

Instructor: **Venkatesaramani, Rajagopal**
Subject: **CS**
Catalog & Section: **6120 01**
Course ID: **31273**
Objectives:

Enrollment: **111**
Responses Incl Declines: **46**
Declines: **0**

Instructor Related Questions: Rajagopal Venkatesaramani (66 comments)

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

- 1 great enthusiasm, always willing to converse
- 2 The instructor was strong and good in communication in his area of expertise but the other topics could have been much better.
- 3 The professor is very eager to impart knowledge, hence makes the environment positive and is there to clear all kinds of doubts
- 4 The assignments and labs were well structured which I quite enjoyed. There were also appropriate hints and expectation laid out in each assignment/lab that made it clear what the students are expected to do. The final project and presentation also was very helpful in creating a new project and presenting our ideas in front of the class.
- 5 Professor is really passionate about what he's teaching and very nice when you ask questions.
- 6 Capturing attention and teaching courses in an interesting way
- 7 Willingness to teach. Always open to a conversation and took the time to ensure the concept was understood properly. Explained and re-explained difficult concepts whenever needed.
- 8 The Professor is very enthusiastic about teaching. In class interaction and discussion was very beneficial in understanding the material.
- 9 Empathy towards student, and student interaction. He's very enthusiastic and passionate about teaching
- 10 The course picked up pace in the second half of the semester and covered content and topics being currently used in the industry. Would recommend the course to students inclined and willing to learn more about genAI
- 11 The course was pretty good for a course with no pre-reqs. Prof. Venkat started from the absolute basics, and picked up pace after the Spring break. I personally enjoyed all classes. It takes a lot of time to plan out a course structure for a course you've never taught before, so kudos to him for doing this successfully.
- 12 The instructor was extremely intelligent and taught us more than we could expect from this course
- 13 The Professor was very friendly and understanding.
- 14 Was available for office hours and kept the class pretty open to questions. Kept a relaxed environment as well. Seemed to enjoy teaching and that makes you want to learn the material even more. Actually makes people interested in NLP.
- 15 -
- 16 The professor tried to teach from the basics to advanced concepts. The professor was open for question any time during the lecture and also outside class.
- 17 The instructor has the huge knowledge of wide range of topics covered in this course and was able to give feedback or resources required for the project, assignments etc..
- 18 The professor is quite knowledgeable and skilled. He cares about his students.
- 19 Good
- 20 clear in concepts
- 21 NA
- 22 The instructor was super enthusiastic about the course and in teaching about the concepts. The instructor really wanted to teach us as many concepts as possible and help us learn. He was also enthusiastic in making us ask questions in class

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

- 1 I wish the course was more structured. The level of the course was somewhat weird as the first 2 classes start with the basics but by the 4th class onwards it suddenly skips to a very difficult level. This was quite challenging for me as it seemed that one must have sufficient knowledge about AI/ML before taking this course, however this course has no pre-requisites. So when the topics got harder, most things went over my head but the instructor assumes that we should already know this by then. This was kind of embarrassing.
- 2 Make in-class teaching more organized. It would be really helpful if the instructor can recap what's learned last lecture and explain the teaching goal of this lecture with more background information and then introducing new topic with more informed slides. I'm really lost in lectures and have to google by myself to figure out what's going on, especially on topics about transformers, LLMs. The instructor encourages us to ask questions in class. But the point is I don't even understand about what he said. It's hard to ask very detailed questions. I took challenging course before and still managed to perform well by resources and materials provided by the professor. For this course, I think it's important to point out the direction/resources that we can use if we feel behind the course.
- 3 Slightly improved on planning.
- 4 The pacing and preparation for the lecture has some issue especially during the first month. The professor improves significantly as the semester went on, but the initial few weeks were somewhat confusing.
- 5 Could've framed topics to be completed within time frame.
- 6 The course would've been much better if we started with NLP topics right from the beginning of the semester. Much of the semester got used to cover ML topics like linear and logistic regression, classification which most of the students would already be expected to know. would appreciate if the assignments and deadlines were better organized since the initial few weeks were basic python and then came a huge assignment end of the semester with the project deadline also approaching.
- 7 Record classes so that students can use it later for reference
- 8 Could have recorded the classes for future reference. Could have had more organized lectures.
- 9 provide additional material on topic to enhance understanding
- 10 Instead of taking more than 2 lectures to cover the basics of ML if the course was a bit fast paced then it would've given us better understanding on LLMs and LSTMs which would've helped us to choose the project and get started with a bit early.

