

FAS Winter 2025 UG Course Evaluation Report

Please review the [Step-by-Step Guide to Reviewing Your Course Evaluations](#) for instructors to assist with interpreting your report(s).

Content of Course Evaluation Reports

The University of Toronto's Cascaded Course Evaluation Framework (CCEF) offers the opportunity for students to provide feedback on their own learning experiences. The CCEF comprises institutional items, divisional items, departmental items as well as instructor-selected items. More information about the CCEF is available on the [course evaluations website](#).

While interpreting course evaluation results, it is important to keep the following in mind:

Course evaluations provide student perspectives on their learning experiences in the course and experts on teaching evaluation advise that no individual method gives the complete picture of an instructor's teaching effectiveness. Moreover, in the U of T context, other factors such as class size and class level were found to cause small variations in the numerical ratings.

This report contains four sections:

Section 1: Quantitative Data Results of institutional, divisional, and departmental rating-scale items.	Section 2: Instructor-Selected Items Results of rating-scale items you have selected during the Item Selection period this term .	Section 3: Comparative Data Comparative results of this course vs. all courses evaluated in the department and/or division this term .	Section 4: Qualitative Comments Unedited student responses to the institutional open-ended questions.
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Statistical Terms Used in this Report

Mean: The mathematical average.	Median: The middle value when all responses are ordered. Less sensitive to extreme and/or divergent scores.	Mode: The most frequently occurring score.	Standard Deviation: A measure to indicate the "spread" of the scores.
The Institutional Composite Mean (ICM): A mathematical average of the first five institutional rating scale items (Ins01-05), which represent institution-wide teaching and learning priorities. The 2018 Validation Study established the reliability and validity of using the ICM as a metric to understand students' collective experiences.		% of Endorsement: The percentage of respondents that selected the two most positive response options ("A Great Deal" and "Mostly" combined in Ins01 to Ins05; "Excellent" and "Very good" combined in Ins06).	

FAS Winter 2025 UG Course Evaluation Report for Harry Sha

Course Name: Algo Design & Analysis CSC373H1-S-LEC0201 Delivery Mode: INPER		Division: ARTSC Department: CSC-ARTSC
Raters		Students
Responded		26
Invited		116
Response Ratio		22%

Section 1: Course Evaluation Results - Quantitative Data

This section provides a figure and statistical information about institutional, divisional, and departmental rating-scale items. Please see Section 4 for open-ended responses.

For the 6 institutional items (Ins01 to Ins06), the two sets of scales and the associated numerical values are:

Ins01-Ins05	Ins06
Not at all-1	Poor-1
Somewhat-2	Fair-2
Moderately-3	Good-3
Mostly-4	Very Good-4
A Great Deal-5	Excellent-5

