Fundamentals - Computer Netwkg (Spring 2024)

Instructor: **Wilson, Christopher**

Subject: **CS**

Catalog & Section: **5700 01**

Course ID: **30568**

Objectives:

Enrollment: **57**

Responses Incl Declines: **21**

Declines: **0**

Instructor Related Questions: Christopher Wilson (43 comments)

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

1   Christo is great - knows the material very well, funny, and is very helpful. Take it with him if you can

2   The content felt very relevant in general, and complex topics were broken down into chunks that were much easier to understand.

3   Christo is an amazing teacher. The way he simplifies the most complex topics is a testament to his vast experience in the field

4   The professor really knows his stuff and is clearly very passionate about it. I liked that this semester had no tests and had more projects instead, which is more useful for the way I learn.

5   Since this is my last semester, I can say that this was one of my favorite classes at Northeastern. Christo is an excellent lecturer. It is clear he is passionate and deeply knowledgable about computer networks, and his enthusiasm made for really engaging lectures. He took student feedback into account and adjusted the course appropriately. I thought the projects were interesting and instructive, and challenging but not overly complicated. Also appreciated the course's generous late policy for managing conflicts with other class deadlines.

6   Above all, Christo's strengths are his excitement about computer networks, his excitement about his research, and his distillation of complicated topics into easy-to-understand explanations. He is one of the best educators I have encountered across both my graduate and undergraduate degrees.

    He also fosters a great in-person learning environment, where he will address students' questions for much of the lecture time, while not losing focus of the lesson at hand. Rarely did I leave the class feeling confused; Not because the class was easy, but because we always thoroughly discussed the hard topics as a class.

7   Christo is one of the best professors that I have had in my time in college. He is fantastic at teaching and helping students understand a complicated topic.

8   Wilson was one of my best professors at NU thus far. He was a great lecturer and I was engaged the whole time. Down to earth and funny with great insights to networks.

9   I loved Professor Wilson! I would tell all my friends just how lucky I was to have a professor so passionate about what we talked about and so clearly excited to teach us. He was a great lecturer and a really interesting guy to learn from.

10 Professor Christo is passionate about the materials and his lectures are very engaging!

11 Now I know why all those different algos come from.

12 really great lecturer

13 this class has been one of my favorite classes I've taken so far. I loved how I was able to ask any question that would come up during lecture and get it answered right away.

14 Professor Wilson is an incredible lecturer. He was able to convey the course material in a way that was both clear and interesting. The topics covered and course structure were also very well designed.

15 Christo is a great guy and is clearly very passionate about networking. I truly feel as if this was one of the more impactful courses I've taken at NEU. It dived deep into the weeds at time and gave us tons of practice with network programming, but Christo was also sure to zoom out at times and discuss the wider implications of the technology we were studying. Considering that the internet is the basis of much of modern society, I believe that this is one of the few CS courses where the bigger picture is really crucial, and Christo nailed this.

    Tl;dr I am more concerned for society after taking this class, which probably means that Christo did his job.

16 Really knows his stuff about Computer Networks. Learned a lot from him during his lectures

17 Christo is a great lecturer. He is very enthusiastic and amiable and knows his stuff. He's always willing to talk to students after class.

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

1   Some homework assignments had only a day between when we covered all the relevant content and when it was due, which I feel was too little of a time frame. Generally, the due dates and structure of some assignments and projects could be modified to better fit the semester's schedule.

2   While Christo is a great professor, he is not a great course coordinator. Poor with managing assignment grading and deadlines. He assigned the most difficult project to be due on a holiday, never addressed any queries regarding it and once most of the class pulled all nighters trying to finish it, he comes the next day with an extension. Multiple such instances of poor course management reduce the enjoyability of the class a bit.

3   Not much, other than making expectations a bit more clear on the CDN project.

4   Have updated lecture slides available sooner after class. Restructure the class schedule to permanently move the Project 4 deadline not immediately after spring break, so students have the ability to get help or questions answered from course staff in the lead up to the deadline.

5   If time ever permits, it would be nice to have coding reviews or even a presentation of different approaches that people took with each project after the fact.

    There were some difficult projects that I would be curious to see how other students approached.

6   I do not think this is his fault, but the Khoury servers need to be improved to handle increased traffic when assignments are close to due.

