



**University  
of Victoria**

**UVic CES Instructor Report 202001 - Bruce Ravelli - INTRO SOCI  
CONTEMPRY SOCIETY - SOCI 100B - A01 (CRN 22758)**

**UVic Course Experience Survey - Spring 2020**

Project Audience 141  
Responses Received 26  
Response Ratio 18%

**Subject Details**

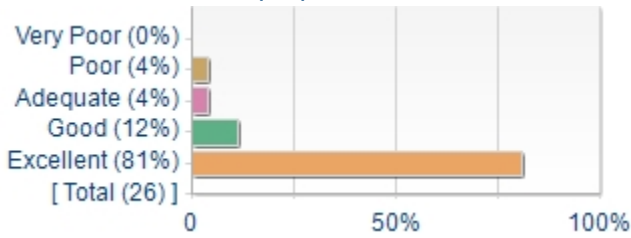
<b>CRN</b>	22758
<b>VNUMBER</b>	V00107670

**Creation Date** Thu, May 07, 2020



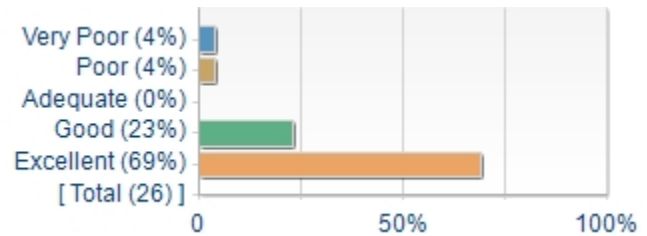
## I Instructor's Teaching - Students' Ratings on the Following Statements:

1. The instructor was prepared for course sessions



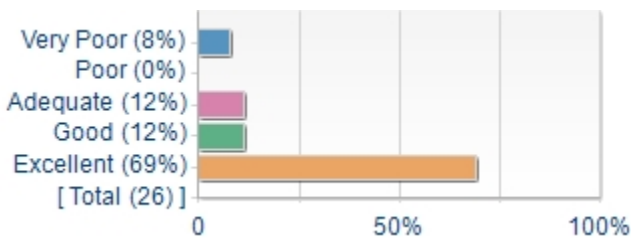
Statistics	Value
Response Count	26

2. The instructor's explanations of concepts were clear



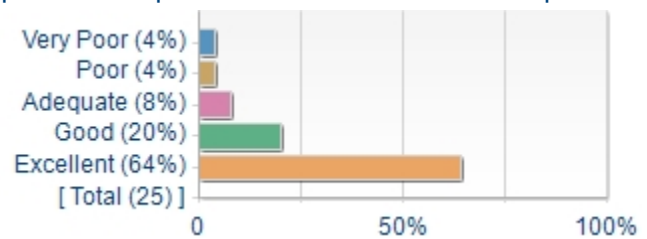
Statistics	Value
Response Count	26

3. The instructor motivated you to learn in this course



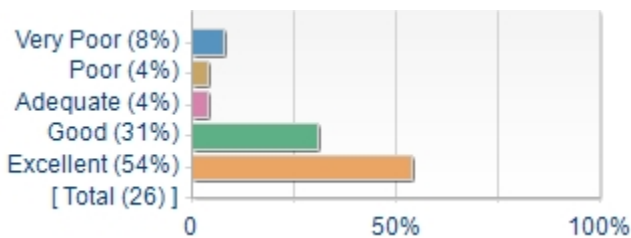
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Response Count	26

4. The instructor was available to answer your questions or provide extra assistance as required



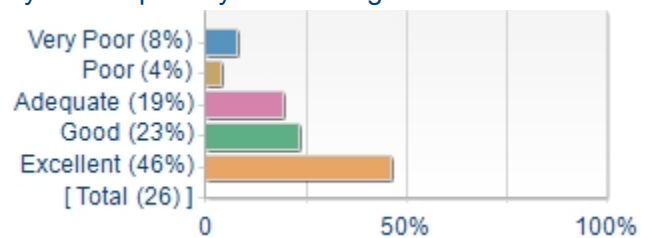
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Response Count	25

