

# Individual Report for Sp21-NUTR-0238-01-Econ Food and Nutrition Policy (William A. Masters wmaste01)

Project Title: **Spring 2021 Course Evaluations - Friedman**

Courses Audience: **64**

Responses Received: **46**

Response Ratio: **71.88%**

## Summary of Results

### Course evaluation summary

Question	Course		School (Friedman School of Nutrition)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. This course met its defined objectives (as described in the course abstract and the syllabus).	1.61	0.54	1.60	0.79
2. The amount of material covered in the course was effective for my own learning.	1.98	1.04	1.77	0.97
3. The assigned readings for the course were instructive and relevant to the course objectives.	2.07	0.88	1.72	0.79
4. Information communicated by guest lectures was useful.	1.25	0.50	1.59	0.75
5. The workload for the course (readings, homework, papers, etc.) was effective for my own learning.	1.76	0.85	1.86	0.99
6. Audio/video media was relevant to the course objectives (if used in this course).	1.81	0.75	1.56	0.75
7. Experiential activities outside of the classroom were relevant to the course objectives (if used in this course).	1.73	0.79	1.62	0.83
8. Overall, how satisfied were you with this course?	1.98	0.91	1.84	1.00
Overall	1.77	0.85	1.70	-

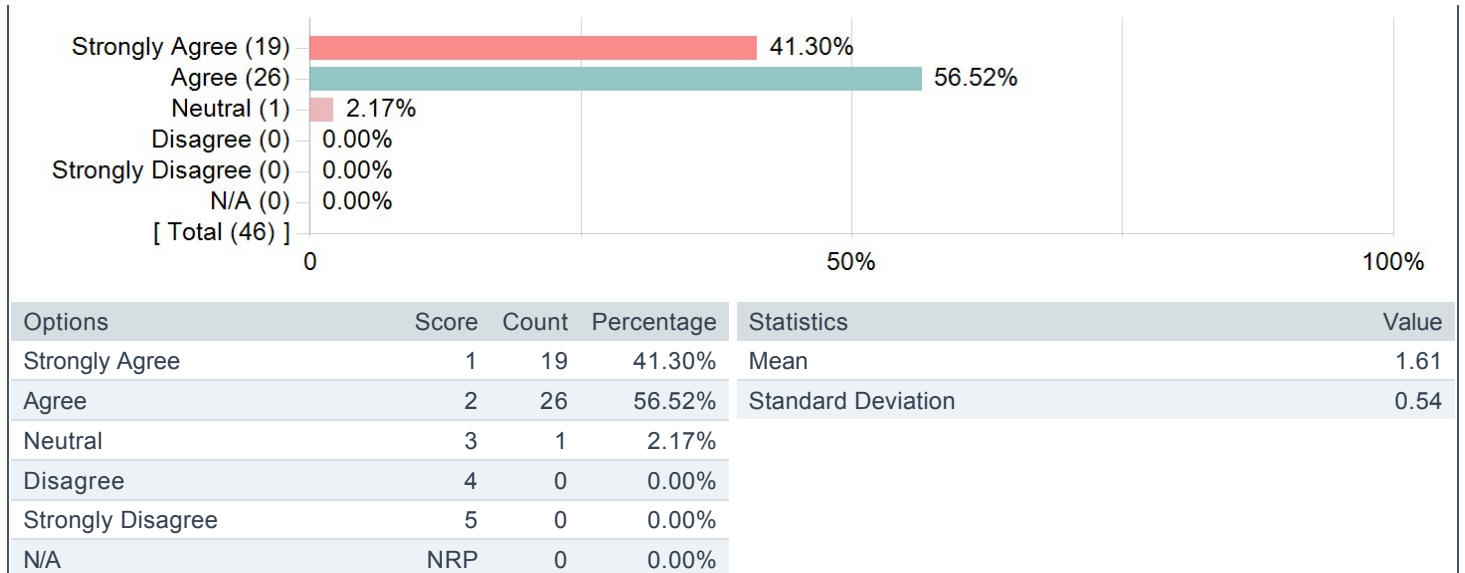
### Instructor evaluation summary

Question	Course		School (Friedman School of Nutrition)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
15. The instructor was prepared for class.	1.20	0.55	1.40	0.74
16. The instructor communicated the course concepts clearly.	1.64	0.80	1.60	0.86
17. The instructor responded clearly and completely to questions and/or feedback.	1.44	0.62	1.54	0.81
18. The instructor stimulated enthusiasm and interest in the subject.	1.16	0.37	1.45	0.79
19. The instructor was available for help outside of the class.	1.20	0.40	1.47	0.70
20. The instructor provided useful feedback on assignments and exams to date.	1.36	0.53	1.73	0.97
21. The instructor was sensitive to issues of diversity (e.g. race, class, culture, gender, sexual orientation).	1.53	0.63	1.57	0.75
22. Overall, how satisfied were you with this instructor?	1.44	0.69	1.56	0.85
24. The course included relevant concepts of diversity and social justice.	1.80	0.85	1.86	0.91
Overall	1.42	0.65	1.58	-

