

COE Course Evaluation Spring 2023

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This online Cornell Outdoor Education Course Evaluation was administered using Google Forms. The responses were collected from March 27th, 2023 to May 11th, 2023.

There were 54 courses offerings listed on the evaluation, and of those courses, only 46 took place in the Spring of 2023. *(For example, there was a Spring Break trip that didn't happen and a biking class that was canceled due to low registration.)*

The majority of the instructors who taught classes this semester were asked to show a QR code to their students on the last day of class so that they could complete the online evaluation. I say "the majority of instructors" because I don't know that every community instructor got this information or how the new evaluation system was shared with instructors.

The responses below include 34 courses (74% of the courses offered).

A COE Course has 10 students on average.

This data includes 327 responses from students who were enrolled in the following PE classes during the Spring 2023 Semester. There were 700 students enrolled in COE's Spring 2023 courses, so this data accounts for 47% of the students who were enrolled¹.

Rock Climbing (150 responses total) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• OADI Basic Rock Climbing- 2 responses• Basic Rock Climbing- 81 responses (9 sections including women's basic rock)• Basic Rock Climbing Closing the Adventure Gap- 8 responses• Southwest Climbing Expedition Red Rocks- 8 responses• Introduction to Trad Climbing- 8 responses• Intro to outdoor rock climbing- 9 responses• Intermediate Rock- 21 responses• Sport Lead- 7 responses• Technique and Training- 6 responses	Paddling (30 responses total) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recreation Canoeing- 8 responses• Recreational Paddling- 1 response• Intro to Sea Kayaking- 6 responses• Stand Up Paddle Boarding- 4 responses• Whitewater Kayaking- 3 responses• OADI Recreational Canoeing- 8 responses
Biking (11 responses total) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mountain Biking- 6 responses• Bike Touring- 3 responses	Hiking/Backpacking (31 responses total) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Backcountry Cooking- 4 responses• Day Hiking- 7 responses

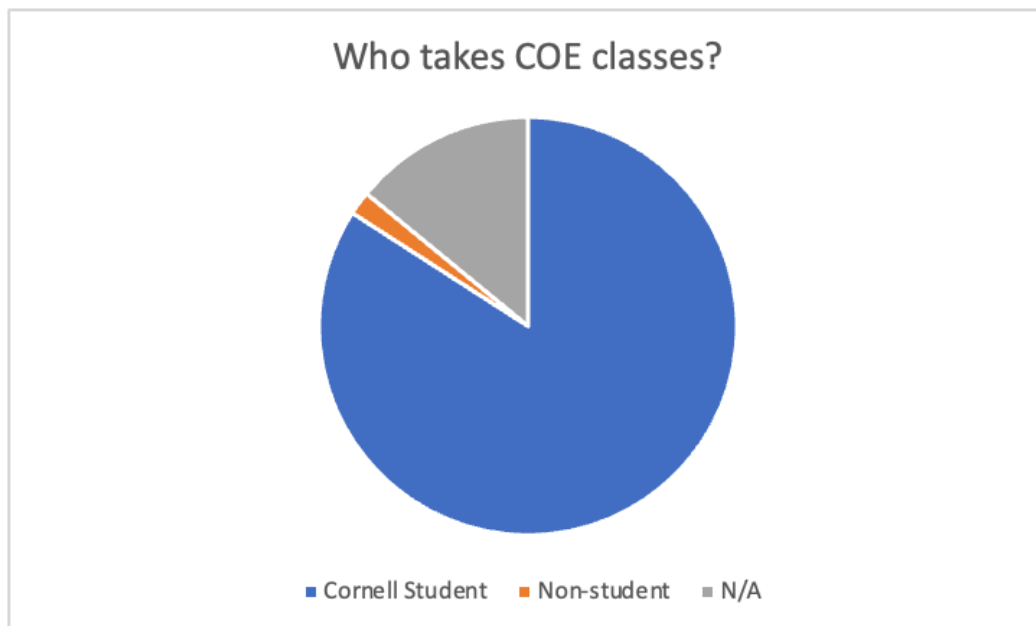
¹ According to Cornell Data Scientists, a typical response rate on a survey is about 20%. Our response rate of 47% is above average and would be considered an "excellent" response rate. In addition, the random distribution across all program areas, and the response rate relative to the number of courses offered in each program area are characteristics of a good data set.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreational Biking- 3 responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor Birding Basics- 7 responses Geocaching- 3 responses Wilderness Survival Skills- 4 responses Introduction to Camping- 6 responses
Circus (53 responses total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Circus Arts- 30 responses Introduction to Aerials- 23 responses (3 sections) 	Wilderness First Aid (13 responses total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilderness First Responder- 12 responses Wilderness First Responder ReCert- 1
Trail Running (20 responses total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail Running- 20 responses (3 sections) 	Tree Climbing (10 responses total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree Climbing- 10 responses
Ropes Course (10 responses total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ropes Course- 10 responses 	Caving (6 responses total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caving- 6 responses

Who takes COE classes?

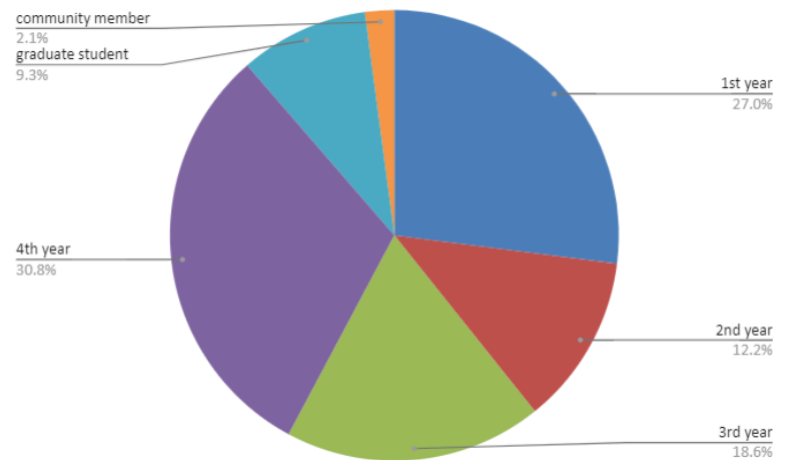
This data is from the full group of 327 respondents, however this question was optional.

