

## IS 395: **The Politics of Sexuality**

Maya Novak-Herzog

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Tues/Thurs 11am – 12:20pm

Office hours: Thursdays 12:30 – 1:30pm, Scott Hall office

### **Course Description**

This course takes the study of sex as its primary analytical subject— what is sex? How do understandings and expressions of sex and sexuality differ across social and political contexts? Students will analyze key historical and political moments that have played a formative role in shaping contemporary notions of sex. Examples include the enduring impact of British Imperialism, the global HIV/AIDS crisis, and the feminist “sex wars” of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, among many other transformative events. Ultimately, this course challenges the notion that human sexuality is merely an individual, biological phenomenon, and, instead, situates sex in a broader context conditioned by power, dominance, and hierarchy.

In addition, students will design and complete a research project related to a topic of their choice with reference to sexuality politics and policy. To encourage success, the course will focus on building skills in research and writing. Previous knowledge or interest in sexuality studies is welcome, but not required!

### Participation: 20% of your grade

**This is a senior seminar and a discussion-based course.** I will spend very little time lecturing. Thus, simply showing up to class will not satisfy the participation requirement. Your grade will be based upon your participation, demonstration of preparation, and active listening. Participation looks like quality and regular contributions during *each* class. Active listening, respecting the opinions of others, and the ability to step back from the conversation when necessary are all just as important to your overall contribution in the class.

### Weekly reflections: 20% of your grade

Starting on the week of January 8th and for every subsequent week (except for the weeks our class does not meet) you will submit a 1- or 2-page reading reflection (12 pt font, any spacing). These reflections do not have to be perfect but should demonstrate that you have completed and engaged with the readings for the week. This “memo” should contain a specific question/problem (preferably not one with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer) from the readings. I will use these questions to guide our discussion for the day. You can write your memo in first person as though you are writing in a journal or in analytical fashion –

– that is up to you. Send me your memo by email Tuesday morning, no later than 10am CST. The reflection should cover the contents of at least two of the readings for that week (whether or not you cover materials from Tuesday, Thursday, or a mix of both is up to you).

### Research paper: 60% of your grade

The final assignment for this class is a 12–15-page research paper due on March 11th at **12pm**. Over the course of the quarter, you will work on developing your paper and research through some of the assignments listed above, as well as through an in-class workshop (see course schedule below). The research paper can be on a topic of your choosing so long as it relates to the topics and themes of the course. The paper should articulate a clear argument, draw on and analyze a number of different sources, demonstrate a strong understanding of your chosen topic, and be generally compelling, coherent, and well-written. Late papers will be deducted a third of a letter grade for each 24-hour period that the paper is late.

### **Research paper components:**

- Research topic & question due Week 5 (5%)
- Literature Review & Outline due week 7 (5%)
- Oral presentation of research paper due Week 9 (20%)
- Final paper due first day of finals week, March 11<sup>th</sup> (30%)

### **Praxis**

- Critical engagement with the material
- Embracing your own shortcomings
- Supporting and encouraging the learning processes of your colleagues
- Critique the idea, not the person

### **Attendance policy:**

**You are expected to attend every seminar.** However, the state of the world, of course, requires flexibility. If you have an emergency, reach out to me ASAP. In order to pass the course, you cannot miss more than two classes without checking in with me.

### **Electronics**

Research shows time and time again that effective classroom learning is hindered substantially by electronic devices, including laptops. See: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/business/laptops-not-during-lecture-or-meeting.html> or <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254> or <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0956797614524581>.

Laptops are for notetaking, accessing readings, and working on research during allotted times. Any other use of them is strictly prohibited. If electronics start to impede on class discussions, we will reevaluate.

## Readings

Each day will have required reading associated with it. Readings must be done **before** the class period for which it is assigned.

All course materials will be accessible through Canvas except for Katherine Angel's book which you will need to purchase, rent, or find online. If acquiring the book poses any challenges for you, please don't hesitate to reach out for assistance.

- Angel, Katherine. 2021. *Tomorrow Sex Will Be Good Again: Women and Desire in the Age of Consent*. Verso. <https://www.amazon.com/Tomorrow-Sex-Will-Good-Again/dp/1788739167>

## Flexibility

Because this is a small senior seminar, content may change or be updated based on the interests of those enrolled, timing, or other unforeseeable factors.

## Content warning

Class lectures, discussion, and readings will cover a range of topics, including sexual violence, sex trafficking, torture, genocide, etc. I will provide content warnings at the end of each session for the topics to be covered in the following class. Students should attend class prepared to hear about and discuss these topics. Students encountering difficulty with the material are encouraged to reach out to me, or you may raise your concerns in-class if it makes sense to.

