

## TEACHING FELLOW EVALUATION

Course Title: PLSC 203 "INEQUALITY AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY"  
 Term: Spring 2014  
 Instructor: Jacob Hacker  
 TF: Malte Lierl

*This discussion section/teaching fellow evaluation was carried out end of the course, in addition to the regular course evaluation that focused on the lecture and the main instructor. All responses are reported. The students submitted their answers anonymously through a web form. No background questions (major, class year, gender) were asked which could reveal respondent's identity. Out of 11 students enrolled in the section, 8 responded to the survey.*

### OPEN-ENDED FEEDBACK

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#### What did you like best about your PLSC 203 teaching fellow?

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He was very clear in what his intentions were for the semester and he provided feedback in a way that allowed me to improve my writing and effectively synthesize course topics into my work.

I liked how he provided extensive comments on drafts as well as final papers, so that we could improve our writing. He was also very open to feedback.

I liked that Malte made his advice on essays broadly applicable by putting it in terms of structure, organization, persuasiveness, and logic rather than just giving narrow text-specific comments. I also liked the feedback box. I also liked that he made section very inclusive compared to most other sections--everyone seemed to feel very comfortable and willing to talk.

Malte was always open to feedback regarding section. He made it abundantly clear that he was open to our questions in and out of section. He was engaging, bringing students into discussion without making anyone feel as though they were on the spot or unprepared. He made his expectations on section participation and writing assignments exceedingly clear, and he provided constructive feedback on my writing.

Malte was absolutely incredible when providing feedback about the writing assignments in this course. I really benefited from meeting with him one-on-one about my two paper assignments, and I loved the structure of the writing section that incorporated this sort of feedback. The written comments he gave as well as the points we discussed when meeting truly guided me when I was revising a second draft, and I've found that TAs in other writing courses often try to be supportive and helpful but are less able to offer concrete suggestions. I also really liked the way that the policy memo presentations were structured. This was the first time in three years at Yale that I actually felt as if peer feedback helped me improve on an assignment, and I think the guiding questions that Malte asked regarding the main idea of the memo and the ways they could be improved is what allowed this student feedback to be productive.

Provided very detailed feedback and was extremely friendly.

He was a fair grader and explained course material in depth during section.

He was always very good about providing me feedback on papers/ideas when I asked for it. Not only did he provide me with new ideas and perspectives, but he did so in a very detailed manner. I appreciated that the most from him and this quality separates him from other TFs.

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**Suggestions for improvement**

I accomplished what I wanted in the course with his help, and he did exactly what was required of him. I cannot think of any improvements.

One suggestion is that Malte should make sure to cover most of the readings for each week. Sometimes we only covered the readings from Monday, and did not really discuss the Wednesday readings.

I liked the sections in which we went over arguments in our readings more than the policy presentations. These were good practice, but could have been shorter. Also, more guidance on how to give a good presentation before we gave them could have been helpful.

Keep doing more of the same. I particularly appreciated days where he sent out expectations for section so that I had an idea of what to plan to discuss.

I think that Malte could improve on general class discussions. Unfortunately, the section had many folks who weren't very talkative, and it was sometimes difficult to elicit a productive and meaningful conversation about the class readings. Perhaps asking students to submit discussion questions in preparation for section could be a way to improve upon this.

Section often felt tense and uncomfortable. Work to create more casual and open environment.

He sometimes assumed that if we read the articles, we definitely understood them. However, I hoped to clarify and go over the articles in section, and we didn't do that to the extent that we could have. It sometimes felt uncomfortable in section to ask questions about material that was unclear to me (which was a lot of material).

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**Your overall feedback...**

Very, very knowledgeable and available. He helped me really understand course topics in greater depth and I used his feedback on improving my writing in other courses and it has helped me as well. Malte was resourceful and always came well prepared for section. He was also clear on how he graded papers and ways in which we could improve our writing.

The box with things that I liked pretty much summed it up! Malte gave really helpful structural advice when it came to writing. He was also in general very supportive and made some of the more complex readings & topics more accessible.

Easily one of the best I've had at Yale. See the my first response for all of the ways in which he made section a constructive use of time and an educational supplement to Professor Hacker's lecture.

Overall Malte was excellent. I felt extremely comfortable approaching him, contacting him via email to ask questions, and speaking up in section. I liked the way in which he affirmed people's comments in section, giving everyone the courage to speak up, but also challenged students' comments and opinions in a productive way. He also should continue teaching WR sections because he gives incredible feedback on written drafts and skillfully guides the student revision process. I would say that the only way he could improve would be to incentivize students to come more prepared to section by instituting a policy of discussion questions in advance.