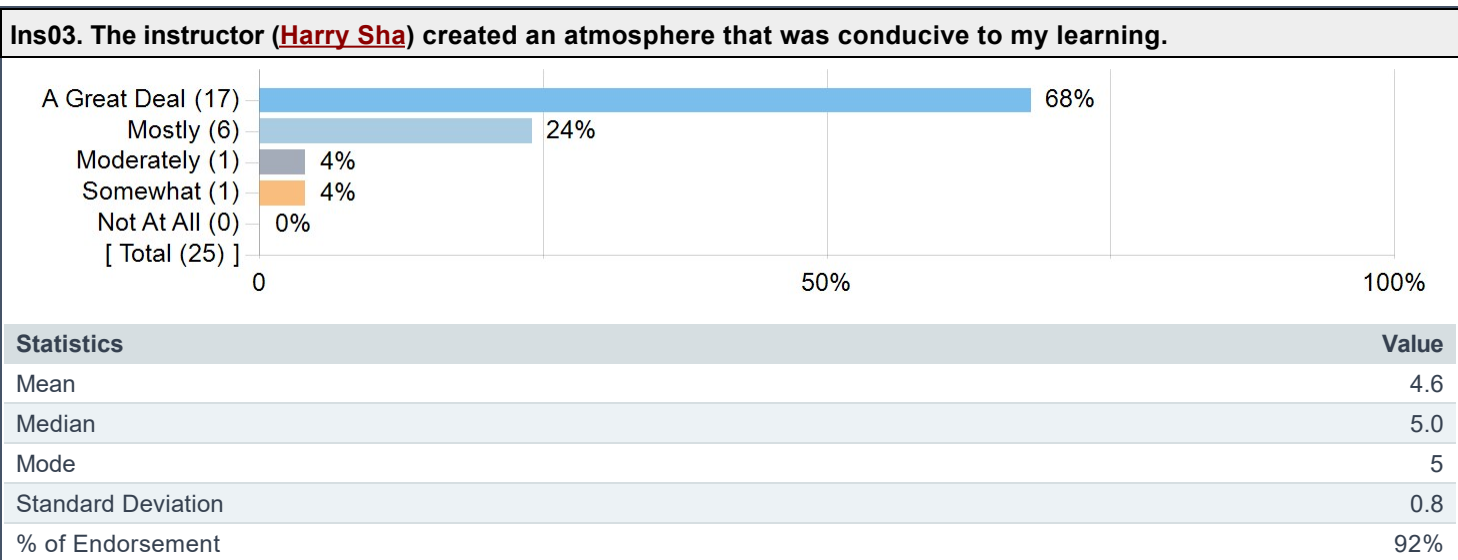
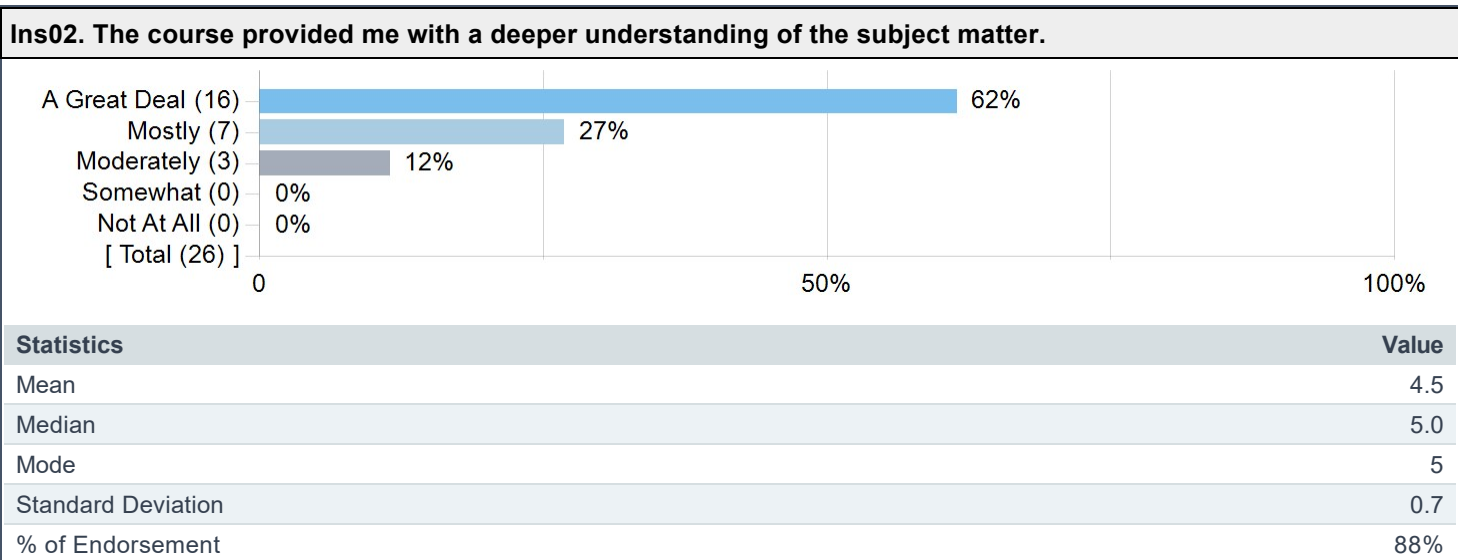
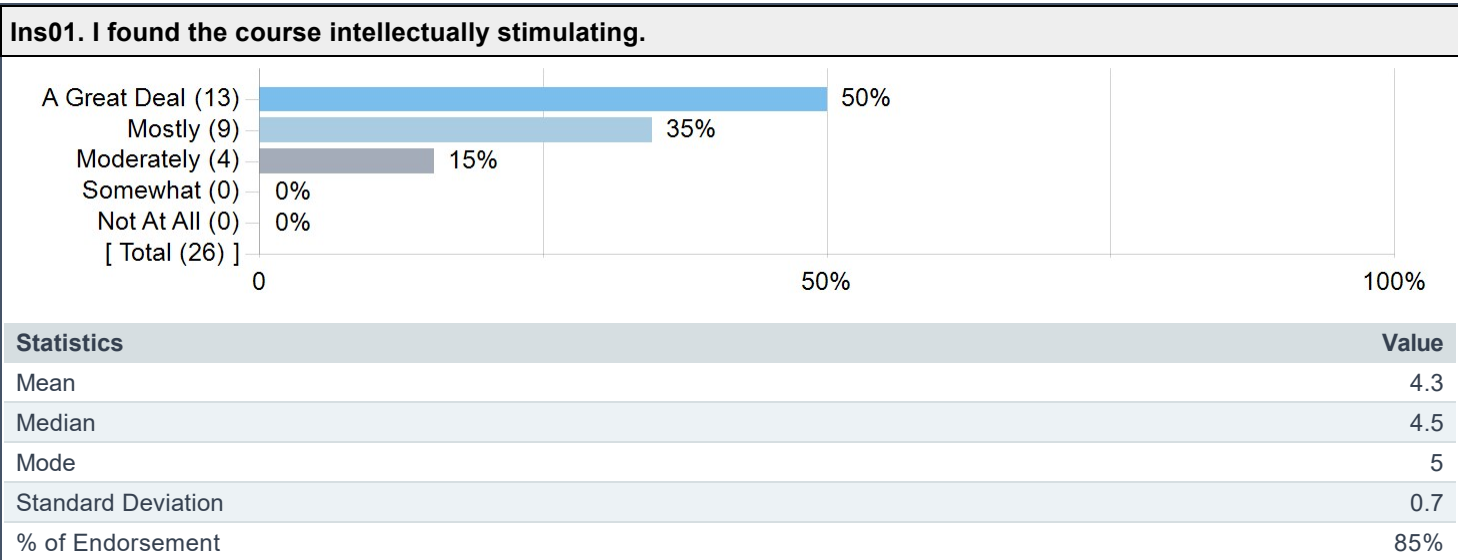
Divisional and departmental items may use scales different than the two noted above.