## Detailed Results of Course Evaluation

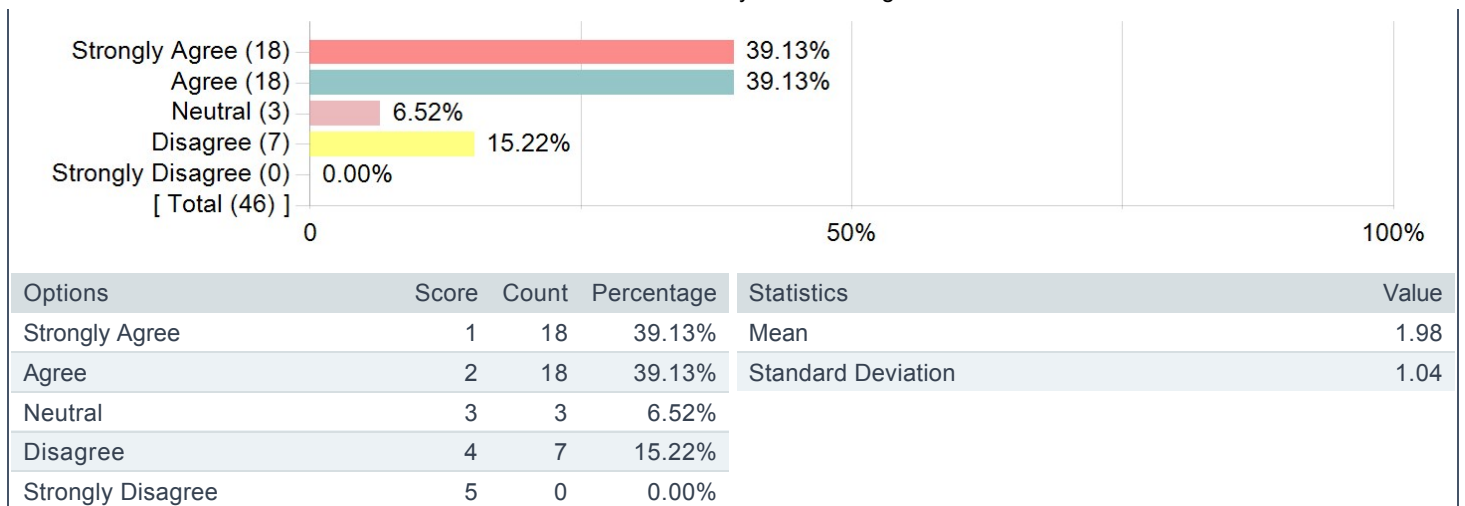
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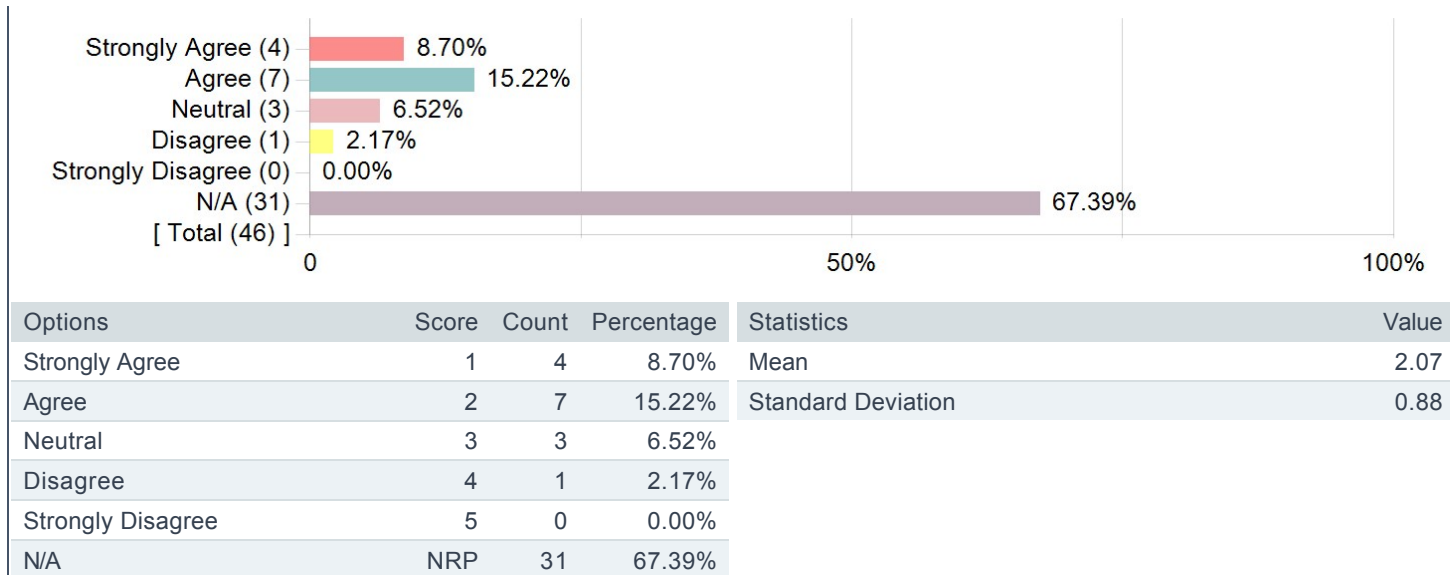
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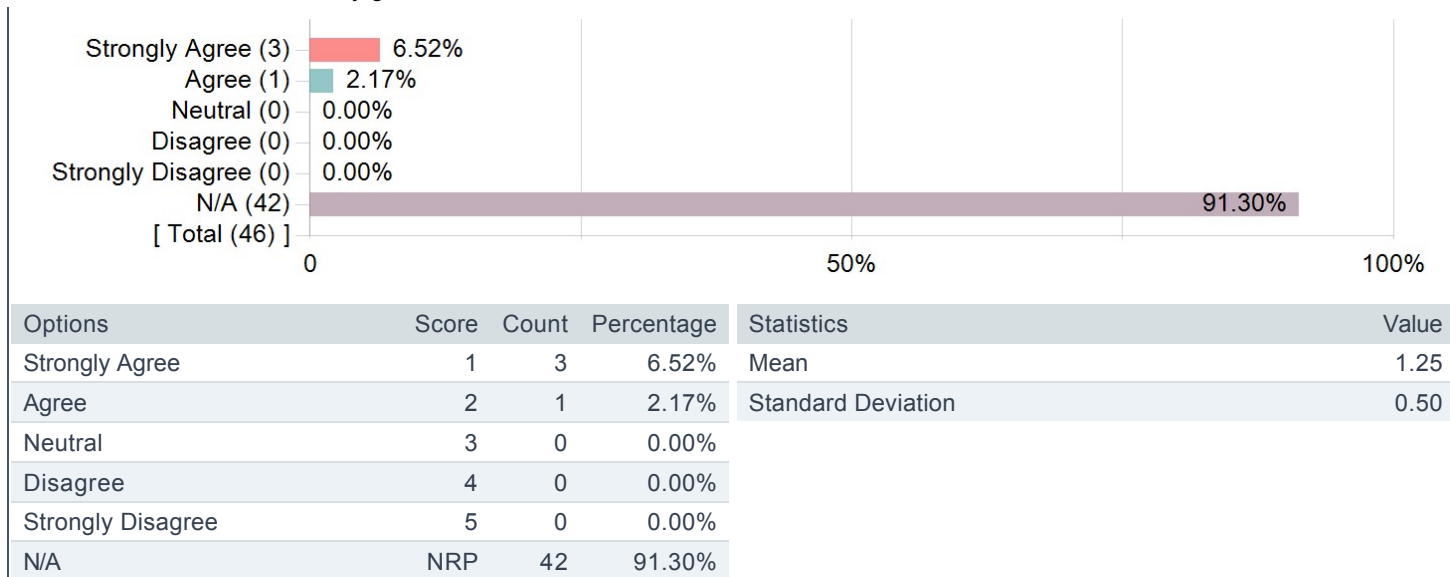
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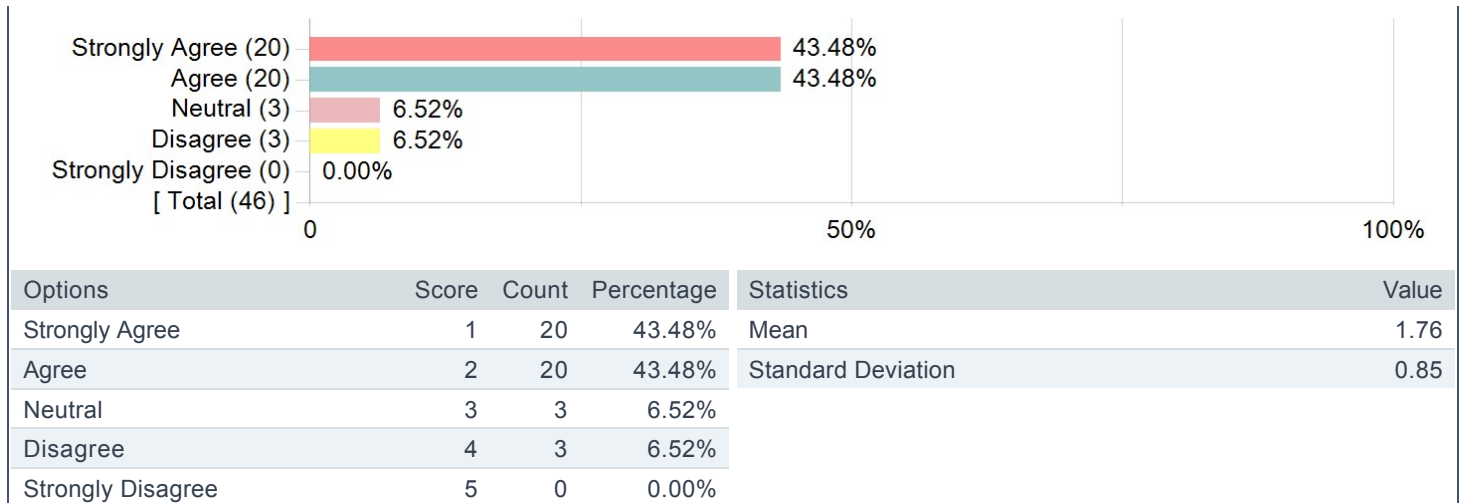