- 275 of 327 respondents were Cornell Students
- 6 of 327 respondents were not Cornell Students
- 46 people did not respond to the question



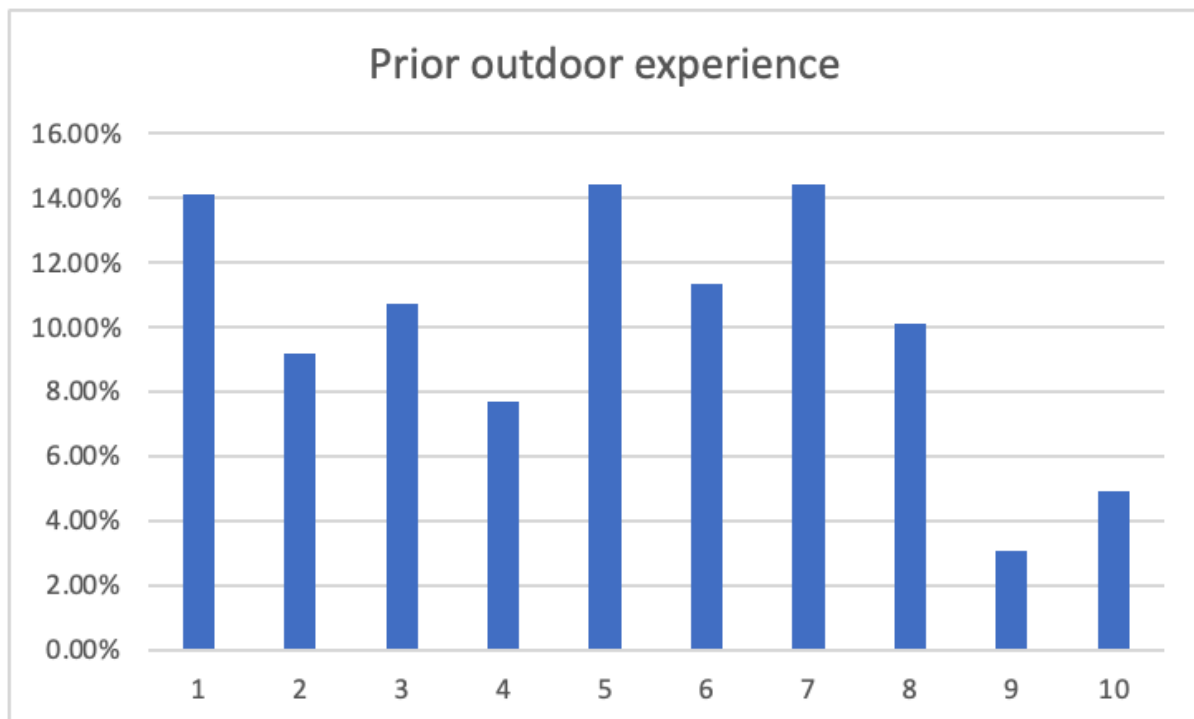
What is your year or affiliation?

1st Year Undergrad- 64 respondents
2nd Year Undergrad- 29 respondents
3rd Year Undergrad- 44 respondents
4th Year Undergrad- 73 respondents
Graduate Students- 22 respondents
Community Member (staff, faculty, local resident)- 5 respondents
89 people did not respond



What was your prior outdoor experience?

We had 326 respondents who answered this question. This was a multiple-choice question with one answer allowed. A “1” was explained as “no prior outdoor experience” and “10” was explained as “lots of prior outdoor experience.” About 14% of students reported a prior outdoor experience of 1, 5 or 7. The lowest reported answer was 9 and 10 with about 3% and 5% respectively. The full results are in the table below.



Prior outdoor Experience	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Respondent
1	46	14.11%
2	30	9.20%
3	35	10.74%
4	25	7.67%
5	47	14.42%
6	37	11.35%
7	47	14.42%
8	33	10.12%
9	10	3.07%
10	16	4.91%

I explored the relationship between gender, race and level of prior outdoor experience for people who selected 1, 5 or 7 and these are the results.

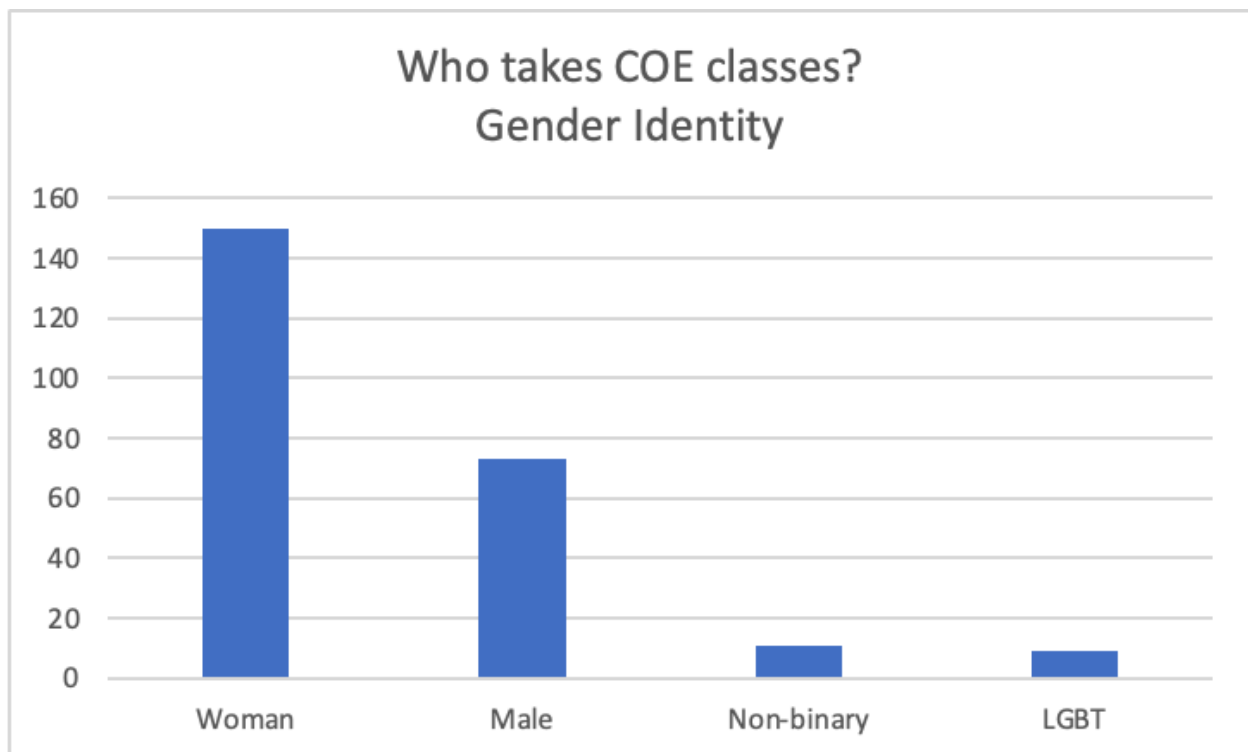
	Rating 1	Rating 5	Rating 7
Gender	66% Female 34% Male 3% Non-binary	69% Female 28% Male 3% Non-binary	75% Female 25% Male 6% Non-binary
Race	32% White 61% Asian 3% Multi-Racial 12% Hispanic	28% White 50% Asian 14% Multi-racial 6% Hispanic 3% African American	41% White 27% Asian 22% Multi-racial 8% Hispanic 3% African American

