Instructor: **Valcourt, Scott**

Subject: **CS**

Catalog & Section: **5008 03**

Course ID: **35056**

Objectives:

Enrollment: **30**

Responses Incl Declines: **19**

Declines: **0**

Instructor Related Questions: Scott Valcourt (22 comments)

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

1   Timing and Canvas are Organized.

2   very responsive professor

3   Passionate, knowledgeable, extremely accommodating.

4   Scott was a pleasure to have as a professor! I can tell that he really enjoys what he is teaching us, and that enthusiasm is contagious. He is very approachable and flexible, and makes it abundantly clear that the end goal here is learning, regardless of how long that may take.

5   Assignments (homework, labs), and live lectures were very helpful and interesting.

6   He is enthusiastic about the material which helps to make it more interesting.

7   Very responsive to student questions and very, very nice attitude

8   Very responsible and passionate about teaching. I think he offered us great help and some mental support

9   We can understand the points deeply through several kinds of teaching approaches.

10   The strengths of this course include lots of contents and interactive lessons, while the instructor excelled in clear communication, fostering an engaging learning environment.

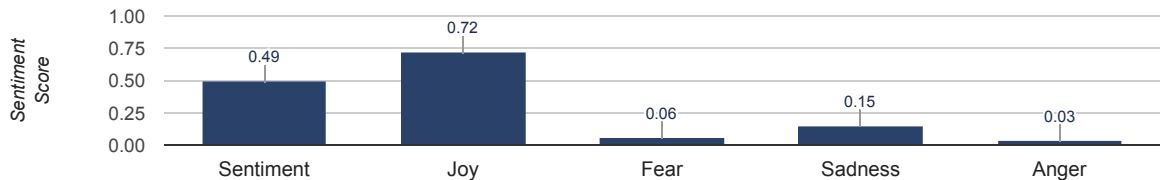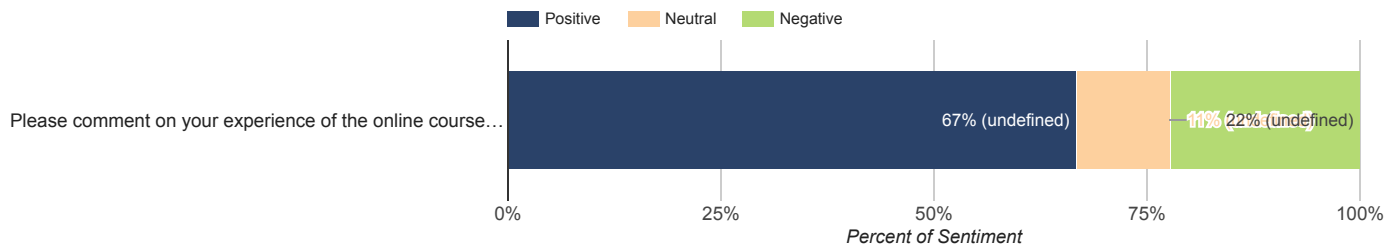### Q: What could the instructor do to make this course better?

1   Modify the presentation assignment. A bit too open ended which led to topics that were really big and not digestible in a presentation. More importantly, they took up too much class time.

2   Despite his infectious enthusiasm and the clarity with which he delivers his lectures, the 3 hour long form lecture is tough. If these lectures were delivered as twice weekly 90 minute sessions it would be much better, but even then I find that I learn best through discussion, not necessarily through note taking and listening.

   I think the lecture materials could be improved upon by asking questions to the class - getting us to actively chew on the material, and make those connections; if x then what? Having students provide the "what" here could improve engagement and retention - though this is all largely just my personal preference.

3   The lectures were good, I didn't feel overly compelled by most of the online videos and I felt like I learned more from the live lectures, the homework assignments, and the supplementary reading. One of the things that I liked about 5001 were the bite-sized coding assignments, and I think this course would profit from that.

