

The SFU logo consists of the letters "SFU" in a white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a dark red square.

Course Report (with Comments) for Fall 2023 - IS 300 D100 - Research Methods in International Studies, Sally Sharif

About the Course Report

The Course Report (with Comments) is viewable to department/school administrators (e.g. Chairs, Directors, Managers of Academic and Administrative Services) as well as the course instructor. It displays student responses to all questions (except for those personally selected/created by the course instructor). It is to be used for course and curriculum design, as well as general program reflection across the academic unit on matters of teaching and learning. This report can be used in the case of biennial reviews for SFUFA instructors who have chosen to include student comments (section 28.9 of the SFUFA Collective Agreement, 2019 - 2022) in their review. If the instructor has chosen to exclude comments from their biennial review, please use the "Course Report (with Comments)."

The Course Experience Survey (CES) is not a direct measure of teaching effectiveness for promotion or tenure purposes. The purpose of this report is to inform understanding of student learning experiences and support reflective teaching practice. This report cannot be reasonably used to rank or highlight differences between individual instructors as it lacks contextual information (e.g. class size, student demographics, etc.). For more information about CES reports and how to interpret please click [here](#).

The [Centre for Educational Excellence \(CEE\)](#) provides consultations on course, curriculum design, and teaching practice and are available to help you interpret and apply student feedback from the Course Experience Survey.

Notes for Fall 2023:

1. The TSSU took strike action from Sept 28 - Oct 19th.
2. An extended survey period was piloted across courses in Linguistics, Resource and Environmental Management, Chemistry and Economics.

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Statistics: This report displays [descriptive statistics](#) (mean, standard deviation, frequency of scale options, and response count for each question) aggregated at a course level to protect student confidentiality.

Low Response: If [less than 5 students](#) responded to the overall course survey, the report will show aggregated scores instead of the response distribution for each question. This is to protect student confidentiality.

Creation Date: **Tuesday, January 09, 2024**

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Section 1 – Response Rate

Raters	Students
Responded	11
Invited	33
Response Ratio	33%

Section 2 – Common Core Questions

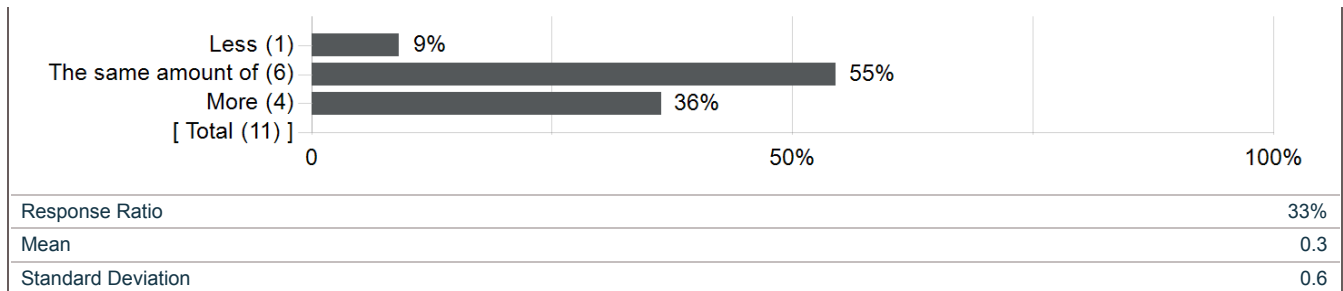
These questions appear on all course experience surveys at SFU and are selected by the Provost.

2.1 Course Workload

This question is about course workload.

SFU expects a student to spend 2-3 hours each week (both in class time and out of class work) per course credit. For example, if Physiology 101 is a 3-credit course, it would take 6-9 hours (on average) of a student's time each week. Courses that are shorter than 13-weeks or a typical semester are expected to require the same number of hours in fewer weeks.

I spent _____ time on IS 300 than expected based on its number of credits.



The mean score summarizes the overall reported workload for this course and can range from -1 to 1. It is scored as: Less time than expected = -1, The same amount of time as expected = 0, More time than expected = 1, given the [SFU definition of a credit](#). The closer the mean score is to 0, the more it means that students reported the workload to be the same as expected.

