

Instructor: **Lerner, Benjamin**Subject: **CS**Catalog & Section: **6410 01**Course ID: **32306**

Objectives:

Enrollment: **27**Responses Incl Declines: **17**Declines: **0**

## Instructor Related Questions: Benjamin Lerner (24 comments)

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

- 1 Professor Lerner is a phenomenal lecturer. He was always prepared to give a lecture that was both well thought out and informative. He also was a master of the course content, and was able to get to the root of why he showed us each concept. Finally, Ben was incredibly accessible outside of class and was always able to answer questions about the content of the course, and any extensions to that content.
- 2 Great lecturer
- 3 Knowledge of material, lecture style, course organization
- 4 Compilers is rigorous but (I thought) rewarding, definitely will not be bored. It's gone through a few iterations and I liked the topics this year. Ben always has a plan for lectures, and I find his style of teaching very engaging. Also, the lecture notes online are excellent: detailed and helpful. The assignments were challenging but overall pretty fair. I liked the Written Assignments as midterm/final-esque work for this class, thought it was a great way to test us while keeping with the style of the course overall (as opposed to e.g. a multiple choice quiz would have been).
- 5 Ben Lerner is without a doubt, one of the best instructors I've ever had. His ability to explain material in context with a clear narrative makes even extremely complex topics easier to understand. He has the right judgement to know how deep to go into tangential topics so as to not confuse students, and it is absolutely clear that he comes to class having extensively prepared exactly how he's going to navigate through a topic.  
  
His passion for ensuring that students learn effectively above all else is glaringly apparent. He doesn't spoon feed information, but rather guides the class along the way to make conclusions themselves, leading us through well-picked examples and using every bit of class time to further our understanding. Little time is wasted, and any extraneous time spent is used only to benefit students.  
  
While he is extremely knowledgeable on the topic and usually able to promptly respond to student questions with fruitful examples and anecdotes, Ben is also honest and modest about where the gaps in his knowledge lie. He does not place himself higher than any of the students, simply wanting them to learn the topic. He cultivates a fair and comfortable learning environment where anyone can ask a question or participate in the discussion if they see fit.  
  
I can sing no higher praises. This class has left a mark on me and I am extremely grateful to have had the chance to take it with Ben.
- 6 everything
- 7 It's pretty clear that Lerner has a passion for teaching and compilers and it makes the in class experience way better. This course is very challenging, but I learned so much from it.
- 8 This professor is very dedicated and clearly wants his students to get the most out of his class. He is extremely prepared to teach every class and answer any questions students have.
- 9 He has experience in compilers.
- 10 Prof. Lerner is very engaging in class and has extensive knowledge of the subject. The course has an atypical structure and focuses on the more interesting parts/phases of compilation and actually implementing them. You get to learn a lot from this course.
- 11 This course is well-designed to competently teach the concepts that go into a compiler and its stages, and the homework assignments reinforce what is taught.

