



Jeremy Menchik <jmenchik@gmail.com>

Menchik teaching observatiopn

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To: "Selin, Henrik" <selin@bu.edu>, "Ripley, Allison Grace" <agripley@bu.edu>

Cc: "Menchik, Jeremy" <menchik@bu.edu>

Dear All,

Below is my report on my observation of Jeremy Menchik's teaching.

Mike

Teaching observation of Professor Jeremy Menchik

On 26 March I observed the class, IR 369 Southeast Asia in World Politics taught by Professor Menchik. A brief summation is entirely apt. The class was an excellent example of the level of pedagogy we want to have characterize the Pardee School and we are fortunate to have Jeremy Menchik as a colleague.

I arrived about 5 minutes before the class was to begin and found Professor Menchik set up and ready to begin. Borrowing his 'clicker' I took a seat in the rear of the class where I could observe both him and all 29 students. Before the class began, and largely to satisfy my own curiosity, I asked several students nearby what they thought of using the clickers. They were all enthusiastic about the way Professor Menchik had incorporated them into his presentations. One said that using these devices immediately focused the mind on the class being taught and got one involved right away. From the behavior of students once class began, on time, I could see that this seemed to be so.

Professor Menchik began the class, largely but not entirely a discussion for the prospects of democracy coming to Myanmar (Burma), by relating the subject to previous classes and discussions. It was here he made the most use of clickers for responses to questions he was asking about previous material and how it could be applied to the day's lesson.

His teaching style was informal and yet he had control of things at all times and clearly knew where he wanted discussions to go. He asked questions of many students, most if not all he knew by name, and the quality of their answers was remarkable. Virtually every response showed the student replying or joining the discussion had read the materials assigned for the course and had incorporated that knowledge with what had been learned in previous classroom discussions. This aspect of Professor Menchik's pedagogy was the best I have seen in any class I have visited at BU since 1995.

A Platonic mode of instruction, drawing information and lessons from questions to the students themselves, is something of an ideal and this is how Professor Menchik worked. He carefully brought sometimes reluctant students into the discussion, not just those eager and volunteering and this he did with patience and no put down to the student. He even had occasion to humorously but pointedly chide one or two who were trying to finish their breakfast making it clear that their eating in class was at least distracting them if not others.

I did not have Professor Menchik's lesson plan but the discussion seemed to go where it was meant to and would lead quite readily to the next class. All the discussion was at a level I more often see in 500 level classes and indeed I learned a good deal myself.

Jeremy Menchik is very fine teacher, highly regarded by his students of whom he nevertheless demands a great deal, and I most strongly recommend his continuation on the Pardee School faculty.

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