2.1a You responded as having spent less time on IS 300 than expected. Please explain.

Comments

Due to the strike the course lost 3 weeks of class. That made the course load to have less material and less readings compared to the beginning of the course

2.1b You responded as having spent the same amount of time on IS 300 as expected. Please explain.

Comments

I think with the readings + preparing for quizzes + assignments they together made me spend roughly the same amount of time

I spent the suggested amount of time required for the class. It would vary depending on the amount of readings and how difficult it was for me to conceptualize them. Some readings took longer than expected, others took shorter.

The workload for the class was adequate. The reading and assignments were just right.

The readings were not too intense each week and the assignments were about the length of work that I expected

I had to read for the quizzes

2.1b You responded as having spent more time on IS 300 than expected. Please explain.

Comments

It was my first time doing a 300 level courses so the workload did shock me and I spent more time on IS300 because of the various specific theories of research that I was supposed to remember.

Due to unforeseen circumstances strike that haepend

The writing and reading took way more time compared to other classes

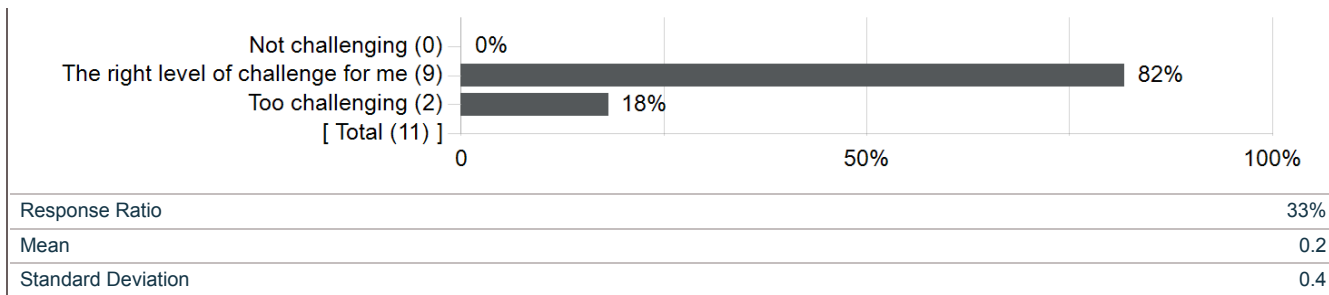
I wish this course was offered earlier – as it would have greatly helped me to structure and frame my writing from a social sciences perspective. I feel it would have greatly helped my other upper division IS courses that I took in Fall 2022, Spring 2023 and Summer 2023.

It took me some time to grasp the terms, context and what the instructor was looking for. But when it clicked (around halfway through the term) it was so much easier. And it is really helpful in my other upper division IS course that I am taking concurrently.

2.2 Course Challenge

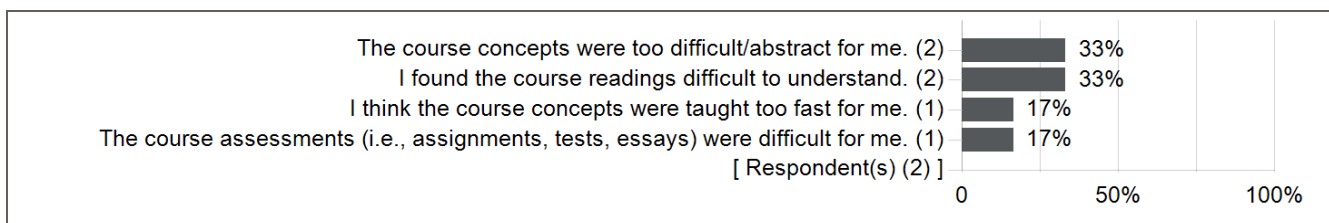
How challenging you find a course is related to how much effort you have to put in to be successful. This can depend on many factors, such as how fast or slow topics are covered or how much you know about the topic already.

I found IS 300 to be...