As you'll read below, the typical gender distribution in a COE class is 64% female to 31% male and 4.7 % non-binary and these ratios are pretty well reflected in the responses above. According to the Cornell Demographic data obtained from Day Hall, in the Spring of 2023, students in COE classes were 31% White, 35% Asian, 9% Hispanic, 28% Multi-racial and 4% African American. A greater proportion of Asian and Hispanic students had "no prior outdoor experience (1)" while slightly more White students had some outdoor experience as indicated by choice 7 on the scale of 1-10.

What is your gender identity?

According to Cornell University Profile: Class of 202²3, 55% of students are women and 45% are men. This data does not account for non-binary students.

According to the Spring 2023 COE Course Evaluation, 64.1% of students who attend our PE classes are female-identifying and 31% are male, while 4.7% identify as non-binary.

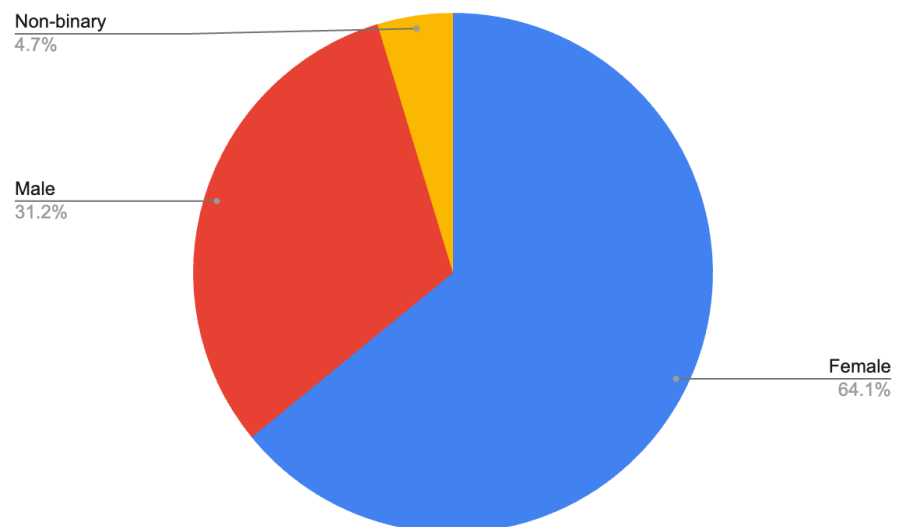


Female- 150 of 233 respondents

Male- 73 of 233 respondents

Non-Binary - 11 of 233 respondents

Of the total respondents, 9 identified as cisgender (male or female) and LGBTQI+
93 people did not respond



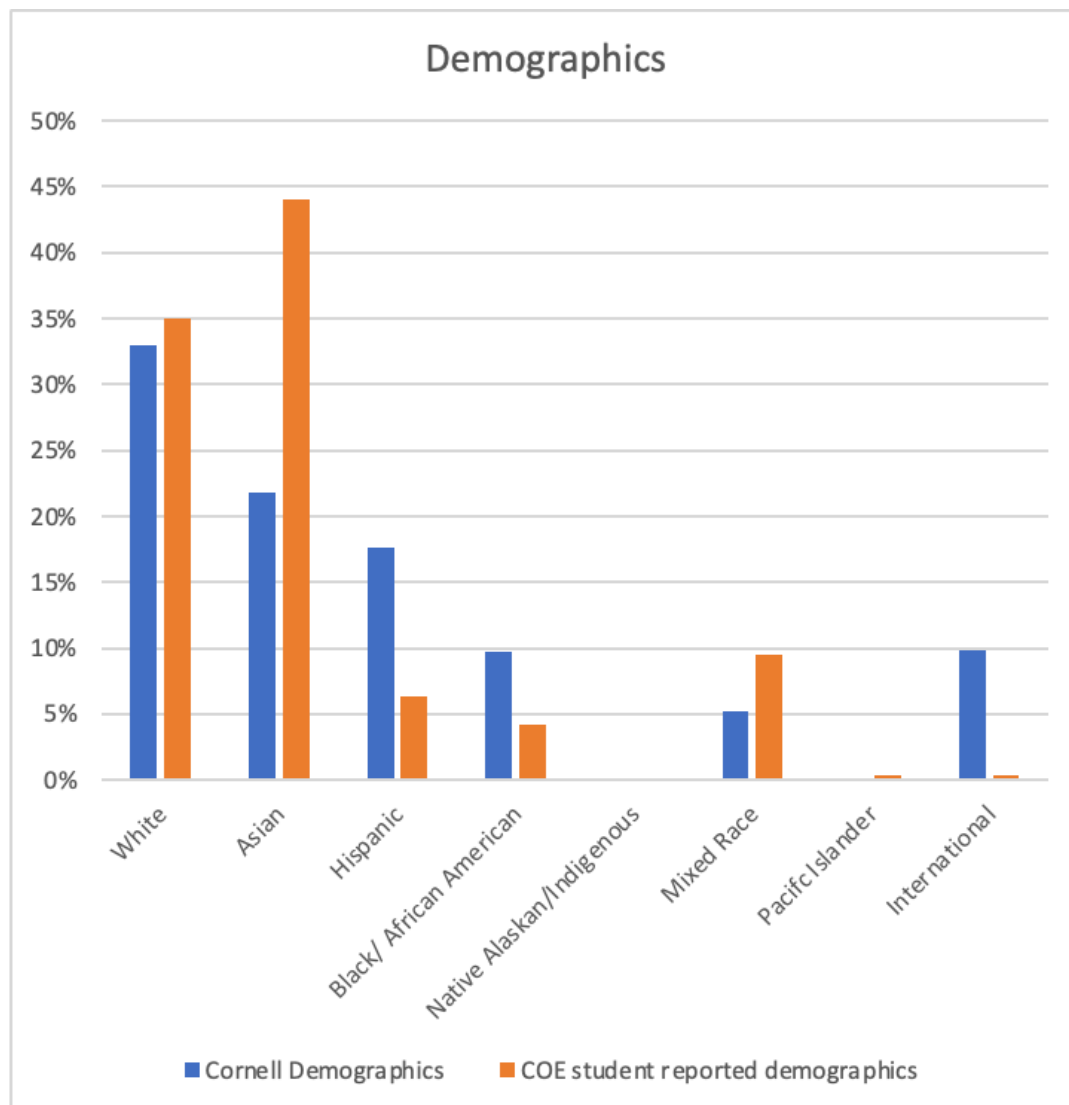
² <https://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/wp-content>

