Individual Instructor Report Spring 2024 Version A for C S 373 - SOFTWARE ENGINEERING (51170) (Glenn Downing)

Project Title: **Course Evaluations Spring 2024**

Courses Audience: **59**
Responses Received: **58**
Response Ratio: **98.3%**

Report Comments

Guide to the Interpretation of Course Evaluations at UT Austin
The goal of course evaluation process at UT Austin is to drive teaching excellence and to support continuous improvement in teaching and learning experiences. The two sets of scales used for core evaluation questions and the associated weights are:

Strongly Agree (5)
Agree (4)
Neutral (3)
Disagree (2)
Strongly Disagree (1)

Excellent (5)
Very Good (4)
Satisfactory (3)
Unsatisfactory (2)
Very Unsatisfactory (1)

The Mean is calculated by adding all of the weights for a single question and dividing by the number of respondents. The course workload question is not averaged.

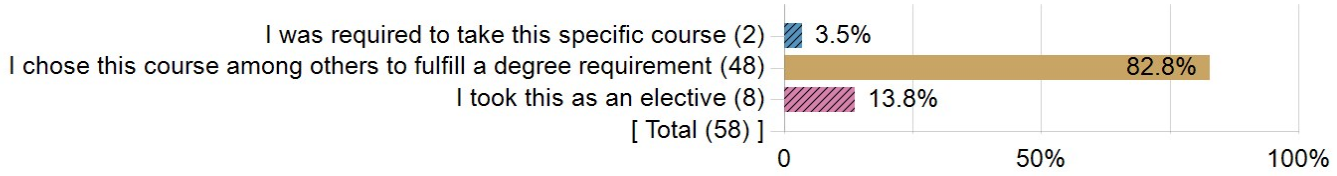
The number of students (e.g. respondents) marking each option is reported for each of the items. These frequency distributions provide information about the level of student ratings and the spread and shape of the class distribution of responses. The distributions thus provide a picture of student perception of a course.

Course evaluations provide snapshots of student perspectives on their course-level learning experiences. Most experts on teaching evaluation advise that no individual method gives the complete picture of an instructor's teaching effectiveness; multiple and diverse measures, on multiple occasions, are advised to give a full picture of the teaching effectiveness of a particular instructor. Moreover, other factors, such as size of class, level of the class, and content of the course, can cause small variations in the ratings. Therefore, student perspectives for a particular instructor or course should be interpreted as a snapshot, and not as providing complete information on the teaching effectiveness of that instructor.

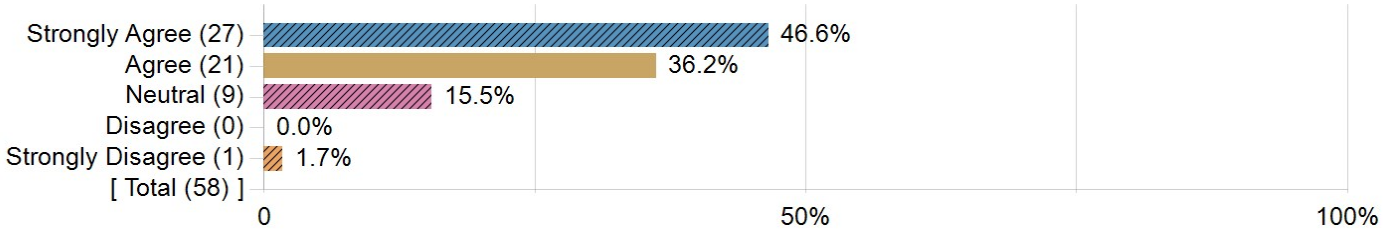
Creation Date: **Sunday, May 19, 2024**

Course Questions

Why did you take this course?