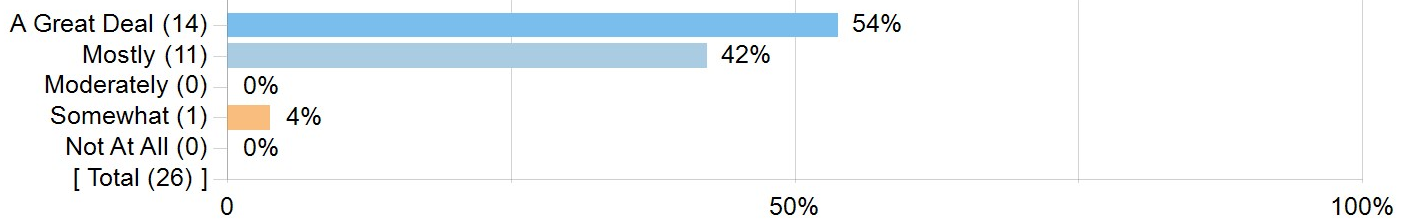
The bar graphs provide the number and percentage of respondents selecting each answer option for each item. The distribution of answer options in the bar graphs gives the most complete information about the typical student response and the variability in the distribution of responses. When interpreting course evaluation results, the bar graph provides more nuanced information than any summary statistic alone.