4   The instructional design misses the mark for me and my learning style. This feedback is based on what works/could work for me. Take with a grain of salt. The class time is largely lecture with out any application or coding. The hardest part of the course is taking some pretty easily understood ideas and implementing them in a low level language with little built in. I think more class and recitation time could be done exploring coding challenges together, comparing solutions/doing code walk throughs, etc. Overall, there was a mismatch or missing connection/feedback loop between the huge amount of content that was presented sort of at a high level in lecture and the the assignments (particularly by the end of term) that we had to do outside of class time. I think the class would have been more effective and coherent for me if 1. We covered slightly less material (I think I would have appreciated a separate course focused on intro to systems but got little out of the high level in this course) 2. we did live coding/code walk throughs together in class in place of some of the lecture time, pairs/small groups/ presenting code solutions, etc, maybe using leet code or some other more bitesized assignment on the current topic/learning goal. Then used recitation to start to dig into the larger HW assignment. Just some suggestions. Ultimately, there were too many assignments, too little feedback and too little collaborative reflection on actual content learning, and in the end, I didn't feel like I was ready for the big tasks that wrap up the course.

5   None

6   Nothing that i could think of

7   The instructor could enhance the course by incorporating more examples.

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

1   This course is very dense - there is a TON of material to work through, and it is not necessarily intellectually easy stuff either. I think any instructor would struggle to cram all of this into a single semester, and without Scott's enthusiasm and approachability, I would have been far less inclined to not only attend (almost) every one of those 3 hour lectures, but to be actively looking forward to them each week!

   My final note: since we have so much material coming at us each week, perhaps recitations could be used more as review sessions of that week's materials, rather than for lab assignments that were only worth 1/10th of a homework assignment. I personally would spend hours each week on the lab assignments, which likely could have been better spent studying the materials we had been given previously and working on the homework assignments.

2   Prof. Valcourt has a very clear and comprehensive way of describing difficult content. While this course was intellectually challenging, I never remained stuck for too long and I learned a lot along the way.

3   Scott's passion makes it fun. There were topics that I thought I would never have any interest in but do feel curious about now because of his enthusiasm. He is very welcoming and generally creates a positive learning environment.

4   None

5   The instructor explains things well but could improve by using more examples and slowing down a bit.

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience (9 comments)

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

Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative ■

67% (undefined) 11% 22% (undefined)

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

Percent of Sentiment

Sentiment Score

Sentiment	Joy	Fear	Sadness	Anger
0.49	0.72	0.06	0.15	0.03

1   Excellent ★★★★★

2   very good ★★★★★

3   Videos are always hit or miss for me. I thought these were a good collection for the course. ★★☆☆☆

4   The video resources were better in 5008 than 5004, but they were still a slog. I found the videos that I could code along with way more useful than those that were just explaining concepts.

   I appreciate that we got some experience with SSH'ing into remote servers to do our assignments; that said, I had some technical difficulties with my server access, and that was something I spent a non-negligible amount of time fighting with. In the end though I was able to largely get it squared away. ★★☆☆☆

5   I'm currently living in multiple places and spending lots of time in different parts of Maine. For this reason, it's been difficult to attend in person although I try to as often as I can. Often with hybrid classes, it's easy to fall by the wayside as a remote student when the in-person cohort received priority. I always felt addressed and engaged by the class and it made me want to try harder and understand the material more thoroughly. The course was well paced and the instruction corresponded closely with the homework assignments. The flexibility of submission revisions let me take the time to fully understand applying the material and the way the projects were structured made it so that there was no way to ignore or not fully understand any of the important elements of each section. Many people feel very averse to the C language and the concept of pointers etc., but this course made that all very approachable and memorable. ★★★★☆

6   I was mostly present in person. ★★★☆☆

7   The teacher is very good, very nice and the lessons are great! ★★★★★

8   The class atmosphere is very relaxed and the professor is very friendly ★★★★★

9   The online course environment is easy to use and helps me learn effectively. ★★★★★

Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (7 comments)

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

1   study more

2   Spend less time worrying about my IDE and just use VSCode! I wasted a LOT of time going down VIM rabbit holes, which while interesting, were largely useless. Similarly, my time management was absolutely atrocious with this course. I also should have more readily utilized help from TA's.

3   More time to read additional content resources and keep up with the module videos.

4   Maybe a little C syntax in advance.

5   Practice more coding with C or C instead of Python when going through Leetcode Questions

6   It is particularly benefit for doing leetcode problems in the future.

7   I can utilize the additional resources provided to enhance my understanding of the course material.