Teaching Evaluations  
Law 145  
Fall 1982

Key

+ = Instructor's greatest areas of strength
-

= Instructor's greatest areas of weakness
C = Additional Comments

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1. + - Letwin understands student remarks better than students do--makes sense of them, uses them to develop ideas, etc. Also, sense of humor helps!

-  

C - Best course I've had in 9 years of higher education--and the subject matter has the reputation of being the dullest aspect of the first year of law. Remarkable!

Reasons: (1) Letwin's approach, emphasizing the philosophical, political and ethical aspects of this material. (2) His obvious mastery of the material. (3) His warmth and humanity in interaction. This has been an excellent intro. to law!

2. + - His knowledge and an approach which includes discussion of politics and policy.

-  

C - An excellent, inspiring instructor. I wish there were more like him.

3. + - Making rather dry material interesting; bringing out underlying policy concerns.

-  

C - This course has been not only the most interesting of all my courses this semester, but also one of the most challenging.

4. + - Encouragement of student discussion/stimulation of interest in the subject matter. Sensitivity to individual student needs.
4. (cont.)
   - = Sometimes the class seems to be permitted to stray too far from
     the substantive law.

   C - I appreciate Prof. Letwin's bringing legal ethics and the
     social implications of the law and its application into our discussions.
     I feel these considerations will better prepare me to be a responsible
     member of the legal profession and to think analytically about the
     issues which I will face in that profession.

5. + - Very warm and genuinely interested in us as people as well as
   students. Articulate and communicates ideas well.
   - = I feel I need a bit more of the nuts and bolts.
   
   C -

6. + - Allowing for high level of student participation yet being able
   to direct the discussion and keep it on the relevant subject.
   - =

   C - Enjoy the way public policy is integrated into discussion and
     amount of student input.

7. + - Presentation and ability to integrate student responses into a
   coherent and meaningful outline.
   - = A couple of outdated idioms. (This was tough to come up
     w/something).

   C - I entered this class with skepticism over how interesting I
     would find the subject matter. However, Prof. Letwin's well-conceived
     presentation and personable attitude have contributed to the overall
     high marks on this evaluation.

8. + - His unassuming, yet authoritative method of teaching.
   - =

   C -

9. + - Sensitivity to student's questions.
   - = Talks very quickly.

   C -
10. + - His extreme fairness. He is gifted as a pedagogue.
   - =
   C -

11. + - He makes a potentially boring class interesting.
   - = Sometimes moves a little too fast but at least we're covering a lot of material.
   C -

12. + -
   - = Sometimes doesn't seem to answer questions he knows the answer to.
   C -

13. + - His genuine interest in the subject and his concern for students grasp of the subject matter.
   - =
   C - I felt like he spent a lot of time on subjects falling on the first 1/2 of the class and were forced to rush through some areas in the last 1/2.

14. + - Open to new ideas.
   - =
   C -

15. + - Wit, hipness.
   - =
   C - He'd be a great uncle.

16. + - Knowledge of subject matter/teaching skills/interest in students.
   - = Instruction sometimes gets missed in bog of uncertainty - class goes off on tangents.
17. + - Teaching, inspiring student interest.  
- = Doesn't discipline those who ramble on too long.

18. + - Not(!) getting sidetracked too often. Giving everyone a chance to speak.  
- = His lack of hair.

19. + - Use of socratic method and development of ideas.  
- = None

20. + - Prof. Letwin combines both personal warmth, intellectual enthusiasm and exceptional powers of communication.  
- = His house is too small for 90 people.  
C - He should announce changes in the syllabus much sooner (e.g. when the supplement substitutes for the regular casebook).

21. + - Helps student feel comfortable, knows subject matter very well.  
- = I can't think of any.

22. + - Gentle, yet productive, intelligent, and efficient.
- =

23. + - Patience w/student ideas, accessibility, best instructor we have had b/c of the clarity of the presentation.
- = "Some" bias against presenting both sides w/o impunity! Arguably acceptable.

C -

24. + - Ability to convey his ideas and the general rules of law to the class; also, he discusses the policy implications of court decisions and statutory enactments, etc.

- = Can't think of any.

C - It would be good to have more profs like him. Unfortunately, we don't.

25. + - Extremely tactful, conducts class discussions beautifully; obviously enjoys his field; funny--and idealistic.

- = Hectic pace.

C -

26. + - His enthusiasm, wit and ability to communicate interest and importance of subject matter. Also his ability to weave crucial social values into course is good.

- = Often overly philosophical but his intentions are good.

C - No comments, overall an excellent, enlightening course and instructor...A+.

27. + - The analytical process of examining procedure, its impact on the merits of the case, and the policy considerations underlying it.

- =

C - The course allowed students to examine the political impact of the law in society--very often that is not part of legal education.

28. + - Receptiveness to students' views, interesting presentation, compassion, energetic approach to teaching, capability to control discussions ("guide").

- = Can't think of any--I really enjoy your style of teaching.

C - Go more slowly (a little). Otherwise, the class has been the high point in interest of the semester.
29. + - Control of class and leading discussion. Communicating importance and philosophy behind case decisions and rules.
   
   C - The book was very good. The cases were tough but the professor did an excellent job of making them understandable and meaningful.

30. + - (1) Mastery of the subject. (2) Enthusiasm about the course. (3) Creates excellent atmosphere in classroom.
   
   C -

31. + - Ability to grapple with complex concepts.
   