Mean, Median, Mode and Standard Deviation are calculated from the numerical values of each answer option.

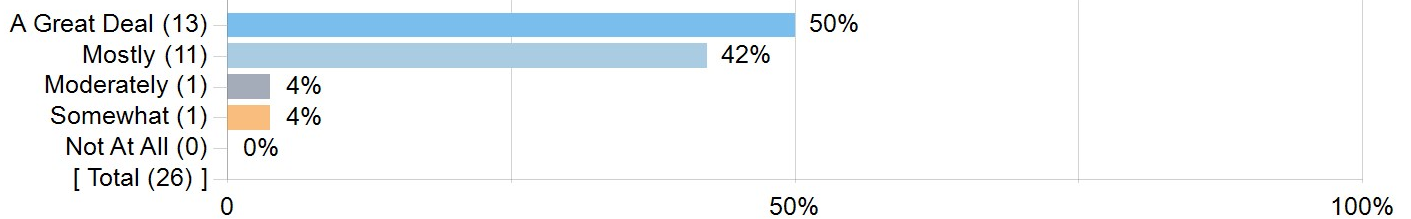
“% of Endorsement” indicates the percentage of respondents that selected the two most positive response options (“A Great Deal” and “Mostly” combined in Ins01 to Ins05; “Excellent” and “Very good” combined in Ins06). Please note that divisional and departmental items might use scales that are not in ascending order and thus “% of Endorsement” is only provided for institutional rating-scale items.

Institutional Items

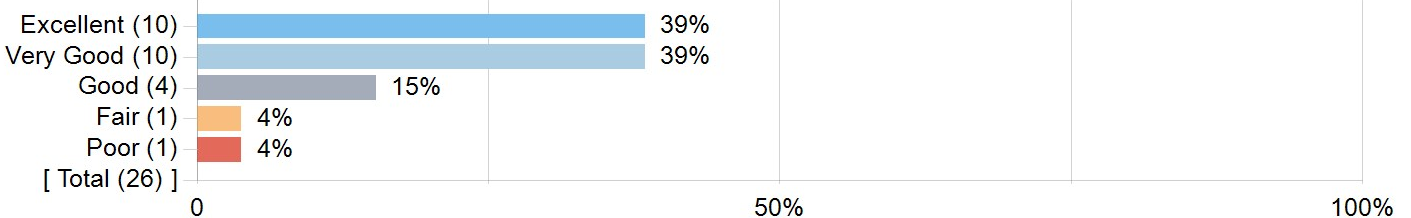


Ins04. Course projects, assignments, tests, and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.

Statistics	Value
Mean	4.5
Median	5.0
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.7
% of Endorsement	96%

