

Instructor: **Mwaura, Jonathan**Subject: **CS**Catalog & Section: **5002 07**Course ID: **19798**

Objectives:

Enrollment: **24**Responses Incl Declines: **13**Declines: **0**

Instructor Related Questions: Jonathan Mwaura (26 comments)

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

- 1 Interested in the subject. The class group work was good when done, but was done less frequently as the semester went on.
- 2 The professor was extremely knowledgeable and open to multiple approaches to solve a problem. Additionally, he was always available and willing to explain a problem or concept multiple times until students got it.
He also incorporated feedback on the class structure as he got it, which I appreciated.
- 3 Funny examples provided, challenging problem set
- 4 Jonathan is a good person who is very passionate about the subject, very knowledgeable but the TA's dont understand the subject, the hw is interesting but honestly prefer it because it takes the concept in real life. Jonathan just needs to make class more interactive and lively and more accepting for questions
- 5 Professor Mwaura's strengths were in his enthusiasm and desire to serve us well. I think, again, that he was utterly kneecapped in his ability to do so by the structure of the course.
- 6 The instructor clearly understands the topics covered in the course
- 7 Professor is very kind and has a lot of enthusiasm for the material.
- 8 Prof Mwaura is a very smart and knowledgeable person and I enjoyed his enthusiasm. The course itself did a good job of helping me understand the topics.
- 9 Jonathan cares deeply about the material and making it useful and interesting. The homework assignments are very well designed

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

- 1 Better focus on actually teaching basic concepts and communicating effectively. Teaching does not seem to come naturally.
- 2 First, and most importantly: the idea of having this course split between two different campuses did a huge disservice to the professor and to the students on both campuses. Due to A/V issues, whichever class was attending remotely was always behind, and most of us who were attending class remotely didn't necessarily learn well that week.
Second, the professor struggled a little bit with time management. Sometimes, we would spend too long reviewing the previous module and not enough time on the module for the week, or the professor would spend too long explaining a concept that it seemed like most people got while breezing through concepts people were struggling with. I think using anonymous surveys to judge what the class is really struggling with conceptually would have made the lectures more effective.
- 3 Accent is a little strong
- 4 It would be great if he could synchronize his materials & teaching style to problem sets
If he could be more cautious when teaching. Online students would ask questions that would remain unanswered for the whole duration of the class.
We (online students) repeatedly inform the prof. we have trouble hearing him.
- 5 I think a closer review of the expected outcomes of the course would have helped. What we learned in class was pretty divergent from the modules, and I was never sure why. I also think more thought into how to handle a course in multiple locations so that we could have done in-class work productively would have been good. Overall, it felt like the class was an afterthought. Although to be fair to Professor Mwaura, he was being asked to teach in a ridiculous way.

Another major thing that would have helped was if the audio was more functional. When not in the room, Professor Mwaura was very hard to hear. I know there were mics in Portland, but they weren't used, and if there were mics in Boston, they weren't used either.
- 6 There was often a disconnect between the modules, the course slides, and the assignments. Topics in the modules would not be covered for a few weeks in the class, then the slides would use different terms or notation. The assignments may or may not include topics that we covered in class because we would spend so much time going over the same topics over and over again across multiple weeks, then rush through new topics as we raced against the clock. It often took over a month to get a grade back on an assignment, and that may come with little to no feedback. If this instructor would manage his time, pacing, classroom management, lines of communication, and assignments better then the course would improve greatly.
- 7 I'd imagine that this is a tough course to teach because of the vast topics covered. With that, the class felt very unorganized most of the time. There were classes that I watched the videos for, but the session the Professor taught that night was not the same material. This actually happened 3-4 times.
- 8 It often felt like the pace of the in-class instruction was too slow to keep up with the pace at which the modules covered the material. There were also times where examples which had been laid out in the modules were repeated in class, and time would have been better served with a different example instead.
- 9 Some of the advanced set theory was a bit over my head as non-Math major. Towards the middle, things seemed to get out of sequence with the online videos, but later we learned that the quizzes and the homework were synched up