7   nothing

8   I would suggest making homeworks biweekly, and only running half of the homeworks. I think that in addition to the projects, they can be helpful for learning, but usually I just found them hectic and not super helpful. The projects were fascinating (in my opinion) and I think those should be the main focus of the course.

9   Projects are kind hard, I do get good grades, but lots of the stuff I have to teach my self and learn outside the classroom, consumes lots of time.

10 If the projects are going to be as demanding as they are, the instructor needs more TAs and needs to offer much more office hours. That's my biggest complaint. I also think the lack of any quizzes or exams was a hinderance to learning. I know the class voted on this, but in hindsight I think less projects and more exams might've been the better option.

11 I felt like some of the topics such as the djikstras with routers and some of the more mathematical concepts were out of place in the class, but I get why they were included. With the projects I didn't have any major complaints but I feel like they focused too heavily on implementing existing conecepts, namely the ftp client, bgp router, tcp protocol and cdn. It would have been cool to implement something new such as a multiplayer game or something similar.

12 A few of the homeworks felt a bit tedious. In particular, I felt that some of the earlier ones were needlessly long. The later howeworks were good though.

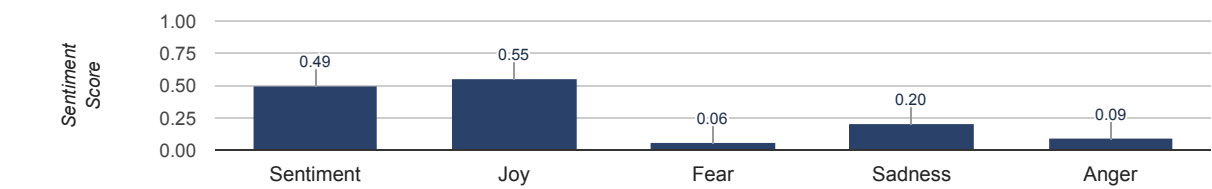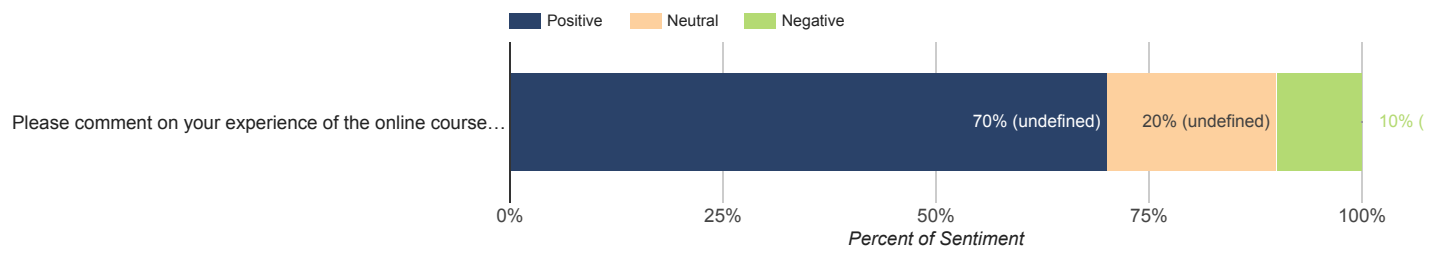## Q: What could the instructor do to make this course better?

13 I thoroughly enjoyed this course, and really all of my criticisms came from the low number of TAs, especially compared to other courses. Given the cost of tuition, I don't think it is too much to ask to have hired more TAs.

- Not enough office hours -- I'm definitely not the only one to think this. More TAs would mean more office hours which would be more in line with other courses. I saw a request for this at one point on piazza that seemed to go unacknowledged.

- Grading took too long -- Again, this isn't anyone's "fault" but it was a bit frustrating that deadlines seemed to be very rigid at times. For example, the last homework was due on Thursday instead of Friday, but by the time of writing (4/15) we still haven't gotten homework 7 or project 5 back. Why are we asked to submit work early when the course staff is clearly still busy grading other work? I don't really care about waiting for homework, but if deadlines are going to be set early, I would expect that the course staff would be ready to grade them after the due date.

- Piazza -- Sometimes questions would either get a curt response or no response at all. Again, more TAs would help remedy this.

In short, An NEU degree is extremely expensive and a very large part of the value proposition is that there is an adequate number of TAs to help facilitate courses. I think all of these issues would have been non-issues with an additional 2 TAs.