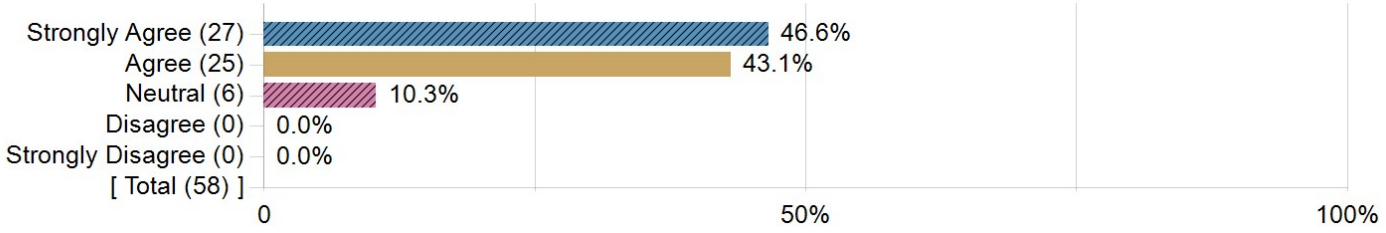


During this course, I gained a deeper understanding of the subject matter.



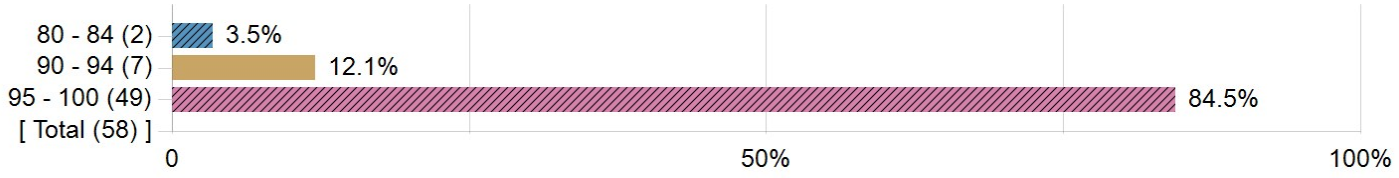
Statistics	Value
Mean	4.26

The course was well organized.



Statistics	Value
Mean	4.36

Overall, approximately what percentage of the course meetings did you attend or complete (online, in person, or asynchronously)?



Statistics	Value
Mean	96.67

The course assignments improved my ability to express my ideas in writing. (Flag Question)

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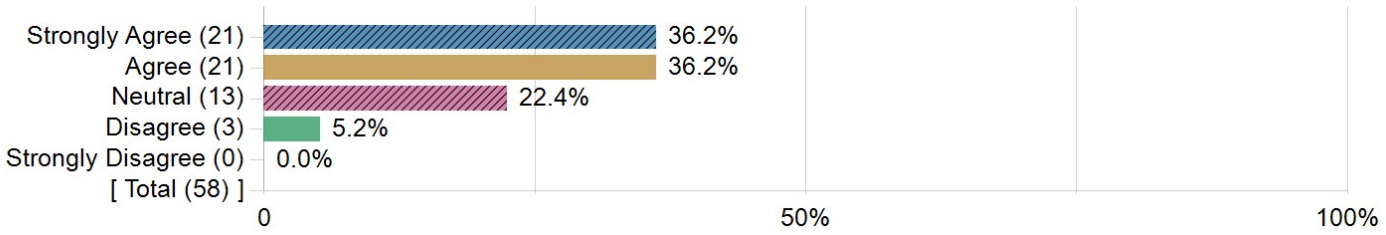