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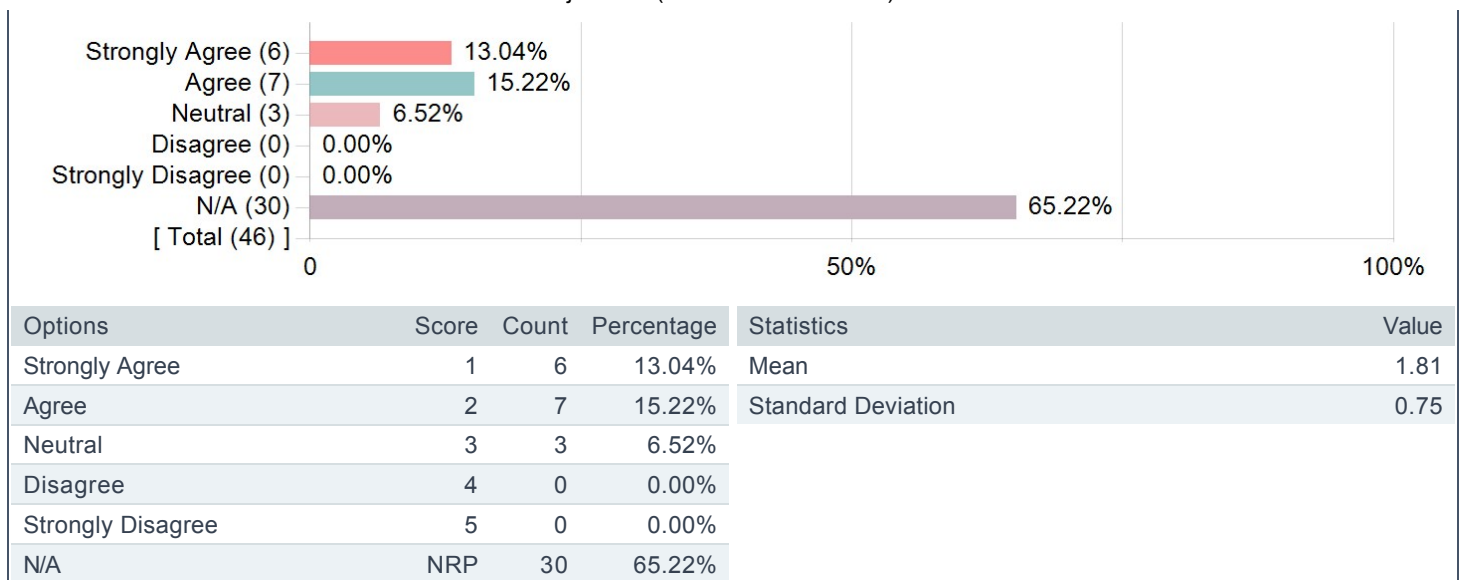
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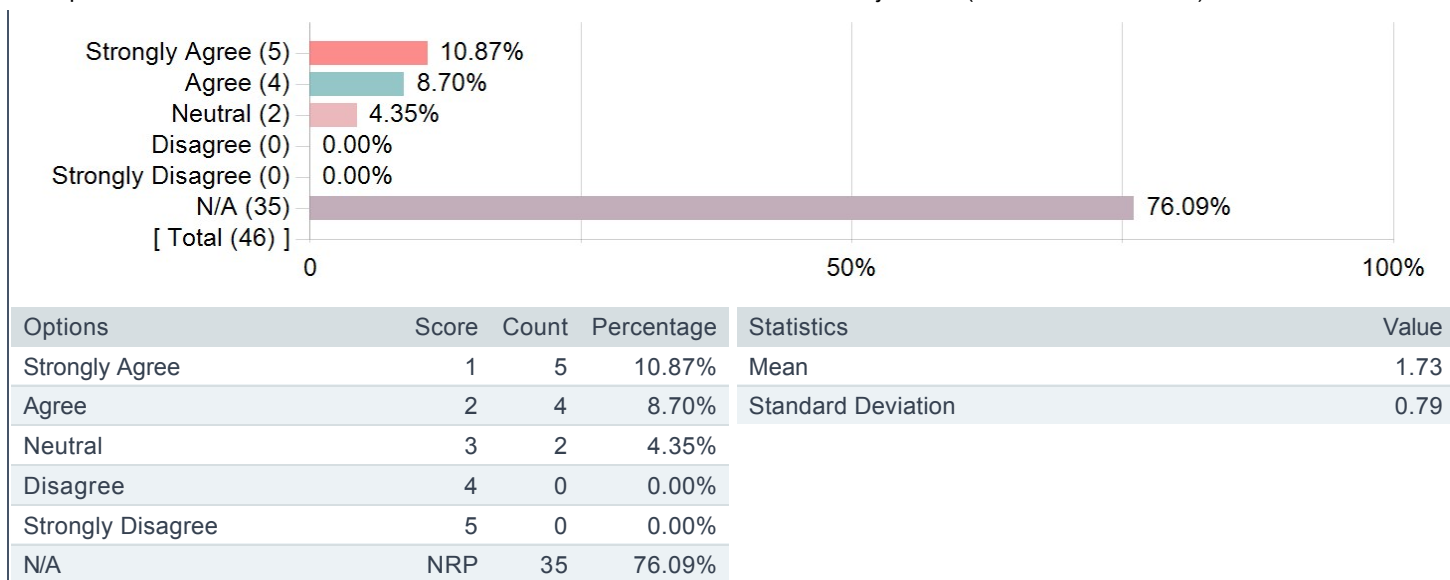
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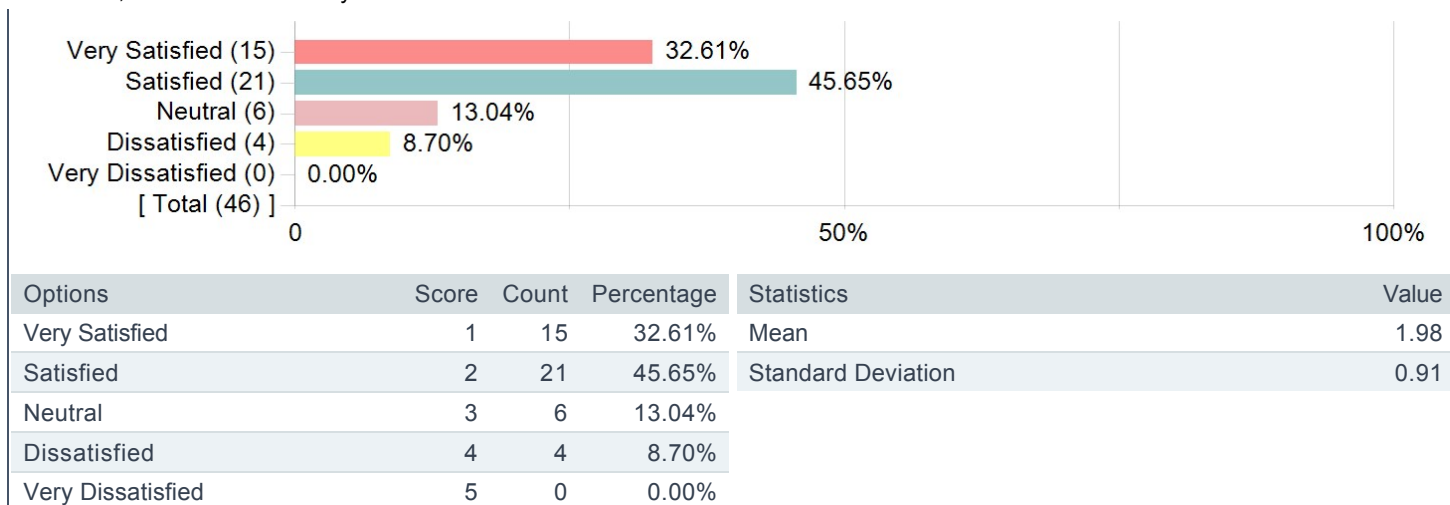
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**8. Overall, how satisfied were you with this course?**