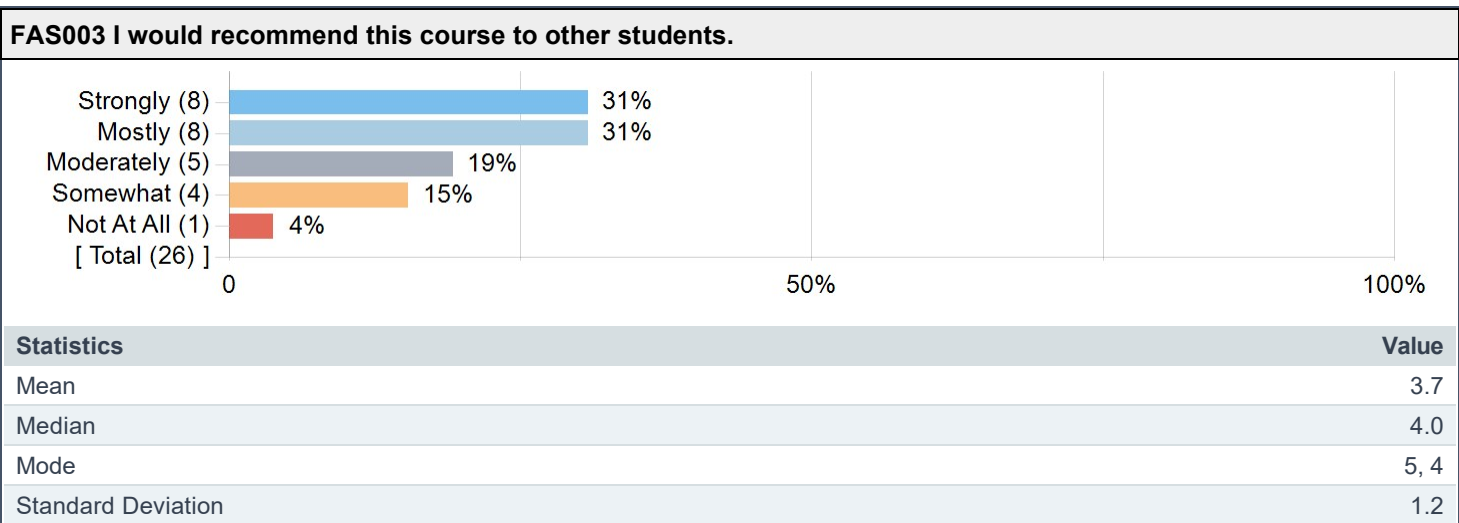
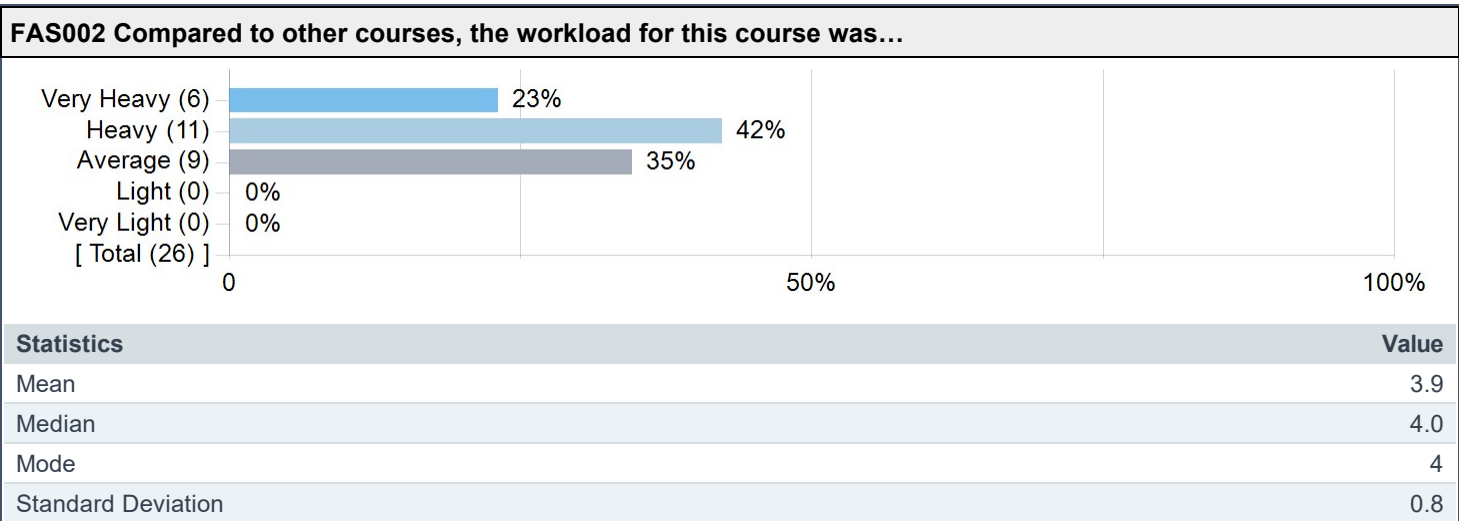
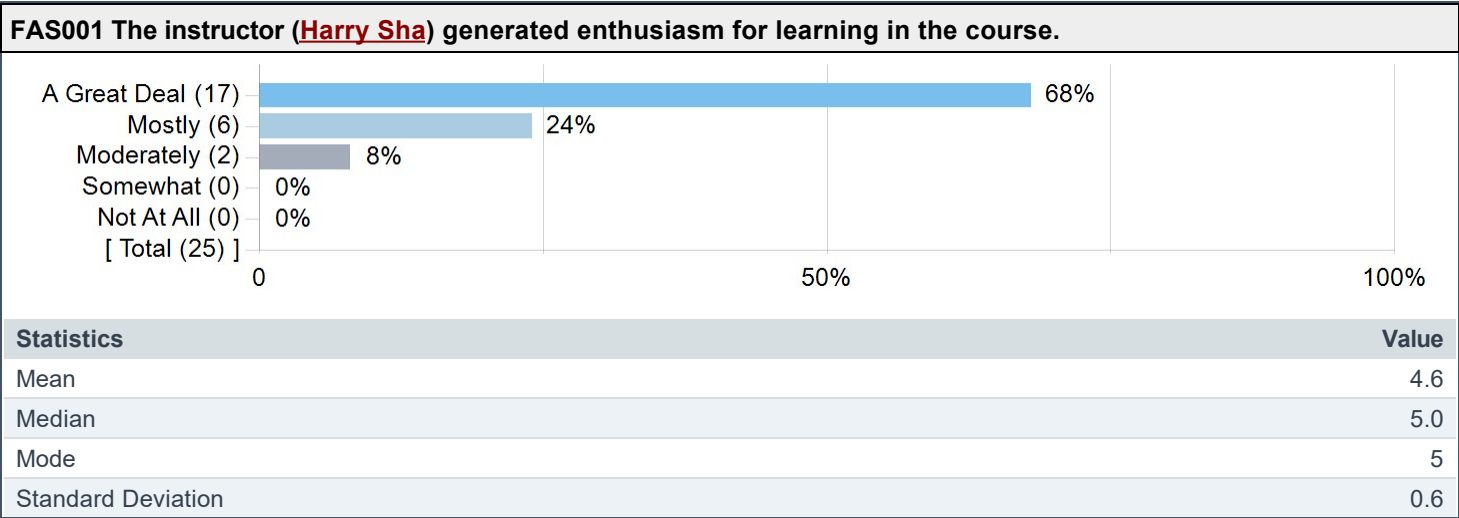
Ins05. Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.