One of the best I have had at Yale.

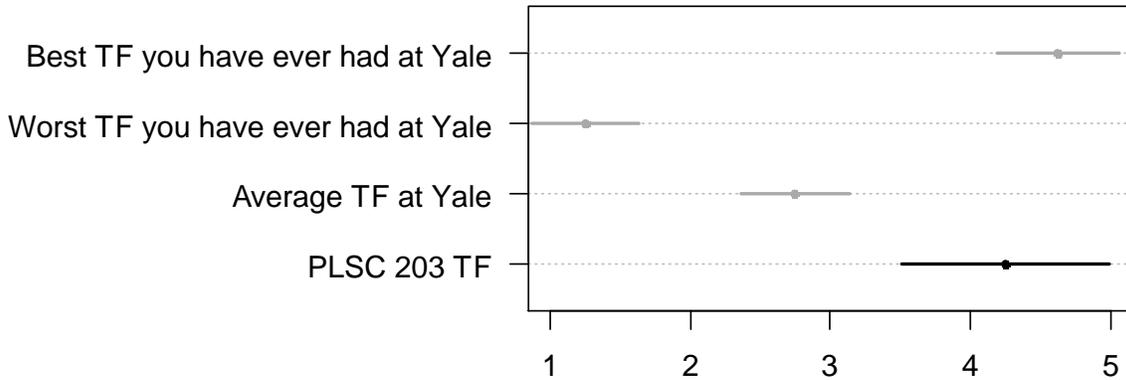
Malte was a good TF who was knowledgeable about course content and helped students improve their writing skills, but did not create a very positive section environment.

He was a great TF who cared deeply for his students and was committed to seeing them succeed. He routinely made himself available for us and always had a good agenda for section. Sometimes the atmosphere would be a bit tense and asking questions felt awkward. However, all in all, great TF.

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**OVERALL QUALITY**

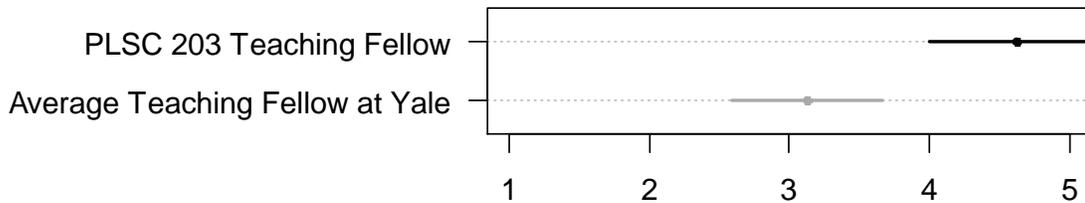
On a scale from 1 (worst) to 5 (best), rate the overall quality of the following teaching fellows:



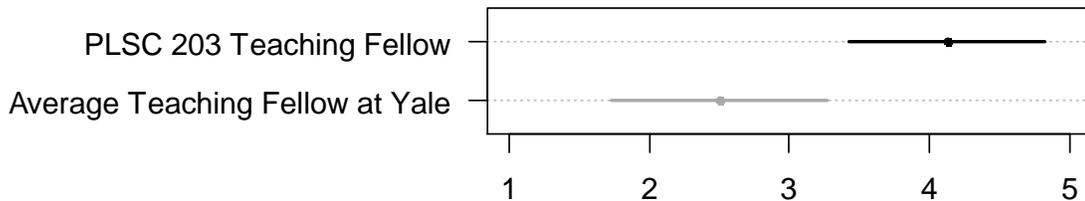
**DETAILED EVALUATION**

On a scale from 1 (worst) to 5 (best), rate your *GLBL 185 / PLSC 342* teaching fellow and the “average TF at Yale” along the following dimensions:

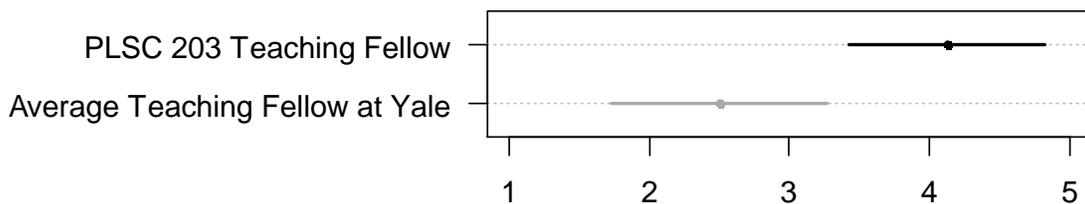
**Commitment to helping students succeed in the course**