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## Open-Ended Feedback

### 9. Comments regarding the assigned readings:

Comments
The assigned readings were optional to the lecture but it followed the theme or the content of the lecture pretty well.
I do not think we had very many assigned readings. I think that incorporating news articles that we'd all read, for example, could be really beneficial to my learning.
Did not have assigned readings
None used
I appreciate not having any!
No readings but loved the assignments, very use and informative
I appreciate that Will does not assign readings. It's nice to know that everything we need to learn is contained within each lecture.
I wish we had some readings, even if not required, that could help build up familiarity with the writing style and theoretical frameworks of Economics alongside the nuts and bolts we learn in class.
N/A
No readings but it would have been nice to get an extra perspective in some form.
The readings are interesting.i
N/A
I kind of wish there were assigned readings! Even if they were optional. It would have been helpful to have some grounding in the material outside of the lecture slides.
N/A
Since there were no assigned readings, the bulk of the material was available on PowerPoints. Reading the content from the slides was not preferential to me, but I do understand a book is being developed.
N/A
Provision of basic readings would have helped me understand few lecture sessions especially those of externalities and government policies.
N/A
N/A

### 10. Comments regarding guest lecturers/speakers:

Comments
Did not have guest lectures
None
N/A
N/a
N/A
None unfortunately
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A

## 11. Comments regarding the Teaching Assistant(s) involved with the course (if applicable).

Comments
We don't get much interaction with the TAs, but overall most of them were very helpful!
Very helpful!
Extremely helpful!!! The TAs I interacted with always responded quickly to emails with as much information as possible. I also like that they participated in class and felt present and approachable. I really enjoyed the TAs for this class.
TAs were very responsive and helpful with feedback
TAs were fairly helpful
The TAs were all very helpful and responded quickly to any questions or issues.
TAs were always available for questions and led weekly office hours/provided feedback on assignments
TAs were great and so helpful!
gave great feedback on homeworks
The teaching assistants were great, and they provided extremely detailed feedback on our assignments. Very quick turnaround time with grading, too!
Very friendly and helpful!
They were nice and helpful!
They were nice
Very helpful and always available
The TAs were lovely; I didn't have a ton of interaction with them, but they were approachable, available, and informative on the course content.
I did not really engage with the TAs other than during class and reading their feedback on my exercises.
The TAs were great! I really appreciated the prompt and detailed feedback on assignments.
Teaching assistants provided useful feedback on the weekly exercises
Always provided helpful feedback on assignments.
It would have been nice if they were more involved with the class or held review sessions in addition to Will's.
Prompt and helpful
Prof Masters was so hands and very responsive to questions, issues and emails that the TAs didn't need to be involved. Having said that, the TAs did provide detailed feedback on any and all assignments that they marked.
Great!
Helpful for technical difficulties
The teaching assistants all consistently provided helpful feedback on weekly homework exercises.
All 3 teaching assistants were helpful and a special thanks to Sarah for helping me out in the initial days when economics was considered a difficult and alien subject her guidance helped develop the confidence to complete the course.
The TAs were very helpful when I worked with them. Sarah was who I communicated with the most and she was always willing to look over homework prior to submissions.
The teaching assistants were fantastic! I was always impressed that they provided such detailed commentary on homework assignments which really helped me learn. Leah was particularly great, and always made time to have a conversation outside of normal class hours to help with class material.
Highly responsive, and gave helpful feedback.
Super responsive and helpful over email whenever I had a question!



## 12. Name at least one thing that should definitely not be changed about this course:

Comments
Lecture and the homework/ I also appreciate the approach the instructor takes on the grading of the course. It does not penalize students for their lack of knowledge; it encourages and motivates the students to do better the next time.
The weekly exercises are by far the strongest point of this class — I really enjoyed doing them and feel that I got a lot out of them, especially later in the semester (making tables, charts, graphs, working with a lot of data, manipulating Excel, etc). I also like Will's lectures and the way he explains data.
The weekly assignments were very helpful
I enjoyed not having external readings!
The homework assignments were very helpful to my learning
I liked the weekly assignments – short (usually) and easy to do based on lecture materials
The span and variety of material covered.
Explanations and examples of weekly assignments were so helpful when doing the assignment and helping to tie everything back into lecture.
I would definitely keep the course material contained within lectures.
Most of it should stay the same. If there was a part 2 I would take it.
The topics are interesting – but maybe the first couple weeks could be quickened. Because the backend of the semester has been way more interesting than the first half.
Weekly assignments
The homework examples, are helpful
weekly office hours, weekly assignments, final exam or project option
The course arc was well designed and the lecture material and assignments had real world applications. I also appreciated the balance between nutrition and agriculture examples.
The weekly exercises were great for developing and practicing economic analysis
The weekly exercises were very helpful.
The pace and the layout of the course. Even though it was fast paced during lecture, being able to go back and watch the recordings to review concepts is invaluable. There is so much information packed into one lecture.
using current events/news for the homework helped with critical analysis and the understanding of economic fundamentals
Access to recorded lectures after the fact. The pace of the class was often fast, so being able to watch the recorded lectures later was very helpful.
The weekly assignments were great, the exercise of finding news articles and applying the concepts directly was very helpful. I also appreciated the exposure to various data sources. I liked being able to choose between exams and project.
The weekly homework assignments. While at times tedious, they were really helpful for understanding the course content and ultimately helped tie real-world scenarios in with the course content.
The "swimming in data" series was very eyeopening and as someone who likes to read graphs and understands them it was very fun and I learned a lot
Weekly exercises are sometimes a lot of work – but they're very helpful for solidifying the material that was covered! However, it was GREAT to have the opportunity to skip two as needed to make up for the fact that they were sometimes time intensive.
The assignment and tasks are given. The interactive session and the review sessions and the office hours present. these extra classes help me understand the subject better rather than just learning it.
Assignment format– always very thorough and thoughtful feedback from TAs and helpful real world information
Though very time intensive, the assignments were insightful and led to a new way of looking at and thinking about the world.
I like the structure of not using assigned readings, and I found the homework assignments to be very helpful to my understanding. I hope neither of those aspects change.
The weekly assignments via excel were translatable skills.
I thoroughly enjoyed the new analyses during the first half of the semester. It was a great way to apply the material we were learning to real world scenarios and it really helped me to better understand the concepts.
lectures are helpful and very organized.