## Course Calendar

### Week 1: Introductions

*Thursday, January 4<sup>th</sup>:*

Required Readings: **No required reading**

### Week 2: Defining sexuality

*Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>:*

Required Readings:

- Halperin, David M. 1989. "Is There a History of Sexuality?" *History and Theory* 28 (3): 257–74. **(19 pages)**
- Foucault, Michel, 1978. *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Pantheon Books. **(Chapter 1-2, 35 pages)**

Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup>:

Required Readings:

- Scott, Joan W. "The Evidence of Experience." *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4, 1991. **(24 pages)**
- Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan. 2001. "Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies - GLQ-J LESBIAN GAY STUD* 7 (October): 663–79. **(18 pages)**

**Week 3: Settler colonialism's impact on sexuality**

Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup> :

Required Readings:

- Gupta, Alok. 2008. "This Alien Legacy: The Origins of "Sodomy" Laws in British Colonialism." *New York: Human Rights Watch*. **(70 pages — not really, though. Lots of large footnotes)**

Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup> :

Required Readings:

- Franke, Katherine M. 2012. "Dating the State: The Moral Hazards of Winning Gay Rights," *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, Vol. 49, No. 1. **(47 pages)**

**Week 4: Legally regulating sex**

Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>

Required Readings:

- Sarat, Austin, Thomas R. Kearns, and Catharine A. MacKinnon. "Reflections on Law in the Everyday Life of Women" Essay. In *Law in Everyday Life*, 109–22. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995. **(13 pages)**
- Lionel Cantú Jr. with Eithne Luibhéid and Alexandra Minna Stern, "Well-Founded Fear: Political Asylum and the Boundaries of Sexual Identity in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands," *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings*, University of Minnesota Press, 2005 **(13 pages)**.

Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>

Required Readings:

- Engber, Daniel. 2015. "The Strange Case of Anna Stubblefield," *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/25/magazine/the-strange-case-of-anna-stubblefield.html>.
- Amon, Joseph J., Katherine W. Todrys. 2008. "Fear of Foreigners: HIV-related restrictions on entry, stay, and residence." *J Int AIDS Soc.* (6 pages)
- Nilsson, Patricia, "MindGeek: the secretive owner of Pornhub and RedTube." (13 pages)

## Week 5: Socially regulating sex

*Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>*

Required Readings:

- Broude, Gwen J. 1980, "Extramarital Sex Norms in Cross-Cultural Perspective," *Behavior Science Research* (38 pages).
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*Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup>*

Required Readings:

- Srinivasan, Amia. 2018. "Does Anyone Have the Right to Sex?" *London Review of Books*, March 22, 2018. <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v40/n06/amia-srinivasan/does-anyone-have-the-right-to-sex>.
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## Week 6: Intimate Partner Violence — Global and US Contexts

*Tuesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>:*

Required Readings:

- Lynnmarie Sardinha, Mathieu Maheu-Giroux, Heidi Stöckl, Sarah Rachel Meyer, and Claudia García-Moreno. 2022. *Global, regional, and national prevalence estimates of physical or sexual, or both, intimate partner violence against women in 2018*. Elsevier (11 pages).
- Zoila, Miriam. 2017. "What would it actually take to end intimate violence?" <https://colorlines.com/article/what-would-it-take-actually-end-intimate-violence/>

Required Multi-Media:

- A conversation with Catharine MacKinnon (1995): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IW7hn6j1Hw&ab\\_channel=AmericanEnterpriseInstitute](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IW7hn6j1Hw&ab_channel=AmericanEnterpriseInstitute) (25 minutes).

*Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>*

Required Readings:

- o Freedman, Estelle B. *Redefining Rape: Sexual Violence in the Era of Suffrage and Segregation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2015. (Ch. 1- 4. 56 pages)

## **Week 7: The University**

*Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>*

Required Readings:

- Reynolds, Celene. 2019. "The Mobilization of Title IX across U.S. Colleges and Universities, 1994-2014." *Social Problems*. 66(2):245-73 **(29 pages)**.

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*Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup>*

Required Readings:

- Htun, Mala, Francesca R. Jensenius, Melanie Sayuri Dominguez, Justine Tinkler, and Carlos Contreras. "Effects of Mandatory Sexual Misconduct Training on University Campuses." *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* 8 (September 20, 2022): 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23780231221124574>. **(13 pages)**
- Hutchinson, Ellie, 'Tackling gender based violence in university communities: a practitioner perspective', in Sundari Anitha, and Ruth Lewis (eds), *Gender Based Violence in University Communities: Policy, Prevention and Educational Initiatives*. **(18 pages)**

## **Week 8: Future world changers**

*Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>*

- RESEARCH PAPER WORKSHOP — upload a draft of your paper by Monday, February 19<sup>th</sup>

*Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>*

Required Readings:

- Angel, Katherine. 2021. *Tomorrow Sex Will Be Good Again: Women and Desire in the Age of Consent*. Verso. **(Chapters 1 & 2, 68 pages)**.

## **Week 9: Future World Changers Continued**

*Tuesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>*

- Angel, Katherine. 2021. *Tomorrow Sex Will Be Good Again: Women and Desire in the Age of Consent*. Verso. **(Chapters 3 & 4, 45 pages)**.