5. The instructor ensured that your assignments and tests were returned within a reasonable time



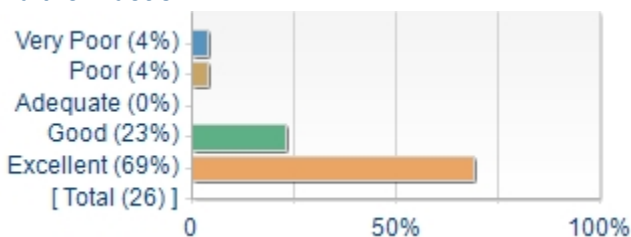
Statistics	Value
Response Count	26

6. The instructor was helpful in providing feedback to you to improve your learning in this course



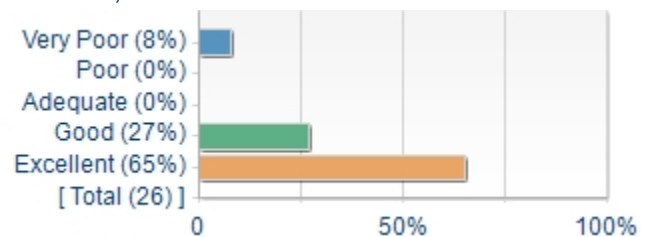
Statistics	Value
Response Count	26

7. The instructor demonstrated respect for students and their ideas



Statistics	Value
Response Count	26

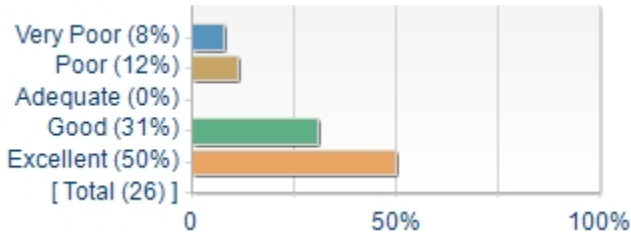
8. Overall, the instructor was effective in this course



Statistics	Value
Response Count	26

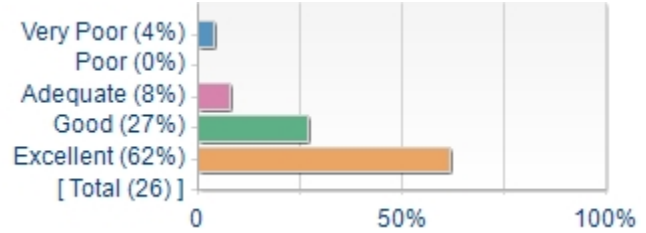
## II Course Design - Students' Ratings on the Following Statements:

1. The course structure, goals and requirements were clear



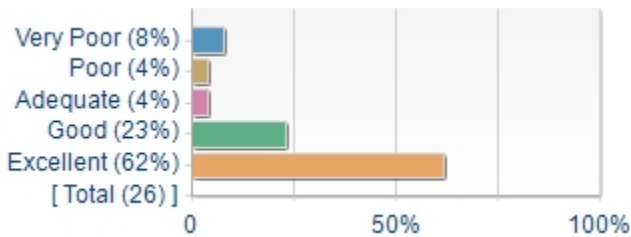
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Response Count	26

2. The materials provided for learning the course content (e.g. handouts, posted material, lab manuals) were clear



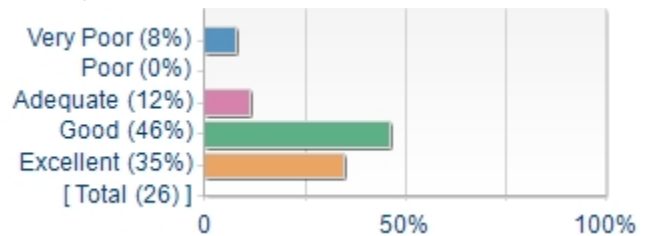
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3. The assigned work helped your understanding of the course content



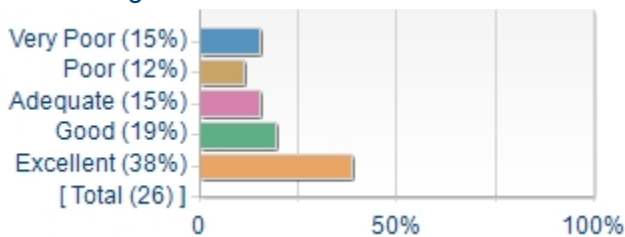
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4. The course provided opportunities for you to become engaged with the course material, for example through class discussions, group work, student presentations, on-line chat, or experiential learning



