

Hi Everybody.

Please find below your unedited feedback in black. I dropped out a few words in one message as it could have identified the student who wrote it. My response to some of your statements is in purple italics.

Many students expressed appreciation for learning about the novel topics of global concern, as well as for the flexibility and freedom the loose structure of the class provides. Many students expressed concern over the lack of structure and request to know more about how they will be graded. Rather than provide this structure, I provide old exams (in past classes; see <http://appropriatetechnology.peteschwartz.net/about-us/>), and I provide feedback on your talks and websites. Regrettably, I've fallen behind this quarter, which might leave you wanting more guidance. Happily, I will catch up this week and provide the feedback.

During class, it was brought up that I changed the assignment for Wednesday on Monday night. I think I expressed in class that I may update the assignment as late as 24 hours before class time. However, this should have been in writing. I have now put it in the syllabus:

“Class Preparation: To maximally benefit from the class, please do the readings and come to class ready to talk about them. Readings and other resources are available via the course timeline (link on main class website). I reserve the right to update the assignment as late as 24 hours before class, so if you read ahead, please check the assignment again the evening before each class. Don’t read more than a week ahead.”

Thanks for your comments, below

Pete

I believe this class does a good job in expanding horizons, talking about issues all over the world.

I appreciate the level of freedom we have with this class. It helped me fit the work into my schedule better.

The class continues to be very interesting. I like the diversity of subject matters.

I really want to love this class. I think the project-based learning approach has real promise and I have been in classes where it was really effectively done, but I don't feel this class does that. Effective project teams require some structure of leadership in my opinion, both from the student team members but also from the professor in the form of useful, direct, and abundant feedback and critique. My team spent too much time this quarter being unproductive trying to come up with a narrow enough focus to create some sort of meaningful project from an assigned topic that came with no guidelines or expectations. While developing a project from nothing is something we should all definitely be able to do, to do so in a 10 week time period constrained by other work and expectations is difficult when no clear end-of-quarter goal is established for this project. I really value all the guest presentations, but I think more time should be spent on the readings if these are supposed to help guide the class. Clarity on the final exam/website/video expectations as well as on the paper for 491 students would also be beneficial in my opinion.

I agree that more discussion on the readings would make them more valuable. Then the question is, "do we reduce time for group work, or cut back on guest speakers? Or should we reduce the number of readings?" In the future, I'll be more selective about the number of readings and make more of an effort to address them in class. In general, I'm not evaluating your video/presentation/website. I'm evaluating your learning. Did you learn something in your group work? Can you convey it to me? During the quarter, I've told you a little about what to provide in the website. The more I tell you, the more I control the direction of learning and thereby reduce your freedom.

As for the final exam, I provided a statement about how you should come to class. However, this could also be in writing. I augmented the Final Exam reference in the syllabus. Originally, I had, "Final Exam: For one hour during the last class. Will cover all concepts from class and reading, and from the presentations of other students. There are open ended questions as well as multiple choice regarding readings and discussions."

I changed the above statement to the following:

Final Exam: The final exam will test what you have learned in the class readings, discussions, and presentations (including presentations by other focus groups). The test is closed book with no notes or access to internet or anything other than your memory. Consequently, the standards for your answers are moderate. Answers such as "the article by the man who said we should live with the local people and see how wonderful their lives are and learn from them..." would suffice for a reference to Joe Bageant. Essentially the final exam is a test to see if you were really present (as opposed to being on social media) in this class.

As for the 491 paper, sorry, I have no expectations aside from what is provided on the syllabus. I'm interested in your experience. I've added the following statement to this paper: "Format is flexible, aim for 1000 words."

Current Status:

Feeling behind and a little stressed. Feeling like we should be further along, but also happy with all we have done. Excited to see our finished product and to implement our solution strategy.

I really enjoy this class. It has opened my eyes up to development models & technologies that I would've never thought about. I wish the website was laid out better, in a more organized fashion, but otherwise all else is good. I've gotten to learn to know what to look for when search out for how to "help" others.

I like all the presentations this class has offered. I've learned a lot and it's cool how they're related to the readings we do.

The class is going well. Having it so unstructured has been very difficult, but I feel that the info and lessons learned are useful. For my final self-intervention, I will try to reconnect with my friends every day.