## 13. Name at least one thing that should be improved about this course:

Comments
The exam and project is a bit poorly integrated to the course. The focus of the midterm exam was not as expected. Also, for the students who choose project, it is not too guided and the project is not a build up as class goes process.
This course assumes you know excel and if you don't, it makes you rely on external videos to learn. Perhaps a week should be spent going over excel or it should be some sort of prerequisite. I don't mind spending time on homework, but having to literally spend hours teaching myself a program outside of class makes it seem as though I should just pay myself and not Tufts for my own education. Also, I feel like the lecture should be summarized before it begins and then we can go into all the details.
The slides used were always extremely long and overwhelming. It would have been nice to have more succinct slides to review for exams, or to have a summary of the information at the end of each slide. Sometimes I felt like the information being shared in class was irrelevant – I wished that Prof. Masters would give us the main points of the lecture in a more succinct way.
Adding lecture notes to the bottom of the power point slides for help when reviewing them. Maybe overall less, more condensed, slides OR at least a shortened version for review.
The speed of the classes is such that often, later slides are gone through very quickly at the end, which impedes learning. Sometimes time could be cut from more tangential conversations that occur earlier.
The course felt very fast paced at times, which may be mostly because it was on Zoom, but a slower pace would be good.
shorter assignment instructions/descriptions online!! I think the goal was to provide a lot of interesting background and helpful suggestions (sites to visit for definitions, side-notes about interesting things in the data), but it was really hard to actually find the instructions for the assignment within the text. It would be better to offer that insight after the assignment instructions.
The predicament of offering students the opportunity to choose between exams and a project, but structuring the course and workload to favor the exam-takers. The weekly assignments are interesting and worthwhile, but take far too much time to also be working on the project. It's just unkind to expect that level of work be achieved over spring break – especially since all the other professors apparently expect the same.
Even after midterm feedback, slides are SO unnecessarily full of graphics and words. Additionally, Will talks so much that (while it is often interesting information) it is hard to discern what is related to the current slides/lecture and what is just digression from class discussion.
I didn't have enough time on the midterm exam and am a bit worried about time heading into the final.
More time on social/govt programs. Honestly I just want an Econ level 2 class where I can dive in deeper to the project concept and learn more theory.
Also, class assignments have incredibly long and VERY difficult to parse descriptions. Examples of previous assignments were absolutely necessary to understand what was required and how to produce it, even when the assignment description offered more rich insights it was otherwise difficult to extrapolate a concept of the work required to meet graded expectations.
Discussion – there was very little room for discussion in smaller break out rooms.
Too many lectures and not enough group work
The material load in the exam might be too many, and the mid-term format in the past is not the same one as we have.
the speed of which the information is presented, could skip a topic to slow down the pace.
I would have loved a bit more active engagement during synchronous lectures. Just using the chat didn't feel very sufficient; I would have loved more break-out rooms, more polls, more learning checks etc. I'm also not totally sure why speed is stressed so much for the midterm and final. I'm not sure speed and intuition are 1:1 with everyone; I feel it makes evaluations needlessly stressful. Especially given how students' speed was overestimated for the midterm.
The assignments designed to help us build econ logic and see around corners would regularly "stretch" me to the point where I felt overwhelmed and lacking confidence in my own abilities. The review sessions were available but did not work with my schedule and I did not get much value out of watching the recordings.
I thought the introduction to the course was very slow (3 days). I sometimes felt we spent too much time on topics that were not central to the course. Finally, this may be too basic, but I was wondering if you had any tips/tricks for Excel that could be provided during the data analysis portion of the class. I know how to use Excel at a basic level, of course, but I always struggle to work efficiently in Excel for any task beyond the basics.
The material of the course was not translated effectively to an online format. Perhaps in the regular setting this course would be an effective way to learn economics however online I found it rambling, confusing and difficult to succeed in.
At times in lectures it was hard follow the visual progression of adding elements and analysis to the economic charts and diagrams, making it difficult to comprehend what I was looking at
Sometimes the lecture slides were confusing. It would have been helpful to watch the instructor draw diagrams in real time.
I wish there had been more emphasis on policy. Doing the practice exams now, and there seems to be a lot of emphasis on policy wrapped into other concepts (market power, technology, etc), and I feel as though we did not spend as much time as I would have wanted understanding policy mechanisms in the food system and how it influences economics

Comments
Maybe a couple assigned or "suggested" readings for anyone who wants additional insight
Can't think of anything. This was a great, comprehensive economics class.
I would have liked to have had one TA office hours per week, maybe rotating between the TAs. I think it's always good to have one format where students can ask questions of someone other than the professor, simply because of different teaching styles and rhythms.
The weekly exercise The length and structure of the midterm exam
The delivery of the content through PowerPoint only was challenging for me. Having a mix of materials — readings, videos, guest lectures — is an idea for future classes.
The breakout rooms at the end were a great way to meet people and would have been helpful at the beginning of the semester as a way to have a group to reach out to for homework/study help
Better connecting the first and second halves of the course – they feel separate a lot of the time.
The way the feedback is given. If I have done well then no explanation is required however if in a given assignment I have not completed my task well enough a good explanation as to where the points were cut will help understand the improvement and changes that need to be adopted.
Communication – expectations for the midterm were not made clear (ie 'speed test' when time was mentioned as a non issue) Quarterly format – the first quarter was a lot of information while the second quarter, while very interesting and helpful information, was more about facts than economics Class format– Often extensive time spent on examples with little time on the material (i.e. one class we spent about 85 minutes going through examples/a bit of history and then very quickly ran through the 'policy' slides at the end which seems like the main focus)
I think the course would benefit from having less content and focusing discussions during class time on the skills required to do well on homework and exams.
The midterm was not able to be finished and even after 12 hours of study, perfect grades on all homework and a great study guide, I still was not able to finish. The format was changed and much of the class was unable to finish. My suggestion would be not to change a test format when so much has already had to change and be adjusted for this year. This makes me VERY concerned for the final. I found the same to be with assignments but it was accommodated because I learned very quickly that they took much longer than what Will expected them to take. On average they took me about nine hours outside of class.
I personally did not like the use of the chat box on Zoom for participation because it often made paying attention in class very difficult. Other than that, most of the class went very well for me.
Instruction length for the HW's and tests! They were so long and overwhelming. Concise instructions would be less confusing and time-consuming during a test.
I felt that the midterm was poorly designed. It was too long for the amount of time given. I think a untimed, take-home midterm would have been better given the circumstances and would have done a better job of assessing understanding.
The exam is hard for me. Not quite familiar with speed writing.

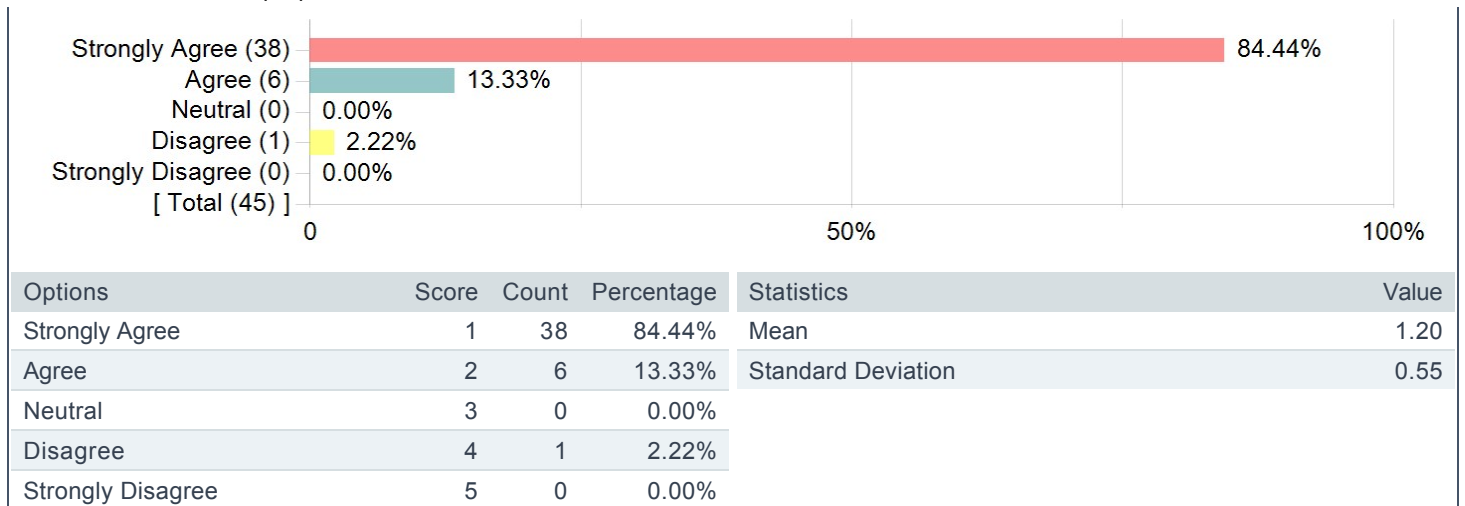
#### 14. Additional comments regarding any other aspect of the course:

Comments
The instructor divides the course into two; drawing economics graph section and data immersion section. I think that the order should be reversed: data section first and then economic graph because the data section is more broad and less detailed. It will also help students who choose to participate in the project a better idea of the data availability. Further, by having the economic graph section after the data section, the instructor can connect the dots of what we learned in the beginning half of the class to the economics by drawing examples of what we had learned previously.
The discussion around class project verse exam was strange. If the final project is an equal option to demonstrate understanding of the material in the course, then why speak so negatively about it? Things like "only people who like to work during spring break would do the project" (... I didn't...I just managed my time...) or "even if you're doing the project, you should think about taking the exam – you might do better than you think and can switch to the exam"
The project is a fun way to use the class material in more detail, and to me, a far less stressful approach because I could do it on my own time. It felt like the project was offered, but really frowned upon.
Will is great! I appreciate how much he cares about students and asks for feedback and input during class.
It is a pretty information-heavy class, and I think it would have been much better to have it in the morning. An evening class isn't great when everyone is tired from other coursework earlier in the day (although I'm not sure if this could have been changed).
Great course. I've learned a lot and I now notice economic principles all around me (at work, in the news, etc).
Important things were underemphasized and random questions were overemphasized
The professor is kind and patient.
The pressure to participate in the chat was really stressful for me. This was my first synchronous 50 person class at Friedman, and my sense is that I would have been able to participate a handful of times if we were in person, but I always second guessed the responses I began to type in the chat.
The weekly assignments took me quite a long time to complete (4–6 hours). I think this was intentional, but it would be helpful to clearly establish these expectations at the beginning of the semester.
I learned a lot in this course and came to deeply appreciate a subject that I was intimidated by!
This was one of my favorite courses so far.
This was a really challenging class to teach on zoom. I think the professor handled that challenge well, and tried to make the class fun and interactive during lecture.
Great Class
The content of this course requires an appreciation for a huge amount of nuance, differentiating between similar scenarios. I found this level of careful distinction between scenarios to be pretty overwhelming. Additionally, the level of detail and specificness that was asked for in the assignments was nearly too much to wrap my head around and keep straight when working through tasks.
I also liked printing the slide decks so I could take notes. I would have liked them posted a little earlier so I could print them and flip through them a little before class.
N/A
Highly informative course.
I was also a little bit surprised about the minimal feedback on the first stage of the project. I was expecting the feedback to be a bit more thorough.