   C -

32. + - Positive attitude, amiability, use of language.
   
   C -

33. + - Energy, enthusiasm, ability to generate interest.
   
   C - Use a better book.

34. + - Ability to lead discussion effectively, communicate clearly with students.
   
   C -

35. + - His obvious interest and enthusiasm.
   
   C -

   C - His occasional impatience.
C - My only fear in Civ Pro would be that unfortunate student who has this boring material coupled with a boring instructor—my thanks to Mr. Letwin for avoiding this eventuality.

36. + - Competence, confidence, accessibility, openness.
   =
   C -

37. + - Organization, the ability to steer us in the right direction while not putting people off and hurting their feelings. Not boring!
   = He stutters sometimes.
   C - He's the best prof. we've got. Very concerned with the quality of our education. Plus, he's a nice guy!

38. + - His respect for student's comments. He is easy to approach.
   = Almost non-existent. Maybe encourage more discussion for the quiet student. He tries to achieve this.
   C -

39. + - Conveying interest in subject to students. Conveying excitement of subject to students.
   = Putting off student questions which go beyond the basic subject of discussion.
   C -

40. + - Accessibility, introduction of breadth to class material, good at handling discussion.
   =
   C -

41. + - Quickness of mind, ability to see and communicate basic issues, sense of humor.
   =
C - This class was very enjoyable, well-organized and challenging. Mr. Letwin did a heroic job to be as good as he was everyday. I'd definitely recommend this course and I'd like to take another course from him.

42. + - He is organized. He summarizes. He can be funny at times.

- = When he gets into a particular mind frame any idea presented by the class which does not conform to his mind frame, he ignores. If he could just take the time to say--we can get to that later or see me after class--I think that would be more receptive to the class.

C -

43. + - He is very receptive to student ideas and does not pretend to know all the answers. Also he makes a very difficult, boring and ridiculous subject area interesting.

- = Some days - not many, we cover material too fast (use of charts and joinder of claims and parties) so that it is difficult to understand later.

C - Some manner of getting full class participation would be beneficial to the class and Letwin would be able to call on people without making them feel self-conscious (his style is very unpretentious and human). Of all classes, this is the one where people could overcome "stage fright." The same people tend to dominate all of our classes and it would be great to somehow get away from this.

44. + - Enthusiasm, receptivity to students, classroom presentations.

- =

C - Mr. Letwin is one of the finest professors I have ever had (includes undergraduate). His classroom discussions are interesting yet directional. The only suggestion for improvement that I have is a minor one: better organization needed among the various topics.

45. + - Good communication with students (good control of socratic method).

- = Biased political viewpoints dispensed in the guise of "discussing the issues"--the world isn't so skewed in terms of power; corporations are not all "bad guys."

C - Should require FRCP with no writing in them for exam. Many students are putting entire outlines in the margins; others of us are struggling with questions of ethics v. possibly doing better on exams.
46. + - Keeping class on the subject at hand, diversity of view in presentation, enjoyed philosophical discussions in class.

- =

C -

47. + - He is very easy-going. He makes a course that could be dull, very interesting. He brings in policy issues which are very important.

- = He often starts to make conclusory statements or brings things together and then stops in mid-sentence.

C -

48. + - He is very approachable and willing to help, to explain, to elaborate on class material. He never makes students feel stupid-confused, maybe, but not stupid.

- = The same as for most law professors in that it often isn't clear where the class discussion is headed. I suppose that's the fault of the teaching method.

C - I wish all professors were as concerned about and interested in our progress as students in absorbing and understanding the course material. My major regret is that this course doesn't go all year so that we could have Mr. Letwin for another semester. I would like to say more but, uncharacteristically, words fail me. Let it suffice to say that Mr. Letwin is absolutely the best professor I've ever had.

49. + - Excellent use of discussion and clarification of issues both before and after.

- = Rarely but: lack of willingness to describe current interpretation of law, i.e. FRCP Rule B--can you ever really use compul. counterclaim in place of cross claim?

C - Joinder problem allows student to test her knowledge and such problems would be useful for each area covered. The more feedback the better. Civil procedure was made fascinating by Mr. Letwin's excellent teaching. I'm sure I wouldn't have liked it otherwise.

50. + - Superb ability to sense when the class had difficulty with the subject matter, and to adjust accordingly.

- = Does not always advise class of the number of cases to be discussed in the next few classes--caught us by suprise!
C - This should be a 6 unit, 2 semester course.

51. + - Brings out many issues, and people happy to contribute (not afraid of being ridiculed for contributions).
   - =

   C - It would be nice to start classes in law school at 10:00 instead of 9:00.

52. + - His knowledge of the subject of civil procedure.
   - =

C -

53. + - His precision in explaining complex issues and presenting both sides of an argument.

   - = His failure to guide class when students continue with irrelevant comments.

C -

54. + - He is intent on us learning the actual rules.

   - = Goes past our get out time nearly everyday.

C -

55. + - Ability to explain cases in simple terms.

   - = Sometimes cuts off interesting side discussions. (I know there is a time limit though.)

C -

56. + - Facilitating class discussion; energy brought to teaching is excellent.

   - = Excellent teacher; occasionally vague re current policy and practices in legal field.

   C - Difficult course to master in one semester--a lot of material; really better spread over whole year.
57. + - Discussions with Prof. Letwin are always provocative and challenging. Very fair, pleasant, concerned man.

- = We need more of his type!!

C - I hope I have more classes and Profs like Civil Pro and Letwin!