The mean score summarizes the overall perceived level of challenge for this course and can range from -1 to 1. It is scored as: Not challenging = -1, The right level of challenge for me = 0, Too challenging = 1. The closer the mean score is to 0, the more it means that students reported that the course was the right level of challenge for them.

2.2b Why did you rate IS 300 as too challenging?



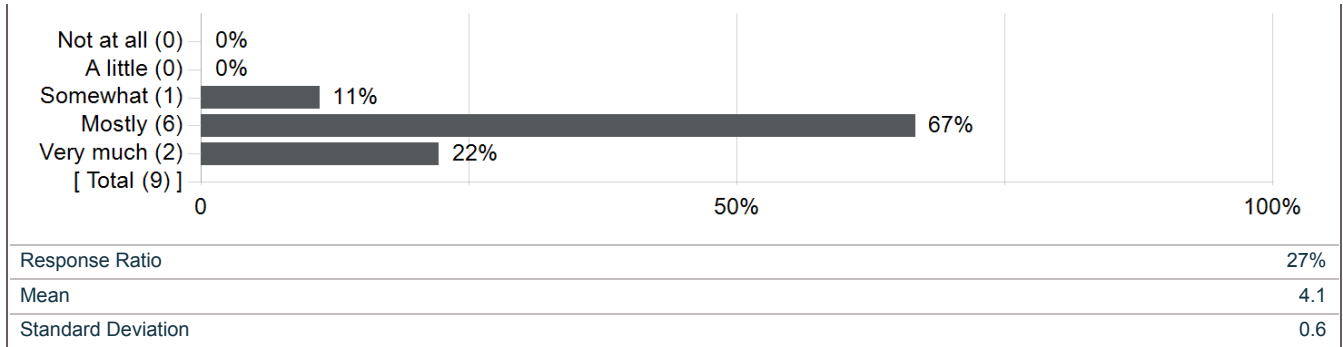
Note: Students were provided with a list of reasons to select with the option of adding an open-comment reason. Students could select multiple reasons.

2.3 Assessments

For Q2.3a and Q2.3b, the mean score can range from 1 to 5. It is scored as: Not at all = 1, A little = 2, Somewhat = 3, Mostly = 4, Very much = 5

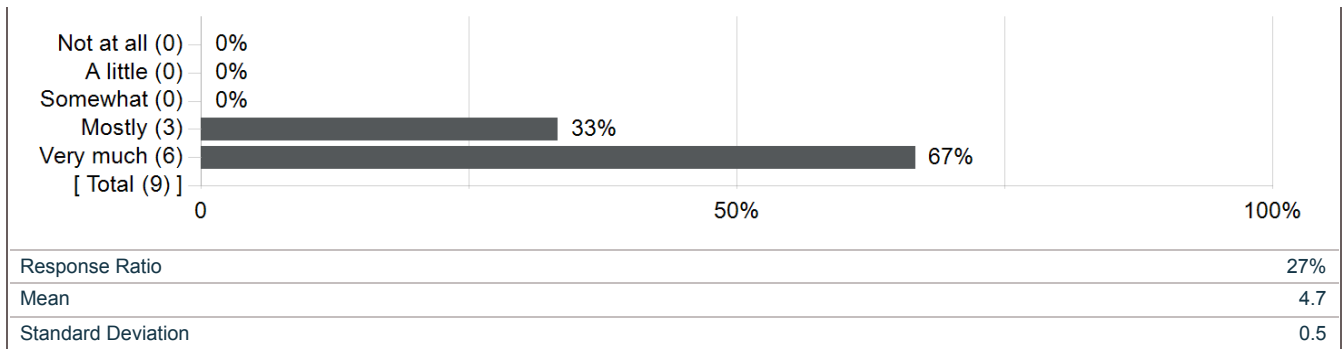
2.3a

Was it clear to you how your work (i.e., assignments, essays, tests, learning activities) would be graded?



