10. How would you evaluate the teacher in terms of effectiveness and talent?

(a) superior  (b) good  (c) average  (d) below average
   35       31     17       3
To:  John Bauman  
From:  Leon Letwin  
Re:  Student evaluation of my evidence course, Fall 1971

January 18, 1972

Attached is a summary of the student answers to those questions which seem to be generally regarded the most significant index of student feeling about the instructor.

I also attach a typed copy of every "additional comment" made by the students and their comments on the course and the material.

A total of 88 forms were turned in out of a total enrollment of 108 students.

Let me know if you'd like to see the student forms themselves.

LL:ij
INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION FORM

Course__________________Instructor______________Year______Quarter____

Your evaluation of this course and its instructor will be of great help to the School, the instructor, and your fellow students. This form is designed to enable you to place your comments in context, although at the end of the specific questions a space has been provided for your own comments on any aspect of the course and instructor you consider significant. If the space for answers is inadequate, continue your remarks on the back of this form. In the multiple choice questions, more than one answer may be appropriate. Please check or circle all appropriate answers.

Please take your time to think through your answers, since they will be seriously read and considered. Please complete the form if possible. It is important to base this evaluation on the broadest possible expression of views in the class.

I. THE COURSE (Note: These questions refer to the course only, not to the teacher.)

1. How would you rank this course in terms of its intellectual interest?
   1 (high)  2  3  4  5

2. In terms of its contribution to what you view as your professional education?
   1  2  3  4  5

3. What topics should be added or given more attention in the course?

4. What topics should be eliminated or given less attention in the course?
11. Compared to other teachers you have studied under at the law school, this teacher is:
   a. distinctly above average  
   b. about average 
   c. distinctly below average  

12. How well does the teacher stimulate interest in the course?
   a. very stimulating  
   b. interesting  
   c. fair  
   d. dull 

13. The teacher's knowledge of the subject matter appears:
   a. excellent  
   b. good  
   c. fair  
   d. poor 

14. How effective is the teacher in communicating his ideas to the class?
   a. very effective  
   b. effective  
   c. fair  
   d. poor 

15. How well did the teacher cover the assigned reading in class?
   a. completely  
   b. well  
   c. spottily  
   d. poorly 

16. Were the class sessions organized and coherent?
   a. always  
   b. usually  
   c. sometimes  
   d. never 

17. Was the teacher regular and punctual in his attendance?
   a. always  
   b. usually  
   c. sometimes  
   d. never 

18. Did the teacher set a reasonable pace and accurately gauge when the time came to move on to a new point?
   a. races too fast to keep up with;  
   b. moves quickly but can be followed;  
   c. goes deliberately, but maintains motion;  
   d. becomes bogged down. 

19. Did the teacher relate the specific subjects studied to the larger concerns of the law and society?
   a. often  
   b. sometimes  
   c. rarely 

20. Did the discussion in classes lead to post-class discussion with other students and/or to further reading on your part?
   a. often  
   b. sometimes  
   c. never 

21. Was the teacher's presentation aimed at the comprehension level of:  
   a. the top of the class only?  
   b. most of the prepared students?  
   c. the entire class?  
   d. students
Comments on the teacher.

Kept me awake--that alone says something since the class meets in Rm. 1425.

I like the course but don't like the idea of objective finals in law school. In practice the questions are not that way. If they were essay questions cases wouldn't be tried. Objective tests lend themselves to cheating as well. I think essay tests are the only ones acceptable in law school.

Made material interesting. Bad habit though when student commented in class he didn't acknowledge this comment and just called on the next person to comment. Made you feel your comment was stupid.

Generally, he presented the material in a clear and concise manner understandable to anyone who at least made a minimal effort with the materials. His emphasis on hypotheticals facilitated "anchoring" the law in the real world.

Mr. Letwin is a highly articulate, well-read instructor. His guidance of the class discussions was superb, never allowing the more argumentative of the class to waste class time in tangential (sometimes irrelevant) forays.

(As to #16) Sometimes the class lapsed into semi-confusion in attempts to trace out specific details on the application of evidence rules.

The level of class discussion was quite low, this being the result of both the low level of students who engaged in class discussion and Mr. Letwin's inability to consciously direct the discussions into productive channels, overcoming the inane superficialities that the class discussions consisted of.

Sometimes he finds it difficult to understand problems the students have with the material. This comes from being familiar with it himself.

Mr. Letwin is the best professor I have had at UCLA Law School.

Excellent pace, use of assignment sheets and hypotheticals was extremely valuable. Took the time and cared enough to make sure material was understood.

There were times when you left a thought although not through with it.

He organized the course very comprehensively and did a tremendous job in preparing additional material relevant to the subject.