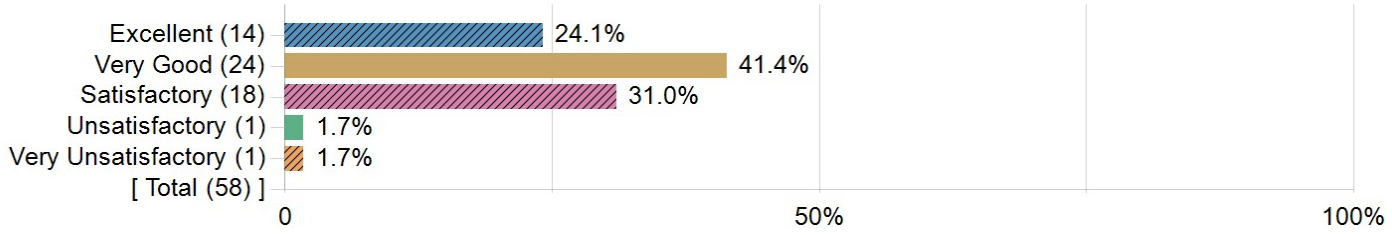
Statistics	Value
Mean	4.03

Instructor Questions

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responded	Mean
The instructor clearly explained the course objectives and expectations.	51.7%	41.4%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%	58	4.45
The instructor fostered an inclusive learning environment.	50.0%	41.4%	6.9%	0.0%	1.7%	58	4.38
The instructor effectively explained the concepts and subject matter in this course.	43.1%	39.7%	8.6%	5.2%	3.4%	58	4.14
The instructional techniques kept me engaged in learning.	37.9%	46.6%	12.1%	0.0%	3.4%	58	4.16
The instructor checked for student understanding of the concepts presented in the course.	60.3%	34.5%	5.2%	0.0%	0.0%	58	4.55