I think this class has been very level and mellow. I'm excited to get my final project in and make that video.

I like the approach of the class so far and love that there are so many guest speakers.

The only thing I would like to have more especially when the finals are approaching is a current grading.

I think there is a bit of a general confusion about the point of our projects. Are we producing an actual thing? Are we passing our project on to the next group?

I love the readings and the presentations. I just am not sure where our projects fit into the equation.

If you produce an actual thing – like an intervention plan, that is great. However, you may just find that there is a difficult situation and list possible approaches. You may find that your investigation yields no easy answers. That's OK. In the spring, you can take PSC-392, where we design and build things. I won't stop you from building in this class, but there is no expectation for building in this class.

Our group project is going great! Readings = better to have less because then I can focus on them more.

Our group is doing well. We wish we had longer blocks of class time to actually do productive work (not just talk). Also, can you clarify your expectations for things (like the video) in class?

Hey Pete!

I like this class very much, because of all the real people that come in to talk about their experiences & expertise. It is what makes this class engaging, meaningful, and unique.

I appreciate your openness and genuine way of being. I feel for your psychological loss of your daughter. I believe she is young, hurting, and overwhelmed. I think she will come back to you when she is ready.

The class is going well for me. I just want to know/find a better way to personally stay up to date in the class & prepare for what is coming up. What is expected from the final presentation?

So far, I'm really still enjoying this class. The articles are engaging & I love how they reach us about worldly current events. Projects are going well too.

I've enjoyed my experience in this class thus far. And feel that the readings/discussions have opened my eyes to topics that I otherwise would not have ever known.

I enjoy all the discussion and the articles specifically about human rights. I think it would be helpful to talk briefly at the beginning of class about how what we are talking about for that day directly relates to appropriate technology. I feel like it could help clarify the conversation more.

My needs from Pete:

Can you please make/post a timeline of the major events due dates for the end of the quarter?
Like projects, tests, etc.

It would be super helpful. And review where our grade comes from. Sorry, I know that's not how you roll, but I just feel like we need that check-in as a class!

I would like to have an outline of the due dates and requirements of the end of the quarter projects. I have also found it difficult to keep up with the readings but I have learned a lot through class discussions & guest speakers.

I think I am doing well cause I “liked” the range of presentations but we run out of time to discuss other things so I forget the other readings.

- I like how open this class is, the subjects that are presented.
- I am always interested in what my peers have to say or what subjects they inform to the class.
- Although I don't say much, I do take these topics seriously, they are very stimulating to think about.

I feel that this class has opened my eyes in relation to the world's problems. Before this class, I hadn't heard a lot about the projects people are working on as well as the kind of stuff presented in the weekly online readings. I would like to see more feedback with our projects. Maybe after a project milestone, students or yourself would be responsible for reviewing the websites and stating what does/doesn't make sense, what needs to be added, etc.

I find this class to be too focused on showing examples of tech in other countries instead of teaching thoroughly how the process of development, implementations & politics, non-profits, the UN, the World Bank & how it all works. I had expected this class to go more in depth and have more structure and technical teachings than it does. I would like more lectures about what we will be tested on so we're on the same page about the readings/speakers/etc. Otherwise it sometimes feels like a waste of time to come to class if I'm being honest.

Maybe I'm just not connecting the dots but I haven't gotten from this class what I had expected which is a bummer.

I'm left with two questions:

- 1) Is the class not addressing the things it should address? Development is such a huge, broad field. We could take a look at a different part of it.
- 2) Did I not correctly describe the class material?

I ask that each of you:

- 1) What might you add or subtract from the material we covered? I gladly accept recommendations of materials/articles/videos/discussion topics that you would like to cover in class. I request that you send me these things.
- 2) Given the present material that we've covered, how should I change the course description to more clearly represent what we do?

This class has presented many interesting perspectives for me, and I enjoy hearing about Pete's projects and experiences.

I really like the project our group is doing and the development models we have learned and discussed throughout this quarter.

It's hard to know when things are actually “due” because the timeline changes a lot.

I'm curious if we can get a notesheet for the final to have quotes/direct references to readings and the presenters. I think my essays on the final exam would be much better if I could easily reference things we went over in class.

I addressed this above, and have added a statement on the syllabus.