

Instructor: **Saripalli, Kanaka**Subject: **CS**Catalog & Section: **6650 01**Course ID: **15257**

Objectives:

Enrollment: **65**Responses Incl Declines: **64**Declines: **0**

Instructor Related Questions: Kanaka Saripalli (77 comments)

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

- 1 .
- 2 we need better plan for learning/teaching and dedicated materials for the class and not just textbook readings. This is very boring and unuseful. Looking at the learning module page, stuffs are all over the places. Nothing seem to be very consistent. Worst class I have even taken.
- 3 He is super approachable and an expert in this subject.
- 4 Course content, curriculum and correlating to real world issues.
- 5 The professor provides timely and constructive feedback, it helps students progress regularly and offer guidance on improvement areas.
- 6 The instructor always seems nice, friendly, welcoming, and approachable. He seems to have a passion for the subject matter.
- 7 1) Industry-relevant topics
2) Good coverage of the basic concepts
3) Good selection of topics
- 8 Relevant topics and a lot of useful material provided by the instructor.
- 9 Knowledgeable and passionate about the course subject.
- 10 The sheer volume and depth of work on a topic that's important in the job market today - the material itself and having a guided introduction to it.
- 11 The teaching contents are very close to the textbook.
- 12 Nothing.
- 13 The instructor clearly knows the course material very well. When clarification was asked for, he was able to provide useful advice and assistance in comprehending the material.
- 14 The content is clear. The instructor is super patient and is able to explain our questions in an easy understanding way.
- 15 knowledgeable
- 16 Course curriculum and the course structure
- 17 Real life application discussions.
- 18 It provides the initial understanding of distributed systems that is required to build upon and deep dive into more complex systems in the industry.
- 19 Deep knowledge of subject.
- 20 The instructor is definitely very passionate and knowledgeable about the subject.
- 21 Teach students with patience, online materials are helpful.
- 22 Instructor is extremely knowledgeable in this domain, and adept at explaining course concepts.
- 23 The instructor is an expert in this field. The concepts learned in this course should be mandatory for every CS student. The practical examples shown in Paint are somewhat helpful and clear.
- 24 The professor is highly organized and has provided many interesting and educative articles and system design concepts in the modules. For enthusiasts, it's a great place to come back to even after finishing the course.
- 25 This course helps me to gain lots of knowledge about distributed systems and network.
- 26 Professor Saripalli is clearly an expert in this area and uses his knowledge and expertise from real world experiences to help drive and facilitate key points in class.

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

- 1 have more proper structure for the course. I felt it was a little disorganized.
- 2 we need better plan for learning/teaching and dedicated materials for the class and not just textbook readings. This is very boring and unuseful. Looking at the learning module page, stuffs are all over the places. Nothing seem to be very consistent. Worst class I have even taken.
- 3 Nil
- 4 To have more interactions with the students and provide real world corresponding situations.
- 5 Professor has done excellent enough
- 6 Class time felt like a bit of a waste more often than not. Instructor read from the book frequently, and topics were present on HW and projects before they were covered in class. Grading assignments took very long, and feedback on assignments was sparse. For the midterm, students were required to email the instructor to get any feedback on their grades. Grading turnaround time needs to improve. Overall, class time needs to be more effectively utilized. Between the HWs, Quizzes, Projects, and Exams, either the HWs or Exams could be dropped, they felt redundant.
- 7 make more example
- 8 1) Conduct a session on modern tools like kafka
- 9 Outside class Piazza, the professor was unavailable and never answered any emails.
- 10 This is just my opinion but use fewer tests, more coursework, and clearer grading criteria.

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

- 11

1. The quiz questions always caught me off-guard – the material that was expected to be on them was no clear. Plus it's only 10 points anyway, so why cause stress for such a small part of the grade? Either eliminate quizzes entirely or make them about narrower parts of the text. The way it is now, they did not help me learn.

2. As I said above, I believe on-camera, well-dressed, speaking participation accounting for a significant portion of grades is an absolute must for an online course. It provides a much stronger reason to keep up with the material each week if you know you have to be able to be conversant in the topics when you go to class. It also gives the professor a much better sense of who knows their stuff b.c. again in the age of ChatGPT, who knows what people are doing themselves and who knows what they're AI generating. And it greases the wheels for networking, which is what a huge part of our degree is about.
- 12

provide some slides(PPT) for us to better understanding some abstractive concepts
- 13

Extend the topic in class since we have read the book thoroughly.
- 14

Prepare lectures and explain things instead of telling us what chapter to read during lectures.