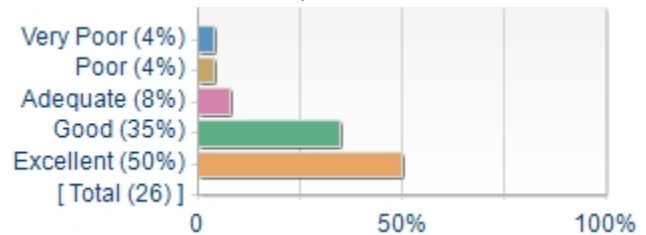
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5. The methods of assessment used to evaluate your learning in the course were fair



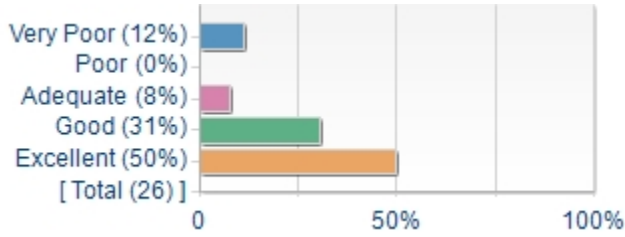
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6. The course provided relevant skills and information (e.g. to other courses, your future career, or other contexts)



Statistics	
Response Count	26

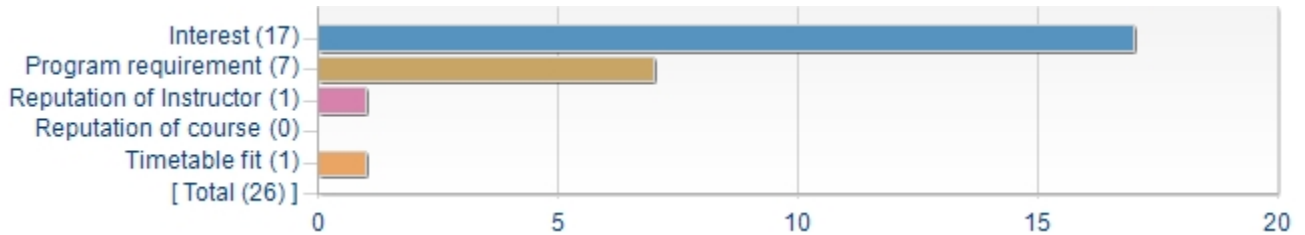
7. Overall, the course offered an effective learning experience



Statistics	Value
Response Count	26

### III Statements About The Students:

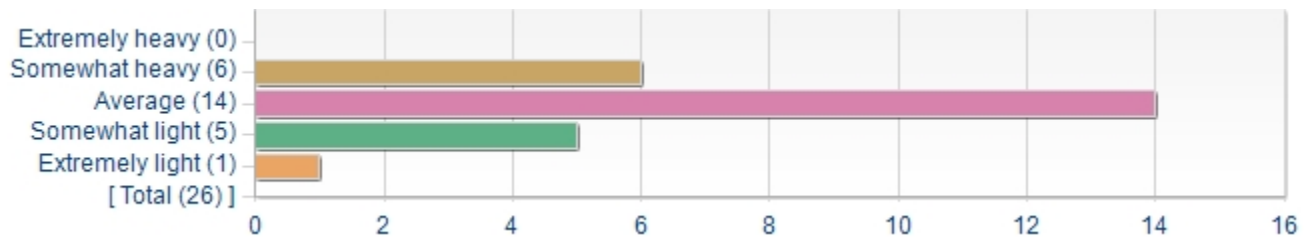
My primary reason for taking the course.