*Thursday, February 29<sup>th</sup>: Project presentations — class led by presenters*

- For those presenting on this day, you will be asked to choose the readings for the class and send them out to the class by Monday, February 26<sup>th</sup>

## **Week 10: Closing Reflections**

*Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>: Project presentations — class led by presenters*

- For those presenting on this day, you will be asked to choose the readings for the class and send them out to the class by Friday, March 1st

Project Title: **Course and Teacher Evaluations CTEC Spring 2024**

Courses Audience: **8**

Responses Received: **5**

Response Ratio: **62.5%**

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## Report Comments

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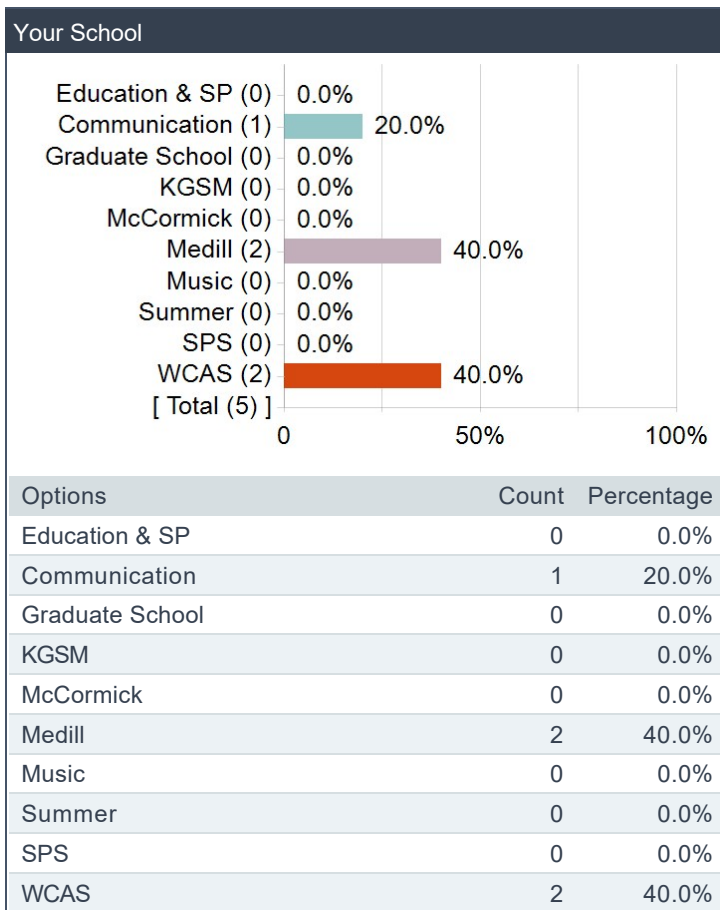
## Northwestern University

### Course Evaluations

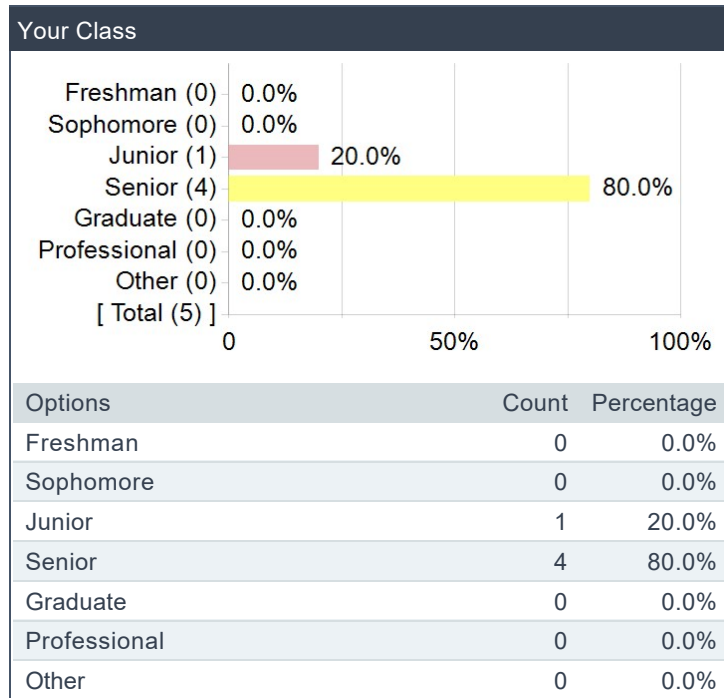
Instructor	Course
Maya Novak-herzog	INTL_ST_395-0_21: Integrating Project Seminar

