

# Clackamas teachers respond to 'Rate My Professors'

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News Editor

Checking social network sites such as Rate My Professors during the registration process could be considered common practice. Ratings for the professors vary from harsh to praising, helpful to confusing and constructive to damaging. But does anyone wonder how the professors feel about it or if their RMP ratings and comments matter to them? More importantly, do instructors think that it is an effective tool for the students?

No one knows what instructors are talking about more than administrative assistants, such as Amy Burghardt from social science and foreign language. She explained that at certain times over the years it has been a big discussion topic among instructors.

"It hasn't come up for a couple years, I have to say," said Burghardt. "It kind of does the wave thing back and forth."

For those who don't know what RMP is, it is a site that allows you to rate a college or its professors from one to five in different categories. Professors are rated in the categories of overall quality, helpfulness, clarity, easiness and even hotness. There are also options to select a professor's specific course and to leave comments; however, all ratings and comments are anonymous.

There are hundreds of CCC professor ratings, with an average professor rating of 3.94. Clackamas Community College itself has 41 ratings with an overall quality rating of 3.6. Other CCC ratings include:

- Reputation: 3.5
- Location: 3.9
- Opportunity: 3.5
- Library: 3.5
- Campus: 3.8
- Internet Speed: 4.2
- Food: 3.1
- Clubs & Events: 3.2
- Social Activities: 3.1
- Happiness: 4.4

"This is a very good school to go to if you're trying to stay focused on getting your degree. If you're looking to party, go to a state college," [SP] said a comment by one of the anonymous

students who chose to rate the college. This person rated clubs and events as well as internet speed as a five, the campus as a four and the rest were threes.

But what do instructors, who are the main topic of RMP, think about the things students say about them? Classes that students feel strongly about one way or the other, such as writing or math, possibly lend themselves to more criticism. Despite the harsh nature of some comments, part-time English instructor Paul Crumrine shared a few laughs while talking about RMP.

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**Paul Crumrine**  
Part-time English Instructor

"It is kinda funny if you read it. One will say I'm the best teacher ever, and the next [student] from the same class says I'm the most horrible teacher ever," said Crumrine. "I don't think it's good for finding a professor that's good for an individual student. It might identify a professor that more students like or dislike."

Crumrine went on to explain why he thinks the site isn't good for finding a good professor "match" for individual students.

"It has like, no validity because most of the time there's no detail," he said. "If someone likes you or doesn't like you — or gives you a good review or a bad review — it doesn't matter because they don't back it up. They don't give you a reason why the teacher is good or bad."

Another issue with the site is absurd comments from students, although it might be that

no one but the instructor knows. Math instructor Stefan Baratto explains one example of this.

"The last time I looked at the site was maybe eight or 10 years ago. There was a comment there that I used too much cologne," stated Baratto. "I think it's been 20 or 30 years since I used cologne and never much liked the stuff. I thought it an odd comment and haven't been back to the site."

He went on, telling the story of two math instructors, Carrie and Carie. Students would rate one professor under the other's name and vice versa. This shows another problem with the information that RMP offers to students.

"I don't have any problems with [RMP], but wouldn't send students in that direction," stated Baratto.

Another obstacle students might face when trying to find the professor that's right for them using RMP is that instructors change. They find teaching methods that work better for them and their students. Social Science department chair Jackie Flowers knows all about this.

"I've changed the way I teach my U.S. History classes several times over the last six or seven years. And I've changed the whole approach, the type of assessments I do. I've changed a lot of things," said Flowers. "I think that if someone read whatever they might have had about me six years ago, it's gonna be a totally different class now than it was then."

Could there be a better way for teachers to get feedback from their students and for students to find out whose Writing 121 class they should take, for example?





"I'm much more concerned with what the official evaluations say, rather than something informal," said Flowers. "Isn't there a pretty effective informal grapevine? Don't [students] hear who's good to take and who's not good to take?"

Outside of the informal grapevine, Baratto has another idea to help match students to instructors.

"I think that a much better solution would be for ASG to compile something based on student input that was CCC specific," he stated. "Given the two year nature of our institution, I don't know if it is work-

## RATE MY PROFESSORS

FIVE HOTTEST INSTRUCTORS AT CLACKAMAS ACCORDING TO RMP

 <p><b>Kelly Brennan</b> Communication</p>	 <p><b>Kerrie Hughes</b> Communication</p>
 <p><b>Adam Hall</b> Mathematics</p>	 <p><b>Mark Yannotta</b> Mathematics</p>

Erich Pfeifer (not pictured)  
Sociology

able, but I can see how something like that might serve the needs of some of our students."

Regardless of a better solution, Flowers discusses why some students will decide to leave such harsh comments on the RMP site.

"Sometimes there's just personality issues that get in the way. If you don't like your teacher's personality, when they're in front of you four or six hours a week, that could affect how you feel about their teaching," said Flowers. "Either that or they're really

upset about a teacher, in which case they're gonna go and post whatever it is they really didn't like."

*The Print* would like to know what students think about Rate My Professors, the Clackamas instructors' view of the site and other alternative methods that work for finding a professor that will maximize your time in the classroom. Join the discussion at [www.theclackamasprint.com](http://www.theclackamasprint.com) under the "Forums" tab or email [newsed@clackamas.edu](mailto:newsed@clackamas.edu) to tell us what you think.

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