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

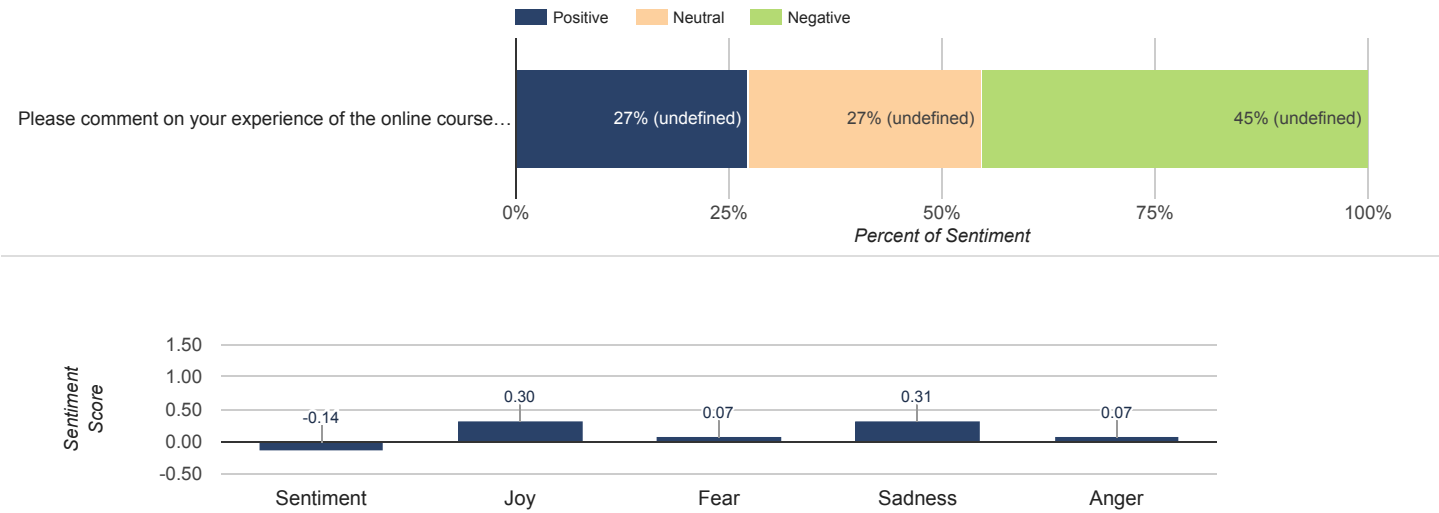
- 1 Really focus on clear structure of your lessons and do better to avoid students disengaging from the course.
- 2 Pose answer of problem set on canvas
- 3 He was passionate about the course
- 4 Professor Mwaura is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. I believe that if he was able to focus on one group of students, not three, and had a better sense of what the concepts we were intended to be learning were, and didn't have to wrestle with technology quite so much, he would be able to communicate what about the topic made him enthusiastic and helped the class share that knowledge and enthusiasm.
- 5 The instructor needs a great deal of help in making the remote portions of the class better. He has trouble remembering to speak into the microphone and often stops using the features built into Zoom to write something onto a whiteboard off camera. It is draining to actively listen while trying to decipher what is being said or written about complex topics.
- 6 The in-class team interactions did not work well as it was often lost on us what you expected us to do.
- 7 Prof Mwaura was very good at trying to get his students engaged and as mentioned earlier, he was put in an awful position. DO NOT EVER ASK STUDENTS TO ATTEND OR A PROFESSOR TO TEACH A CLASS IF THE PROFESSOR IS GOING TO BE SWITCHING CAMPUSES. IT WAS RIDICULOUS AND NEU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WAS A STUPID IDEA FROM THE START.

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

- 8
- Jonathan has a deep understanding of the material. The classroom exercises on graphs were useful (using excellent paper handouts), so more time spent doing interactive math problems in the classroom would be useful.

Questions to Assess Students’ Online Experience (11 comments)

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



- 1
- Online course material was sufficient. ★★★★★
- 2
- I was not always sure of which module was meant to be covered in which week with the flipped course format - I would've liked to see an updating schedule or to clearly be told what we would be reviewing in the next class during class. ★☆☆☆☆
- 3
- The microphone. The ability of receiving voice need to be improved ★★★★★
- 4
- Noisy. ★☆☆☆☆
- 5
- When Jonathan was in boston he was hard to understand so those classes became null ★★★★★
- 6
- It was a really tough experience for me. I had a hard time trying to connect the materials taught in class and the problem sets. I had to spend a lot of time searching online to understand the problem sets ★☆☆☆☆
- 7
- It was hard to know what materials to review, as our progress through the modules was not clear-- sometimes we spent multiple weeks on one topic, sometimes only one.

In addition, many of the modules were very frustrating to watch. I think I understood some concepts LESS well after watching some of the videos. ★★★★★
- 8
- The modules were very helpful, though having to navigate Canvas, Gradescope, Teams, and email for updates was taxing ★★★★★
- 9
- Lots of material were presented to us but they were located in different areas (Canvas vs Teams vs Teams Team...). ★★★★★
- 10
- I'm not sure whose bright idea it was to split a course between Boston and Portland and have the teacher rotate between the two locations but it put Prof. Mwaura in a terrible position and was a hindrance to putting students in their first bridge semester in a position to succeed. ★☆☆☆☆
- 11
- The classroom technology needs to improve to approach the effectiveness of in-person instructor with a physical whiteboard/blackboard. 1) The Digital pens used don't work and are almost impossible to read or use when the instructor tries to write something on the screen, so generally they have to rely on powerpoint slides. 2) Audio quality is frequently bad - needs an upgrade. The hybrid classroom experience needs to be improved - it was a major disadvantage that the course was taught in 2 physical locations. The A/V setup in Boston is not as good as Portland ★☆☆☆☆

Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (9 comments)

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

- 1
- Read the material before class so I would be engaged
- 2
- Honestly, I wish I'd referenced other Discrete Mathematics materials. The approach the professor took was not always an approach that worked for me, and I actually learned the most by doing - I wish I'd thought to seek out more practice problems.
- 3
- Build a stronger relationship with professor
- 4
- N
- 5
- Maybe if the course was more structured, I didn't have a hard time doing the problem sets. the materials provided in the class were not sufficient to do the problem sets
- 6
- I'm not sure. The class was set up to fail from the start-- by asking the professor to teach in two physical locations as well as catering to an online cohort, it was nearly impossible to have a coherent sense of the course.
- 7
- Attend in person when professor was on campus.

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

8 attend office hours more frequently when I had trouble understanding a topic.

9 Engaged with the professor and teaching assistants earlier in the term for help when needed.