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

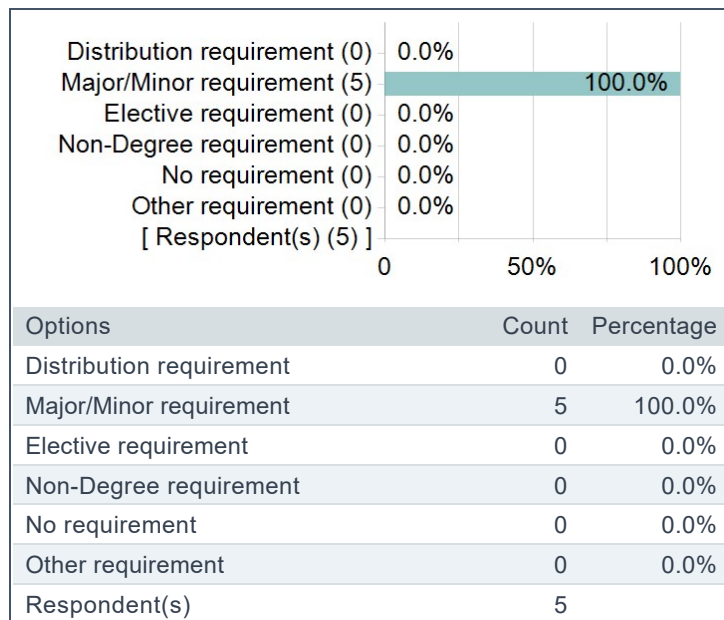
##### Your School



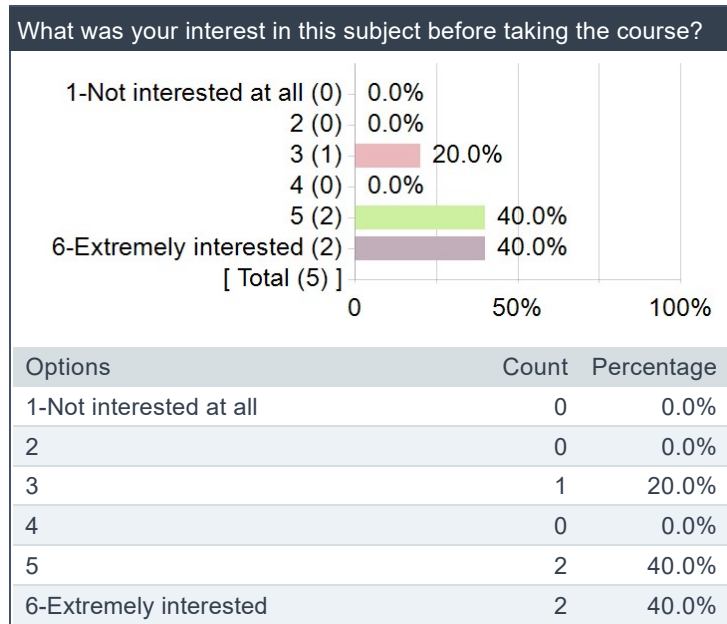
### Your Class



### What is your reason for taking the course? (mark all that apply)

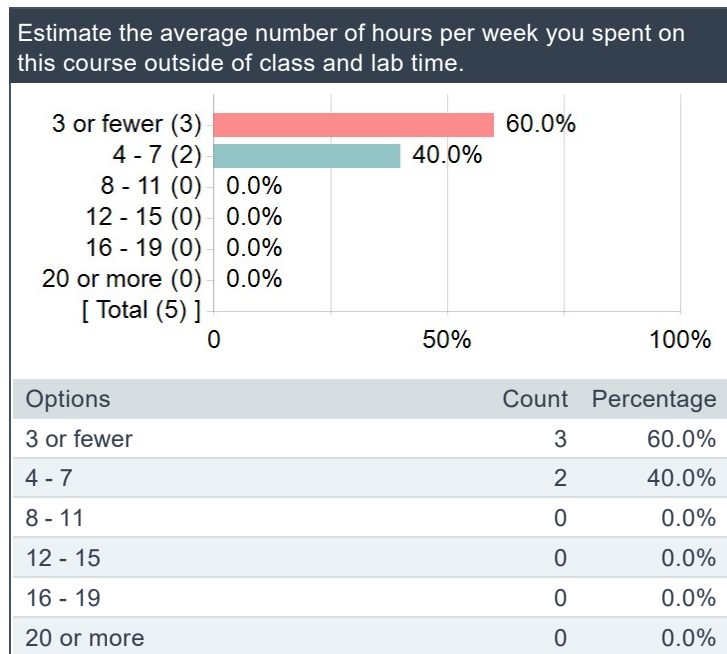


**What was your Interest in this subject before taking the course?**



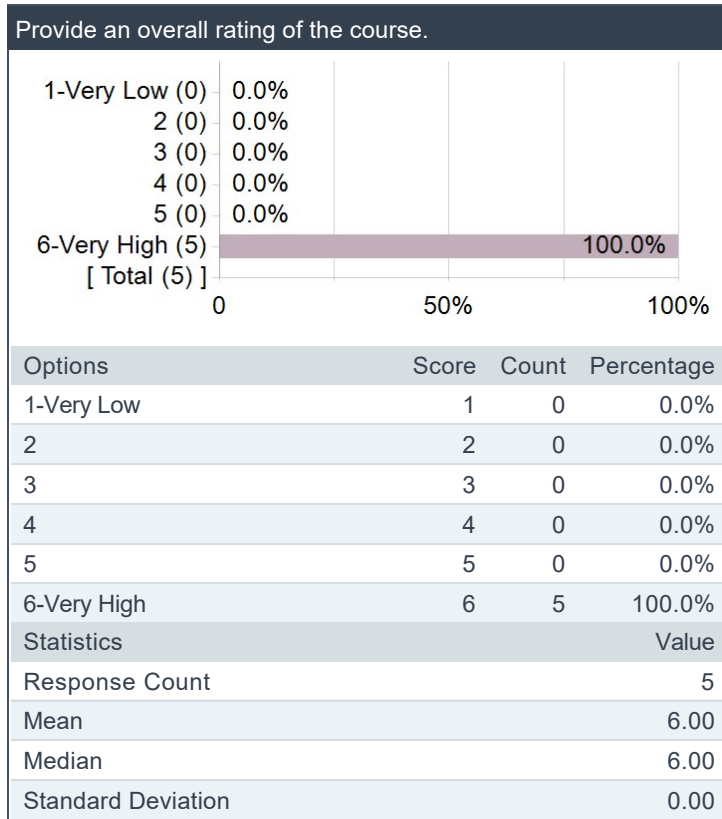
**TIME-SURVEY QUESTION**

Estimate the average number of hours per week you spent on this course outside of class and lab time.