## Detailed Results of Instructor Evaluation

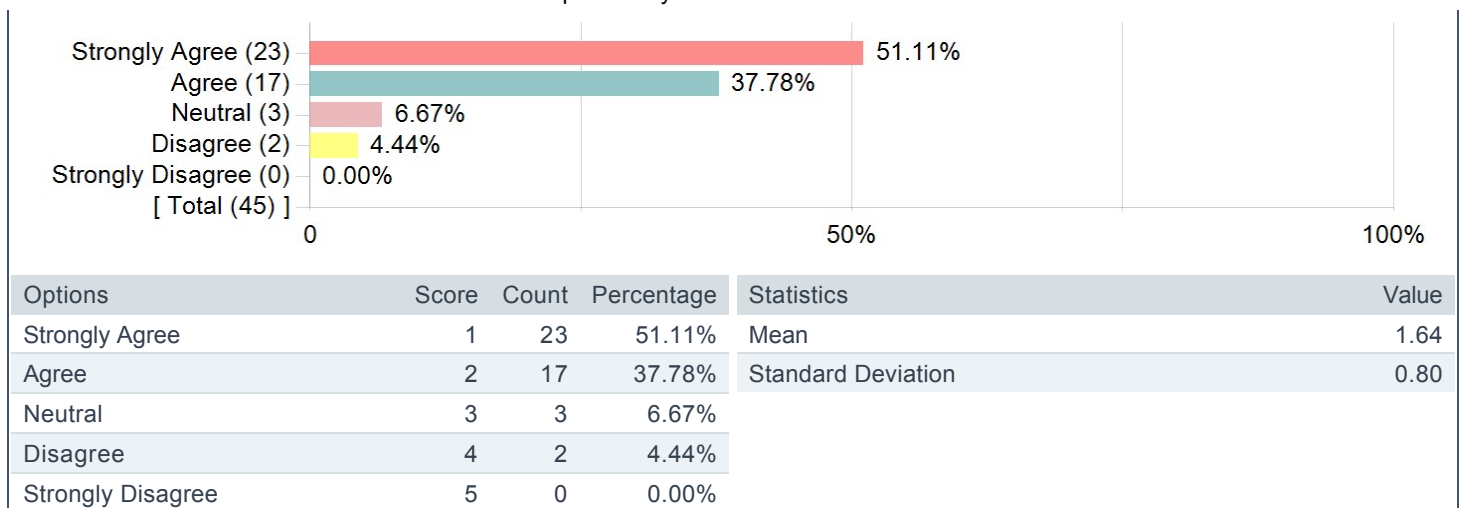
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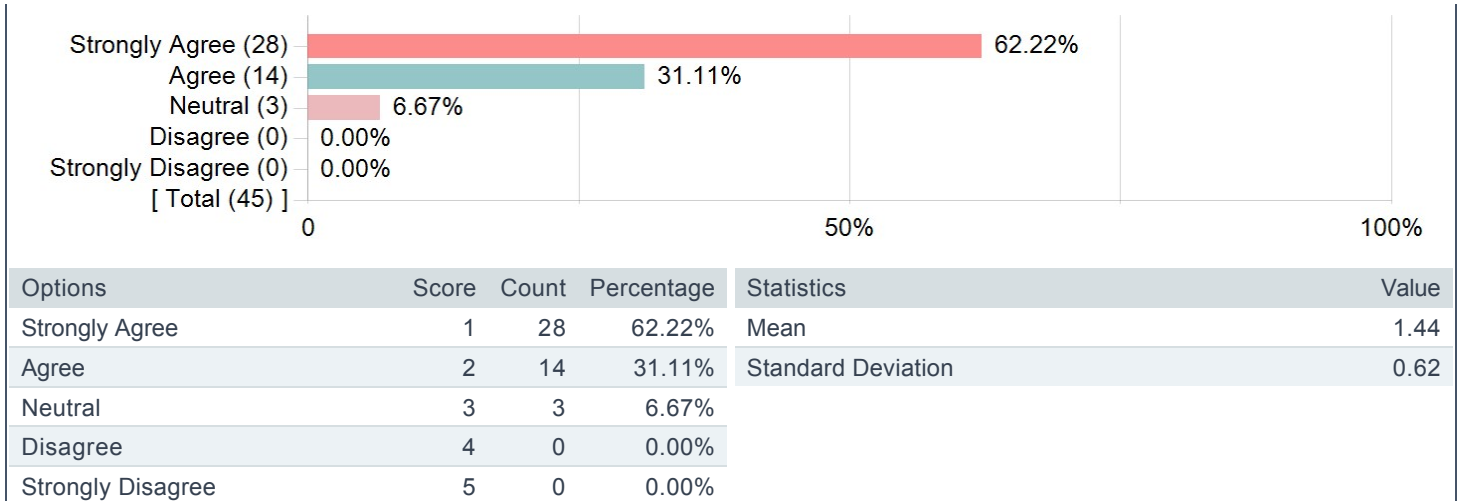
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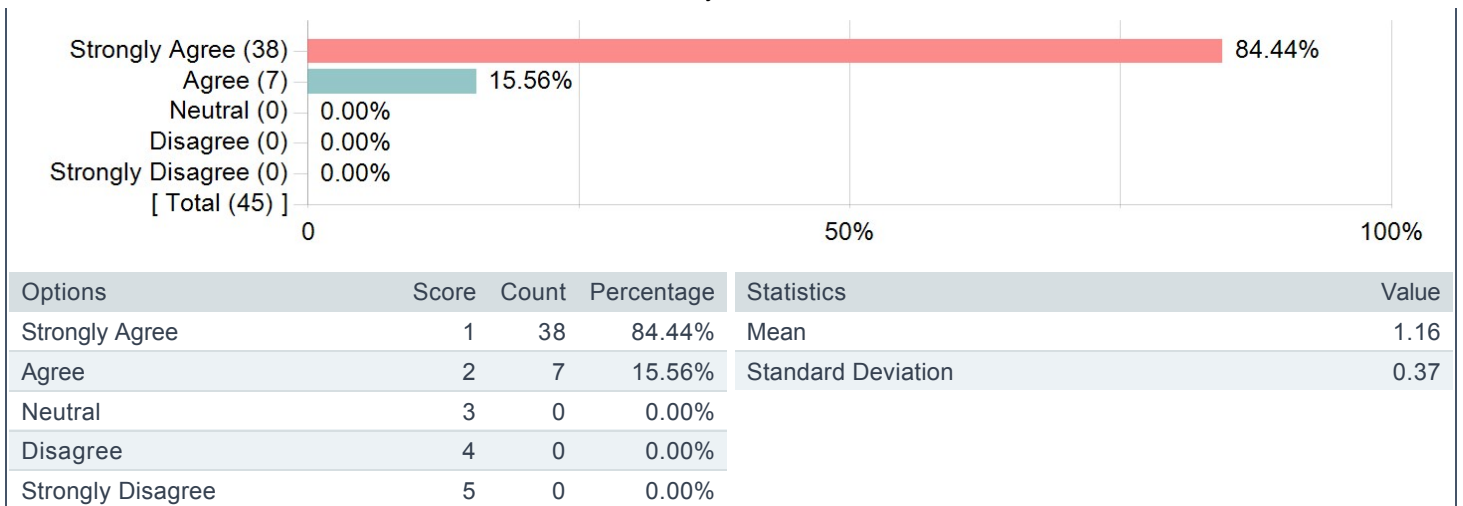
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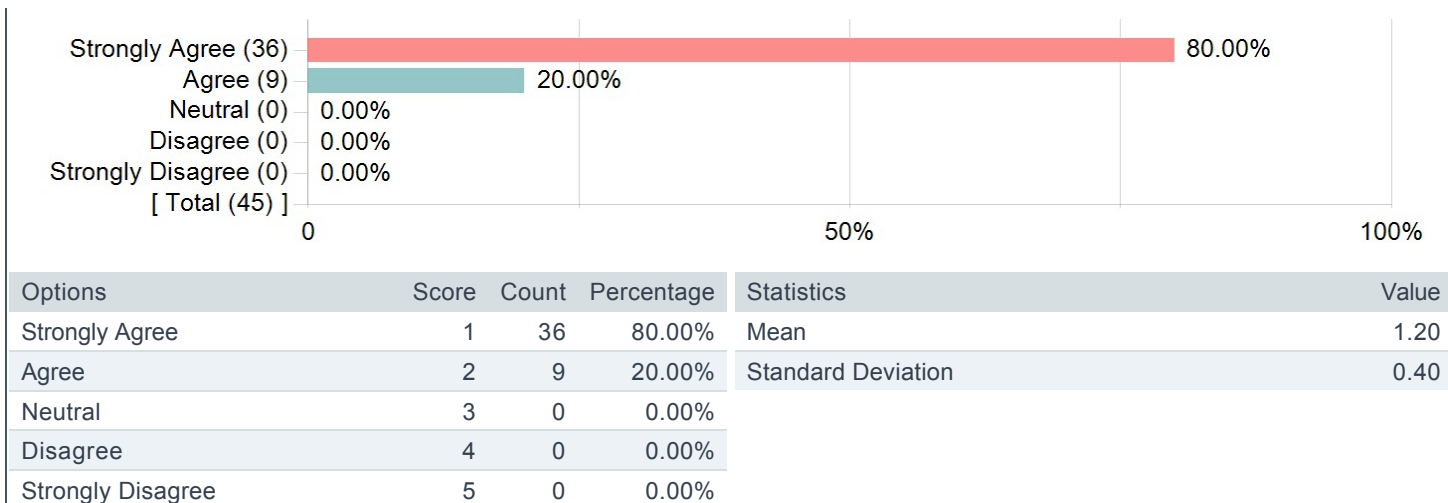
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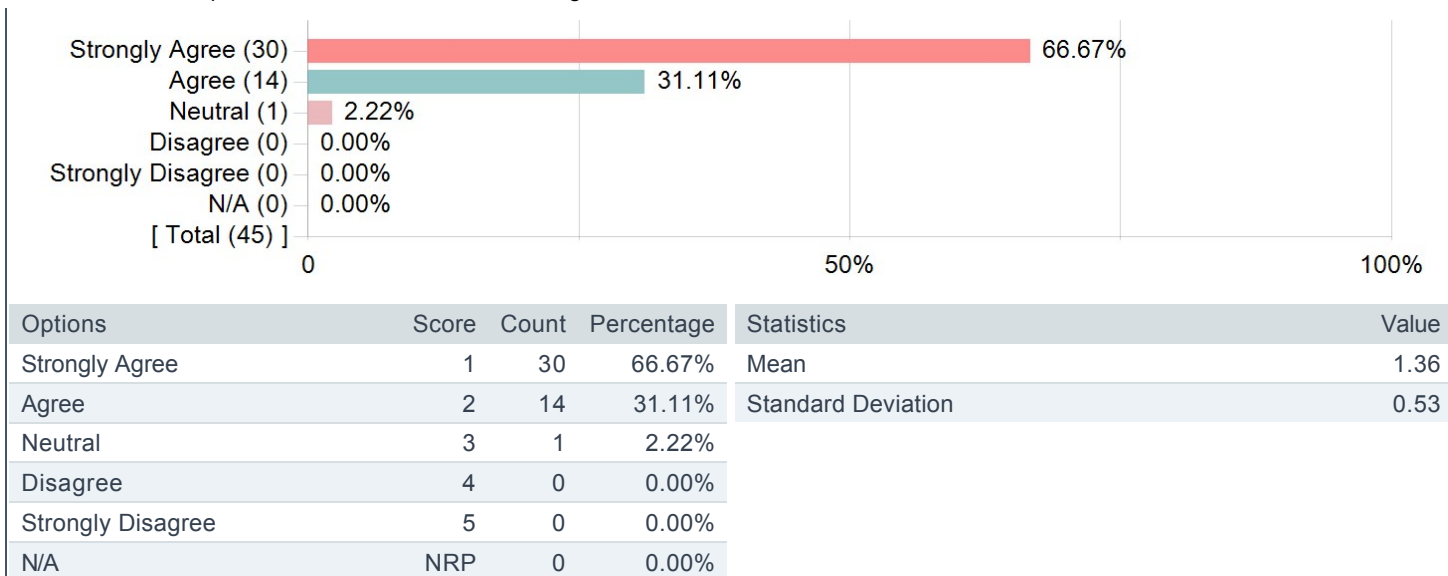
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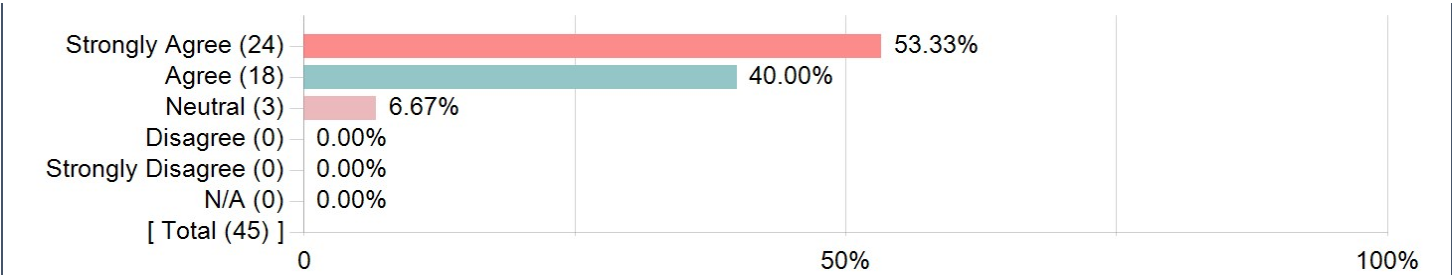
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**21. The instructor was sensitive to issues of diversity (e.g. race, class, culture, gender, sexual orientation).**

