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# Teacher evaluations fail to leave a mark



MARIA  
KOTOVYCH

Chances are, you're finishing up term papers and final exams are creeping up. This also means that your TA and a huge stack of pencils will soon be entering your classroom to administer course evaluations. Students are under a lot of stress as they face the last stretch before finals. Yet the University still expects us to complete another Scantron questionnaire—as if we didn't have enough multiple-choice exams to take. So as a public service to you, I've compiled a little how-to guide to help the on-the-go student complete their course evaluation at optimum speed.

The "comments" section of the course evaluation form is something that students often neglect. Yet this is the place where you can say the stuff that's really important, the stuff that the fill-in-the-bubbles section doesn't ask.

I'm talking about the truly important things, like the prof's appearance. Currently, students can't rate statements such as, "The professor knows how to coordinate his/her belt and shoes." But, if your profs are guilty of wearing brown and blue in the same ensemble, make sure that you use the space on the back of the evaluation to tell them. When it comes to university teaching, physical appearance is absolutely everything.

Less important than physical appearance, but still something you could bring up in your comments, is your prof's ability to communi-

cate and explain concepts. Since some of the computer-scored questions already ask about communication, you don't need to spend too much time belabouring this issue, nor do you need to make the comments too specific. So, in the interest of time and efficiency, give brief and vague feedback. Say stuff like "this prof sucked." Always leave a little mystery too. For colour and spice, you can even pepper your language with a few swears. Your profs will thank you for making their time reading the forms more entertaining.

And regarding communication, if your prof has an accent, be absolutely sure to complain as much as you can about this; in fact, take this opportunity to be a real asshole and take the comment one step further. Question that person's entire ability to speak English. Surely that's the same thing as having an accent.

Last and certainly least, when doing course evaluations, never give your prof a reasonable evaluation, and certainly don't let your own approach to the course or attitude towards personal responsibility and independent learning influence how you rate him or her. Those things don't count for anything in university; as they say, campus is just a glorified high school.

Are you someone who can recite all intricacies of the Powerplant's hours and format, yet your textbooks haven't had some fresh air in a long time? Remember that you and you alone can affect the course of your tenured prof's career. This is *not* a responsibility to take lightly. So if you follow my tried-and-true method for completing course evaluations, you can complete them in record time and then head to the 'Plant to drink your sorrows away. And if you like this method of completing course evaluations, you can always try using it again on your finals.

## Students' Union Award for Leadership in Undergraduate Teaching (SALUTE)

### Call for Nominations

The SALUTE Awards were developed by Students' Council to promote and encourage excellence in teaching by recognizing faculty members who make outstanding contributions in their roles as undergraduate instructors at the University of Alberta.

All instructors of undergraduate courses are eligible for nomination.

If you have an instructor that you feel deserves recognition for going the extra mile, nominate them today!

**Deadline: January 23th, 2007 at 5pm.**  
For more information or to download an application, please go to:

**[www.su.ualberta.ca/awards](http://www.su.ualberta.ca/awards)**

