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What students say

Evaluation Course: CH2205 Europe in Globalizing World: Migration, Citizenship and Identity (2020- 2021).

The course of Europe in Globalizing World: Migration Citizenship and Identity was an innovative and groundbreaking experience for me. I am an exchange student coming from Italy. I study political science, and I chose this course with the aim of deepening the concept of citizenship, a topic widely discussed in my various courses of law. At the beginning of the course I was amazed by the original teaching method, completely different from the theoretical approach applied by my home university's way of teaching. The weekly tutorials were an arena of discussion and condision. My classmates and I had many times the chance to debate on controversial issues. The possibility to standup, and state my opinion was a way to strengthen my public speaking skill and to improve myselfesteem. More importantly, being challenged every week with different issues to analysis, interpret and evaluate, I was able to practice my critical thinking skills. The utility of the skills I acquired in this course go well beyond my academic career. The capacity to think critically and to confidently speak in public will be important features for my curriculum. Such skills are a valuable source in the job market, and make me a suitable candidate for many ambitious positions.

This course opened my eyes to the value of citizenship and how it is affecting the way people migrate and the policies of countries who are receiving these migrants. It also showed me the importance of certain rights and freedoms of societies that have been redesigned and re-thought of due to the modern day wave of migration. {...}
It is hard to create a perfect world as reflected even in our idealistic constitution of Utopia but as long as one becomes more aware of the world they live in, it would be easier for discussion and

debates to occur. As such, this course provides scholars including myself to gain a deeper insight into this.

The main thing that I learned, and this may sound silly, is to stop thinking about politics in the terms of 'left-wing' and 'right-wing'. The proper introduction of libertarianism, communitarianism, and egalitarian liberalism, and being forced to think about the concepts, has really opened my eyes to a completely different world of politics.

I think some of the most important things that I learned during this course, is the importance of basic individual freedoms. In western societies, we simply go through life without ever really thinking about our individual freedoms and how easily they come to us. I have never felt like some of my fundamental rights have been violated in any way, and up until this course I never really thought about it either. However, this course has widened my horizon, as in that I can understand certain minority groups now more clearly when their basic rights have been affected. For example, the case about the gay couple not being allowed to sleep in the same bed at the christian hotel was quite an eye opener. At first I would've have said that the gay couple should just not complain and move on. However, with this course, I now see the importance of individual rights and equal treatment.

[...] during these eight weeks I feel that I have laid out the groundwork for society based on justice and fairness. While I did not see myself as someone who actively engages in risky debates, I found that I did not shy away from dialogue on fundamental rights and values. [...]
To put it more directly, during this course I learned to think more critically about pressing issues in society, and reflect on these issues from different perspectives. I learnt to do this by studying the literature, and class debates, but perhaps most important were the case studies which helped understand that each situation is different.

This course taught me how to effectively look at issues from multiple perspectives, even when I do not personally agree with them. I consider myself to be a very political person and as such I often get somewhat stuck in my ideas. This course helped me break that cycle and open up my mind to new viewpoints. I think this is important because all too often debates get bogged down in personal bias and I think healthy debate requires people to set aside their beliefs and look at cases objectively. Additionally it gave me some more information about the major schools of thought which inform contemporary politics, as well as their historical roots.
Through engaging in different, and usually conflicting moral perspectives, I am able to go beyond my simplistic thoughts on the issue of 'justice', to become aware of the real world's complexities, and of the fact that 'justice' to one person might mean injustice to another, that the provision of a right might be the loss or repression of another. I am made aware that there is no easy solution to our society's problems, and attempts to address them require much more than a single moral code. [...] The important thing is not to win the debate, but to refine each of our argument so as to reach the most satisfactory solution – which must be done by taking conflicting views and theories into consideration, instead of sticking to only one's own intuition and prejudice

Politically I believe I learned a lot from this course. I personally learned that politics is way harder than it look and that it involves a lot of philosophical thinking and involves topics that can get way broader that it looks like. This course has made me realise that a constitution can never be

perfect, it has taught me that it is almost impossible to please everyone, everyone has its own opinion on how a perfect society works, but at the same time I learned and deepened how I imagined a perfect society and more about my personal way of thinking. On a personal level, all of this is important to me as I would like to pursue a political career in my country. All of these Constitutional questions are therefore very important to me as they help me figure out my political idea about all of the cases topics, and help figure out what ideas I would like to promote.

This course helped me realise that constitutions, citizenship, and so on... actually shapes your thinking of what belonging is, of who you actually are as a person.

[The weekly assignments] were brain racking and seemingly unending, making me nervous for the future and in dealing with more of these kinds of cases, but overall feeling a lot more prepared for them. I got plenty of perspectives, including fleshed out academic ones (liberalism, libertarian, communitarian etc.) as well as from my tutor and also many of my classmates.

Furthermore, I also got to know a few cases and historical examples I did not know before, such as the case of the American-Japanese in the United States during World War Two. Those cases sparked my interest in the main topics of the course. They also contributed for the historical contextualization of migration and identity. For us, as historians, those historical examples are key to ignite contemporary debates that might be similar in nature. Overall, I enjoyed the experience of the course and I learned a lot from it.

What I learned and Why this is Important

Nuance and humbleness when it comes to defining just and justice. What I have learned is that is one thing to define a 'just' strategy with the best of intentions, but it is quite another thing to give it hands and feet.

[...]

