

Selected Comments from Student Evaluations

I have full official sets of course evaluations for all Rochester Writing Courses available by request for hiring committees. Below, I've copied several selected comments from various student evaluations. The intent here is not to indicate that every evaluation I've received is positive. We all know that isn't true (I had one student offer "Use a different instructor" as a suggestion for improvement). Nor was the idea to collect all of the highest rankings (empty praise is rather pointless). My intent in collecting these particular comments is tied to the fact that they spoke to several of the core things I try to do as an educator. These are some of the comments that showed me that I succeeded in conveying my approach to these students.

"To be honest, I think Mr. O'Neil has changed the way I think about writing. Specifically, before the course, I thought essay writing is just a different form of reflection: to show teachers what you have learned. But now, I enjoy writing, because I am writing for myself; I am writing to introduce my ideas and to convince people. Thanks for making writing fun!"

"The skills of doing proper research before forming our thesis is quite useful. High School curriculum has taught us to always chose a side, now I learned that writing is more than supporting a side. It is understanding and doing the proper research to form your own educated opinion."

"From my experience, he is the most approachable and helpful writing professor I have ever seen. He explain course material in the way that everyone can understand especially the international student like me who don't have a strong background in writing."

"Also, one thing I find particular good about this course is that how Mr. Scott always talk about classical readings such as Shakespeare in a funny but educational way, which spurred my interests in reading more classical and literature work. More importantly, I like the class atmosphere, because it is really open. Mr. Scott seems to be really interested in knowing different cultures. Me and other students who have different backgrounds are often encouraged to share our culture and compare it with American culture. In this case, I learned not only how to write papers in this class, but also learned people's different cultural backgrounds and some of their cultural uniqueness."

"I really like how Mr. O'Neil approaches teaching and writing. First of all, he is really approachable and patient. Also, he is really good at using metaphors and giving examples when explain my questions. Those metaphors and examples helped me understand the material much better. Secondly, in terms of writing, he encourages people to write what they are interested in and are passionate about. I find it especially helpful, because I enjoyed the writing process when I am writing about things that spurs my interests."

"He is super knowledgeable and always surprises us in details. He taught us to do a close-reading while he himself set up a long-term close reading of his change of clothes."

"I am not a fan of comic books, but Mr. O'Neil was able to change my view about the topic. His teaching methods, even though they included comic books, made sense to me and he was able to make class really interesting."

"I felt like I was heard as an International student."

"Scott kept the class relevant and thought provoking. I felt like I gained something leaving class every time."

"He is passionate about the subject and will offer guidance if you need it, without judgement. He can meet you eye to eye as an equal."

"Very intelligent, but approachable. Never made me rushed when talking to him after class. He went with the flow and would rather see improvement and excellence over strict scheduling. Easy to work with and never scornful."

"Had a real knack for demystifying the writing process by comparing it to parts of our life that we experience everyday, i.e. communicating with friends and movies."

"He is always ready to help students and has huge respect for students. Clearly is passionate about writing."

"Kind, knowledgeable, and very funny (in an awesomely nerdy way)."

"Helped me to think about approaching writing in an entirely new way."

"Scott is an incredible teacher. He notices what his students are struggling with and will adjust his lesson accordingly. This means a lot because he is not just teaching from a formula lesson plan. He listens to what the students need help with and will explain it in a new way."

"His responses to the discussion board were encouraging and informative. I would urge my full-time working friends to take this course by itself, so they could devote enough time to absorb all it has to offer. They will do better in further courses after studying with Scott."

"Scott was a terrific instructor--great personality and great methods of providing the information--made the material less 'dry.' I found his mini lecture videos quite helpful. I liked hearing the teacher speak to us, provide the lesson and give real world examples of the lesson topic. I would like to see more instructors use this feature."

"I found this course well structured and programmed to fit into my busy life--full time job and family life. Professor O'Neil guided me through every step of the last seven weeks. I could not have completed this course without his guidance. Thank you."