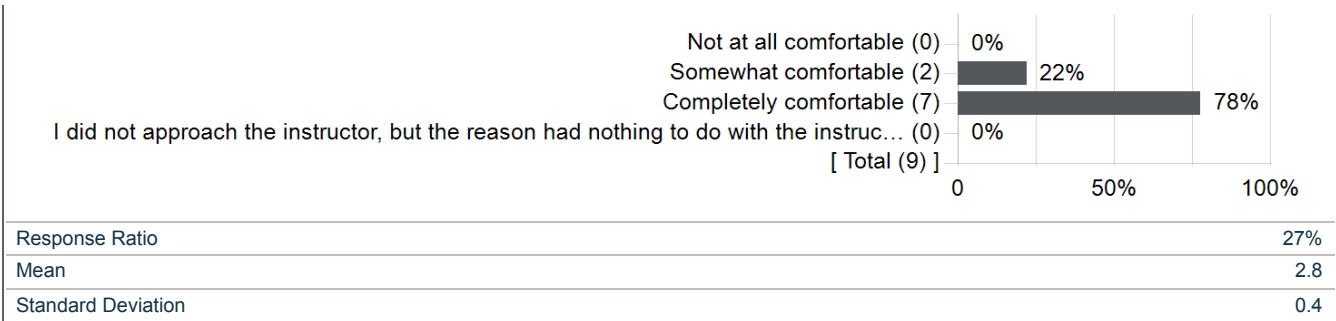
2.3b

Did the assessments reflect what you were taught (i.e. learning activities, concepts, materials)?



2.4 Comfort Approaching Instructor

How comfortable did you feel approaching Sally Sharif (in person or online)?



The mean score summarizes the overall reported level of comfort approaching the instructor and can range from 1 to 3. In contrast with questions Q2.1 and Q2.2, 1 represents one end of the scale (Not at all comfortable), while 3 represents the other end of the scale (Completely comfortable). The middle of the scale is 2 (Somewhat comfortable). Responses for "I did not approach..." are excluded from the mean score.

2.4b You responded as having felt somewhat comfortable approaching Sally Sharif. Please explain your response.

Comments

She was very approachable, but sometimes I got nervous

I usually use email to communicate with her.

If it is an emergency, I have actually come up to her at the end of class.

She is decently responsive over email....so so far it has been working okay for me.

2.4c You responded as having felt completely comfortable approaching Sally Sharif. Please explain your response.

Comments

Sally was great at making you feel like you could come to her with any questions. Whether it was during break, after class or through email, Sally always made time for you and made sure you understood the material well.

Her approachability made the class feel like an opportunity to delve into research methods, rather than simply covering theoretical concepts.

Sally was very approachable and quick to help when I needed it and encouraged follow-up questions to help my understanding

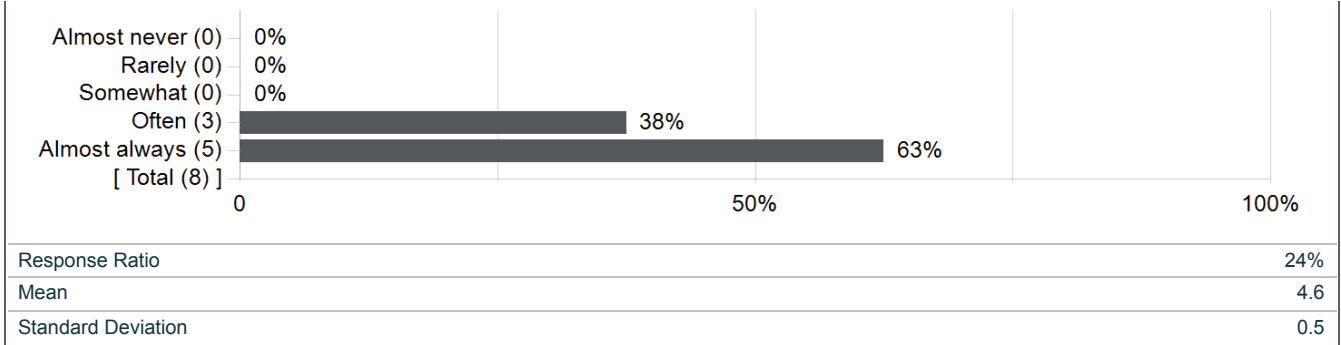
She is an excellent professor and a great human being. Approaching her to ask questions or permissions about the class is very comfortable as she is very understanding.