Appears to have a genuine concern for the student understanding the rules of ev. and their application. His class presentations reminded me of Mort Sahl (a compliment).
Comments on the teacher (cont.)-2

The best teacher I've come across in this law school.
Possibly most effective teaching method used in this school--really makes you think out the issues for yourself--none of the handholding other profs. engage in.
Excellent approach to a seemingly difficulty and unruly subject.
A fairly good teacher. However, he too often got sidetracked arguing with individual students over minor points.
Does a good job for teaching a rather boring subject.
A credit to the institution.
Raced a little too fast.
Excellent!
A paradigm of a professor.
Without a doubt, Mr. Letwin is one of the more interesting professors this school employs. If he has a fault; it is in being too concerned that some students are not following the class discussion.
His manner of preparation and presentation of the materials is indicative of an uncommon concern for the students and an awareness of his role as Professor. Beyond a doubt, the finest professor yet encountered in the law school.
He did an excellent job of preparing and his hypotheticals really helped understand evidence issues. Maybe a few less hypotheticals would have been better--but this is not to infer that they should be eliminated.
Will take more classes from him.
Prof. was of a very high caliber. Particularly, eliminated unnecessary reading materials w/use of good hypos. Good organization etc. Recommended very highly.
One of the nicest people in the Law School--perhaps that's what gets him into trouble--i.e. giving too much time to those who are un-prepared in class.
A terrific person, but too honest for everyone's good.
Great effort made by teacher--but could have been more assertive. Personally I liked him, he was perhaps a little too concerned about the welfare of the students and therefore classes became bogged down somewhat.
Comments on the teacher. (cont.)-3

Very good instructor, interested in helping students and doing all possible to see they understand. Relies on liberal classroom discussion allowing everyone free discussion.

Appears to try to be too much like a young hip teacher and this detracts from his otherwise good performance.

He is probably the second best teacher I have had here. Murray Schwartz's Crim. Law I was perhaps a little better organized, but this professor is unusually accessible to questions in class--which has its own advantages.

He's an interesting character, which helps to motivate what could be dull material.

Mr. Letwin combined several innovative teaching aids--such as minimizing reading by using hypothetical questions to summarize, and encouraging class discussion and generally was effective, except for the limited class response.

Mr. Letwin is one of the best teachers we have here. He is one of the few good teachers who is also very approachable as a human being.

Mr. Letwin obviously knows the material well but has some trouble in clarifying it to the class--partly perhaps because of his fervor in attempting communication. He should explain things a little slower and more logically rather than trying to explain the whole problem in one quick burst. Also, the class itself was a bad one and did not help him in his task at all.

Great stage presence--he ought to go into comedy. Also, the only 5 day-a-week class I could stand to regularly attend.

Good pace in class. Good organization. Entertaining. Good politics and groovgy sweaters. Also had something to say usually.

Excellent professor. Definitely relates to students, not so preoccupied with other matters as to slight us; definitely saw correlation between Evidence and outside world and saw need to relate it to each other.

Mr. Letwin is not only an excellent teacher but a fine person as well. I have really enjoyed and benefited from our association.

The most comfortable in terms of easing tensions in the classroom--very relaxing atmosphere.

Mr. Letwin is a human being. He is sensitive to students, something which cannot be said of other Profs. in law school. His presentation is democratic.

He doesn't seem to be the school's sharpest intellect. In fact, he's below average in that area and it made the course a bit dull at times. But, he's fair, pleasant, conscientious, and unpretentious. I wouldn't want to "put him down."
Comments on the teacher. (cont.)-4

Often got feeling he was one day ahead of us in his reading. Seemed confused sometimes by the cases—which he had apparently just read. Thought his mimeos were helpful, however and he tries to be helpful and concerned in class.

Mr. Letwin possessed a rare quality among law professors—he was self-effacing and considered himself but one among equals in the classroom situation; this without sacrificing communication of his superior knowledge of the subject matter.

A concerned, dedicated and effective teacher, not a great teacher. He did a very good job and I would take him again.

(Material from evaluation forms.)
Comments on the course. (211. Evidence)

Tactics (topic to be added or given more attention)

Just about covered everything in Code.

Excellent balance between the law and its application.

Became uninteresting when dealing purely and technically with whether evidence is admissable or not.

Course was merely a study of the codes; there has to be a better, more intellectual (conceptual) approach.

(Added or more attention) Evidence

(Eliminated or less attention) Metaphysics

(Added or more attention) Code--better case material

(Eliminated or less attention) Textbook

I enjoyed it.

Good choice of topics.

I think the course material was balanced well to maintain interest and present the relevant material.

Best course I've had in the law school.

Prof. Letwin gave adequate attention to those subjects which were important, glanced over the minor topics (although making sure that they were put in their proper perspective).