The student should come out of the lecture being able to do 50% of the assignments at the very least. Not counting on students having to read like 100+ pages of dense materials per week with no other instructions.
- 15

I think that the assignments and projects in this course would benefit from more rigorous instructional material. Some of the homework and exam questions felt as though they were fashioned haphazardly. Project instructions felt somewhat unclear and included typos and ambiguous statements. Additionally, although the instructor knew the course material, class sessions lacked spirit. They often consisted of simply reading from the textbook rather than utilizing informational slides, videos, and other more engaging materials. In other words, I felt that I mainly taught this course to myself using the additional materials provided on the Canvas page. I didn't feel that class sessions helped me much at all.
- 16

Maybe we could have a starter code for project1 as well project2. It's a bit hard to write everything from scratch at the beginning of this course.
- 17

I do not think the method of information delivery suited my learning style. I found reading the text book very difficult and hard to really apply to the projects directly. I think spending more time discussing projects in class would be beneficial. I spent considerable time looking/researching how to do projects which at times felt like I only knew of terminology from class and had trouble even starting at times.
- 18

Introducing more slides to illustrate the ideas in a more easily understandable also improving the quality of questions in the quizzes will improve the overall quality of the course. Right now some of the questions in quizzes are ambiguous at best and can have more than one answer even though questions are of single correct answer.
- 19

Communication was horrible, especially on grades. The midterm was a very good example of this. Students didn't receive feedback on where they missed points, just vague statements such as "answers are in the right direction but sparse".
- 20

To provide feedback in a timely way
- 21

The
- 22

A better management of reading resources, and concise list of topics to read and ignore in the reading material.
- 23

I think the organization of the lectures was rather difficult to follow. The lectures consisted mostly of jumping between slides and textbook pages and other articles. While I think it is fine to ask that we do these readings before class on our own, it is quite difficult to follow the professor's train of thought while jumping between different media. Having a core of slides with the relevant passages or content on them would make it a lot easier to structure our class notes and keep track of material covered.
- 24

Canvas modules are sometimes confusing, and could be better if well-organized. The after-class homework is quite heavy considering other courses still have some, especially the readings/homework/quizzes/projects that are due in the same week.
- 25

Prepared for lectures and provided exquisite reading materials.
- 26

Many things.
1) Grade projects, homework, and exams in a more timely manner.
2) Hold more office hours and tell the TAs to show up to theirs.
3) Update the projects' guidelines (they're unclear, totally outdated, confusing, and just an absolute mess).
4) Use slides instead of the textbook to teach during lectures.
5) The in-class examples drawn in Paint are fine, but they need to be better drawn to make them clearer and more organized; it might help to just create some animations in a slide.
6) Provide more specific and helpful feedback for homework and exams.
7) Better tailor the quizzes to the concepts learned in class; I found many questions to be a little out of scope.
8) Provide students with vidoes and visual aides to better understand the algorithms, especially in the second half of the course.
More things that hopefully other students pointed out.
- 27

It is difficult to teach online due to lack of blackboard. It can be compensated by using a tablet or stylus-enabled laptop. The professor has wonderful ideas but it's difficult to draw clear diagrams on paint using a mouse and keyboard.
- 28

N/A
- 29

If possible faster results from homework, as the mid term and final is based off of content from these homeworks and if they are not returned before then it leaves to students unsure if the work they did in the homework was correct or if there was a miss understanding, which means the student can not adjust in time for the exams.

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

- 1

.
- 2

Nothing.
- 3

I thought the learning environment was satisfactorily inclusive.
- 4

we need better plan for learning/teaching, dedicated materials for the class and not just textbook readings. This is very boring and unuseful. Looking at the learning module page, stuffs are all over the places. Nothing seem to be very consistent. Worst class I have even taken.
- 5

Effecient teaching, very good designed quiz. It would be great if we could have some explanation after the quiz answer releasing. Getting the grade in timely manner would be better for self-learning for this class. For example, if we can get project or homework grade at least one week before the next assignment due, then we will have enough time to correct the answer of next assignment as well as ask for help from TAs. And for the midterm exam, there are few questions being in the previous assignments. But the grade was released just before the midterm exam. We may make the same mistakes.
- 6

Delivering the concept and preparation.
- 7

The professor is an approachable instructor who creates a positive and inclusive learning environment and encourages students to ask questions, seek help, and actively participate in discussions. And he always offers clearly communication to help students understand what is expected and has a roadmap for the learning journey.
- 8

Instructor was very inclusive and welcoming.
- 9

very interesting
- 10

I felt like the piazza could have been more interactive but I understand that is also up to students. Very little sense of classmates in this course – potentially have an auto piazza where students can form study groups in their respective campuses?
- 11

The course can improve if better visualized in the class with proper slides and presentation.
- 12

1) Breaking down complex concepts into smaller modules and covering them in detail.

