Parallel Data Processing (Spring 2024)

Instructor: **Riedewald, Mirek**
Subject: **CS**
Catalog & Section: **6240 02**
Course ID: **35350**
Objectives:

Enrollment: **29**
Responses Incl Declines: **10**
Declines: **0**

Instructor Related Questions: Mirek Riedewald (20 comments)

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

1	This course was intellectually challenging and I can see how its relevance is growing. Knowledge of algorithms that run on many machines efficiently seems a necessary skill to learn in the age of data warehouses and distributed systems. Professor Riedewald has real-world experience working on such algorithms, and it shows. Class time is spent mostly on problem-solving examples and classroom interaction, rather than slide review, which I enjoyed. Professor Riedewald is also inspiring to his students, encouraging them to answer questions even when they don't know the answer. One aspect of the course that future readers of this should be aware of, is that it is not a straightforward course, and Professor Riedewald is clear about that up front. The frameworks used to write code in this course are not always well-documented, and environment setup can sometimes prove a hassle. It takes perseverance, asking questions, and starting early to do well on the homework assignments.
2	Strengths : one of a type course, got to learn a lot
3	NA
4	Very knowledgable professor. Hard but fair assignments. Learned useful tools.
5	Class material is explained fully
6	Dr Riedewald shows a clear mastery of the field and is great at explaining abstract theoretical concepts in distributed data processing while still making them accessible to students.
7	Professor is well prepared for lectures and he uses whiteboard a lot to show us the thinking and solution steps. I can see that professor tries his best to lead us to think and I really like his teaching style.

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

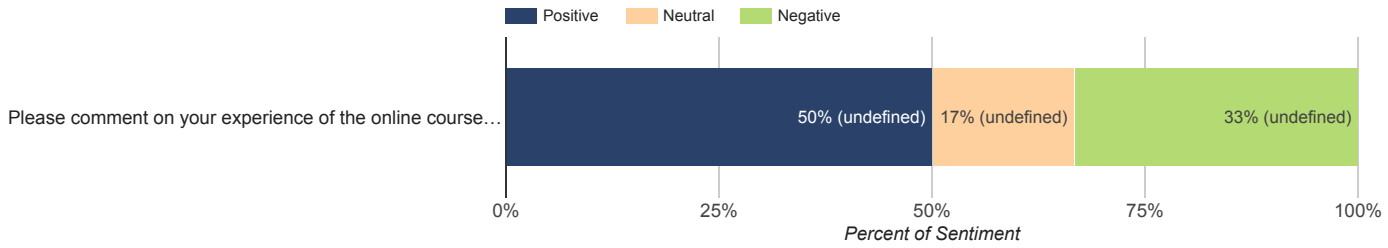
1	I think some of the readings could be revised or pared down to include more "foundational content" up front, with more supplementary "advanced" content in the back. It was difficult going through the readings while learning the concepts for the first time because some of them were very long and it was hard to know what was important and what was a more advanced topic because they sometimes existed in the slides right next to one another. I also liked the in-class group exercises where we were prompted to solve an example problem with other students. Those kept me engaged and forced me to exercise my skills. I would recommend doing that more often, maybe even once per class or more.
2	Provide more material to study at home
3	We had 3 TAs who 2 of them hadn't take the course before and didn't know about the topic and 1 had taken it online and with another instructor and he was barley knew the materials. So basically we couldn't count on any TAs help. Having better would have been beneficial specially for a challenging course like this.
4	Teach from slides in lecture rather than just talking with a whiteboard and making us read slides on our own time.
5	He's really good
6	I wish the course was not so heavily weighted towards the singular exam.
7	I would appreciate it if he can adjust the grading rubrics. The final exam just takes up too much of the whole.

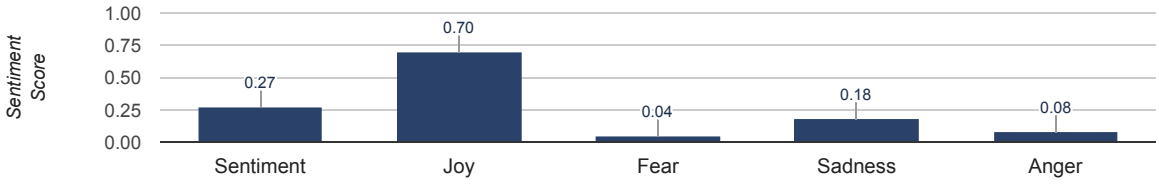
Q: Please expand on the instructor's strengths and/or areas for improvement in facilitating inclusive learning.

1	N/a
2	The class dynamic involves collaborative participation, where the instructor randomly selects students to engage with the discussed topics. While the emphasis is on participation rather than correct answers, this approach can cause stress in some individuals. The grading system for the exam, which is 60% of the final grade, presents its challenges. Leaving an answer blank garners 30%, while providing a response valued at less than 30% leads to deductions, potentially discouraging students from expressing their insights. Moreover, the final exam mainly is algorithmic questions. The course lacks a coherent structure, with clarity emerging only towards the latter part of the class. I'm skeptical about the practicality of the course materials, primarily focused on algorithmic topics.
3	Some of the slides had some very dense/complex information and I think we could have been better served having the professor directly discuss some of that in class.
4	He's really good
5	n/a
6	The instructor is passionate about what he's teaching and good at explaining complex concept/topic through visual graphs. He encourages us to think, discuss and answer questions in class. Unlike other large courses, we have opportunities to discuss in class and think. I guess this's the benefit of a smaller class. Overall, professor mirek is one of the best professors I met at Khoury so far in terms of teaching.

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience (6 comments)

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





1	The Canvas discussion board was a useful substitute for Piazza, but I still found it lacking some of the nice functionality of Piazza that makes online learning and class communication easy. ★★★★★
2	We used Canvas instead of Piazza, which made it hard for students to participate in discussions because Canvas does not allow anonymous posting. Additionally, most questions were answered late, as only the professor responded, while teaching assistants did not answer any questions on Canvas. ★☆☆☆☆
3	Everything was a bit all over the place. We had a Canvas page, a Gradescope page, the professor's personal web page, and a separate Canvas to access AWS (which was out of the professor's hands, to be fair). This made it hard to find things at time. Would be nice if the professor would just use Canvas for everything like most professors do. ★★★☆☆
4	Perfect★★★★★
5	I think the course would have been better on Piazza rather than Canvas★★☆☆☆
6	Discuss board in canvas is not that useful. I would prefer using Piazza where I feel more comfortable to participate in. ★★★★★

Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (6 comments)

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

1	DO THE READINGS. I found myself catching up late in the semester due to slacking on the readings, and I could have gotten more out of this course if I had kept up. While I had read them just to do the quizzes, I was not fully grappling with the material by the time we discussed it in class.
2	Should have done the pre-requisite studies
3	Learn more about algorithms.
4	Be more prepared
5	Started on homework earlier
6	Finish reading material before the lecture.