

Principles of Programming Lang (Fall 2023)

Instructor: **Barzilay, Eliyahu**
Subject: **CS**
Catalog & Section: **5400 01**
Course ID: **15056**
Objectives:

Enrollment: **72**
Responses Incl Declines: **16**
Declines: **0**

Instructor Related Questions: Eliyahu Barzilay (31 comments)

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

- 1 Eli is extremely knowledgeable and willing to spend time talking to you about anything you have questions about. It is clear that he has been thinking about programming languages for a long time, and you can passively learn a lot by simply soaking up the information that he releases in lecture.
- 2 The instructor was great at showing a lot of examples for each concept, often in different programming languages. The course was very interesting and covered topics in depth. It has been my favorite course at Northeastern and definitely has made me a better programmer.
- 3 This professor is very knowledgeable and funny and I learned a lot. The course is incredibly well organized and changed my perspective on how to program, and how programming languages worked. I was nervous to work in Racket and I was pleasantly surprised by how fun the course material was.
- 4 Eli tries to make the class as forgiving as possible. I appreciate the PLQs as an alternative over exams because they are less stressful. However, I did bomb quite a few of them (oops). Thankfully, after calculating my average PLQ grade, I found out that, like Eli said, the bad grades were counterbalanced by the good grades and I ended up with a decent average after the dropped PLQs. He also has homeworks that are challenging but not back breaking which is nice. He also has a more time button for PLQs which is helpful for students like me who take more time to process questions. Doing PLQs at the beginning of class was also nice.
- 5 The professor is very knowledgeable and knows the subject on the back of his hand. Lectures were always informational and it was super fun to learn.
- 6 Eli is so entertaining! His lectures are always a lot of fun.
- 7 I liked how the instructor provided a lot of insight on big tech decades ago along with the material presented in class.
- 8 Eli is a very good teacher. When I went to office hours, he was super patient and thorough in his explanations. He also is super knowledgeable, and I heard through other students during the class that he helped them get involved in research. He often goes off topic during the lecture, but the topics he diverges on are very interesting.
- 9 Eli is one of the best lecturers I have had at Northeastern. He is extremely knowledgeable and facilitates an inclusive learning environment.
- 10 Eli is clearly passionate about what he does and teaching.
- 11 He knows his stuff. Big time. He's a hilarious person and that makes lectures engaging.
- 12 He really knows his stuff. He's also very helpful during office hours.

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

- 1 I wish that some of the homework assignments were less prescriptive. It feels like most assignments explain how to do something, and our job is to do a straight-forward implementation. When there is room to make design decisions, oftentimes the write-up would note some of the possible options with explanations for the pros and cons. While this is useful, I think it could be perhaps more useful if we were allowed to explore these options and pros/cons on our own. This would allow for more problem solving in the homeworks, rather than simply ironing out implementation details.
- 2 The course was really great, there isn't much room for improvement.
- 3 This isn't the fault of the professor but a 3.5 hour lecture is brutally painful to sit through.

I also think the participation grade is unfair. It's difficult to participate in lectures of that size. It's also clear that some students already know a lot about this material and are able to answer questions about it, while I'm learning it for the first time so it's difficult for me to answer questions on the spot.

Also, the PLQ's are really difficult. I know they're not supposed to be easy, but sometimes it feels like they're trick questions which seem unfair when we only have a minute or two to answer them.
- 4 Sometimes I got lost during the lectures because transitions between topics aren't clear enough, and the professor encouraged listening instead of taking notes. It would be nice for paper notes to be more encouraged during the class, they are not as distracting as laptops.
- 5 Not too much. Maybe make it so the handin server doesn't log you out so quickly and make the arbitrary "karma" points more clear. Additionally, sometimes the tangents/stream of consciousness style of teaching is hard for me to process because I don't understand which parts are relevant for the PLQs and which ones aren't.
- 6 Maybe we could cover more content if Eli didn't go on long tangents during lectures unrelated to the class (such as ranting about Apple or other tech companies)
- 7 Not the instructor's fault, but the classroom that this section was placed in was not ideal for an evening class. Maybe for future semesters, the department can place this class in another room.
- 8 Eli could definitely not go on tangents during class and actually teach the lectures so we could get context for the homework. He also showed up late for the first 3 lectures (one time he was 1 hour late), and he often comes 30 minutes late to office hours (although to his credit, most people do not attend them).
- 9 The directions for the homework could be better organized at times. Homework is frustrating but that is due to the nature of the work.
- 10 Perhaps less tangents, more cohesive class subject
- 11 I think the pace of the class was a little too quick at times. There are a few lessons were my partner and I, who both read the lecture notes and attended lecture, really struggled to start the assignment. Particularly at the beginning, since many students have not touched Racket in ~3-4 years I think its important not to rush through things.
- 12 record lectures?