I want to emphasize that all of the existing TAs and Christo are awesome, I just think they could use a little more help!

14 Probably could've included a lab section where he could show us how to put the theory that he displayed the powerpoint slides into practice by coding in a lab

15 Some of the homework questions are pretty annoying—I wish they focused less on how the algorithms work and instead on what the purpose of algorithms are. I also wish the last was auto graded, since I am completely in the dark about what grade to expect...

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

1 The instructor did a great job facilitating inclusive learning.

2 Great course, highly recommended!

3 Christo is very good at leading interesting class discussions. He was also very receptive to feedback from students about the course, and would even update the course accordingly - adjust homework questions for clarity, extend deadlines, etc. I always felt comfortable approaching him with my questions.

4 N/a

5 Christo is by far one of the best professors I have had and I really enjoyed my time in his class. He is clearly incredibly knowledgable about the foundation of networks, distributed systems, and web security and did a tremendous job at teaching us enough to complete the topic and be able to do more research on our own for projects and assignments.

6 Such a great professor/speaker. Super engaging.

7 I looked forward to attending each of the lectures for this class. I also very much enjoyed the projects. This was a really great class.

8 Christo is a fantastic professor, and I am glad that I took networking. We've covered a lot of ground, and explored a lot of implications of the internet and the digital age we find ourselves in. I don't think that I would have been as well rounded of a CS student had I not taken this course. If I was advising a student early in their degree, I would absolutely recommend this course.

9 Very enthusiastic, networking is a abstract concept

10 I understand that there's a lot of theory to teach, but I felt that it would've been more helpful to understand the theory behind certain concepts by doing some sort of live coding so that we understand how certain concepts play out in the real world

11 N/A

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience (10 comments)

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

Legend: ■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative

Please comment on your experience of the online course… : 70% (undefined) | 20% (undefined) | 10% (

X-axis: *Percent of Sentiment* (0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%)

Sentiment Score bar chart:
- Sentiment: 0.49
- Joy: 0.55
- Fear: 0.06
- Sadness: 0.20
- Anger: 0.09

1 The class was organized neatly online, although some content in the course website (such as slides, project descriptions, etc) were not always kept up to date. Also the online content was partially split between Canvas and the actual course website, which could be confusing sometimes. ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

2 No issues, the professor was very quick to respond to Piazza posts. ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

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

3	Well-organized course website. The project descriptions were generally clear and descriptive, and implementation strategies/ & suggestions were especially helpful. Course staff was helpful and responsive over Piazza. ★★★★★
4	Professor Wilson frequently monitors Piazza for both homework/project-related questions, as well as questions regarding understanding of course concepts. Courses were recorded on posted online for students who could not make it to class. ★★★☆☆
5	super straight-forward ★★★★★
6	Course website was easy to navigate and very informative. ★★★★★
7	Great! Most lectures have recording. ★★★★★
8	I think that Christo was often less approachable over Piazza than he was in person. Often times it seems as if questions on piazza went unanswered, or Christo's answer came off as a bit curt. While I really liked this course and Christo, pretty much every complaint I had with this class (including this one) could have been solved with having more TAs. I think that is a reasonable ask given the cost of tuition. ★★★☆
9	Generally, the responses to questions on Piazza were timely. ★★★★★
10	The course doesn't use Canvas, which is GREAT. The course website was nicely organized, the slides were made available, and Piazza was relatively active. ★★★★★

Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (10 comments)

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

1	Start projects early and this class is pretty easy and can teach a lot.
2	I could have gotten started on assignments earlier.
3	More learning outside of course content and reading the textbook.
4	Started homework earlier. They are deceivingly difficult and also require deepening your understanding of the course material. Saving them until the last day was a mistake. I could have read from the textbook to refresh and deepen my understanding of course materials.
5	better self-pacing
6	I could have dedicated more hours to the projects that involved performance-based grading. I was able to get almost full points on the autograder, but the projects in this class were really great and I could have dedicated more time to make my implementations more efficient.
7	Start some of the projects earlier, particularly the BGP project 3
8	Maybe take the computer system course as prerequesit.
9	Probably learn more about Computer Systems beforehand.
10	I should've read over the slides before lecture, since I often found myself confused about parts of lecture. The most important part of the course is the OSI model, which I should've nailed down as it was being taught.