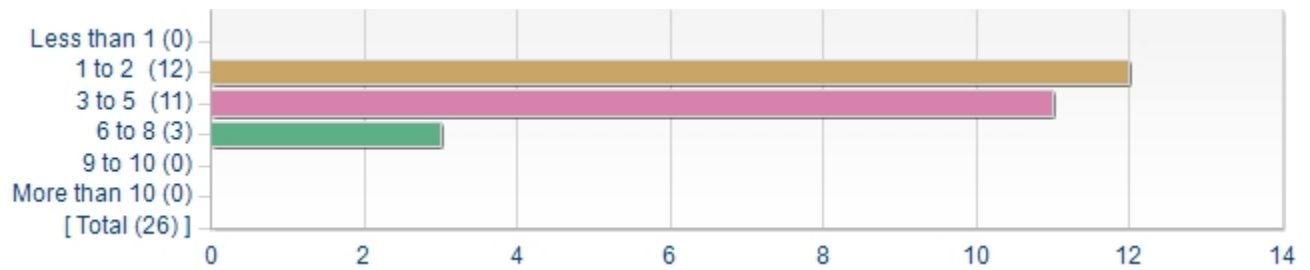
The approximate number of classes or labs that I did not attend



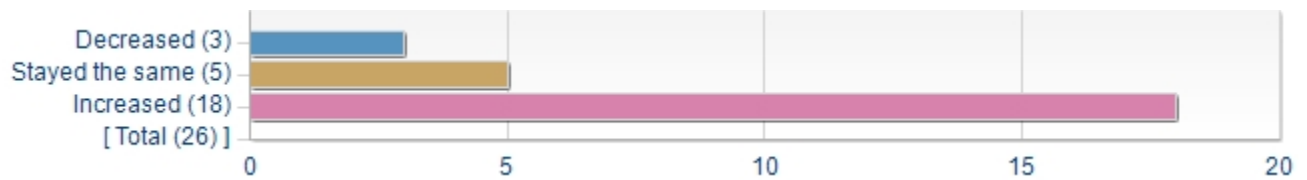
Relative to other courses I have taken at UVic, the workload in this course was



**The approximate number of hours per week I spent studying for this course outside of class time:**



**As a result of my experience in this course, my interest in the material:**



## IIV Student Comments:

### What strengths did your instructor (**Bruce Ravelli**) demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?

#### Comments

He was very prepared and is a great professor in that he performs well in teaching the class.

My professor was effective in keeping the class engaged through storytelling and explaining concepts clearly through projecting notes and then further explaining. He helped me to learn effectively through the online textbook quizzes and exam preparation because it allowed me to think sociologically and to explain concepts to family and roommates.

Bruce was available for office hours and always responded to emails and answering questions outside of class time. His teaching style was unique which I loved and it allowed me to stay engaged in learning the course content. For those who missed class, he was accommodating through his recorded lecture audio samples that the class could review for exams.

I love Bruce! His attitude, energy, and his passion really come through in teaching and I really appreciate that because it motivates me to learn and do my best! I love how for each subject/idea/theory he provides either a personal story, made up stories, videos, or different resources that show you how what we're learning ties into real life. My favourite prof so far and the best lectures to sit through. I love that this class made me laugh, think, question the "norm", and even cry. I think sociology should be a required course, it expanded my horizons more than I thought it would and I wish there was a 200 level class with Bruce. Thank you!

His story telling techniques to demonstrate concepts in contemporary society were really helpful! He replies to emails really quickly, which is helpful in getting clarity in a timely manner! He listens to students' ideas and makes everyone in his course feel valued!

Excellent examples that helped me learn and remember a lot. Very positive and passionate instructor. Interactive learning. Answered all questions relevant to the course material, not based on his own opinions. He had open office hours and really incentivized students to learn and come see him, which was excellent. He levelled with students and spoke to them with respect, but still maintained authority. We love Bruce.

I loved his stories

amazing lectures

Bruce great prof! He makes all of this lectures very engaging and always adds some humour which makes the lectures very entertaining!

His story telling provided good examples of material.

Bruce was great! He was engaged in every class and was very clear in explaining our course material. Bruce was also very accommodating for students who had questions or needed extra help with the material.

The instructor was strong in organizing clear and to the point slides that were backed up by carefully selected videos. The instructor also provided helpful ways to catch up on the content if a student was unable to attend lecture. The instructor also demonstrated a very in-depth knowledge of the course contents.

He has a very conversational attitude, which is so nice for a professor and keeps students engaged.

Bruce is extremely engaging in lectures. He is always organised and prepared, also working in current issues and affairs into class discussion. Many of the lectures will be unforgettable to me!