What is your race/ethnicity/background?

This was a multiple-choice question where students could select more than one response. These results are from 328 students. This was an optional question and 284 people responded. You will find more specific class and course area demographics in another section.

Ideally, the demographic distribution in COE classes matches that of the University as a whole. The Spring 2023 COE Course Evaluation data is displayed in the table below, alongside demographic data from the Office of the Registrar and the average from Cornell University's Class of 2023-2026 profiles.

COE's Evaluation data is self-reported.



COE Spring 2023 Evaluation Respondents	Office of the Registrar Spring 2023 Numbers
Asian- 103 Black/African American- 13 White/Caucasian- 100 Hispanic- 19 Asian/Pacific Islander - 2 Multi-Racial- 4 Middle Eastern/multi-racial- 2	Asian- 243 Black/African American- 25 White/Caucasian- 219 Hispanic- 21 Asian/Pacific Islander - Not reported Multi-Racial- 97 N/A (Other multi racial groups that are not white/Asian or Hispanic/white)- 95

	COE Race/Ethnicity Distribution from Evaluation Spring 2023	Office of the Registrar's COE Race/Ethnicity Distribution Spring 2023	Class of 2023-2026 Race/Ethnicity from Cornell University³⁴⁵ ⁶(Institution reported data)
Alaska Native or Native American	None reported	None reported	.04% (double check)
Asian	44%	35%	21.77%
Black/African American	4%	4%	9.75%
Hispanic or Latino	6%	3%	17.63%
Middle Eastern	Recorded under multi-racial	Data not collected	Data not collected
Multi-Racial	10%	14% (this includes only asian/white and hispanic/white)	5.25%
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	0.35%	Included in NA category	About .2%
White/Caucasian	35%	31%	32.95%
N/A		14% (this includes Pacific Islander, Native American and any people of mixed race that were not included in the Mixed Race group above)	

³ <https://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Profile2019-Freshmen.pdf>

⁴chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Profile2020_first-year.pdf

⁵chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Profile2021-first-year.pdf

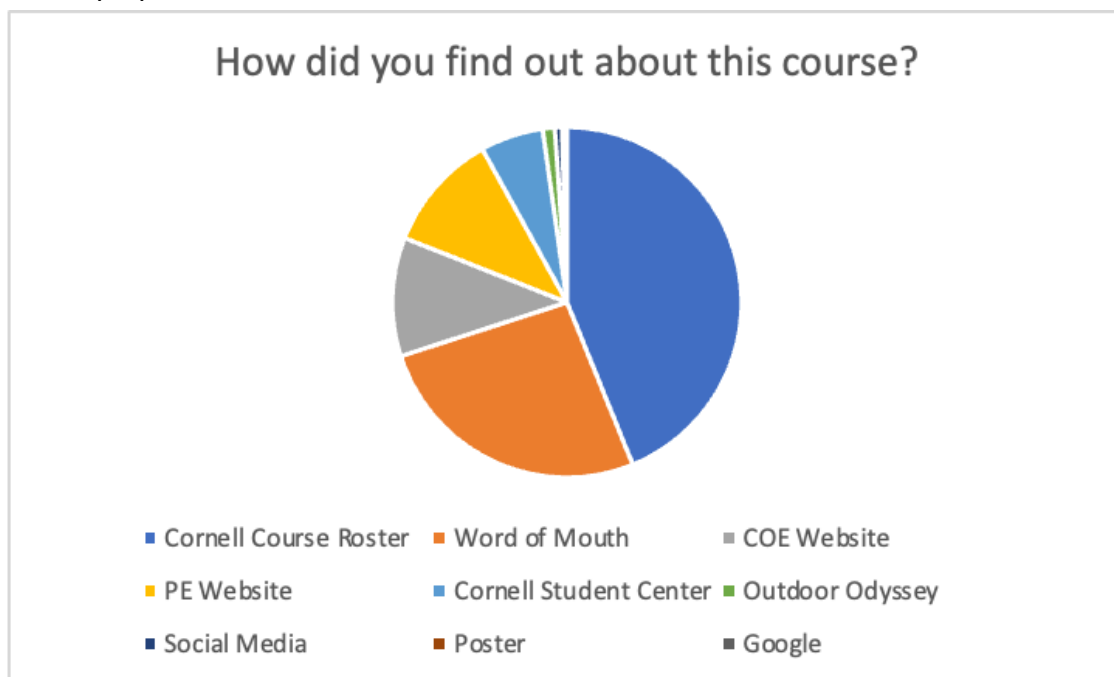
⁶ <https://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/university-factbook/freshman-profile-archives/profile-of-the-class-of-2026>

A disproportionate number of Asian students responded to the COE survey than other races. The number of Black, Hispanic, White and Multi-racial students who responded to the evaluation versus those who took the classes had less variation (ex. 35% of students who responded were White and 31% of students who took the classes were White). With this in mind, the written responses from students in the COE Evaluation will have an overrepresentation of Asian students.