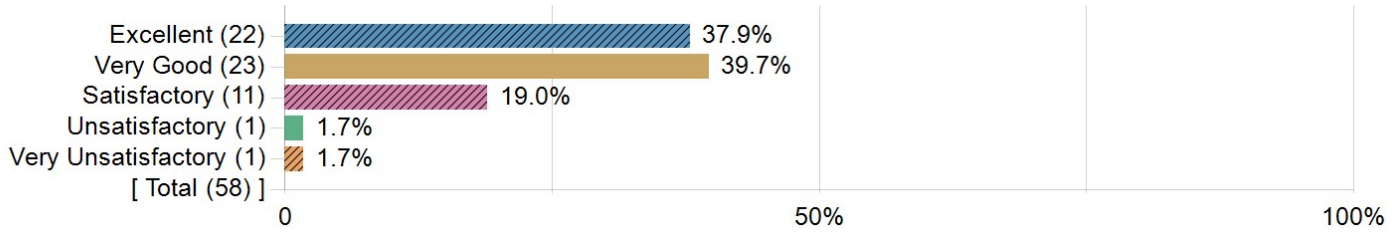
Overall Questions

Overall, this course was



Statistics	Value
Mean	3.84

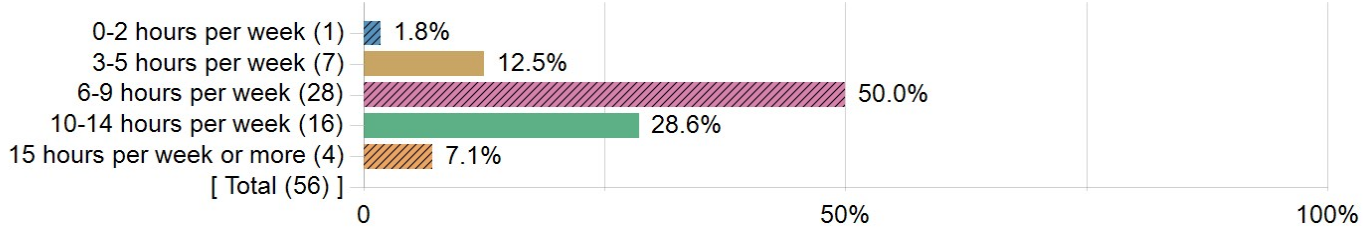
Overall, this instructor was



Statistics	Value
Mean	4.10

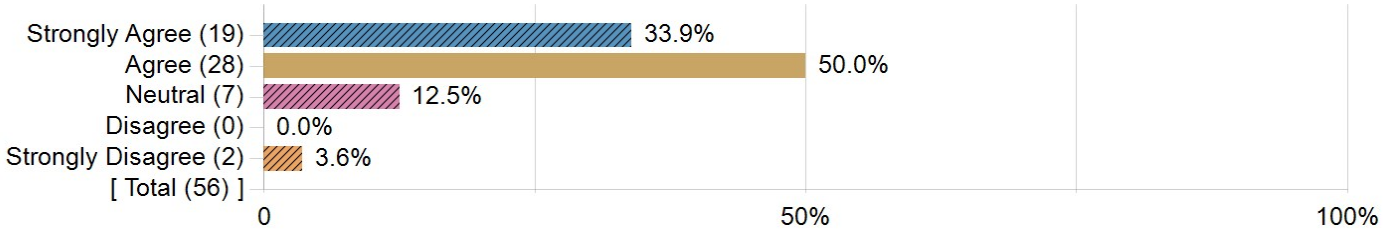
College, School, or Unit Questions

On average, approximately how many hours per week did you spend working outside of the course? Include time on homework, reading, reviewing, papers, projects, etc.



Statistics	Value
Mean	3.27

The course format (online, hybrid, face-to-face) helped me to learn.



Statistics	Value
Mean	4.11

Comment Questions

Identify aspects of the course that were the most effective in helping your learning.

Comments
The programming assignments and lectures
TA meetings, lectures were good for learning new material.
The professor would do cold–calling in class, meaning that I would always had to be paying attention as to not miss whenever he would call on me
While everyone complains about the morning quizzes including myself, I think for the most part, it was a good mini–test for us because it helped us effectively learn the content.
Definitely the projects
I really liked the website creation aspect of the course
The exercises were nice as a way to put the lecture material into practice, although the time could be a bit strict on some.
The python lectures on advanced python topics really made me a better programmer and helped me in interviews since I used python for them.
The lectures and TAs were helpful in understanding the material.
The IDB projects
The published notes made it very easy to review what we covered in class and follow along.
I thought the professor's enthusiasm for the subject and his thorough examples in class allowed me to get the content ingrained into my memory. I also didn't really mind his cold calling, because it forced you to pay attention and know what was going on so you could answer his questions.
I thought that the SQL lectures we did helped me understand SQL a lot better and I wish they were longer. Even though it didn’t really have anything to do with the printing also found the python lectures helpful as well to my general knowledge.
All of the resources available to us for creating the website was very helpful. It made the process a bit easier.
I thought the lectures were really good and helped my learning immensely
The semester–long project
The lectures were insightful as well as putting the notes up and offering us resources for our projects on Ed Discussion.
Daily quizzes were usually pretty helpful in making sure I stayed up to date. I like that several 3s can make up a 1.
n/a
I found the exercises helped a lot in my understanding of the material. Especially for the section on SQL – I learned/retained a lot of information about SQL queries despite covering it for only a week or two.
I think that the IDB projects and the in class lectures were super helpful in understanding the content.
Project–based learning
The cold calls were pretty effective because it forced me to pay attention
Daily quizzes ensure that students are pushed to practice and remember concepts.
The lectures were informative and the quizzes helped test learning.
The projects are interesting, as it forced you to learn how to code with others in a concurrent manner and you get to learn new tools. The exercises are probably my favorite part of the class, as there's tight collaboration with someone else and the material is actually applied rather than being purely theoretical.
Aspects that were most effective was that I could refer back to lecture videos and notes for the class to understand.
project
Daily quizzes, projects, and code exercises
Honestly, I liked the group project. It taught me a lot.
Quizzes and Exercises held in class were helpful in cementing certain programming conventions and/or practices. that we'd learn in the lectures.
I appreciated the project as a way to dive head–first into developing a website.
The projects helped me a lot to learn about web development since we had to learn how to do everything ourselves.
Online course notes and lectures
The projects were very useful in introducing me to web development and software development.
I found the quizzes and exercises to be very helpful

Comments
The quizzes were nice checkpoints for understanding of the material, even if they could sometimes be a little difficult. I also thought the papers were very informative and useful
I found the quizzes helpful for making sure I was retaining the lectures.
I thought that the lectures were very good
The cold calling was engaging and interactive, also very open to questions
The IDB was a very comprehensive project which taught me front end and back end programming.
Rereading the notes for topics learned in class.
The daily quizzes were super helpful because they made me go over what we learned in class each day. Having to review the previous lecture's content before each quiz really helped reinforce everything in my mind. It was like a mandatory extra study session that made sure I understood the material well.
Projects are very relevant to real–world experience and are great to put on your resume. Lecture material covers neat and useful Python quirks and programming paradigms.