Very passionate about what he was teaching and engaged with the class

Bruce is a great speaker and is very interesting to listen to love going to his lectures

Bruce is a fantastic lecturer. His classes are engaging, informative, and he makes sociology a subject that you want to take the extra time to dive in to. His mp3 files also add an element of flexibility which is much appreciated when you have to miss a lecture.

He can tell a story that's for sure.

### Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor (**Bruce Ravelli**) could have helped you learn more effectively.

**Comments**

He could have told the TAs to be less tough with grades, as it is a first-year class and their grading was just unnecessarily hard

Bruce was an effective teacher and was helpful in all aspects of this class. He could of helped the class to learn more effectively through allowing discussion time between classmates to further understanding.

Bruce always listened to our feedback! One of my profs for English 225 put up in the first week called something like "get over the fear of meeting your instructor" and maybe Bruce could provide something like that. As much as I liked Bruce, I found myself intimidated by him (probably just my own anxiety), but I thought this idea was really helpful!

Personally, I think the grading system in this class isn't very fair. I think there is a lot of discrepancy between TA's since everyone's standards are different, and they all look for different things. I went from having an A in soc100A to a D on this first midterm. I had different TA's for both courses, but it seems like a really big dump to go from being an A student with one TA and going to a D student with another. After meeting with my current TA, I was able to earn an A on my midterm2, but again, I just catered my response towards what I knew my TA was looking for (more small examples rather than the big example outside of the text), and that was how I "improved" so much. Personally, I don't think my sociological understanding really changed at all. It was just how I explained myself, and I think that is where the grading system misses the mark. I wish there were some way to actually measure our sociological knowledge as opposed to how good we are at steering our responses to the style our TA prefers.

Moreover, I feel the true irony of this is that this system is bureaucratic yet is irrational because humans are subjective. This was the content on our exam, and I think it's funny how the department can't see or figure out how to solve the flaws in their own system. I understand that social sciences are subjective, but there has got to be another way to test for the actual course content as opposed to writing style. Also, I believe that students attend university (the ones who choose to be here), to become free thinkers and push the boundaries of academia, but they are being ripped to shreds by TA's who probably were C students in the first year courses they're teaching now...and not because they were bad students. It was simply because they didn't realize how to conquer this system. And now they have become the system.

Continued...

Sometimes I found he would lean towards one side or the other of an open argument. Like, a lot of the time he would present a sociological theory or argument that would seem innately unbiased, but Bruce would speak of it as though it were pointing to a negative or a positive. I would ask if it were a negative thing, and he would say "no, not at all!" It's not very specific, but something to think about.

nothing

Most of the work is done by TA's, I felt he often went off on his own tangents in class and we did not learn as much informative material as I would have hoped. Sometimes I felt he was a little condescending and wouldn't accept answers that did not fit his own ideals as valid. Quite honestly I love sociology, but Bruce's teaching methods really made me dislike the subject. He was also very disorganized when doing an alternative assignment.

I have no suggestions; he was a great teacher who went above and beyond to help students.

While I greatly enjoy the stories that the instructor tells, and while they do make the topic more memorable (which is useful for studying), too many of them can be distracting and made me lose track of what we were learning about.

N/A

As I'm sure many others will say, the exam system in this class I found completely ineffective. It is so 'illusive' how you get an A. In the first midterm, I didn't do too well, as I didn't make use of office hours and resources. So in the second midterm, I talked to Bruce in person for around 40 minutes about my ideas for the questions, I listened to every MP3, and reread all the lecture slides. However I still did poorly in the exam. It seems impossible to me to get an A, and this has made me lose interest in the class which is sad because when I first started this class, I immediately declared a double major in sociology because I love the topics so much. I understand the exams are designed to push you to think in depth, but beyond a certain point, they will make students lose motivation and interest. If you want students to push themselves to get an A, it has to be clearer how to do this. I studied for hours and did exactly what Bruce told me and still didn't get a grade I was happy with- and I feel there are no resources to help me improve or know what I'm doing wrong. All I get both from Bruce and my TA when asked how to improve are vague unspecific directions to think 'more in depth'- this was not helpful for me and just discouraged me.

How to get a higher grade on an midterms (since they're written)

Don't have any

Sparking more discussion in class a little more often or doing participation questions like "raise a hand" could be great. But might not be able to work considering how much material needs to be discussed. The learning aspect of this

### Comments

course was great! No complaints.