How did you hear about this COE Course?

Students were asked how they found out about the COE Course that they took. Students were able to select multiple responses. From 328 respondents we had 447 selections reported. The majority of students heard about the course on Cornell Course Roster and of those students, 77% only reported hearing about the course through Cornell Course Roster. We didn't post new posters about our courses prior to Spring 2023 and we don't explicitly encourage students to register for classes through our social media.

Of the students who heard about the class through the Cornell PE Website, 20 of those respondents also heard about the class through the COE website. The PE website lists some but not all of our courses offers and they are categorized differently from the course list on the COE page. For example, on the PE website, under the "Backpacking" category the class list includes Wilderness Advanced First Aid and Introduction to Circus Arts but does not include Intro to Camping or Fall Break Backpacking Trip. In addition, none of the PE website classes include information from the COE website about how to prepare for the class or how to dress.



The results are below:

- Word of Mouth - 117
- Cornell Course Roster -196
- Cornell Student Center- 26
- COE Website- 49
- PE Website- 49
- Poster- 1
- Social Media- 3

There was an option to write in a response. These are the results from the write-in option:

- Google- 1
- Outdoor Odyssey- 4

What are ways that we can make this course more accessible to a more diverse audience?

In response to the hypothesis that our classes were not reflecting the Cornell University demographic distribution in regards to gender, race/ethnicity, ability, year and financial aid needs, we requested feedback from students on how to diversify our classes and make them more accessible.

The relevant responses are listed below and broken up by theme. Some answers were discarded because they didn't respond to the question.

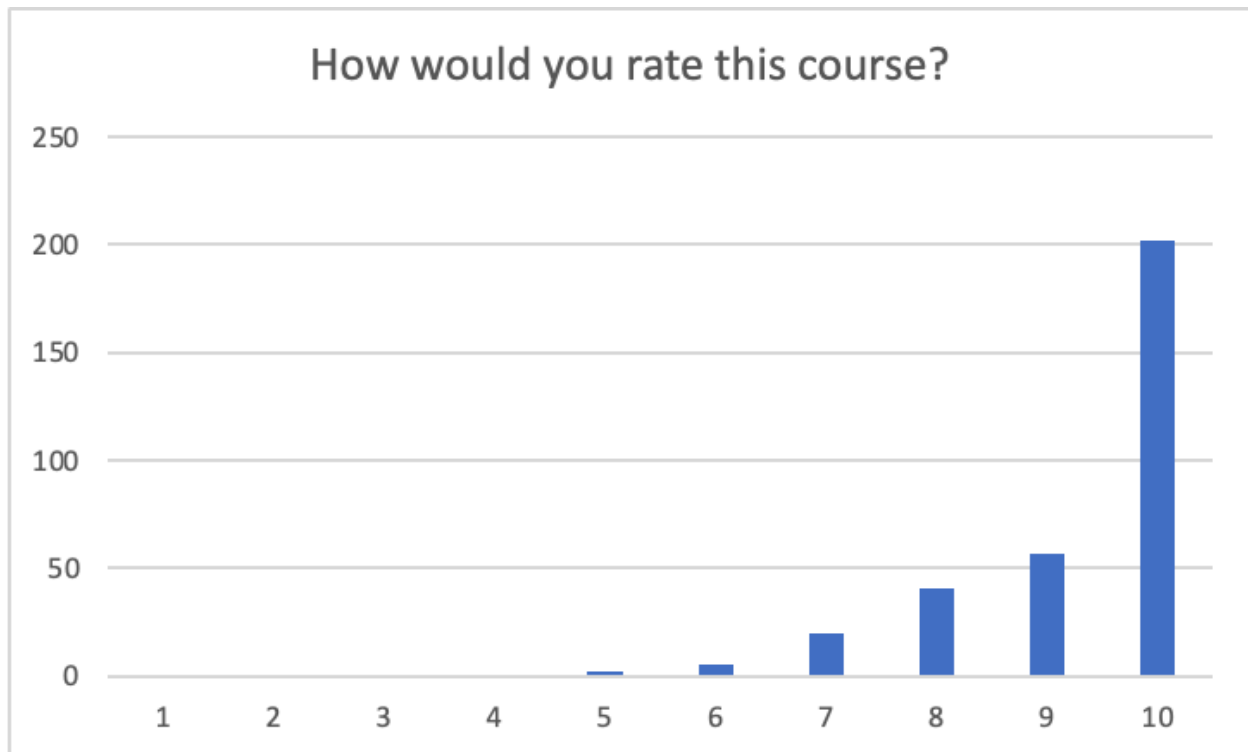
Marketing	Cost	Course structure	Instructors
A better description of what the course entails might help. I was not 100% sure what I was getting into. That might be a deterrent.	Cost less	Having different activities for handicapped people would be very helpful and trying to have diverse elements for old and young children.	Hiring a diverse set of instructors!
Advertise a little more	Lower course fee	I think the smaller class sizes encourage people who don't deem themselves as fit for an activity like rock climbing. I felt most supported because other people in the class looked like me and that way I didn't feel like I had to perform or try and do better than others. So making the classes	

		smaller would also be good because more 1-on-1 attention is critical for a student to be successful in a class.	
Also more workshops are needed to help people know what is Rope course.	More publicity about the course fee waiver	Maybe have explicit convos about access to the outdoors and build towards an even more diverse instructor team	
Put information on COE courses on physical abilities necessary so disabled students can assess their ability to join courses. Provide training on adaptive systems and disability inclusion	More scholarships are always good so that cost is never an issue for students (or community members). Diversity in outdoor climbing is already a challenging thing, so perhaps putting more effort in creating a more diverse climbing space in other ways will in turn positively affect the accessibility for this trip? Also tough, but bringing in more instructors for these trips that can provide an inclusive space so that a more diverse audience feels empowered to go on the trips?		
Specify in course descriptions what might be good courses for physically disabled students - I need help convincing my friend to do a class with me!	PAY COE STUDENT INSTRUCTORS MINIMUM WAGE	Truly a comfortable environment!	
Wider marketing scope			
Try to make the pre-trip classes more climbing focused if possible or provide external resources to study beforehand so that students have some basic knowledge			

How would you rate this course overall?

