

NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

POST OBSERVATION CONFERENCE MEMORANDUM

Date of Discussion 10/12/16

Observation date 10/14/16

Candidate's Name _____

Department _____

Representatives Present _____

Course & Section Eng 3409
DL14 Name of Observer Kate Falley

Name of Observee JASON ELLS

Date Observation Filed _____ with Chairperson _____

P&B member or other assigned by chairperson

(Attach additional pages if necessary.)

Signed Kate Falley Title Assoc. Prof.

I understand that my signature means only that I have read this memorandum and that I may attach any comments I wish.

Staff Member's Signature JWG 11/8/2016
6/96 date

NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK CLASS OBSERVATION REPORT

Name of observee: Jason Ellis

Rank: Assistant Professor () Tenured

(X) Untenured

Department: English **Course/Section:** ENG 3401 Section D614 **Room:** 505A Namm

Date of Observation: 10/19/16

Name of Observer:

Kate Falvey _____ Rank: Associate Professor

Lesson Topic & Brief Summary:

This session of Law through Literature was devoted to contextualizing key themes of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* by providing biographical, social and historical background.

Please complete each item. This report will be returned unless each category contains supportive comments. Use additional pages if necessary. The items in the parenthesis are examples of areas to be addressed in each category.

1. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (prompt start; efficient attendance check)

(x) Satisfactory () Unsatisfactory

Class began promptly with a clearly displayed announcement of the session's agenda. An attendance sheet was passed around. Professor Ellis used the front-of-room screen to display important points in print and then highlighted these points with well-chosen, memorable images. His presentation was entertaining, informative, and exceptionally clear. Crucial ideas about Forster's life and times, his ethical philosophy, and the historical and political contexts for the novel were covered in enough interlinked detail to give students a solid basis for understanding the text and to prepare them for further inquiry.

2. PROFESSIONAL TRAITS RELEVANT TO TEACHING (professional appearance and demeanor)

(x) Satisfactory () Unsatisfactory

Professor Ellis's expertise and his student- and subject-centered enthusiasm were evident throughout the session.

3. SUBJECT MASTERY (accuracy of presented material; use of appropriate terminology)

Excellent Very Good Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

Professor Ellis's ability to effectively synthesize such a complex and weighty amount of literary, historical, political, and philosophical material into clearly stated, realizable student learning objectives is a testament to his subject mastery and his teaching expertise.

4. ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIAL (clear statement of objectives; logical sequence; budgeting of time; review, summary, and outside assignments as appropriate)

Excellent Very Good Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

Professor Ellis's presentation style was exceptional – appropriate to the stated lesson plan, pointed toward clearly announced goals, intellectually sophisticated, good humored, and keenly mindful of student needs. The lecture was punctuated by pauses to ask students questions and enjoin them to make connections with previously covered material: “Empiricism. What do you think that means?” “Anyone want to take a guess as to what this means?” Students were frequently reminded to take notes: “You should definitely write that down.” “Liberal humanism: you should definitely put that in your notes.”

5. PRESENTATION OF MATERIAL (level and clarity of presentation; appropriate use of learning aids)

Excellent Very Good Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

A sweeping amount of social, political, legal, and literary history was clearly condensed and presented through a wonderfully canny array of images and bullet pointed information, from Isaac Asimov's *Bicentennial Man* and a mention of robot rights to introduce humanist themes, to a picture of Victoria to highlight Pax Britannica and keynotes of Victorian social and legal history, to the use of a “Downton Abbey” picture to present an overview of the Edwardian era, to Virginia Woolf's observation that Forster is a novelist “who sees his people in close contact with their surroundings.” Each image was well-chosen and each point contributed to a compelling depiction of a living world that students could conceptualize and enter.

6. STUDENT-INSTRUCTOR INTERACTION (appropriate recognition of student contributions; establishment of rapport with students)

(x)Excellent ()Very Good ()Satisfactory ()Unsatisfactory

Professor Ellis's rapport with his students was evident throughout the session. Students were interested and focused. Professor Ellis routinely asked students questions to make sure they understood central concepts and key terms: "Forster was a conscientious objector. What does that mean?" "What does agency mean?" He would then rephrase a students' near-answer or tease out salient ideas and prompt more thinking and connection-making while supporting students' efforts. For example, when a student attempted to define "empiricism," Professor Ellis provided an expanded definition and link to liberal humanism: "Empiricism is normally associated with the sciences but we can test ideas. We can evaluate ideas. We can think critically.... Liberal humanist ideals are built into higher education in the U.S." He then went on to relate these interlinked concepts to law and social relationships and, eventually to Forster's preoccupation with forging human connections. "Only connect," Forster's famous epigraph and guiding theme from his novel *Howard's End*, ("Who knows what an epigraph is? Does anyone remember what 'interiority' means?") was in many ways modeled and illustrated throughout this intellectually spirited class.

7. OVERALL EVALUATION (categories 1 through 6)

(x)Excellent ()Very Good ()Satisfactory ()Unsatisfactory

Professor Ellis is a challenging, engaging, student-centered instructor who is extremely effective in managing class time, using visual media for stimulating student learning, and creating a cohesive class community.

8. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT (Use additional pages if necessary.)

Professor Ellis has a knack for choosing rich, evocative images, quotations, and cultural touchstones in order to introduce complex material to his students. My only recommendation is that he continue to do more of this kind of thoughtful, spirited, student-centered teaching.

I have read and have been given a copy of the above report, and so signify by my signature below. I understand that I may attach additional comments to this document.

Signature of observee JWG.

Date 11/8/2016

Signature of observer Kate Foley

Date 11/8/16