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

- 13

Worst course I ever took. Awful course! The professor is just a textbook reviewer. All course materials are from internet. The professor just scrolls through the textbook during the lectures telling to learn this and learn that. HWs were from textbook. Projects were from Moodle. Exams were graded arbitrarily. There is no criteria or even guideline for exams. No one really paid attention to piazza.
- 14

See above ^.
- 15

From the lectures it is obvious that the professor is passionate about distributed systems and knows about the content he is teaching. Students can ask him questions about the content and he can answer not only the student’s question but also provide more information.

As for improvements, I personally would have more clear grading criteria. For some of the assignments, I felt the grading was a bit harsh. Also, there were some cases where homework was due before the content had been taught.
- 16

Said above.
- 17

The instructor respects different solutions in the homework. We can get scores even if our solution is different from standard answer, as long as it can solve the problem.
- 18

N/A
- 19

NA
- 20

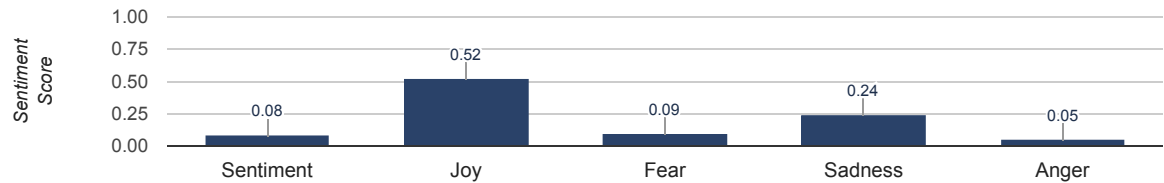
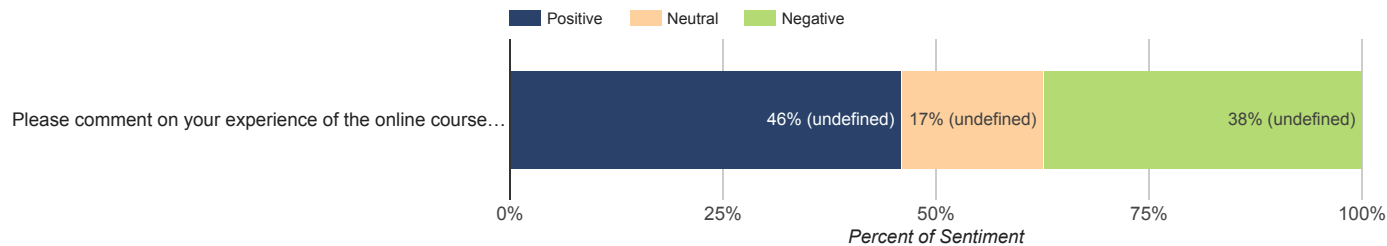
I understand this is a master level course and reading from a textbook and articles is requested and required, but, like I said in the above text box, it'd be helpful for visual learners to have access to more slides, animations, and videos, instead of just walls of text.
- 21

The class is scheduled for 2:30 hrs. An additional 30 mins could be used to illustrate the famous backend system design concepts. That said professor has already included them in modules. Spending a little time each week on this could intrigue students more.
- 22

N/A

Questions to Assess Students’ Online Experience (24 comments)

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



- 1

I wish the professor would go more in-depth into the materials during his lecture, the lecture should last 3 hours and go more in-depth into materials. I understand that for a graduate courses reading the textbook is important, but it is not acceptable to rely 90% on students reading the textbook to understand concepts. It should be 50% information explained clearly and in-depth in the lecture, and the rest covered by assignments and readings. The lecture is so disorganized, and professor only goes through concepts superfluously and not in-depth at all. Then, in the quiz, we are asked obscure details from the textbook. Without decent lectures, how do you expect students to ingest information from a dense textbook covering too much material. I have no idea which material is important and what I should focus on, and feel like my understanding of the course material is so shaky, since the only way I learned anything was through a textbook, and not through examples or actual information by the professor. Professor should actually prepare PowerPoint lecture and goes through them in a predefined way, instead of just scrolling through the textbooks and asking us to read it. If we can learn 100% of this through textbooks why would we pay \$6k for a professor who doesn't even prepare his own course.