Students were asked to rate the course on a scale from 0-10 with 10 being the highest rating and 0 being the lowest.

The average rating is 9.26



The results are as follows:

- *No one reported 0/10, 1/10, 2/10, 3/10 or 4/10*
- .6% reported 5/10
- 1.5% reported 6/10
- 6% reported 7/10
- 12.5% reported 8/10
- 17% reported 9/10
- 61.8% reported 10/10

Of the lowest ratings, here are some relevant comments:

- "Says on roster this is a 3 day camping plus kayaking experience. Was looking forward to that. But it became a 2 day camping, and only 2 hours on the water in day 1 plus half an hour on day 2. I don't think it met my expectation of a kayaking course. This is more like just a camping class with some kayaking. Also I don't like that the trip is shortened. We paid a lot for this course and it turned out to not meet my expectations." - Intro to Sea kayaking participant
- "I have not upper body strength lol" -Intro to Aerials participant

- “As we mentioned, it would be helpful to include more details on the website/roster about what the class involves” - Ropes Course participant
- “I included a photo of my super fashionable and decidedly NOT waterproof getup. I had a lot of fun even though the consequences are rather severe. I kinda wish there was more we could do indoors when the weather didn’t cooperate.”- Ropes Course participant

Which topics did you learn about or experience in this course?

A list of skills and expected experiences were compiled from the COE Mission Statement, The COE DEI statement and the Cornell University Core Values. The relevant phrasing from these statements is in bold below.

The COE Mission Statement:

Cornell Outdoor Education develops **teamwork, leadership, and growth through outdoor experience.**

We do so by:

- **Teaching outdoor skills** and judgment for lifelong recreation and fitness
- Promoting **environmental responsibility** through **personal connection to the natural world**
- Empowering individuals and groups to **move beyond their limitations**
- Igniting a passion for experiential learning
- **Enhancing initiative, self-reliance, and compassion for others**

Cornell Outdoor Education (COE) serves the broad membership of the Cornell community: students and student instructors, faculty and staff, alumni and friends, local community and outside groups. We enhance academic performance and success in the workplace by **developing leadership, teamwork and personal achievement** through experience-based education in the outdoor environment at Cornell University and around the world. COE programs place participants into hands-on learning situations that promote honest and constructive assessment of individual and group performance, provide natural and immediate consequences to actions, and promote personal growth. Our programs encourage participants to gain a sense of perspective in their own lives, and build support networks that develop meaningful lifelong friendships. Finally, we include fun with learning. By integrating these experiences into the rich academic curriculum and physical setting of our University, Cornell Outdoor Education plays a unique and vitally important role in developing the Leaders of the 21st Century.⁷

Excerpt from the COE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement:

Lastly, for COE, inclusion means **building a culture of belonging** that intentionally embraces differences and actively invites the contribution and participation of all people. We believe that developing respect, **compassion**, and dignity for ourselves and towards others is central to the COE experience and fundamental in achieving our organizational mission of ‘**developing teamwork, leadership, and personal growth**’. To this aim, COE provides the tools, resources, and a safe space for people to explore nature, define their own adventure, and benefit from outdoor experiences.⁸

⁷ <https://scl.cornell.edu/coe/about/mission>

⁸ <https://scl.cornell.edu/coe/about/DEI>

The full Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement can be found at:
<https://scl.cornell.edu/coe/about/DEI>

Cornell University Core Values include purposeful discovery, free and open inquiry and expression, a **community of belonging**, exploration across boundaries, changing livings through public engagement, **respect for the natural environment**.⁹

The full explanation of Cornell University's Core Values can be found at:
<https://president.cornell.edu/initiatives/university-core-values/>

The list of topics that were included on the COE Course Evaluation are listed below:

Communication Skills
Trust Building
Environmental and Personal Responsibility
Health, Wellness and Mental Well-Being
Inclusion & Belonging
Compassion
Connection to Others
Community Building
Goal Setting
Self-Awareness
Self-Reliance
Outdoor Leadership Principles
Pushing Past Perceived Limits
Adaptability
Decision-making

The most commonly reported topic that students learned about during their PE class was Pushing Past Perceived Limits, followed by:

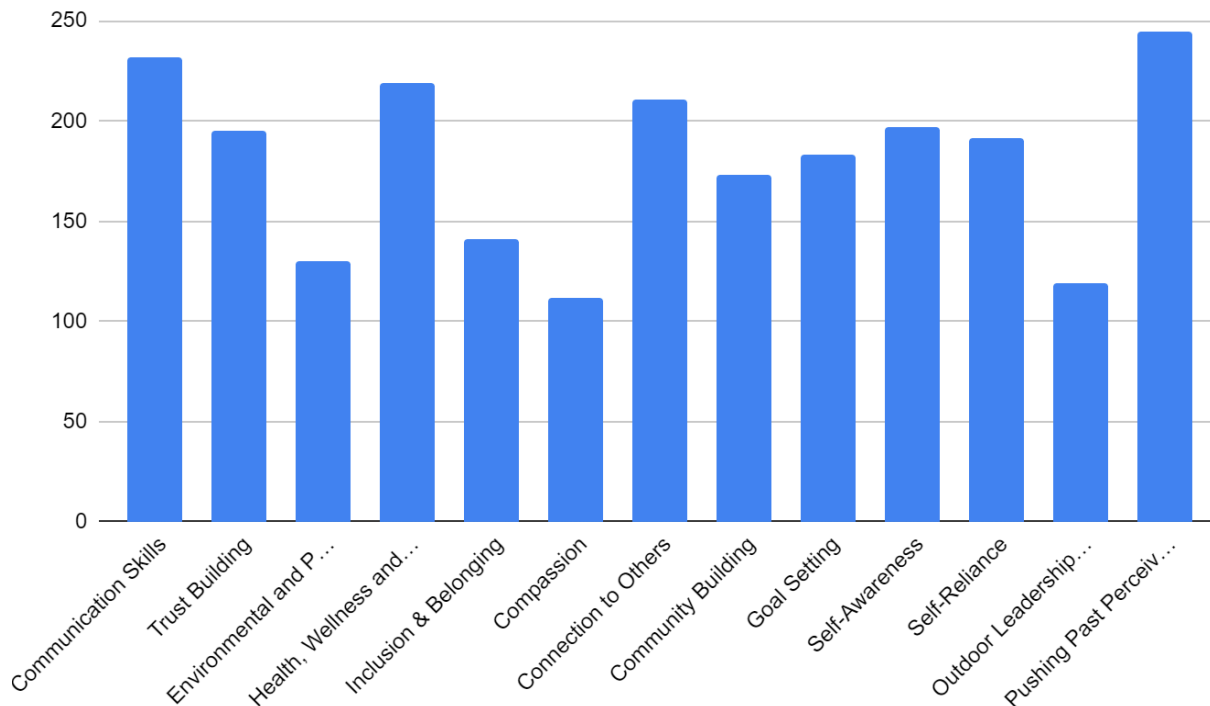
- Communication Skills
- Health, Wellness and Mental Well Being