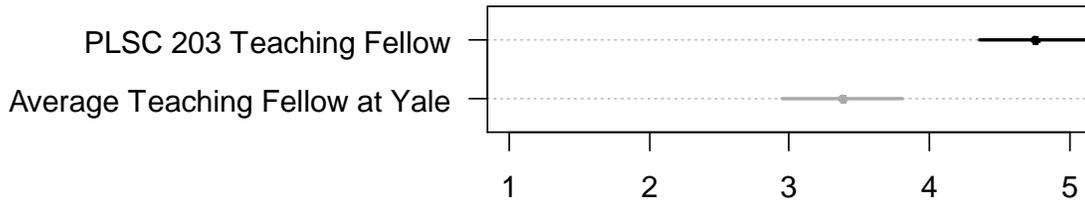
**Commitment to students’ college/career success beyond the course**



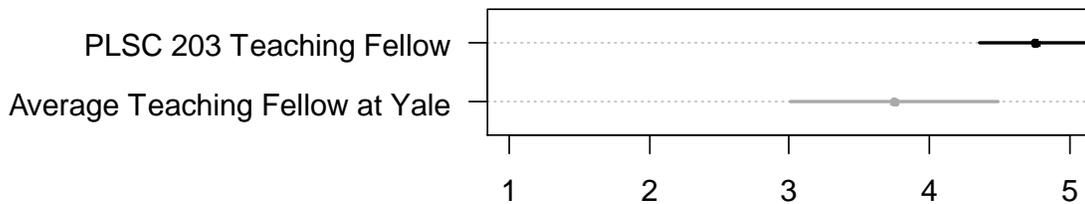
**Interest in and willingness to incorporate student feedback during the semester**



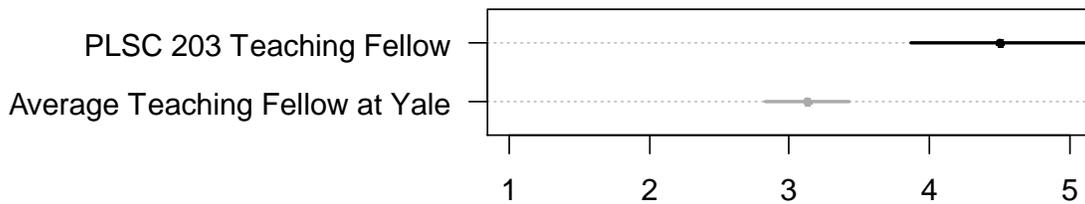
**Fairness in grading**



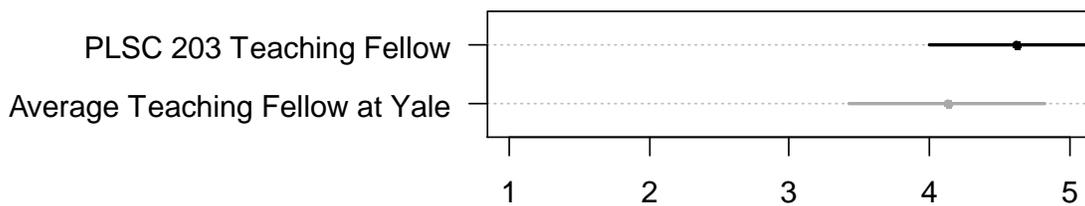
**Responsiveness to inquiries and willingness to provide in-person feedback at designated meeting times**



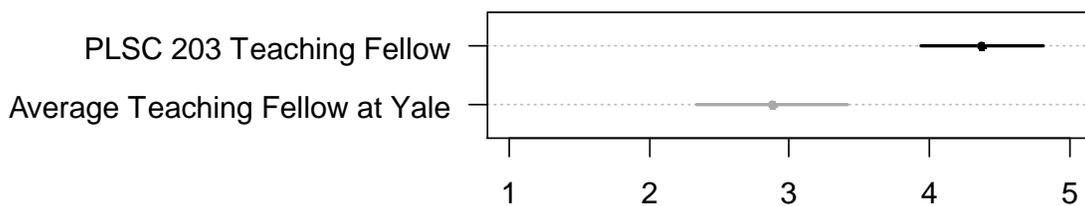
**Extent and quality of personalized feedback on assignments, research proposals, etc.**



**Concern for maintaining an inclusive and discrimination-free classroom environment**



**Helped me improve my writing skills**



**Got me interested in a topic or motivated me to delve deeper into previous interests**