More on privileges.

Cal. Code book was helpful. So were hypos. I didn't think the text was so good.

(Added or more attention) All topics w/ transcripts added. More time w/ code.

(Eliminated or less attention) Textbook

1 quarter is just not enough time!

(Added or given more attention) Transcripts of trials and preliminary hearings.

The initial part of hearsey was too extended.

Too much for one quarter! Make it 2 quarters and cover more material.

(Added or given more attention) Relevancy
Comments on the course (cont.)--2 (211. Evidence)

(Topics added or given more attention) Competence; privileges
(Topics eliminated or less attention) Hearsay was given too much emphasis--it perhaps is the most difficult subject of course, but not that difficult.

Method of preparation (Hypotheticals) with limited number of cases, far superior to case method.
Relevancy and mode of procedure in court (added or more attention).
Hearsay material (eliminated or given less attention).
Privileges (added or more attention).
A little something on how one actually gets evidence introduced at trial.
Hearsay more developed, privileges.
Parole evidence, competency (Added or given more attention).
Not bad.
A little more organization to often rambling class discussions wouldn't hurt--but the material admittedly is conducive to such discussions.
Hearsay was rather long.
(Topics added or given more attention) -- I'm not sure--Letwin seems to have sufficiently covered everything.
Letwin runs a well-organized yet not a high pressure course.
Less time on Hearsay or Exceptions.
Adequate as it is (Additional comments)
Course is adequate as it is. (Additional comments)
Privilege (Topics added or given more attention).
The course should be spread over 2 quarters and an additional hour should be added.
Practical application of evidence rules to real situations. (Added or given more attention)
Fed. proposed rules should get more attention even though Cal. Code can remain primary.
(Add or given more attention) Mock trials maybe two, to illustrate method and scope of x-examination.
Can evidence really be taught in a traditional, large, law school class? I can't be sure at this point, but I doubt it.
Comments on the course (cont.)--3 (211. Evidence)

Courtroom situations might play a greater part in order that students would see how questions of admissibility come up.
Comments on the material.

Handouts were helpful.

Use of short concise hypotheticals as an alternative to wading through the case book to find the law is an excellent idea.

Teacher's hypos a helpful and well-used tool.

I liked not having to read cases only for their fact value. Hypo sheets were very helpful.

Mr. Letwin's supplemental material was excellent as a study guide and course outline.

The hypos handed out in class for discussion probably most important materials.

The supplemental materials passed out in class are in my opinion much more valuable than the text--both from an "understanding" standpoint and from an "intellectual" standpoint.

Prof. Letwin did an excellent job in condensing and supplementing course material--very well organized.

It would be better to use more California cases.

I wish it was more oriented to Calif. Evidence Law.

Book is not much help. Code is.

Prof. Letwin's concept of substituting hypothetical problems for unimportant cases is outstanding.

The text of the proposed fed. rules are next to useless--the Code is good, however.

Excellent choice to require the CEC and the proposed Fed. rules; contributed to a good understanding.

More on code.


What can you do but look at the evidence code in an evidence class?

The Code is much better reading than the textbook. Cheaper too.

I got the impression written materials were secondary to class discussion with organization of the course. With the professor at least, this is an advantage.

Very good that Prof. edited out most cases and substituted own hypotheticals.
Comments on the material. (cont.)

Heavy emphasis on California Code which was good for a future Calif. lawyer--could hurt others.

Shouldn't require book. Instead should memeo the Fed. cases interested in.

Elements of text material well summarized by class handouts.

Textbook was almost a waste--course could be taught with code alone.

Book wasn't really very helpful.

Mainly used code sections--what can I say?

Handout outline. These help organize course.

The Code is excellent levining vehicle; the commentary to the sections is extremely helpful.

Using hypo to ease reading load was an excellent idea.

The materials used should consist only of hypos and the Code. The textbook was of no value whatsoever.

Everything was OK except for some organizational problems.

Perhaps some reference should be made to treatises on the subject. ("Hornbooks")

Casebook not necessary at all--syllabus of hypotheticals and a few important cases (e.g. Jackson v. Denny) would be preferable.

Excellent idea to use the Ev. Code--a touch of real life--also a good outline of Evidence.

The McCormick casebook should be eliminated from the course. Because of Prof. Letwin's excellent hypothetical method, the few cases read from the book do not justify its expense.
Your evaluation of this course and its instructor will be of great help to the School, the instructor, and your fellow students. This form is designed to enable you to place your comments in context, although at the end of the specific questions a space has been provided for your own comments on any aspect of the course and instructor you consider significant. If the space for answers is inadequate, continue your remarks on the back of this form. In the multiple choice questions, more than one answer may be appropriate. Please check or circle all appropriate answers.