⁹ <https://president.cornell.edu/initiatives/university-core-values/>

- Connection to Others

The topics that were least reported included:

- Outdoor Leadership Principles
- Environmental and Personal Responsibility
- Compassion
- Inclusion and Belonging



What did you expect from this course?

This was an open ended question with a text box.

Of the 327 responses, 131 people used the word “learn” in their responses.

- “To learn an introduction to aerials in a way that pushed me out of my comfort zone but also was not overwhelming.” - Intro to Aerials participant
- “I wanted to learn some trail running skills and see some nice views. I also wanted to meet new running friends on campus.” - Trail Running participant
- I had no clue why I was going into. I just expected to learn a lot about how to solve health problems I would run into outdoors, but it was a lot more involved than I thought, which is good.”- Wilderness First Responder participant

- “Honestly, kind of a hallmark life experience. I had never done anything remotely like this, and I was expecting to be pushed mentally and physically, and to learn new skills.” - Southwest Climbing Expedition participant
- “To learn about sea kayaking and kayaking skills so that I might try to go on kayaking trips in the future.” - Intro to Sea Kayaking participant

The word “fun” occurred 54 times in the responses.

- “Have fun, get challenged” - Intro to Outdoor Rock Climbing participant
- “I expected to learn how to move around in the water in a canoe, go on different lakes, and overall have fun” - Recreational Canoe participant
- “A calm, easy, fun way to spend Friday afternoons while being in the outdoors” - Day Hiking participant

The word “new” was referenced 30 times.

What were the best things about this course?

This is an open ended question with a text box. Students referenced specific elements of the course they took. A keyword search was done to find words that were in the COE mission statement and DEI statement. Those included words like compassion, belonging, respect, environment, leadership, growth, healthy, etc. Of the words that occur most commonly in COE literature, here are the ones that showed up in the response:

Of the 327 responses, these are the words that were most commonly referenced:

- Trust- 16 references
- New- 9 references
- Push or push yourself- 9 references
- Capable- 6 references
- Comfort zone- 4 references
- Goal or Goal setting- 3 references
- Community- 3 references
- “I am stronger than I thought. Also learned how to balance pushing myself out of my comfort zone but also recognizing my limits.” - Intro to Aerials participant
- “Birds are more abundant than is immediately clear and fascinating, varied creatures!” - Outdoor Birding Basics participant
- “I learned how to build more trust in my body by letting go.” - Intro to Circus Arts participant
- “Things that seem daunting at first may be more doable than i thought” - Caving participant

Student Instructors

We've struggled to get enough instructors for some COE PE courses and this online evaluation was in part created to try to encourage more people to be instructors. The paper evaluation encouraged people to reach out if they wanted to teach a course. Current instructors would sometimes nominate someone from a class to teach and encourage them to take the next step. One change we made on this survey was adding a section where students can express their interest in becoming an instructor.

From the Spring 2023 evaluation, we had 50 people express an interest in becoming an instructor for COE.

The areas of interest were as follows:

Rock Climbing- 11

Circus-1

Caving- 2

Paddling- 4

Trail Running- 1

Cycling- 3

Backpacking or hiking- 4

Ropes Course- 2

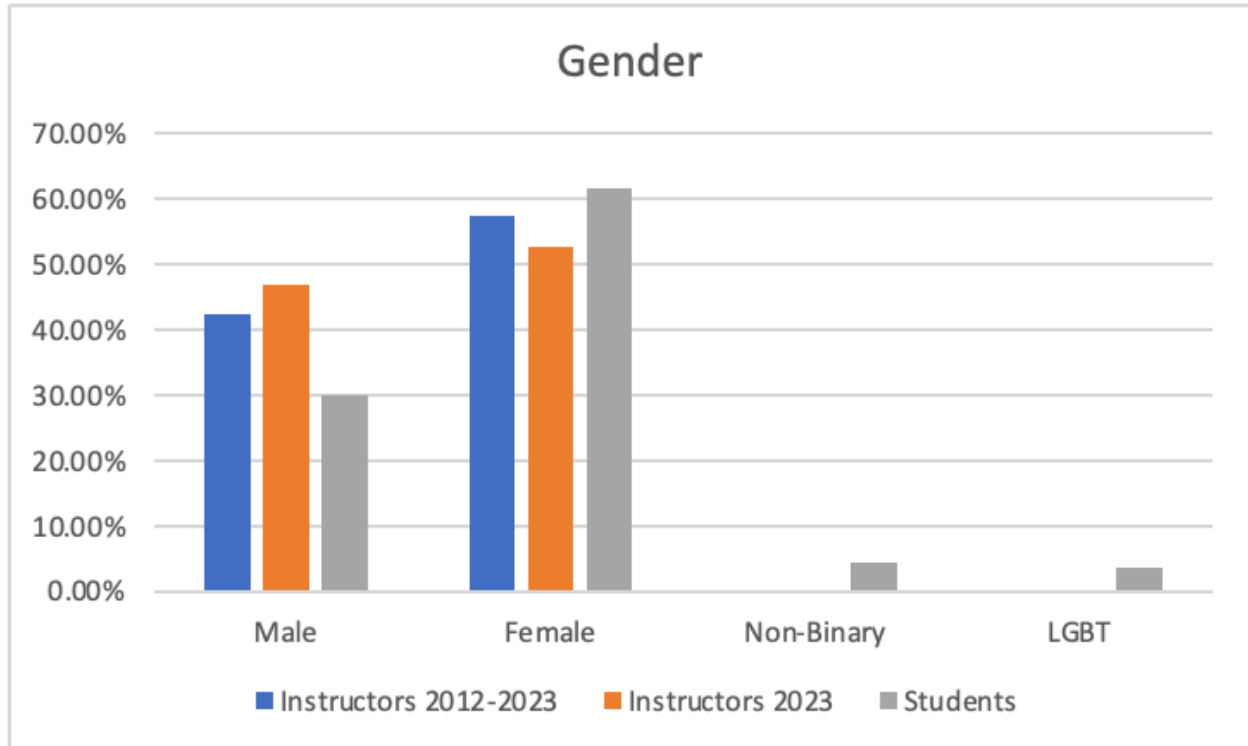
Tree Climbing-1

Of those 50 interested students, 12 are teaching classes for Fall 2023.