Identify the aspect of the course that you found most challenging, why you found it was challenging, and suggest one thing that could be done to help future students meet that challenge more effectively.

Comments
The programming assignments, exercises and quizzes. For the assignments, they were very large scale and difficult to implement. For the exercises they were very time constrained and sometimes challenging. For the quizzes, some were very difficult to complete in the short time given.
The lectures hardly relate to the projects we have going on. A suggestion would be to get research done early for the projects. The specifications grading can also be a bit challenging as you can only miss a small number of anything or else your grade drops and there's nothing you can do about it.
I think the grading scheme for the quizzes is too harsh sometimes. Getting zero on 4 quizzes is surprisingly easy, leading to a drop in grade if any more quizzes are missed. I have no problems with scoring a 1 in quizzes since they can be made up
I think again it was the quizzes. It was a bit tedious to keep up with.
The exercises were the hardest thing for me due to the time constraint
The quizzes were definitely the most challenging. The 3 minutes that we had didn't feel like enough time for most of the semester.
The projects were definitely the most challenging part of the course, but that's to be expected of a CS course. I remember specifically IDB phase 2 was the hardest out of all of them, since it had the most requirements. I guess the specifications themselves can't be helped, but perhaps a fair warning would help some people treat it with enough urgency.
I think the SQL stuff should be taught a bit earlier maybe switch the SQL and Regex topics so we know SQL when messing with the project.
I thought that the quizzes were challenging since they were very specific.
Exercises varied wildly in difficulty and we were given very little support as there were usually only 2–3 people available to help a class of almost 60. Have exercises be completed outside of class so we can go to office hours and ask on Ed.
I personally thought we could've had some more guidance on the IDB project, even if it wasn't super in depth. Like one lecture at the start of each phase going over the basics of what tools you might want to look into or just some guidelines for how to implement certain features would've been helpful.
For me, it wasn't a huge deal, but I feel like if the professor explained some web development concepts for the projects, we would be much better off. There are many people who don't have experience with React, building Python APIs, or most importantly, AWS, so it would be nice to cover those a little bit.
The morning quizzes were really rough for me. It was hard to wake up and do a 3–4 question quiz and be given little time. I also didn’t like how announcements were given on ed. Quizzes/zoom meetings were announced there the day of and I do not receive a notification.
The specifications grading was challenging, more specifically, the quizzes. I didn't have problems with the concepts of the quizzes as they helped reinforce what I learned in the prior class. However, 3 minutes was too short for the quizzes, especially the quizzes with 4 questions. The fact we only at first got 3 drops was stressful because if you didn't do well on a quiz and got a 0, it was as if you didn't show up at all. The 3 minute timer was stressful because it took me sometimes way too long to digest the question and understand what was happening. There were way too many quizzes where immediately after I realized what was the correct answer, but got it wrong due to be rushed.
I thought the projects were challenging at points since we had to do all the outside info.
Working with random partners. Suggestion: allow students to choose next time (at least one partner)

