

Instructor: **Amato, Christopher**  
Subject: **CS**  
Catalog & Section: **7180 01**  
Course ID: **33588**  
Objectives:

Enrollment: **16**  
Responses Incl Declines: **8**  
Declines: **1**

Instructor Related Questions: Christopher Amato (13 comments)

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

- 1 Very strong knowledge in the course – was able to very clearly answer all doubts and questions
- 2 Chris is highly enthusiastic about reinforcement learning which makes his lectures refreshing and interesting. He was responsive on Piazza, evaluated assignments fairly, and prioritized learning in the course. The final project was enjoyable, allowing a high degree of flexibility and helping to develop critical research skills that are crucial to a PhD.
- 3 great articulation and communication of materials, interesting assignments and up-to-date content
- 4 Chris is very experienced in the field of RL, and the course was very comprehensive as a whole, with mostly clear slides.
- 5 The instructor was perfect. I cannot think of a better way to describe him. I will take any graduate course he offers.

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

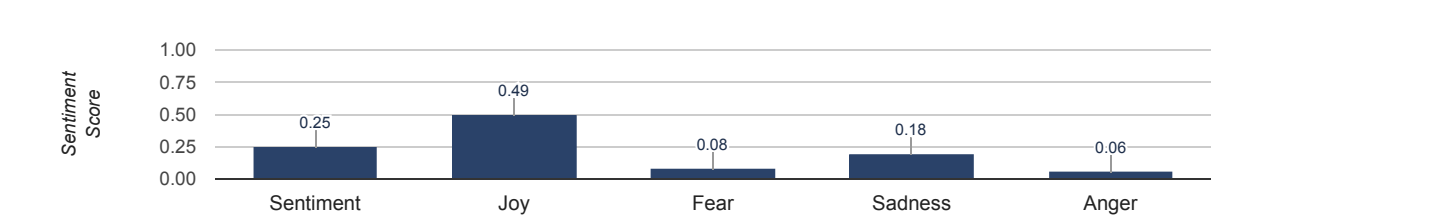
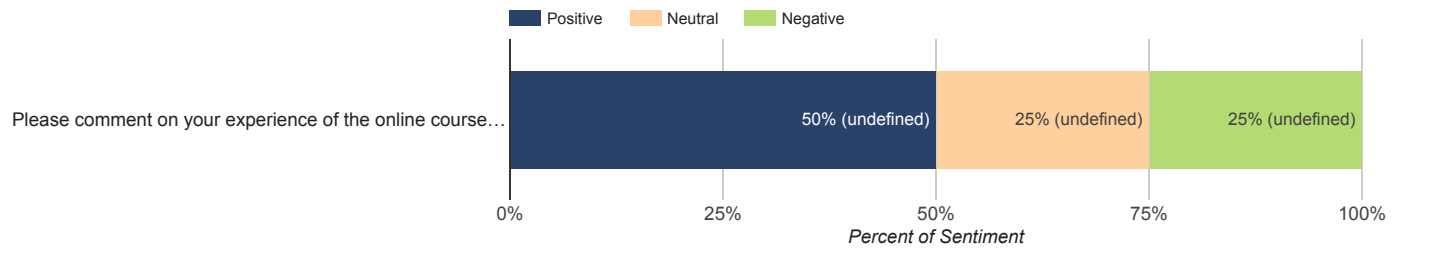
- 1 Hard to say, home works took too long but I can also see why they took long and were necessary.
- 2 Compared to CS5180, there was a lot of repeated material in this course -- in particular, the material from Sutton & Barto (2018). I understand that this was mainly to keep the course self-contained, but I do wonder if there would have been a different way to approach the subject. For example, some of the earlier assignments on bandits and dynamic programming could have potentially been condensed without losing continuity. The material at the end, including DQN, policy gradients, and Dec-POMDPs, was new and interesting though.
- 3 more clear communication of final project expectations
- 4 Sometimes Chris misinterpreted the question someone was asking, and gave an answer to the "wrong" question. In these cases, taking a moment to clarify what the student was asking would have saved a few minutes of back-and-forth confusion.
- 5 Nothing on my mind.

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

- 1 Very clear and concise teaching, helpful in answering doubts
- 2 Recorded lectures would have been helpful since they would allow students to watch lectures when they couldn't attend in person, and replay lectures when doing the assignments.
- 3 He is doing a great job. I can not add anything.

Questions to Assess Students’ Online Experience (4 comments)

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



- 1 Course documents on Canvas and Piazza were well organized and made it easy to follow along the course. ★★★★★
- 2 N/A Classes were in person ★★★★★

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

3 Canvas slides were sometimes uploaded a bit late ★☆☆☆☆

4 Last time I checked, an average question on Piazza took 18 minutes to be answered. Chris and his TAs were always responsive. This was a perfect online experience in my opinion. ★★★★★

**Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (3 comments)**

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

1 Because there was no remote option, I did not attend many of the lectures, which I think prevented me from getting the most learning out of this course. In retrospect, I should have attended more, but it was a tough transition from the remote work I was conducting concurrently with the class.

2 Read textbook before class

3 Nothing on my mind.