2.5 Instructor

For Q2.5a - 2.5c, the mean score can range from 1 to 5. It is scored as: Almost never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes/Somewhat = 3, Often = 4, Almost always = 5.

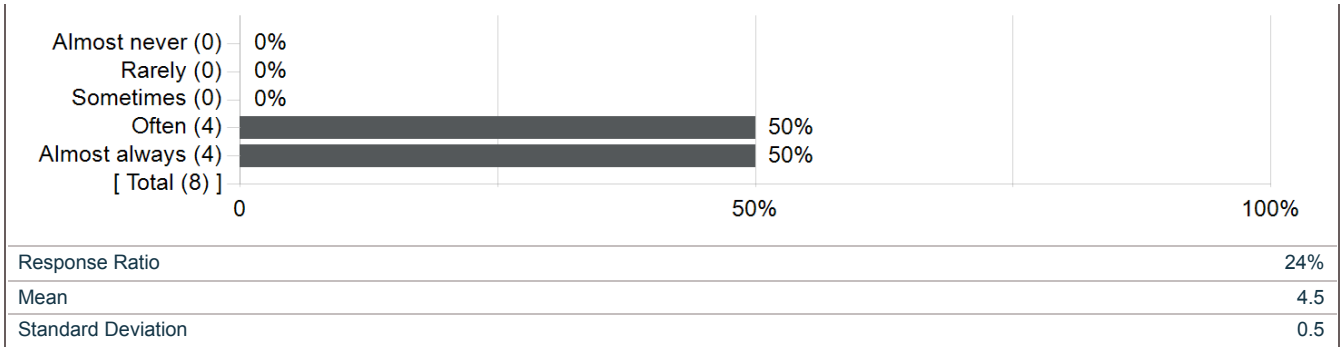
2.5a

I think Sally Sharif _____ tried to support student learning (i.e., used a variety of learning activities, invested in my success, invited and responded to student feedback).



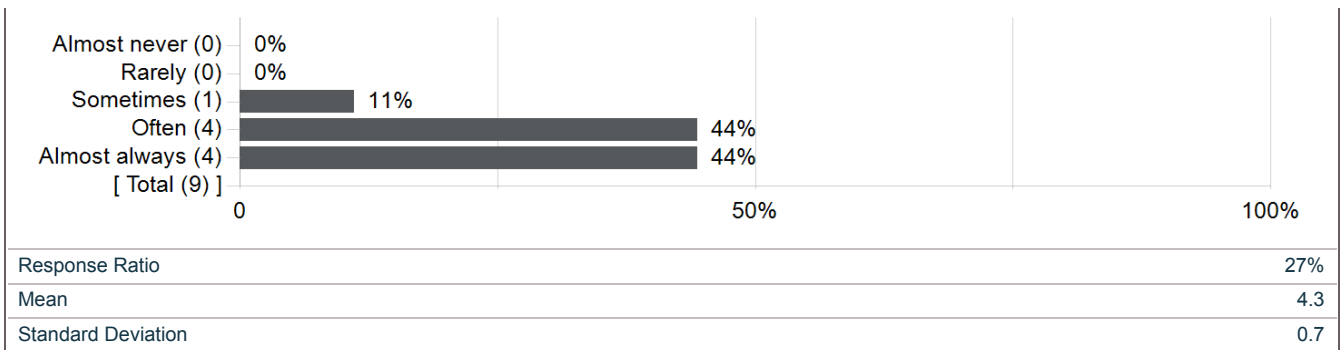
2.5b

I _____ felt engaged by Sally Sharif's teaching approach (i.e., activities, lectures, discussions).



2.5c

How often did you understand Sally Sharif's explanations of course concepts?