Not lie about what the course is about. It's not about the sociological imagination, it's not about seeing the "shades of grey" or possessing the "quality of mind"

I was incredibly disappointed in this class. I've never failed anything in my life, let alone failed a midterm OF WHICH I COMPLETELY UNDERSTOOD THE MATERIAL. It's absolutely infuriating knowing you have a full comprehension of content, and yet failing a midterm because you failed to use trigger words and provide the cookie cutter response. The class is a complete and utter contradiction of itself. Brutally disappointed.

I'm not sure if it's the way Bruce is telling his TA's to mark, how he's structured the course, or if it's how the department is telling him to construct the class. Adjustments are most definitely needed. The essay response questions are a joke, especially considering you aren't really looking for someone to demonstrate critical thinking; you're just looking for regurgitated information, puked out on the page in a format which you find pleasing.



**Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.**

**Comments**

Allow in class review sessions for the exams

This course could be improved through having the lecture in a theatre that allow students to comfortably write exams. loved it!

...I am just as floored as to how to improve this grading system as I am sure you are. I know it would be difficult to change the exam type, but honestly I can't think of any way to make this one any better without having you read every single exam yourself to remove the discrepancy between TA's. I apologize if this response comes across as rude or entitled, but I think you should know the grief this course has caused students who like to do well, chasing a standard that is ever changing...and yes, that is how the real world works when working for different bosses and what not (my dad has tried to explain that to me a thousand times), but our GPA's are supposed to be an empirical, quantitative measure of our skills, and I just don't think this grading system is a good measure of our skills aside from steering our responses to our TA's preferences.

The only way I can think of improving this current grading style would be to have TA's cross check their grades with other TA's so that the standards are more alike across the board. I am sure something like this already happens, but it's the only suggestion I could come up with that doesn't add a bunch more work onto your plate. Besides the grading system in the course, I actually REALLY enjoyed it! I think the content is really engaging and our TA's do a good job of helping us see the concepts we learn in our own lives. I think it's valuable to learn how to be critical of systems that make up our lives so that we don't become "cheerful robots." I would like to thank you for helping me see the systems around me through a sociological lens.

more opportunities for extra marks (not just revel and exams)

New professor.

I wish we had been a smaller course. We were able to discuss course material in our large lecture hall, but I felt that we could have engaged more with the course if we had a smaller, more intimate place to talk about the material and how we interacted with it.

I would suggest that for topics such as gender, it might be more useful to have a guest lecturer or someone with personal experiences in the subject who can help the students make the connections between the theory and the course content.

N/A

As mentioned– please rethink the exam! I understand the idea behind it, but everyone works/thinks in a different way, and I feel this exam is only designed for a specific type of thinker. And it is not true that only this kind of thinker is good at sociology. This fact makes this class almost feel exclusionary to those who can't succeed in this exam style, which seems contradictory to many themes of the class. I know I am not bad at sociology, but this class has made me think I am, just from the exam style presented and lack of clarity on how to get an A.

Don't have any

This course has by far the most ineffective grading system I have ever come across in my academic career. The midterms and final format are really the only issue that needs improvement. The midterms and final exam grading system is centred around the bias and expectation of TA's and how well they understand and value your essay discussion points. In order to achieve an "A" you must come up with original arguments that the TA considers valuable. And by focussing on only two subjects for each essay, we are forced to focus all of our energy on a fewer amount of topics, limiting what we take away from this course. I understand that Bruce wants students to not just memorize material, but as it has been expressed by numerous other students, this grading format just doesn't work for people. I would recommend a mix format exam that is part multiple choice definitions, and 2 (1) page essay responses where you are required to discuss contemporary examples of a topic. All of these tests would be marked by Bruce creating a fair grading system and eliminating TAs from the grading process. This way, if the student does not perform well on the example section, their whole mark does not have to suffer. It is unfortunate that a student's grade and gpa can suffer or increase over such high stakes. Sociology is a very interesting subject, but not every student is a perfect writer under a short time limit and often unclear or very loose expectations. Even with 2 weeks to prepare.

See my comments on Bruce, the overlap between the course and the professor should be quite obvious.