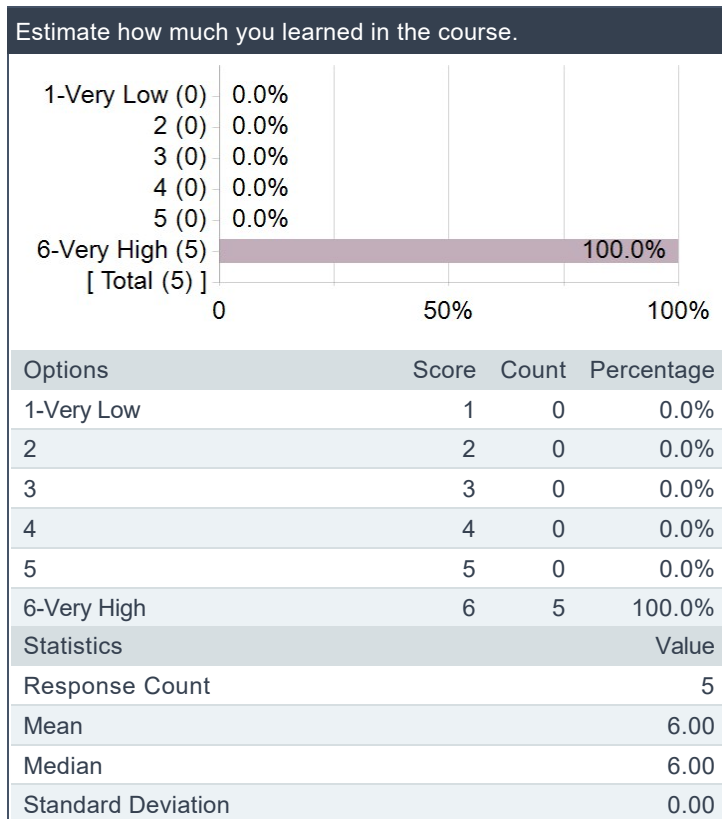


## COURSE QUESTIONS

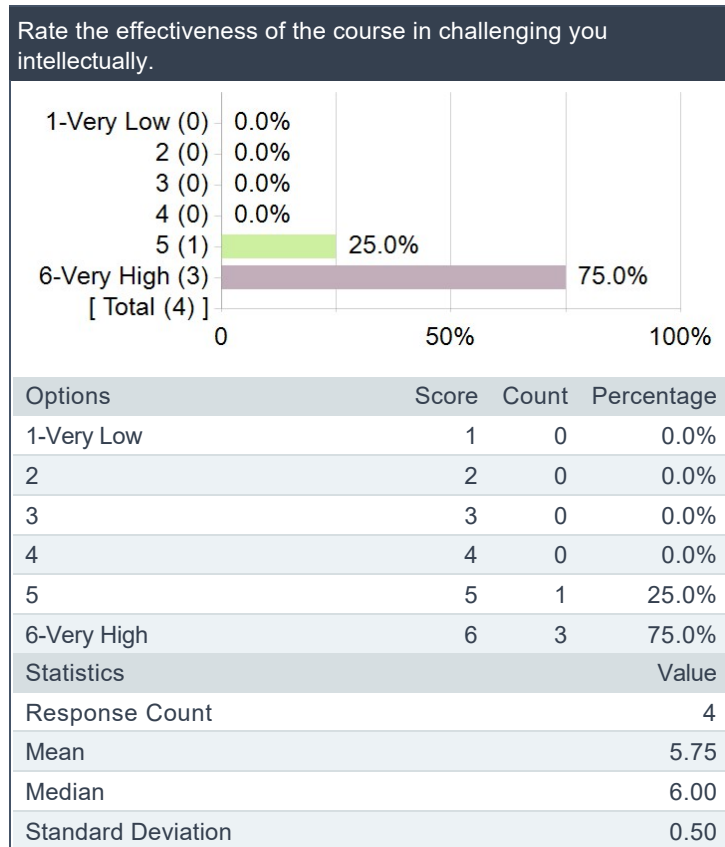
Provide an overall rating of the course.