Student Instructor Demographics

Apart from our Spring 2023 Evaluation Data, I also reviewed the Instructor demographics from 2012 to 2023 which was obtained from hiring information reported by the office manager. It is all the instructors who were hired between November 2012 and August 2023. This does not include some community instructors who currently work for us and were hired prior to 2012. These gender identities were self-reported, however this information was obtained for HR and hiring purposes, so it might be more binary than the self-reported gender identities that we got from the student evaluations. In addition, GenZ (people born between 1997-2012) is much more comfortable identifying as non-binary than any previous generation. Since 2017, our undergraduate population has been GenZ.

This list includes 1048 instructors (from 2012-2023) and we also took a closer look at the 311 Instructors who were hired between November 2021 to September 2023. Of these instructors 27 are community members, 27 are graduate students and 157 were undergraduates when they were hired.



Instructors hired between 2021-2023

Male	136	47%
Female	153	53%
Non-binary	1	>.01%

Demographics of Student Instructors from Spring 2023

The instructors' self-reported their demographic data so it doesn't use all the same terminology as Cornell's data. With that said, there are two tables below that explain how the data can be interpreted.

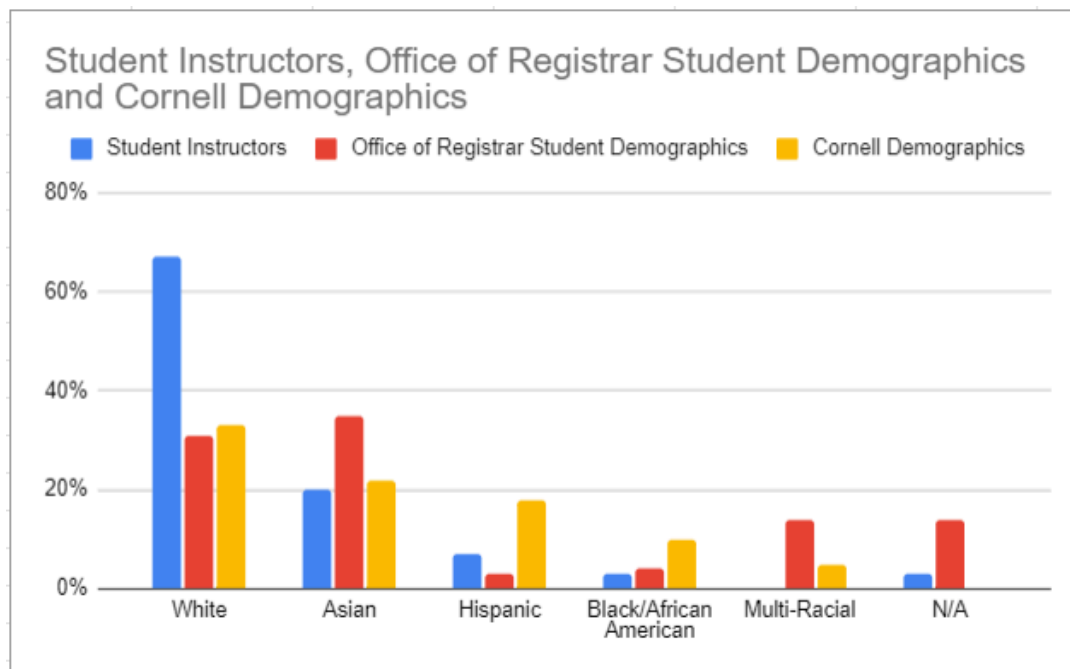
The graph below compares the self-reported demographic data of COE instructors with the demographic distribution that was reported by the Office of the Registrar in our Spring 2023 classes and that is compared with the overall demographic data at Cornell University as a whole.

We have a disproportionate number of white instructors. Our instructors who identify as Asian match the percentage of Asian students at Cornell, but we have a higher proportion of Asian students in COE classes, so there is underrepresentation of Asian instructors.

We have a higher percentage of Hispanic instructors than we have Hispanic students who take COE classes, however both of these numbers are below the percentage of Hispanic students at Cornell as a whole.

Overall, we have fewer Black and African American students taking COE classes and instructing COE classes than the percentage of Black and African American students at Cornell as a whole.

Cornell's multi-racial categories don't match the self-reported races of students, so this data point is not something that can be explained simply.



This table below includes the self-reported ethnicity of our instructors. The first table includes information from 300 respondents where instructors could select multiple ethnic identities. Some instructors did not respond to this question. Of these instructors that did respond, 40 selected 2 or more identities but only 1 self-reported as “mixed or multi-racial.”

White	232	67%
Asian	71	20%
Hispanic	24	6.90%
Middle Eastern	3	0.86%
Black/African America	11	3.16%
Native Alaskan/Indigenous	6	1.72%
Mixed/Multiracial	1	0.29%
TOTAL	348	

This table below is the adjusted data where instructors who reported 2 or more ethnic identities are included in the “mixed or multiracial” category and the appropriate numbers were subtracted from the ethnic groups in the table. For example, if a student selected “white, asian” I took out 1 tally from “white” and 1 tally from “asian” and added 1 tally to “mixed/multi-racial.” The most common racial identity was asian/white, followed by hispanic/white.

White	193	64.33%
Asian	48	16.00%
Hispanic	10	3.33%
Middle Eastern	1	0.33%
Black/African America	5	1.67%
Native Alaskan/Indigenous	2	0.67%
Mixed/Multiracial	40	13.33%
NA	1	0.33%
TOTAL	300	