Another ethical minefield of sorts is migration; allow or not, on human rights and/or economic grounds, is multicultural the basis of a society or the basis of multiple societies uncomfortably held together by the fabric of the nation state? We are all confronted with these topics and always daily; they trigger emotions, reflexes. The course introduces the scientific debate around these topics, with history, nuance, and active participation. I believe that has an impact on how one follows the debate, with less reflexes and more reflection. That sounds 'right'.

The first lecture of the course explained some common misconceptions about migration and this really widened my view on the subject. This especially made me more critical towards news about migration and immigration. Additionally, I did not know about the different ways to acquire citizenship such as jus sanguinis. I believe this is important because it can make you more critical about certain topics around migration, it gives you the ability to decide for yourself what would or should weigh heavier in the decisions that are made around the world.

The discussions in class really improved by discussion skills. Because the discussions were quite broad everyone was able to really make a stand for their own viewpoint and opinion which in my opinion also increased the chances everyone was actually listening to what this person had to say about a topic. This is important because discussion skills are quite important to have in society, and a high participation grade during class only improves the classes, in general.

Lastly, this course made me think a lot about everything I thought I knew about the world. In the process it also showed me how immensely impossible or wrong my opinion was about certain things, and I strongly believe that is what a good course does.

Developing an understanding of Egalitarian Liberal, Communitarian and Libertarian perspectives has been especially enlightening and will be applicable in many other situations later on in life. It is useful to have an understanding of how these perspectives differ and why they differ as it has helped greatly with developing a better understanding of how elements of each of the perspectives can bleed into one person's opinion on any given topic. Not only are these perspectives useful for understanding the opinions of others but they have also enabled me to develop a more clear understanding of my own beliefs and thought processes.

The main thing that I learned from this course is that there is not just one way of looking at the world. You might think that your opinion is the only right one, but someone else might also find their opinion to be true, even though it differs greatly from yours. I am, generally, a categorical thinker, which clashes with others who are consequential thinkers; simply because they use a different kind of logic. Being able to look at a subject from different perspectives helps a person to nuance their own opinion better.

During this course I learned that it is okay to have your opinions or views on things altered by other people's views and insights. This is what I noticed most during the tutorials. I would always go into the tutorials with a clear view on where I would stand on the matters we had to write about in the assignments, but when we would discuss them in class, I often found that the others also had some great points that I either had not even thought about, or that I had not assumed were important. This is what I liked about the discussions we had during the tutorials as well. This is very important because besides the fact that it is good to hear different views, opinions and insights on things discussed in the tutorials, it could also be very useful in real life. It is good to be open to other suggestions and opinions than those of yourself, and admitting you were in the wrong and someone else was right about something is a good quality in my opinion.

I learned to see and think more about both sides and not just one. I started to question my own opinions and try to come up with different ways to think about different cases. It is important to think this way, for it shows that the world is not as simple as black or white. It is very complicated with very hard questions and events. This is a good reflection on history, for it shows that history is also very complex.

The primary thing I learned was the three different political streams we discussed this semester and how they correlate and differentiate from each other. Although I might have already known what a liberal, libertarian and communitarian was there was so much to learn on how these three overlap on interesting issues and questions. Getting to know these streams better in turn better helped me understand my own position on issues of migration and citizenship and helped me strengthen my own arguments and shift my perspective on these issues. Hearing so many

different perspectives both in class and during the reading really widened my horizons to the beliefs some people hold, and where those thoughts originate from. Also, as someone with no real background in philosophy tackling these social philosophers, like Rawls and Locke definitely gave me a more tangible appreciation for their craft.

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Another ethical minefield of sorts is migration; allow or not, on human rights and/or economic grounds, is multicultural the basis of a society or the basis of multiple societies uncomfortably held together by the fabric of the nation state? We are all confronted with these topics and always daily; they trigger emotions, reflexes. The course introduces the scientific debate around these topics, with history, nuance, and active participation. I believe that has an impact on how one follows the debate, with less reflexes and more reflection. That sounds 'right'.

Tijdens deze cursus heb ik vooral geleerd om problemen te bekijken vanuit verschillende perspectieven en deze perspectieven ook te kunnen onderbouwen. De argumentaties van deze perspectieven kunnen drastisch verschillen maar bieden wel een goed idee van de verschillende wijzen waarop een probleem bekeken kan worden. Dit is een belangrijke vaardigheid, omdat het ervoor zorgt dat naast onderbouwde perspectieven het er ook voor zorgt dat de verschillende zwaktes en sterkten van argumenten aantoonbaar zijn. Ook zorgt het ervoor dat er meer dan één perspectief overdacht wordt, wat belangrijk is om onderbouwd aan te kunnen tonen waarom een bepaald onderdeel beter of belangrijker is in aanzien tot andere onderdelen. Tot slot zorgt deze vaardigheid van een breder idee van hoe de wereld en haar problemen bekeken kan worden, wat belangrijk is voor het zien van de problematiek van één perspectief. Daarnaast heb ik tijdens deze cursus geleerd na te denken over concepten waar ik voorheen nog niet over nagedacht had, zoals nationaliteit, staatsburgerschap en fundamentele rechten. Deze concepten zijn vaker langsgekomen en eerder overdacht, maar nooit dusdanig uitgebreid besproken. Ik heb hiervan veel geleerd, wat uiterst belangrijk is om mijn eigen pek in deze wereld te kunnen overzien en te kunnen evalueren. Daarnaast is het ook van belang om te kijken naar deze concepten in de geschiedenis, omdat het ons een nieuw perspectief biedt van eerder bekeken concepten. In deze cursus heb ik, om het samen te vatten, vooral gekeken naar de wereld en de wijze waarop deze bekeken kan worden.