11:59pm*
- Sun 5.16** ***Digital Portfolios, with polished compassionately critical narrative and video,
 due by 5pm***

It may be that what is right and what is good consist in staying open to the tensions that beset the most fundamental categories we require, in knowing unknowingness at the core of what we know, and what we need, and in recognizing the sign of life in what we undergo without certainty about what will come.
 –Judith Butler

Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?
 –John Wesley

REL 4343-LEC (40): Saints Sages & Social Reform

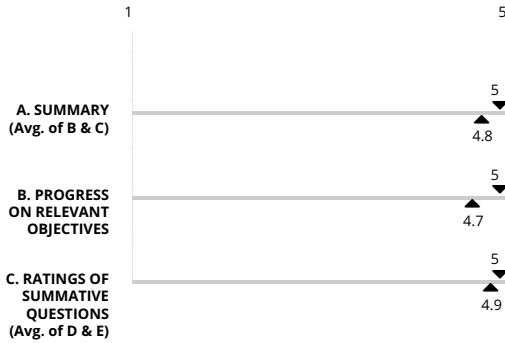
2021 Spring Reporting Term | Chad Pevateaux | Course CIP Code: 38.0201

7 Students Enrolled
4 Students Responded
57.14% Response Rate

Summative

Adjusted
 Raw
 3 Point Plus/Minus

Your Average Scores
5 Point Scale



Your Overall Mean Ratings
5 Point Scale

Ratings of Summative Questions	Raw	Adj.
D. Excellent Teacher	5	5
E. Excellent Course	4.8	5

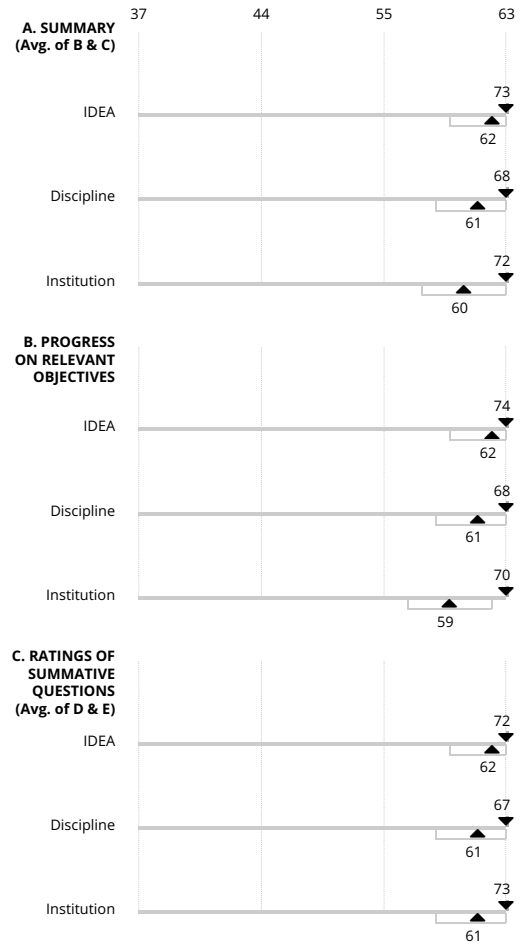
Your Overall Converted Ratings

Ratings of Summative Questions	Raw	Adj.
D. Excellent Teacher		
IDEA	62	69
Discipline	61	66
Institution	62	72
E. Excellent Course		
IDEA	61	75
Discipline	60	68
Institution	59	73

Converted Average Buckets
Based on a Bell Curve

Much Lower (Lowest 10%) 37 or Lower	Lower (Next 20%) 38 - 44	Similar (Middle 40%) 45 - 55	Higher (Next 20%) 56 - 62	Much Higher (Highest 10%) 63 or Higher
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Your Converted Average



Comments -

- Thank you for working through the many distractions we experienced during the semester, especially with the freeze storm. I appreciate you extending deadlines etc.
- Classes with Dr. Pevateaux require you to go outside of your comfort zone..something I don't necessarily love at the time but am very thankful for.
- Would have liked to see readings from a wider variety of viewpoints. The course was great and the discussions were very engaging.