

Instructor Related Questions: Olin Shivers III (8 comments)

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

- 1 Professor Shivers was extremely knowledgeable about compilers and explained all materials in a clear way. In addition, office hours were very helpful for explaining topics that I didn't understand in class
- 2 Compilers is a really great course and I learned so much about programming languages and how these languages get translated under the hood. I enjoyed the rigor and the challenge in compilers, in particular I enjoyed learning about how they work in person.

Professor Shivers did a great job explaining the lecture material in class. I felt like I was being bombarded with new, interesting material, while at the same time all this material was actually fairly digestible. A professor with weaker teaching tendencies could make each lecture appear unmanageable given the course material, but I think Professor Shiver's explanations were great and helped me understand a lot about compilers. It also helped that his tangents and passion for the course helped keep me interested in the material too!

- 3 Professor Shivers is a very engaging professor. His lectures are entertaining, insightful, and educating. He very clearly knows a lot about compilers, but he is able to explain it in a way that is palatable for his students.

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

- 1 The instructor unfortunately never had assignments prepared and students would run into issues, to which he was something very late in responding to piazza posts about the issues
- 2 The grading was definitely not up to par this semester--Granted, we did not have a TA so it was more difficult for the professor to grade everything, especially since he was teaching another class, but it would've been nice to get feedback on the earlier parts of the compiler before we began working on components like the IR generation or the register allocator.
- 3 Personally, I think that spending less time on the front end of the compiler and focusing more on the back end would make the course better. I'm not sure if Theory of Comp is a required course, but if it was, it could make the lectures around lexing and parsing a bit shorter since the topics of DFA and regexs would already be known.

I found myself more engaged (and confused) around the flow analysis and register allocation lectures, and I think more time spent on that would be beneficial.

That being said, this is still a great class with a lot to learn and exposes how complex and involved compilers are.

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

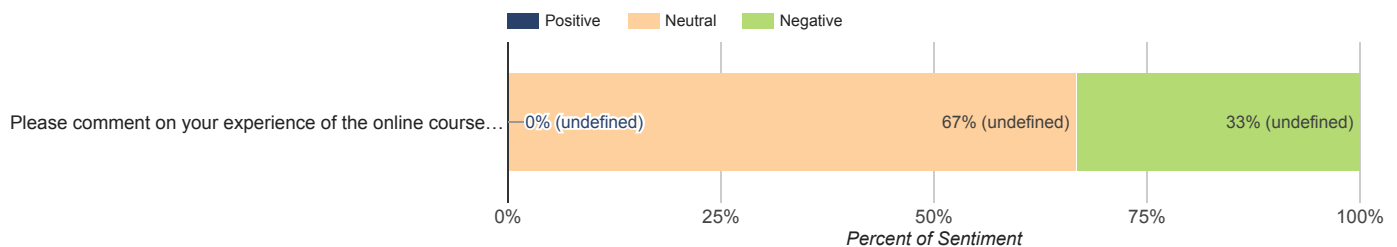
- 1 Professor Shivers' teaching style was really effective in class and I think it would be nice to continue doing so.

One thing I think I would like to see in a future iteration of the course is more check-ins to gauge our understanding of the material. Whether it is through small homeworks or just discussions by the students, there weren't many stop-gap measures to ensure students were comprehending everything

- 2 N/A

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 Attended class in person ★★★★★

2 I went to class in-person ★★★★★

3 Communication for this class was mostly done through lectures. Professor Shivers wasn't immediate with his responses on Piazza, but that is understandable given his other classes. He would still respond eventually and was more than willing to have extra office hours, which makes up for the lack of online interaction. ★★★★★

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 not taken software development along with it since both courses are extremely challenging

2 I could have reviewed the textbook material and my own notes more thoroughly to have a more complete understanding of the material

3 I wish I had practiced more SML before taking this class. It wasn't impossible to pick up, but if I had practiced beforehand, there would have been less friction with the language (especially for type checking)