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

- 11

I hope he can teaches what he already knows well. I don't think it was his problem, but mostly how Khoury assigned him to too many courses that he didn't have enough time to prepare for the course well enough. He did try his best, I believe. But doesn't make sense skipping a class for his holiday..? Hmm... May be I am mistaken. Also, I hope he can make a syllabus before the semester and have more concrete outline of what he could teach. He has potential and I think he is a nice person, but needs more experience and time.
- 12

a bit more aligned towards applications could be helpful
- 13

hold more discussions maybe?
- 14

The course structure was very bad. Important topics such as LLM's and Transformers wasnt explained in depth and did not spend much time on this. This was the first time for the instructor taking this course, so could have been much better overall.
- 15

Probably making it more structured and emphasizing on some approaches of the problem more
Also the comment section of assignments can be made more clear and hopefully the TAs can also align on some topics.
Also highlighting some pre reqs so students can focus on the basics and come
- 16

Keep the first few concepts of the course as a pre-requisite. As most students already knew it.
- 17

Maybe kept more labs (optional) for students with no background in programming to gain a little experience. But again the fact that this course had no pre-reqs is not Prof. Venkat's fault.
- 18

Advocate to add prerequisites or ensure the course is structured to pace accordingly, initially the course was very smooth as just basics were being covered but later on it got too fast and did not get enough time to prepare for that pace.
- 19

40 % on project is too much could have been 20%
- 20

Unprepared lectures where the instructor spends too long trying to think of an explanation to clarify a concept makes the lecture hard to follow. Lectures should be prepared and not improvised.
- 21

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- 22

I felt professor could have prepared well before teaching the class.
- 23

The instructor was quite consistent in terms of presentations and material at the beginning of the semester. When introductory ML topics were introduced, the examples were quite basic , and while we obtained a good understanding, it did not feel intuitive to apply those concepts in later slides of the session. If the concepts are presented like they were in textbooks, in a detailed and systematic way, the professor can do wonders. This also calls for making Machine Learning a prerequisite for this course so that more time can be spent on NLP.
- 24

Nothing
- 25

teach better
- 26

Have a well defined curriculum, There was a lot of time spent in pretty rudimentary concepts. I feel there can be a brush up on the basic concepts and spend the rest of the time in learning the main components.
Be bit more prepared about the concetps

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

- 1

Plan the course structure and in class lectures in a better way.
- 2

Very motivated, can get through to you about 80% of the times.
Does prepare material well.
Pretty good teaching just sometimes feels the structure is off.
Great professor, not his fault the subject itself is hard, only thing is hopefully he can emphasize on the self study part in class before the next class so that students can prepare what would help them under better.
- 3

The learning environment has always been inclusive so there are no improvements to be made in this case.

The instructor has good knowledge about the subject but I wish he would practice more on how to articulate better to actually make people understand the concept. He is very kind and open to suggestions but sometimes I feel like there is a small gap that has to be bridged when it come to teaching and actually retaining that information after the class.
- 4

Professor is a nice person and willing to answer questions in-class and outside class.
- 5

Plan out a wider set of topics.
- 6

Assignments were very interesting.
Math of this course was properly taught to a point where difficult concepts seemed do-able.
- 7

I think he's already doing his best.
- 8

The professor is very lively and open to feedback. He revolved the course as per student demands and covered topics most of the class was interested in much of which was new and trending in the industry. Loved the fact that he was willing to accept the improvements he needed to make and also come up with was for us to understand the math better.
- 9

His biggest strength is his ability to create a free atmosphere in class where students can ask doubts without hesitating, and he responds to questions online as well pretty quickly. For his first time teaching the course, he was pretty good. Like FAI, he will definitely perfect himself over time.
- 10

Strengths:
No rigid class structure, super flexible for students who are hungry to learn more
Weakness:
Lack of class recordings for later use
- 11

Could have recorded the classes for future reference.
Could have had more organized lectures.
- 12

Prof Raj was great in teaching. There should be improvement in course structure. Add prerequisites.
- 13

Need to record lectures and need to have proper slides. How am I going through the material again in the future if the slides are impossible to navigate quickly and there is no recording of the lecture.
- 14

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- 15

The professor has a lot of knowledge in many areas of AI. However, he was not effective in teaching those AI applicable concepts to NLP.
- 16