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

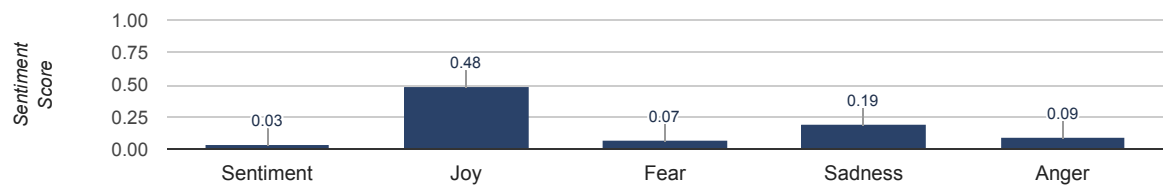
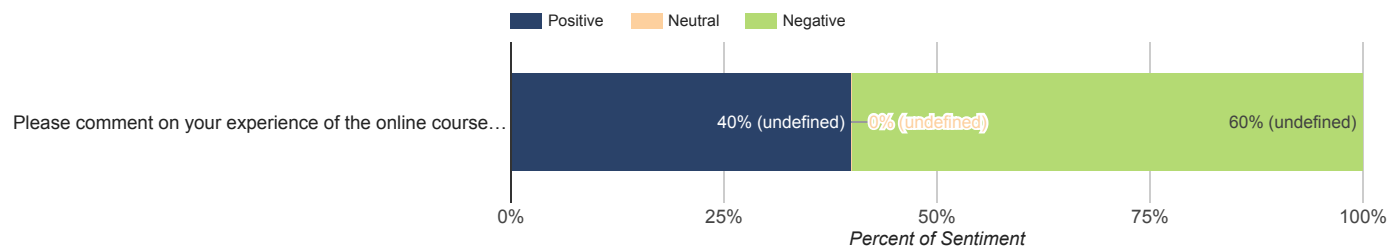
- 1 Pls... weeks with both exam write up and assignments... they are simply nightmares....
- 2 I think the assignment due dates could have been managed a bit better - it felt somewhat arbitrary which assignments had 7 days to complete vs 10 days (ie, not entirely based on difficulty).
- 3 Have the lecture notes written ahead of time so they can be released in-step with the corresponding lecture. Probably less of an issue in future years because now the notes for the new/re-done topics are written.
- 4 Nothing really. While it's clear that the class is a continuous work in progress in terms of class materials and what domains it covers across lectures and assignments, Ben has been upfront about this and transparent about expectations. He is fair in the sense that uncharted territory within assignments (ones that haven't been tried before or have been notoriously difficult in the past) is accounted for in terms of deadlines and expectations, and he even provides a safety net for students who may fall behind.
- 5 nothing
- 6 I honestly have very few complaints about this course. I felt all the assignment were all great learning experiences and had unique purposes. The only logistical qualm I have is it often felt bad that some homeworks and written assignments were due on the same day. I think the time limit of 2 days for the written assignments is good, I think otherwise we would all overthink / write too much, but I wish those 2 days were free of any other compiler work so I could have full focus on the written assignment.
- 7 I would love to learn more about the history of compilers
- 8 The current structure of the course is quite rigorous and time consuming. It would be nice to have slightly fewer assignments.

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

- 1 chad
- 2 Ben is an engaging lecturer and clearly cares greatly about teaching/helping students succeed. Also very knowledgeable about this stuff, will happily field questions. In years past I have noticed there is a tendency in his lectures to drift into students' tangents- there was still some of that this time but less often, so an improvement.
- 3 I don't have much more to say other than reiterating that this class is obscenely well facilitated. Though it is a difficult upper level course, he does well to not alienate anyone who may not follow along as fast or have prior knowledge of the material.
- 4 I've had Lerner for Fundies 2 and OOD. But with compilers, I think his true inner self came out and I could see the excitement he had every class even more than in the other classes. This is a class I am very happy I took and I learned a lot from this class.
- 5 This course is geared towards Khoury CS undergrads and assumes some knowledge of topics taught in previous years. It would be nice to have a little extra time at the beginning of the semester to get on the same page for students who are not Khoury undergrads. This could be done as an assignment 0 published before the start of the sem.

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience (5 comments)

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



- 1 It was a stressful course, but I learned a lot. ★★★★★
- 2 In terms of streamed lectures, they were so-so: online students could only listen and watch, but quality was good enough. Other main online experience is Piazza which was very helpful for getting questions answered. Ben and the TA were often quick to respond ★★★★★
- 3 This class was operated in person with remote accommodations for sick students. ★★★★★
- 4 lectures are organized online so well and everything is helpful ★★★★★
- 5 Online lecture notes were great. FYI for future readers the "More than 10" hours per week is a pretty large underestimate. Once the harder projects start expect to work 15-30 hours per week. ★★★★★

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 I should have started a little earlier on some of the assignment.
- 2 Try to put more time into the assignments early on (beyond just starting them). That gives you more time to think things through and ask questions.
- 3 Attended more office hours and spoken more one-on-one with the instructor.
- 4 Read the lecture notes before coming to class
- 5 Spent time learning OCaml and functional programming before taking this course.
- 6 I could have gone to office hours more