Statistics	Value
Mean	4.4
Median	4.5
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.8
% of Endorsement	92%

Ins06. Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was:

Statistics	Value
Mean	4.0
Median	4.0
Mode	5, 4
Standard Deviation	1.0
% of Endorsement	77%

Divisional Items



Section 2: Instructor-selected Items

This section provides the results of the quantitative items you selected from the item bank during the question personalization period. These results are available only to you as they serve for personalized formative feedback.

Please note instructor-selected items are *not included* in the administrative report provided to your department.

Section 3: Comparative Data

This section provides comparative information (i.e., means and medians) between the results of this course and those of all courses evaluated in the department (if applicable) and/or in the division **in this term**.

Please note that means for the department/division are weighted by the number of respondents so courses with higher numbers of respondents carry more weight in the calculation of the departmental/divisional mean values.

The departmental and divisional median values are the middle values when responses from all courses are ordered.

Departmental/divisional mean and median values are provided for comparison but due to other course factors that may influence the responses for a course, they should not be regarded as definitive benchmarks.

Institutional Composite Mean (ICM): A mathematical average of the first five institutional rating scale items (Ins01-05).		
Course	Department	Division
4.5	4.2	4.1

Institutional Items	Course Mean	Dept Mean	Div Mean	Course Median	Dept Median	Div Median
Ins01. I found the course intellectually stimulating.	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.5	4.0	4.0
Ins02. The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	4.5	4.3	4.2	5.0	5.0	5.0
Ins03. The instructor (Harry Sha) created an atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.	4.6	4.3	4.2	5.0	5.0	5.0
Ins04. Course projects, assignments, tests, and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.	4.5	4.1	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0
Ins05. Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.5	4.0	4.0
Ins06. Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was:	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0

Divisional Items	Course Mean	Dept Mean	Div Mean	Course Median	Dept Median	Div Median
FAS001 The instructor (Harry Sha) generated enthusiasm for learning in the course.	4.6	4.3	4.3	5.0	5.0	5.0
FAS002 Compared to other courses, the workload for this course was...	3.9	3.5	3.3	4.0	3.0	3.0
FAS003 I would recommend this course to other students.	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0

Section 4: Qualitative Comments

Please note that unedited student responses are presented here in random order.

When reviewing student responses, look for common themes and focus on actionable feedback. For assistance interpreting your report(s), please see details on the [Step-by-Step Guide to Reviewing Your Course Evaluations for Instructors](#).

Ins07. Please comment on the overall quality of the instruction in this course.

Comments
good
Decent enough, but I usually watched the recordings of the other professor because I felt that they were more engaging.
I found the course was quite disorganized and the instruction was treated as an afterthought. The quality of instruction was poor. The lectures did not teach the material since there was quite a lot of slides to go through, and both instructors would read off the slides. The course was not structured well enough to teach the material. The only way to learn in this course was to avoid the lectures and to read the three textbooks in depth. The way this course is taught needs to be seriously reassessed.
Harry Sha is a great professor, very good at explaining things and also a very passionate prof
The instruction in this course was overall quite strong. Harry Sha, in particular, was a great instructor—he consistently brought a positive and upbeat attitude to class, which made lectures enjoyable. He clearly cared about his students and made a real effort to help us succeed. While there were some complex concepts that didn't always come across clearly (which is understandable given how tough some topics were), Harry did his best to explain them and would patiently repeat or rephrase things to make sure we had the chance to understand.
He was also very helpful during office hours. Rather than just giving answers away, he guided us with useful hints and helped us think through the problems ourselves, which was a great way to learn. On top of that, the instructors were understanding and flexible when it came to deadlines and extensions, which helped alleviate stress and showed that they genuinely cared about student well-being.
That said, there were some organizational issues. The Quercus page was confusing to navigate, and it didn't help that lecture slides were hosted on Dropbox instead of being directly embedded or linked clearly on Quercus. This made it harder to keep track of materials. Piazza was okay, but there were often conflicting responses from instructors, which sometimes led to more confusion than clarity.
One other issue was the assignment scheduling. There was a three-week gap between Assignments 2 and 3, which left only about 10 days to complete Assignment 3. Then, Assignment 4 ended up being much shorter than expected—about half the length of a typical assignment. It would have been more helpful to spread things out more evenly and keep the final assignment at full length to reinforce key concepts.
Despite those issues, the instructors overall did a pretty good job of teaching the course and supporting student learning, especially considering how hard some of the course content is.
Quality of teaching was great. Topics are hard but there is plenty of office hours and Piazza answers if I have any questions or things I am confused about. Overall the course feels difficult, but fair due to the supports we are given. The only criticism I have is the speed of marking, as assignments in a lot of cases are taking a long time to get returned to us, which makes getting feedback slow.
Harry Sha was really kind and patient! He was very willing to take questions from us and lectures never felt rushed.
The lectures were very helpful in understanding new and complicated ideas.
Structured but had to be changed fairly far from the initial Syllabus. However, the professors accomadated well and adapted well to the new pace. Overall, great course with extremely good professors
The prof (Sha) was very clear with explanations, especially for such difficult concepts. I wish there were more text explanations on the slides though, especially for proofs.
The lectures were mostly clear, however, I would have appreciated there would be proofs that went into as much depth as is required for assignments and midterms as reference.
Harry is a really good instructor. He explains things really clearly.
Harry is a superb lecturer. It is clear that he cares a lot about the material and wants his students to succeed. He explained the material in a very clear and understandable way, which allowed me to spend most of my revision time approaching practice problems/assignments rather than retroactively trying to decipher lecture material (as I did for 236 and 263). I also really appreciated that Harry did a good job of summarizing concepts so I could intuitively understand them and not memorize as much.