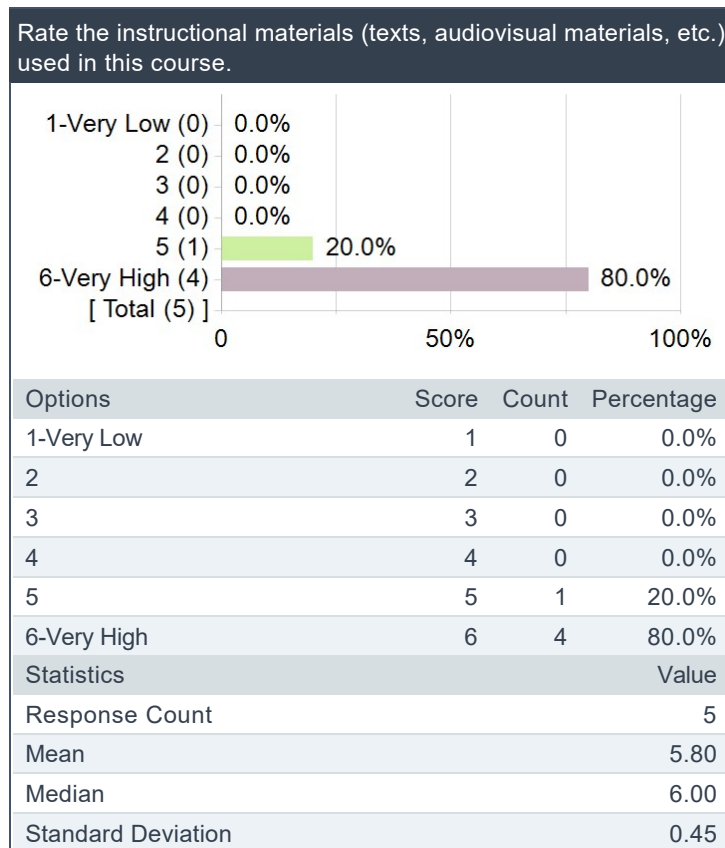
Estimate how much you learned in the course.