I can't emphasize the lack of effort this professor put into the course. Lecture lasts 2 hours instead of the 3. No predefined slides or plans, just going through the textbook telling us what to read. Assignments are copied from textbooks. The project does not go in-depth and has copy-pasted instructions. Questions went unanswered often in Piazza. Homework and even the exam have almost no feedback. The funny thing is the professor provided a link to Youtube videos from the Distributed OS course at UMass Amherst in one of his notes, and the YouTube playlist taught me more than this professor ever did. ★☆☆
- 2

The online environment could have benefitted from better organization of the additional materials provided on the Canvas. ★★★★★
- 3

Very bad experience ★☆☆☆☆
- 4

I liked the projects they were challenging and I found it very helpful. The professor was very approachable and explained the concepts in detail. Had a great experience enrolling this course. ★★★★★
- 5

The online course is perfect for me. I have a conflict canlendar with this class. The recording allows me to watch the content after the class which is super helpful for me. The quizzes, homeworks and projects are very well designed. ★★★★★
- 6

It would have been better if that was more interactive. ★★★★★
- 7

A little messy and confusing at the beginning. Course materials not that clear. ★☆☆☆☆
- 8

I think online courses offer flexibility in terms of scheduling, allowing me to learn at my own pace. This flexibility can be particularly beneficial for students who have other commitments such as work or family responsibilities. ★★★★★
- 9

For the most part it felt pretty isolating, and I would have struggled more if I did not know people in-person who I could meet up and discuss the course with. ★☆☆☆☆

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

- 10

I have had better experiences in other NEU online courses. ★★★★★
- 11

It's an easy course if you have all the relevant experience and skills to complete this course. The course provides deep insights into algorithms and architecture working behind the scenes in a distributed system. ★★★★★
- 12

Organization of materials was very poor. Assignments were never connected to their submission, always buried away elsewhere. ★☆☆☆☆
- 13

Being remote, I did appreciate this course being available online. The overall experience has been great and I never had any hurdles. ★★★★★
- 14

Worst course I ever took. Awful course! The professor is just a textbook reviewer. All course materials are from internet. The professor just scrolls through the textbook during the lectures telling to learn this and learn that. HWS were from textbook. Projects were from Moodle. Exams were graded arbitrarily. There is no criteria or even guideline for exams. No one really paid attention to piazza. ★☆☆☆☆
- 15

It will be more helpful if some Tasks are more responsive ★★★★★
- 16

Little more explanation on assignments would be great.
More organized reading material with proper docs would be helpful. ★★★★★
- 17

I think this class would have been better in person. The online format made it more difficult to stay focused and near impossible to connect with other students to study. ★☆☆☆☆
- 18

Instructors replied early and often to piazza posts. Also, the relevant articles that the professor mentioned during class were posted on canvas. ★★★★★
- 19

Definitely should require camera-on and talking participation. Make it 10% of the grade or more. I think disengagement goes way up without it. Plus in the era of ChatGPT, the social aspect of learning is the main opportunity presented to us by learning in a class format. Without this aspect, I might as well just self-teach my way through a project. ★★★★★
- 20

This online course helps us learning knowledge very quickly, better than the traditional in-person form. ★★★★★
- 21

Course materials were educational, though could have been better organized within Canvas. Some artifacts from prior versions of the course remain in current assignment instructions. ★★★★★
- 22

The materials in canvas contains the content from the past semesters, and the homework/project is mixed with in lecture set. ★☆☆☆☆
- 23

The instructor needs to do a better job at organizing the various resources on Canvas: the Lecture Sets are confusing, as they contain materials from different lectures, and many files are duplicated. The resources should be categorized by either topics or lectures, since these latters are held only once a week. ★☆☆☆☆
- 24

Very good. ★★★★★

Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (23 comments)

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

- 1

strengthen basics of networking and OS
go though all materials in time
- 2

I should have taken this course with a professor who actually teaches.
- 3

I would have benefitted from digging into the additional reference material more thoroughly.
- 4

More engaging with the reading? Averaging 300 pages of readings and they are totally useless. I was looking for a more intuitive teaching and learning. However, all we had was textbook readings. Total BS
- 5

Nil
- 6

To devote more time towards the course with respect to multiple projects and concepts. Simulating to real world issues.
- 7

I practice a lot and finish the assignments on time.
- 8

Had some prior knowledge of Distributed Systems, OS and networking.
- 9

Be proactive with the readings and other materials.
- 10

do more project
- 11

More time spent with TAs during office hours.
- 12

Implementing more projects and increasing the difficulty or adding more real-life examples of distributed systems to implement in projects.
- 13

I missed the first few classes, in a hindsight, I could have attended those.
- 14

The whole course needs to be redesign
- 15

attend more office hour
- 16

Give increased time to reading resources.
- 17

I could have taken more detailed notes in class.
- 18

Although I could not attend the course at the in-class times I watched all the recordings. I think I worked hard over the semester but I should have probably sought help rather than working by myself. Also, not having a sufficient background in networks and operating systems made it so I found the early topics hard.
- 19

Not much.
- 20

I may spend more time reading the textbook before the class every week.
- 21

Have more time to read all materials.
- 22

I could have taken better notes on the reading.
- 23

Taking network course before enrolling this course.