

Instructor: **Jackson, Alden**Subject: **CS**Catalog & Section: **5700 01**Course ID: **30589**

Objectives:

Enrollment: **44**Responses Incl Declines: **14**Declines: **0**

Instructor Related Questions: Alden Jackson (13 comments)

Q: What were the strengths of this course and/or this instructor?

- 1 Prof. Jackson is incredibly passionate and knowledgeable about Networking. I thought he was totally fantastic, and always willing to help students. Amazing professor.
- 2 Professor Jackson definitely knows his stuff when it comes to networking and I appreciated his ability to answer a lot of contextual and historical questions regarding why certain things are the way they were.
- 3 Prof. Jackson is among my favorites at NEU. He's very enthusiastic about the material, explains tough concepts clearly, and is really excited to respond to students' questions. The four coding projects felt removed from the lecture content while we were working on them, particularly since we never talked in class about how to code sockets and such, but after completing them, sometimes with a lot of challenges, I did feel like they reinforced the concepts we'd learned.
- 4 Professor is very knowledgeable and lectures very well. Some lectures were dragged out but topics are explained in detail. Projects are very interesting and well spaced out. Professor is very helpful one on one in office hours to clear up confusion related to projects or course topics.
- 5 Everything - his attitude, his deep subject-matter expertise, his responses to questions. Professor Jackson is among the best professors I've ever had.

Q: What could the instructor do to make this course better?

- 1 It felt like the Projects and Lectures/Exercises lived in their own separate worlds, as opposed to building off of each other. Integrating them better would be helpful in my view. Also, things often took a while to grade, which was a little frustrating. Being open to curving course grades would've also helped me focus more on the learning and less on the results, which I think is important.

As a sidenote: I thought the TAs this semester were not very helpful. Prof. Jackson was way more helpful when working on projects than the TAs ever were.
- 2 I think one thing that could have been more helpful is to break things down in simpler terms. There were definitely periods where I left lost and wasn't really sure what was happening.
- 3 Prof. Jackson's weakness is announcements. He usually adds a slide to the deck (but not to the published version) and shares some logistics verbally in class, such as when to expect grades or what to expect on an exam. However, he often fails to make an announcement that would be accessible to students who missed class. For example, to find out that the exam date had changed, if you missed class the day it was announced, you would have had to be reading every response to every post on Piazza or looking for changes on the otherwise static schedule page. I wish he would send emails or push notifications in brand new Piazza posts for important changes.

I love having the slides available before class to download so I can take notes on top of them. However, because of the way he used animations and overlays, the PDF version of the slides often had some text blocks laid on top of others so many things weren't visible. While studying for exams this meant hours of going back to the original power points and taking screenshots of the various stages of each slide. Updating the animations, slide breaks and placement of items on slides could solve that problem.

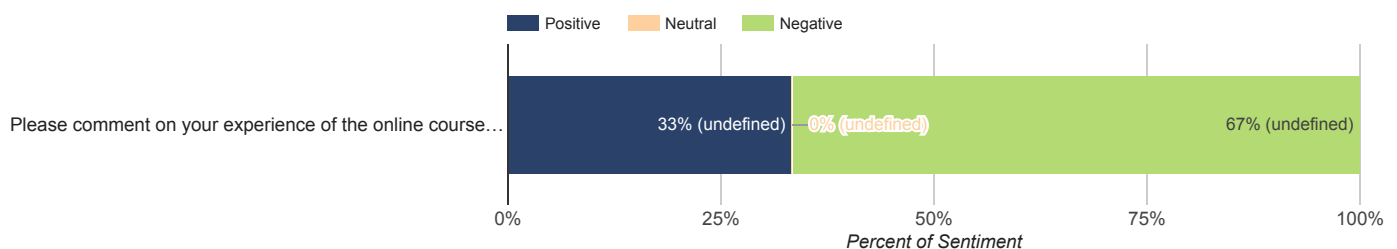
Grading was fairly prompt for our first few assignments, but the professor and TAs got quite behind in the latter half of the term, which meant we didn't have as much feedback as we wanted before taking a final exam or approaching our next project.
- 4 Faster response time to piazza, especially around due dates. More office hours with the professor - the current structure has the professor offering 4 sessions 1 day a week which are often booked near assignment days. More structure to the syllabus and sticking to it.
- 5 More clarity re: announcements, especially w/r/t reading response questions.

Q: Please expand on the instructor's strengths and/or areas for improvement in facilitating inclusive learning.

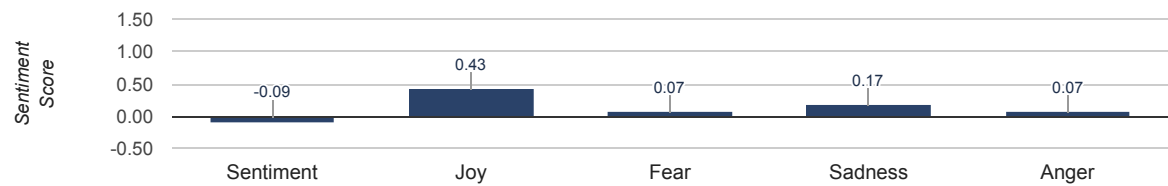
- 1 Prof. is doing exceptional in this area. No further comments.
- 2 I really appreciated hearing Professor Jackson use female pronouns one day when sharing an example involving a fictional military general.

Prof. Jackson was also very welcoming of all students and didn't expect pre-existing knowledge of the subject matter. I was grateful that being an Align student didn't put me at a disadvantage in this course.
- 3 No areas of improvement re facilitating inclusive learning.

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience (3 comments)

Q: Please comment on your experience of the online course environment in the open-ended text box.

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- 1 The course website is a little obtuse to navigate, especially through Canvas. Reorganizing this would be helpful, sometimes it was hard to find things. ★★☆☆☆
- 2 This was not an online course but we had Piazza for questions, access to the schedule and slides online, and online office hours. The professor was willing to create a Zoom during lecture if someone was sick and unable to come in. ★☆☆☆☆
- 3 This was one of the best classes I've taken, ever (including undergrad and my first masters degree). Professor Jackson is enthusiastic about the content, engaging in the classroom, and accessible for advice and guidance. I "highly" recommend this class to any student with even a passing interest in networking.

The exams are tough, and the projects are tougher, but if you study hard and work consistently, you'll end the semester with a deep appreciation for computer networking at the large-scale and small-scale. 10/10, 5 Stars. ★★★★★

Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (4 comments)

Q: What I could have done to make this course better for myself.

- 1 Start earlier on the Projects, and study more for the exams. When it is open note, it is still important to prepare ahead of time and not rely on the notes. More note-taking in class would've been helpful.
- 2 Could have started on the projects earlier and asked more questions around the general topic and architectures
- 3 Having partners for projects was optional but highly recommended. I wish I'd chosen to work with a partner for more of the projects. (For future students selecting partners, I strongly recommend picking someone with the same operating system as you.)
- 4 Asked more questions. Partnered up on projects earlier.