**Rate the effectiveness of the course in challenging you intellectually.**

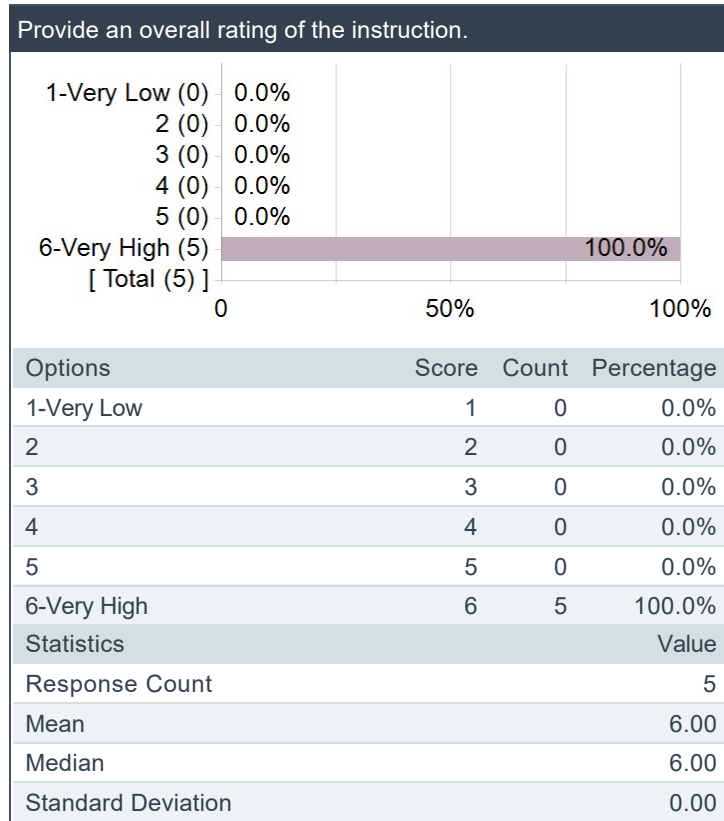


**Rate the instructional materials (texts, audiovisual materials, etc.) used in this course.**

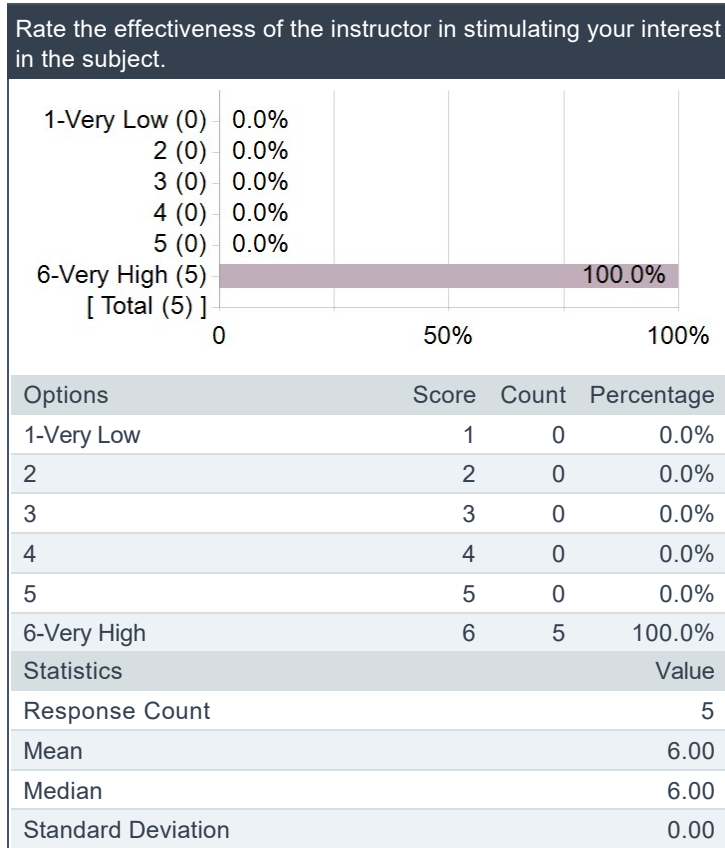


## INSTRUCTOR QUESTIONS

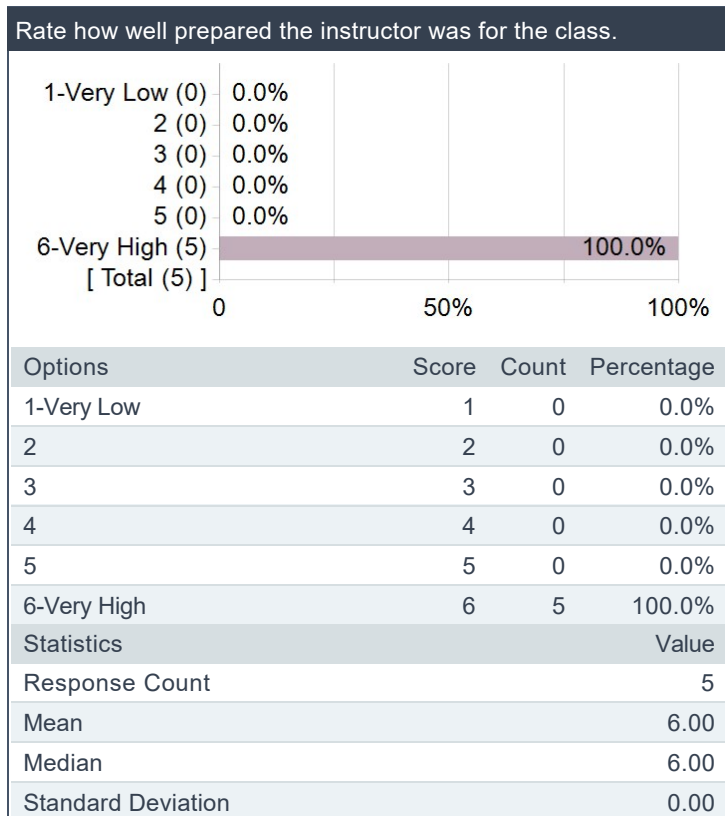
Provide an overall rating of the instruction.



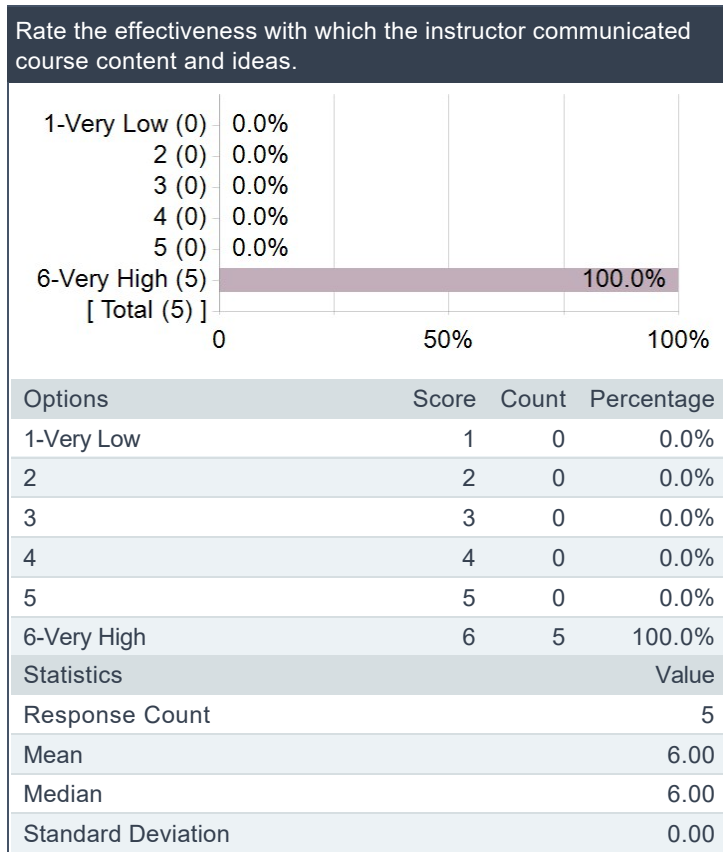
**Rate the effectiveness of the instructor in stimulating your interest in the subject.**