Comments
As with the majority of the class, the attendance quizzes were ok at times and more often than not, downright horrible. It got a bit better towards the end but I really wished there was one question worth 1 point at the beginning of each quiz that would simply confirm you were in class, so you could at least get a 1/3 and not a 0/3 and thus have the chance of being able to make up a quiz you might have gotten a 0 on but still attended the class. That way you get rewarded for going to class and learning instead of just having the 4 digit code.
I did not like how little projects felt like they applied to the lectures. I can't really see a lot of the points of lectures (how does learning about a certain implementation help me as a software engineer, even just beyond python programming?). Felt more like an OOP class than a SWE class. Readings didn't feel all that helpful, would be nice if they were more interconnected to the class.
The class content had nothing to do with the projects. Would like it if there was workshops or a couple lectures to go over the tools we were expected to use on the projects
There's many things that were challenging. The hardest thing for me was probably the project – I feel like some group mates didn't put in a lot of effort, which shifted the undoubtedly large work load of the project even more to the few that did care.
I think one thing that was most challenging were the projects, but there was ample amount of help provided through the office hours. One thing that I would have liked is to allow people to choose their own groups.
The most challenging aspect was not learning material relevant to the final project during class time. It often felt like I was wasting my time during class because the main work I was doing outside of class did not relate at all.
The project was challenging because of using unfamiliar tech stack. Provide more resources on project
The daily quizzes can be hard at times, and the grading scale is unforgiving.
I found the quizzes to be the hardest part of this class, as they are only 3 minutes long and the pressure of failing a certain amount means one's grade drops down entire stages past a certain threshold.
The project was challenging as there was little guidance.
The quizzes can be quite challenging at times, as the extremely tight time limit and with occasionally very difficult questions combined with how early this class section is (10am) for me makes it hard to get them correct. Adding 1 or 2 extra minutes to the quizzes would greatly help with making the quizzes less stressful.
The daily quizzes, they're pretty much what's hindering my grade right now. There is not enough time to do some of the quizzes you have posted. And that's not to say we don't study, we do, it's because you throw in questions that take too long to process in just 3 minutes. Give more time to students, give them 6 minutes.
i thought class lectures weren't really relevant to Software Engineering. It was lots of in–depth specifics which didn't really seem necessary to know.
Lowering the threshold for needed quizzes for an A.
The quizzes were kind of hard at times and the time limit made it hard for me to understand.
Probably just set aside time early enough to work with the group for the projects without it being too much of a time crunch.
I would say the quizzes for the course were fairly difficult at times, and perhaps there could be more leeway to allow more missing of quizzes.
Since the class did not actually teach software engineering, learning how to do everything on our own was very difficult and time consuming. Instead of teaching python, web development should be taught, maybe things about AWS expecially.
Working with a large, randomly–assigned group that you may or may not work well with for a majority of the semester
The quizzes were often challenging. You have to really pay attention in lecture if you want to do good on them, or you should review the notes.
I found the projects to be challenging since I didnt know a lot of stuff required to do the projects.
I thought the exercises could become quite difficult sometimes, specially because of the limited time we sometimes had. I would suggest seeing if a little more time could be allocated to doing exercises whenever there is one
The hardest part was getting my project group to get stuff done in time. Also, we don't get notifications for ed so it would be helpful if important announcements were made over canvas, like assignment details being changed.
I thought the projects were hard sometimes as it just took a while to do certain things
The content is just not connected to the projects what so ever. I remember the Docker lecture which I thought I understood, but when I tried to use it in my project I struggled and nothing I learned from lecture helped because it was too brief.
The quizzes were sometimes too hard in my opinion. Also, some exercises needed more than 20 mins especially when they had 2 parts to them.
The quizzes were the most challenging out of all the assignments. As there is little time to do them. Most of my time is spent trying to understand what the question is saying and by the time I'm about to answer half of my time is gone. I feel like rather than 3 minutes for the quizzes, 5 minutes would be more accommodating.
One thing I found challenging was how the class material and group projects were separate and unrelated. It meant we had to self–

Comments
learn a lot. While it was a fun experience, it did require extra effort. My advice for future students would be to start the projects early. Since they're not tied to the course material, and often require self–learning, giving yourself enough time is crucial for success.
Specifications grading paired with daily quizzes is really annoying. Only being able to afford to miss class three times for any reason whatsoever before being bumped down to an A– is already very harsh, but furthermore messing up on difficult quizzes (like where the questions are all "select all that apply") counts as an "absence" if you can't get one out of the two or three questions correct. I saw in 2022 that the course used to give eight quizzes of breathing room for an A. Additionally, if you happen to be unable to attend class for whatever reason on an exercise day, you only get one chance until you're bumped down. This is especially frustrating when you do perfect in every other aspect of the course.