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

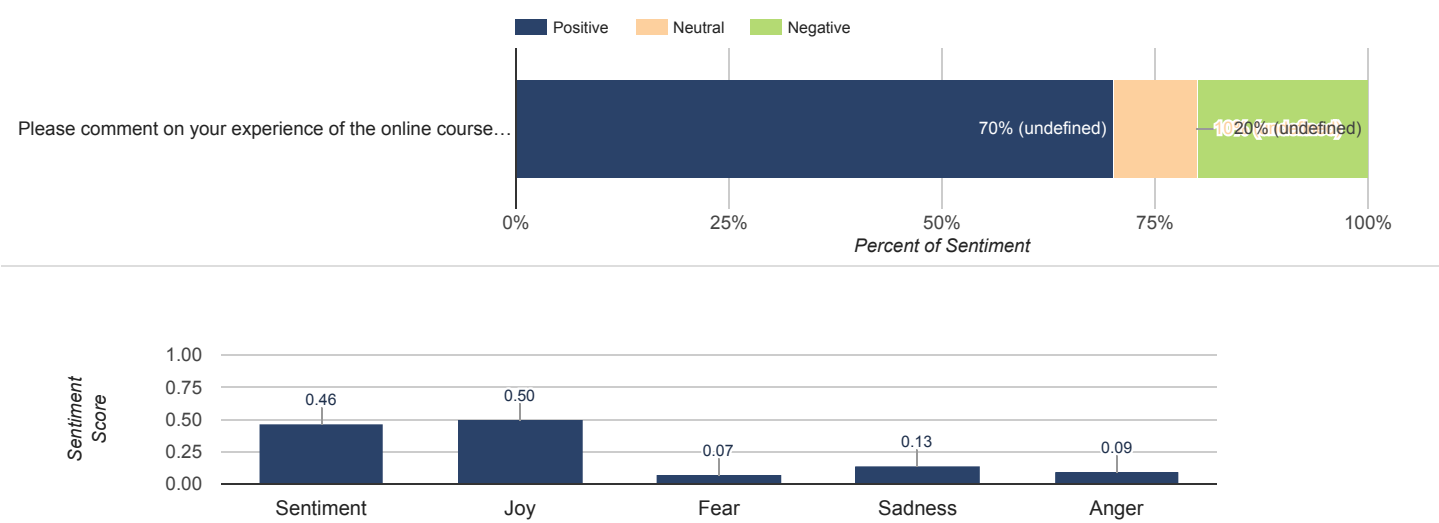
- 1 n/a
- 2 I felt kind of a afraid to speak up in class despite Eli saying that you should try to speak up even if you don't know the answer. This might've been my own anxiety issue, though.
- 3 The professor is very knowledgeable and knows the subject on the back of his hand. Lectures were always informational and it was super fun to learn.
- 4 I also liked how the instructor didn't just read the notes off of the course page and provided nuanced explanations of the topics presented in class.

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

- 5 Eli rewards people with participation credit if they interact with him in class, but somehow only a couple people ask questions in class. This doesn't feel too inclusive, but he is very good at keeping people engaged in his lectures.
- 6 Eli is a character, often going on tangents that are only somewhat connected to the class, but this personality also makes the class interesting. For most topics we learned I felt as though I was missing the bigger picture connecting it all.
- 7 Great experience

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.



- 1 I really enjoyed the responsiveness of the professor online, and found the website to be well-organized (and enjoyed how willing Eli is to take feedback pertaining to the website when it was lacking) ★★★★★
- 2 n/a ★★★★★
- 3 This course is incredibly well organized and I really appreciate the effort that Eli put into the course website. It helped me a ton! ★★★★★
- 4 pl website is well made and the additional features like seeing where you fall on the bell curve were helpful. when we switched online to zoom, eli came up with a good solution to keep classes interactive. ★★★★★
- 5 Professor Eli was readily available and answered doubts on Zoom as well as on Piazza. I remember his spending extra time explaining Racket to me because I did not have any prior experience in functional languages. ★★★★★
- 6 Very well organized website. ★★★★★
- 7 It is great that the instructor was receptive to the feedback on the course website. I thought that it was easier to navigate and look at as the semester went on. ★★★★★
- 8 We rarely had virtual classes, but when we did have virtual classes (we had about 4 virtual classes due to the professor’s personal issues), he made sure that we had all the material, and spent time out of class to record the entire 4 hour lectures of notes and more. ★★★★★
- 9 Course website was well organized and easy to use. ★★★★★
- 10 Notes are very thorough ★★★★★

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 I could prepared more for some of the later PLQs.
- 2 Maybe gone to office hours more. I never got to take advantage of office hours because they were during my work/class times, but I could have reached out and scheduled something with the TAs/professor/tutors. I just didn't have the energy to spare this semester.
- 3 Attend class instead of leaving after the PLQ. Alternatively, actually reading the class notes helps with PLQ grades a lot, and I got busy and stopped reading the notes towards the end which lowered my grade.
- 4 Read more resources and give more time to the course.
- 5 Study more often. Try to focus harder during class.
- 6 I could've went into office hours more often to understand some of the trivial mistakes I made in the assignments.
- 7 I definitely could have read the notes before lecture and suggested PLQs. That would ensure that I knew the content more strongly and I could score higher on the PLQs.

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

8 I could have paid more attention in lecture.

9 I could have better studied for the PLQs

10 Dedicate more time to reading class notes