2.6 Which aspects of IS 300 helped you learn and why?

Comments
I really enjoyed her lectures because she often covered things I may have otherwise somewhat understood
Understanding research methods was very useful for me to know how to conduct it through research but also through hands-on exercises. It really made it clear that I already use research methods, but helped me hone in on the skills necessary for post-education situations. I would really enjoy more classes on research methods.
writing
It helped me to be more strategic when choosing and defining concepts for theory building. It gave me resources that would be helpful when working with future essays.
The conceptualization, the processes and the different types of methodology were all new to me and I honestly wish I had learned it in 2nd year.
Sally's in-depth lectures & support on the assignments were helpful in understanding key concepts
the aspect in which I learned the most was during sally's lectures. I could read the entire article about the topic before going to class and not understand it just until sally lectures about it. her explanations makes it look much more easy and understandable.

2.7 How would you improve IS 300 for future students?

Comments
i dont know
A real-world outside of class exercise where all the students can see what research looks like, going out in the real world as a class would be helpful in understanding the content better. I would also increase the amount of research method classes available
more specific explanation about assignments
I think the class was very interesting and provided lots of real life examples of how the material could be applied.
It was quite a bit to be honest – having everything in one course. I hope the IS department would consider the possibility of offering a mandatory intro version in first or second year that introduced students to what we learned in this class to give them some foundation in social sciences writing and then another one (could be mandatory or optional) in third year that expounded on the methodology in order to prepare them for grad school writing....I feel it would really be helpful as well as much less stressful.
For example, based on the syllabus provided by Dr. Sharif; conceptualization, ladder of abstraction, social science concepts, causal arguments, and process tracing would have been very beneficial for past, is definitely helping me with current, and will definitely be used for future IS papers.
Perhaps ethnography, participant observation, interviewing and ethics of human research could be touched on in summary and then delved deeper into in a second elective/mandatory course for those who would like to continue into grad school or participate in research studies or would like to delve into these areas through other upper division courses.
Maybe make what specifically the assignments should look like be clearer on the syllabus rather than in classes sorta right before its due.
I wish all three hours of the class focus on lecture about the readings, how to do the graphs, how to read tables, how to exercise fieldwork, and the second half on the class focus on the discussion questions in smaller groups and in class exercises, creating hypothesis and designing causal mechanism graphs. that part of the class was fascinating to me because I got to in class exercise what we had just discussed and learned, and since sally is present it made my learning and understanding a lot easier since I could ask her more questions. I really loved the small groups in class exercises and the sustantation of it as a whole class minutes later. this would usually happen half and hour before class ended. I wish we had more time to do this segment of the class.
I also wish there could be more specific instructions for each individual assignment rather that a whole explanation of them on the syllabus. besides that, I wish the quizzes and attendance accounted for only 25% of the final grade. in other words, 10% for attendance and 15% for quizzes. this mainly because the quizzes are unpredictable. some of the questions were very tricky in terms of their answers, which options were very similar to each other, and with the time management it made it harder to act fast and effectively. I wish the quizzes portion become take-home and that they are done before coming to class. if not possible, I wish the lectures and in class exercises come first and then the quizzes at the very last portion of the class.
In addition to that, I wish that the assessment of the 3 (5 pages) assignments accounted for the 45% of the final grade because some of them require a substantial amount of work to be worth only 10% each. for example the interview, in which we had to transcript 30 minutes of a conversation, take a certificate online training course and also design a consent form and a questionnaire, is quite time and effort consuming to account only 10% for the final grade. I wish each assignment accounted for at least 15% of the final grade.
finally, I really wish the SFU school for international studies develops a 100 level course for research methods, some of us students do not get the opportunity to learn this information before coming to university. so having only one course in the upper division that nest such amount of information is quite a lot for one semester. I wish I could have learned many of the basic things I learned with sally in this course earlier in my carrier. specially because it made research to be much easier and less complicated to understand academic research when it comes to collecting and analyzing data.
Consider a quiz every other week possibly? I still don't like quizzes lol, sometimes it felt overwhelming. It would be helpful to provide slides with examples of the conceptual graphs (making of graphs) ; etc. so students can go back and reflect; I had to heavily rely on my notes (which were sometimes messy) when following chalkboard examples