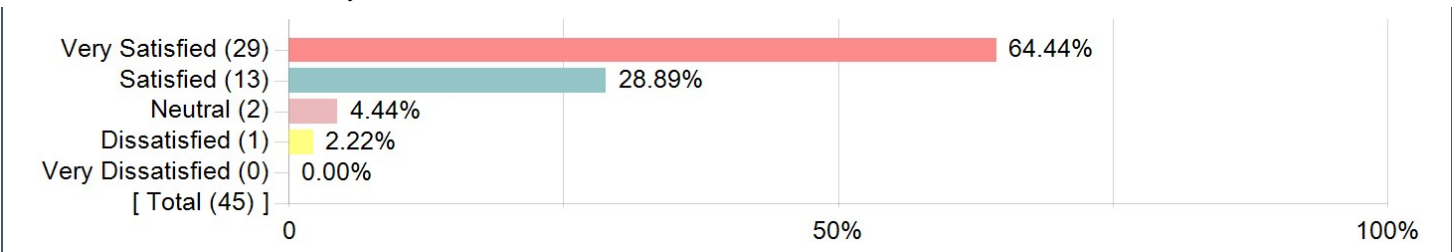
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Options	Score	Count	Percentage	Statistics	Value
Strongly Agree	1	24	53.33%	Mean	1.53
Agree	2	18	40.00%	Standard Deviation	0.63
Neutral	3	3	6.67%		
Disagree	4	0	0.00%		
Strongly Disagree	5	0	0.00%		
N/A	NRP	0	0.00%		

**22. Overall, how satisfied were you with this instructor?**

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Options	Score	Count	Percentage	Statistics	Value
Very Satisfied	1	29	64.44%	Mean	1.44
Satisfied	2	13	28.89%	Standard Deviation	0.69
Neutral	3	2	4.44%		
Dissatisfied	4	1	2.22%		
Very Dissatisfied	5	0	0.00%		

**23. Additional comments regarding the instructor:**

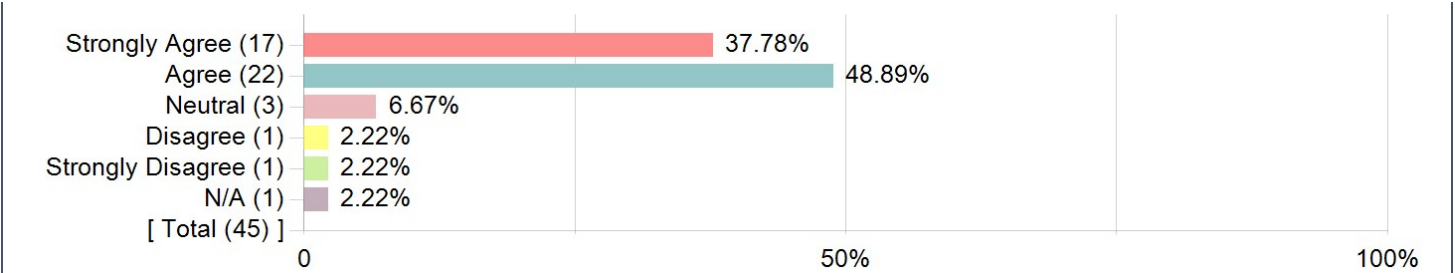
Comments
He is a great professor; he is very enthusiastic, resourceful, and very knowledgeable. I wish he teaches more classes similar to this class!
Will's enthusiasm for the subject matter is very evident and it translates into effective and engaging lectures. Top rate!
Prof. Masters is clearly very passionate about economics. However, sometimes his assignment instructions and slides were too wordy and could have been put simpler for ease of understanding.
I was honestly not looking forward to taking this course but it ended up being one of my favorites mostly because of the enthusiasm of Will Masters.
Will is great and so kind! As mentioned previously I believe the only issues were with the heaviness of the lectures and slides.
Always very well prepared and excited by the material which is contagious! Very well thought through course, I can tell he puts a lot of time into every lecture and assignment
I've really enjoyed taking class with Will, and I've learned a ton from him. His enthusiasm has been helpful during Zoom classes – it



Comments
helps me stay focused! I'm not afraid to make mistakes on assignments because he turns them into learning opportunities.
I am grateful to have taken this class. It was incredibly well thought out, and it was very clear that the professor cares about the development of the students both in and out of the class. The dedication and support from this professor is unparalleled at Tufts.
Thank you!
it might be good to look into strategies beyond lectures
Professor Masters is very nice and kind.
Will had a lot of enthusiasm and made learning enjoyable. also was always available for extra help
So so knowledgeable and clearly very enthusiastic. Also clearly cared a lot about properly and empathetically relaying information to students. I just wish synchronous class time wasn't 100% lecture.
I appreciated the time and energy that Will put into this course and I had many aha moments during the semester. He engaged with current events through an economic lens.
While I know that generalizing is an important part of economics, it made me a bit uncomfortable when we were looking at the pictures of families around the world and a student asked about something in the picture of the family in India and a white student suggested it was chai, and a student whose family is from India had to comment in the chat that it was not chai.
Amazing professor! Really cares about his students and has great enthusiasm for the subject.
I thought Prof Masters was extremely eager and willing to help students with any and all questions. I appreciated his experience in the field and enthusiasm for the subject matter. I wish that the course had felt less like an experiment with online teaching because I think this experience hindered my ability to absorb the objective course materials
Will taught economics in a way that got me truly excited about it. I really do feel that my new understanding of economics is, like Will says, a "superpower"!
Your enthusiasm for economics and for learning is fantastic and very inspiring.
I couldn't imagine a better instructor for this class – passionate, informative, timely
Prof Masters is a great professor! Informed, knowledgeable, engaged, enthusiastic and also very accessible.
Professor Masters is incredibly passionate and knowledgeable. His passion is contagious and makes even the most skeptical person discover a newfound interest in economics, and it's importance in our world of food and nutrition.
Loved the energy and the real life examples Will was able to include. Great intros using alphabet village and then generalizing it to see broader trends
Will is great! His enthusiasm for the subject matter always shines through and makes class especially engaging!
Thank you for the assignment. I would request that for future students the assignments are kept the same, however, the feedback given helps them develop confidence in the subject as it did for me.
Will was an incredibly enthusiastic professor who clearly has so much to teach in the field of economics. His passion for economics and its reach in every field comes through in his teaching and I was happy to hear about his attitude of 'be critical toward everything'. My main issues with the course stemmed with miscommunications and what I saw as disproportionate amounts of time on information that did not seem based in economics as mentioned prior.
I am certainly a fan of Will Masters. He is a passionate and compassionate man, and it is obvious that he cares deeply about his work, about the quality of the course, and about the success and wellbeing of students. In my opinion, he tries so hard to make the course beneficial and is so sensitive to the needs of students, almost to the point of a fault. It was clear that he was thinking very hard about the restrictions resulting from the pandemic and how to change the course accordingly, and I think he actually went a bit overboard on trying to perfect the course. The pace was too fast at times and the content was too dense. The weekly assignments required immense amounts of time, effort, and brain power. The midterm exam was overwhelmingly challenging. Furthermore, much of the material discussed in class seemed to have little relevance to the assignments in particular weeks. In whole, I found this course to be so challenging that my interest in the material severely eroded throughout the course of the term, and I found myself suffering through the final third of the course... I do think Will is a great instructor. I certainly learned a lot from him. Furthermore, I was totally inspired by his intellect and the level of insight he brought to class. Will seems to know basically everything there is to know about the world and can boil it down into little tidbits of insight that are genuinely quite profound. He has the aura that makes you feel like everything is okay in the universe... that is, until you attempt the next homework assignment... It is very unfortunate that feelings toward the course have become so negative given all that I have learned from Will and all of the respect I have for him as an instructor. I feel, at the very least, quite fortunate to have gotten to know Will despite the course not going so well for me.
Will does a great job bringing light to what many would find to be a difficult subject. As much work as this class was, he was always available and his passion made you want to do great things. I would definitely take another class with again and I find myself looking for advice and conversation outside of class as well. He is very approachable. Thanks!
Will is great! His unique approach to economics with empathy was truly new to me and I really enjoyed his teaching style.

**24. The course included relevant concepts of diversity and social justice.**

24. The course included relevant concepts of diversity and social justice.



Options	Score	Count	Percentage	Statistics	Value
Strongly Agree	1	17	37.78%	Mean	1.80
Agree	2	22	48.89%	Standard Deviation	0.85
Neutral	3	3	6.67%		
Disagree	4	1	2.22%		
Strongly Disagree	5	1	2.22%		
N/A	NRP	1	2.22%		