Comments
I really enjoyed the fill-in-the-slides structure of the lectures, where a "blank" copy of the slides was provided. I tried going without them for one lecture (my iPad died) and my learning experience was diminished compared to when I was using them. I did find that in the beginning of the course (first 4–5 weeks), some of the lectures went at a (perhaps too) slow pace, and then nearing the end of the lecture the rest of the material and explanations were quite rushed. I also found that for the complexity portion of the course Harry's explanations were not as effective for me. I feel as though this may have been because it was his domain of expertise, and thus the simpler concepts that were intuitive to him were not for me. I also found that the tutorials were immensely helpful. However they did end up losing attendance after the first week due to the lack of structure of the first tutorial (which admittedly I didn't gain much from; the tutorials after were the most helpful). One suggestion would be to host the first tutorial in the same way the ones after would be held (ie. the TA takes more lead in asking questions from the tutorial assignment and explaining how certain ideas are on the wrong path). very good

Ins08. Please comment on any assistance that was available to support your learning in the course.

Comments
no
Office hours, slides, recordings, recordings are nice
The assistance available throughout the course was generally helpful. Office hours, especially with Harry Sha, were a great resource—he explained concepts clearly, gave helpful tips for assignments, and guided students without giving away full answers, which really supported learning. Beyond that, just being able to ask Harry questions during or after class was also really useful. He was approachable and always willing to take the time to explain things, even outside of formal office hours. Piazza was somewhat helpful, though there were times when responses from instructors conflicted or weren't entirely clear, which made it harder to rely on. Still, it was a decent tool for quick clarifications. Overall, between office hours, in-class help, and Harry's general availability and willingness to support students, the learning support in this course was solid—especially on the instructor's end.
Plenty of office hours with professors and TAs, as well as a Piazza
I wish solutions were released for the assignments and the test, as it would help students gauge a fully correct response.
Office hours were available with TAs and instructors every week. I would have appreciated seeing profs more active on online forums available for students who were not able to make it to a ton of in person office hours.
Accommodations and office hours
Piazza, office hours
Piazza and office hours were good.
There were 3 different TAs that ran the tutorial section I attended throughout the semester. The one who started and ended the semester, Ben, was very helpful and had clear explanations, but sometimes would get spoken over by students' conversations because of the more laid back structure of his tutorials (ie. he waited for questions). I learned most from Ben when he called everyone together to try and figure out the answers. I don't know the name of the TA whose tutorial I enjoyed the most. He filled in many weeks while Ben was gone and ran tutorials in a way that really worked well for me. He would cold call on people (scary, but very helpful!) and allow them to give ANY answer. If it was right, he would ask for an explanation, but if it was wrong, rather than just saying "no" he would actually explain where it went wrong. This was really helpful for me as someone who is not super talented at proofs, as it helped me figure out patterns to investigate to debunk/prove my algorithm ideas. I also routinely attended Harry's office hours (I treated them like a third lecture). These were a really great resource for me to clarify lecture material and assignment questions. Piazza was a mixed bag, with most of the helpful answers coming from students. I found a lot of the TA answers to be either misleading (maybe my reading comprehension is not great) or stress inducing (they sometimes had a condescending tone combined with a non-answer that did not clarify anything and made me feel more confused/discouraged). I also think the lack of assignment and midterm solutions was detrimental, because the TA comments given often just said "wrong proof" and didn't explain what was wrong, or where to begin to get the right answer.
very good