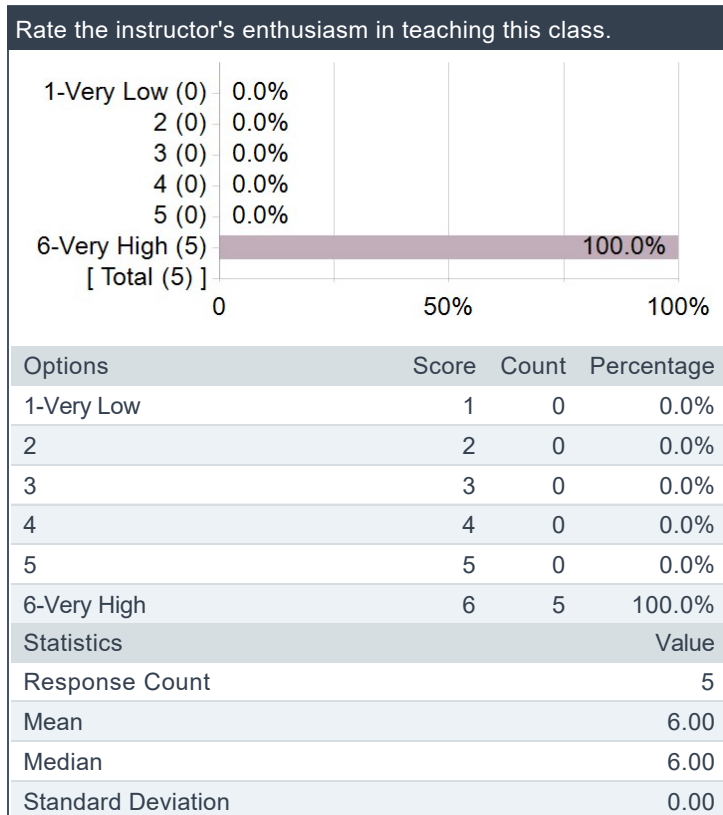
**Rate how well prepared the instructor was for the class.**



**Rate the effectiveness with which the instructor communicated course content and ideas.**



**Rate the instructor's enthusiasm in teaching this class.**





## OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

### Did the course help you learn? Why or why not?

Comments
Yes – maya was great and it was a super interesting course. I learned a lot
Yes! Professor Novak–Herzog was absolutely incredible, and the small discussion style was perfect for the course.
Yes, before each class we were assigned one or two readings and then we discussed them in a seminar. This allowed me to hear other people's opinions on the readings and contribute to the learning as well.
This course was a wonderful end to my International Studies seminar—it gave me the chance to apply a global perspective to an important humanities issue and engage in interdisciplinary thinking.

### Please summarize your reaction to this course focusing on the aspects that were most important to you.

Comments
Maya is so passionate about the class and material and seems genuinely interested in what people have to contribute.
I really liked this seminar. Maya is great, and I learned way more than I expected to. This is a subject that I wasn't super familiar with, and the readings were genuinely very interesting. I feel like this is a class that will definitely stick with me.
I had SUCH an amazing time in this class. It was such an important class to take, and I honestly think it should be required for all of Northwestern!
This is a seminar–style course that covers various topics relating to sexuality including, pinkwashing, intimate partner violence, and Title XI. Before every class, there are a few readings (roughly 40ish pages of reading per class) and then the class is primarily student–led. You submit a short reading reflection once a week but they are graded pretty leniently. Maya is an amazing instructor!! She takes the time to explain things to you, gets to know you, and understands that these are, at times, difficult topics to talk about. The final research paper is only 12–15 pages long and Maya helps you a lot by setting up a draft workshop and reviewing your research question, outline, etc! Overall this is an amazing class, I learned so much, it was super interesting, and the grading for the final paper was really fair!
This course was so interesting and really challenged me to think about the way sexuality connects to all aspects of life. As someone interested in international relations, I really appreciated exploring the overlap between global politics and sexuality/gender identity—I was challenged to think about geopolitical issues through an entirely new lens.

### What are the primary teaching strengths of the instructor?

Comments
Really wants to hear student's thoughts, gave great feedback, super knowledgeable on the subject. Didn't discount anyone's ideas even if they were not entirely correct or a little out there. It's clear that she's super passionate about the subject and really cared about our learning and put a lot of thought into the class.
She kept us all incredibly engaged and was endlessly supported.
Maya was very good at explaining concepts that we didn't understand and jumping in when necessary. Beyond that, she did an incredibly good job of facilitating discussion and ensuring that the class was primarily student–led. This provided us with the opportunity to learn more and explore various points of view.
Great reading materials and led engaging class discussions

### What are the primary weaknesses, if any, of the instruction?

Comments
Sometimes the readings were a bit long/confusing
None!
NA

### Can you offer suggestions for improvement?

Comments
I'd recommend just cutting down some of the readings like we talked about in class.
No!
NA
As much as I enjoyed our research project, I feel like I didn't have much time to dedicate to it given all of our other coursework (and other classes) throughout the quarter. I would recommend having students start the project at the beginning of the quarter, or at least make a plan, so that their work is not rushed.

### What is the most important thing you learned in this course?

Comments
Key debates in the gender/sexuality space and errors in ways that we have been trained to think about sex and sexuality.
About the important of constantly researching and learning about conceptions of sexuality and consent.
I learned how to effectively synthesize information from larger texts and utilize this information to have a strong discussion.
It is important to analyze sex on the macro level as well as the micro level—it can influence entire populations in addition to the behavior of single individuals.

### What is one thing the professor could have done differently to help your learning?

Comments
I think reading guides and a little guidance as to what to look for in readings would have been helpful. Also some sort of rubric or more defined guidelines on the final paper.
Nothing!
NA