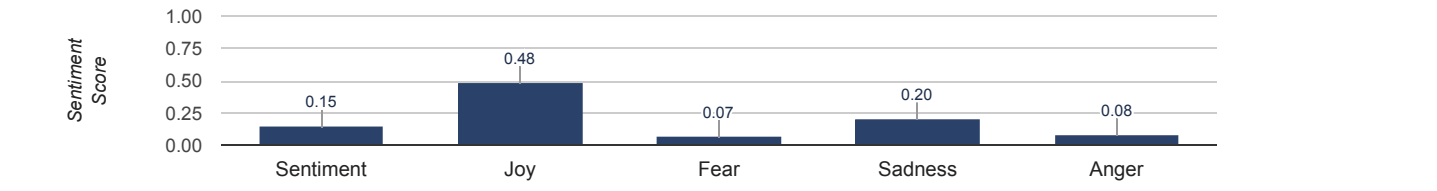
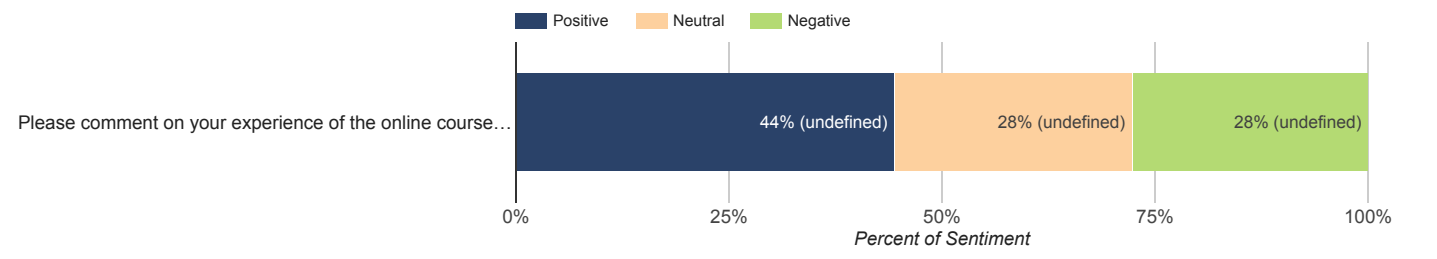
Good
- 17

NA
- 18

Strength:
Super enthusiastic in teaching and helping students learn about the concepts
Weakness:
Could have a more well structure curriculum

Questions to Assess Students’ Online Experience (18 comments)

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



- 1 not enough access to RC ★★☆☆☆
- 2 N/A ★★★★★
- 3 N/A. This was an in-person course. ★★★★★
- 4 I think professor and TAs are really responsive on campuswire, the platform we used for discussion. ★★★★★
- 5 Very interactive and engaging class. Overall a good experience. Only possible improvement i could comment on, is the speed of the lectures. Felt like we could have covered a bit more. However, in the time we had, the professor covered a lot of important topics. ★★★★★
- 6 The environment was very helpful and constructive. TAs were always available as well as the professor. ★★★★★
- 7 Super useful. And the professor is very great in terms of student interaction and teaching. ★★★★★
- 8 The use of campus wire helped create a kind of connect with the TAs and Professor. And the professor was really prompt with his answers, on both campus wire and email. ★★★★★
- 9 It was a in-person classs. ★★☆☆☆
- 10 Notes were posted promptly. Campuswire was used effectively for all communications. Professor responded to emails quickly. Classes could have been recorded. ★★☆☆☆
- 11 The online resources are negligible as the slides are extremely hard to navigate and often far too sparse. Why am I having to click 40 times to get to the 7th slide. Please just have a powerpoint or pdf. ★★☆☆☆
- 12 - ★★★★★
- 13 Honestly, I havent gone through the online material provided by the professor. However, the assignments were helpful to give an understanding on how Logistic, LSTM, NN works. ★★★★★
- 14 It would've been better if the slides for the classes and the readings for every class are updated in the course web site. ★★☆☆☆
- 15 I hope he just use a simple website. ★★★★★
- 16 Good ★★★★★
- 17 Boring ★★☆☆☆
- 18 The TA was the only component online. Rest of the course was held in class ★★☆☆☆

Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (20 comments)

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

- 1 Learnt more about transformers and LLM's to come better prepared for the basics.
- 2 Should have pre studied before attending classes would have made it better.
- 3 I wish I would have gone through the course materials for the upcoming lecture before I attended the lecture. This way I would understand better when the professor explained it and also clear out any pending doubts that I might have had during the class session.
- 4 Not to take this course this semester. It's not an introductory course for students who have little/no machine learning experience and undergrad level mathematic literacy. I should study machine learning and linear algebra first before taking this course.
- 5 Nothing really. It was a good experience
- 6 There can be a pre-requisite placed on the course so that the professor need not take the time to teach the basic to the students. As this is a 6000 series course, it is not in the best interest of the professor nor the students to spend time on already learnt concepts in other courses.

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

- | | |
|----|---|
| 7 | Could've done more self study and get my clarified with the prof. |
| 8 | Researched about NLP concept myself as well. |
| 9 | Allocate more time and practice more coding in NLP |
| 10 | Effectively practiced implementations |
| 11 | This course needs prerequisites, I had to spend too much time to grasp what was covered as the pacing was too fast. The professor tried best but course isn't structured properly. |
| 12 | Attend every single class. |
| 13 | - |
| 14 | I could have done more reading regarding the course as this is a theory heavy course where we need to learn a lot of methods and understand which one to use where. |
| 15 | I should have learned basics of Deep learning and Neural networks prior to registering this course. Or, please make these concepts mandatory for a student to register this course. |
| 16 | work hard |
| 17 | Start early for the project |
| 18 | Good |
| 19 | self study more |
| 20 | I could have studied more about this course |