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I. THE COURSE (Note: These questions refer to the course only, not to the teacher.)

1. How would you rank this course in terms of its intellectual interest?

   1 (high)  ?  2  ?  3  ?  4  ?  5 (low)
Additional Comments on the Teacher:

1. Instructor generally way above average in all respects. Very intellectually stimulating to relevant course. Instructor should, however, make more of an effort to clarify material presented in 1st quarter so that students are not quite so frustrated.

2. Interesting and relevant side comments in a relatively boring (personal) subject matter type course. Best 8:00 teacher I've had.

3. Mr. Letwin is one of the most relevant instructors I've ever had; even for a course I thought would be dull—subject matter.

4. EXCELLENT clarity in explaining fact situations of complex cases. Excellent attention to tactical & strategic considerations. Even more would be appreciated.

5. --

6. --

7. --

8. I am looking forward to studying trial tactics from Mr. Letwin.

9. --

10. I enjoyed the course taught by Prof. Letwin, albeit many times I didn't quite understand what was going on.

11. Fantastic; made a dull subject (in my opinion) very interesting. Remarkable sense of humor. A thoroughly enjoyable 2 quarters.

12. First part of course concentrated too long on jurisdictional problem -- last half of course tried to cover too many items in too spotty an approach. Too unsure as to how much & what to know of last part of course for final.

13. --

14. Had tremendous personal rapport with the feelings of his students -- presented material in a fashion that made it useful and realistic.

15. Very knowledgable and dynamic and interesting, but often his superior grasp of the material allowed him to gloss over area apparently he thought were understood, which really weren't. Always very stimulating and thought provoking, although sometimes the answers to the thoughts were frustratingly hard to come by.
16. He was excellent giving the class its subject matter. I will do my best to take other classes given by him. He was very conscientious in taking the sting out of having to tell a student that his comment was not valid; he went out of his way to try to give a sense of intelligence to many stupid questions.

17. --

18. Lucid, fair, stimulating -- Letwin made a potentially dull subject fascinating.

19. Inspiring. A very human professor whose professional lifestyle is intriguing to me. In addition, he was able to make procedure an interesting, provocative course.

20. --

21. A fair and just gentleman at all times. Well-informed and always willing to answer questions & discuss problems.

22. --

23. --

24. --

25. --

26. --

27. --

28. --

29. A master at his madness -- if only I could become so competent. Best instructor I've had!

30. Treats a potentially troublesome subject quite well in terms of knowledge & stimulating presentation. Only complaint is the adherence to an aspect-by-aspect approach.

31. Made the classroom a comfortable as well as educational experience. Very congenial.

32. --

33. Lively & entertaining, but obviously constrained by the traditional Law School format of classes & exams -- doesn't have opportunity to maximize his potential for making issues compelling & relevant in large classes, etc.

34. Went slowly at first so that there was a noticeable oust at the end which was unnecessary considering how few pages of the book are actually read.

35. --

36. He could have been a little more prepared.
37. --
38. Mr. Letwin seemed to exhibit concern for his class, but was [sentence wasn't completed.]
39. --
40. --
41. --
42. His organization and effectiveness improved markedly during Wtr. Qtr.
43. He was excellent and w/ a more interesting topic would be fantastic.
44. --
45. Very good teacher -- I like the way he conducts class. He stimulates interest.
46. --
47. --
48. Very interesting to listen to tho unorganized at times. Material fairly boring. But he tried to put in his personal opinions to make it more interesting. (Did very good job considering rather poor subject matter.)
49. --
50. Letwin is good -- He didn't always seem real interested in the class -- this class -- and this isn't Letwin's fault. Can only be viewed one way. A requirement
51. Letwin was somewhat disorganized at first but the main problem was the material. He vastly improved in the second quarter of the course. His approach is interesting.
52. I'm not sure how other professors teach, but Prof. Letwin tried to bring some interest to a fairly dry subject.
53. --
54. Good concept of how the course should be viewed. Too bad he got stuck with procedure.
55. --
56. Good man but his overall handling leaves one with an uneasy feeling of being bogged down and not progressing steadily forward to an understanding of the material.
57. --
58. --
59. For what I considered to be rather dull material, Mr. Letwin was able to stir a considerable amount of interest - at least at the class meetings.

60. By bringing in personal experience, Letwin related the daily practice to the text. He should have introduced some emerging theories & practices to give a sense of direction to the future of C.P. It could have been much worse.

61. --

62. Has good practical approach -- is concerned with implications of law in society, etc. & is very honest with students.

63. --

64. --

65. --

66. ---

67. --

68. Terrific individual. The type of person that I might emulate. Conscientious and concerned.

69. --

70. Nice guy; generally good on speculating on what REALLY went on in a case.