Data Str, Algo App in CmpSys (Spring 2024)

Instructor: **Akhmetov, Ildar**
Subject: **CS**
Catalog & Section: **5008 11**
Course ID: **40391**
Objectives:

Enrollment: **34**
Responses Incl Declines: **14**
Declines: **0**

Instructor Related Questions: Ildar Akhmetov (10 comments)

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

1 Well-designed course structure.
Great instructors with patience and knowledge, almost always available after class.
Efficient in-class time, cover the main topics of online materials, but it is kind of extension, not repetition.

2 Ildar is patient, he explains complex concepts clearly, and as a teacher, I appreciate his ability to empathize with his students.

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

1 The content of the first half of the semester was very simple, but the difficulty increased dramatically in later chapters. However, the teaching time for both was the same. I hope we can compress the teaching time for the first half of the data structure, and spend more time teaching the latter part. For example, we spent several weeks on sorting, but only one week on networking. And for the networking assignments, we really didn't know how sockets operate.

Also, the lab (CS5009) operates like a Q&A session. We work independently, only seeking help from the ta when we have questions. I hope the instructors can make better use of this time. Perhaps they could demonstrate how we can debug, set up Makefile, or configure Vim during class, and more.

2 Because students come here with different learning objectives, like some of them are determined to become software engineers after graduation, while others might only want to learn some basics in order to continue their previous career (such as they are working in a tech-combined sector), the comments on this course would vary I guess. Given the competitive job searching market for IT in Vancouver, what we have done is not enough. But if you only consider a career requiring some knowledge about programming, some parts of the course could be overloading. For example, solving 12 LeetCode problems perfectly would not be enough for those aiming to become a software engineer, but could be too much for those who do not wish to become a SDE in the future career. For me, this course is a good introductory course, it gives me the courage to deal with LeetCode and confidence in my future career transition. It is just a fit for me. The workload is balanced in my opinion. Before coming to NEU, I have learned some basics by myself, and I prefer self learning, so I consider the workload and difficulty of this course reasonable. But I have to say that there are students, especially those "real Aligners" (which means they do not have knowledge about data structures and algorithms before they came to NEU and are not good at learning by themselves), the content might be a little bit challenging. From my perspective, this is the best align course, and I have learned a lot. But I think there are problems when someone who are not good at data structures and self learning encounters LeetCode problems for the first time of their life, especially if we consider the different objectives I mentioned at the start. They even struggle to learn the basics, not to mention that we never actually teach how to use these data structures and algorithms to solve complicated problems in LeetCode. I do not have a clear suggestion about these problem, and I think the instructors have done their best. However, I wish to raise these points to improve the awareness of the fact that different students are facing different situations by providing my opinion on this. Considering different needs of students with different levels might be something that could lead to improvement. In addition, because of the nature of different learning objectives, sometimes group work is discouraging. I want to discuss the in-class problems with my teammates, but they are not always willing to discuss with me. And when it comes to the concept presentation in groups, the situation could be worse. I do not want to blame my teammates because I totally understand their situations: they never wish to be a SDE in the future, they just need some knowledge about computer science because they have work experience in an IT-combined fields or wish to work in these fields. They are not seeking for a complete career transition, but for adapting this IT-driven era.

3 Nope, Ildar is the best!

4 Better course structure and reduce workload

5 I've got some thoughts on how the course is set up. Honestly, it feels a bit all over the place. Like, we spend time learning how to install virtual machines, but then we never actually use that later on. And then suddenly we're jumping from networking straight into data structures, which feels kind of random. I don't think it's the teacher's fault, though. It seems more like a problem with how the course itself is designed. Furthermore, the quizzes are often ambiguous, making it challenging to understand what the questions are asking us to do.

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

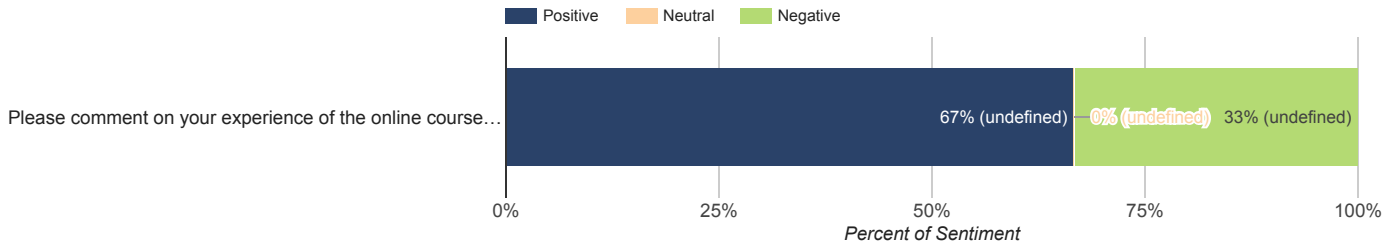
1 Ildar is good at evaluating students and discovering their potentials. He could just use several questions and know your actual level. And so do the whole design of this course. I am the one who said about the different situations of students at different levels. I know the course have provided a lot of bonus materials, which is great for those who learn well and have extra time. If we could take the advantage of the various evaluation methods(hw, lab, code walks, quiz, etc.), and give additional help and detailed feedback to those who are not receiving good results, this might help.

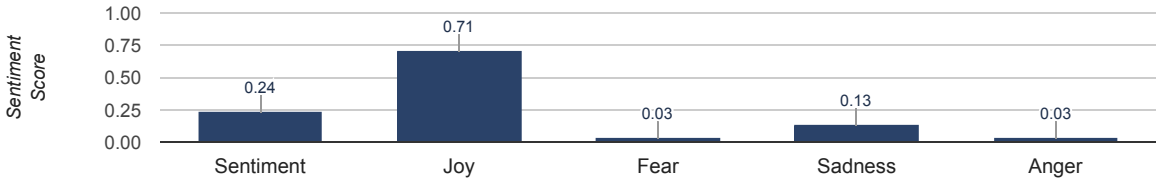
2 He is knowledgeable and patient, always simplifying complex topics and helping students in any way he can.

3 The course crammed too many materials into one semester without carefully considering what students can manage. Most of our classmates focus on finishing homework rather than learning and digesting knowledge—because we have no time!
We normally don't receive feedback from instructors on the assignments we complete: homework, labs, quizzes. We don't even know where we made mistakes or what the correct answers are. How are we expected to learn from our mistakes? If we cannot learn from our mistakes, how can we improve?
It's a game of luck. We do lab codewalks randomly; some get easy questions, and some get hard ones. We all invest the same time and pay the same tuition, so why do some of us gain an advantage while others don't? If you say this is what we encounter in real-life jobs, well, we don't pay employers, do we? Moreover, getting a job may not be the ultimate goal for some of us but to learn more about computer science. So why do we have this unfair game?

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience (3 comments)

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





1	Logan and Ildar give efficient and in-time responses on Piazza. The online resources are good compared CS5004 ones. ★★★★★
2	All the videos online are informative and helpful. ★★★★★
3	Online materials are very limited and not enough to cover what we are asked to do in the course ★☆☆☆☆

Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (3 comments)

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

1	Devote more time
2	I devoted a lot of time to this course and I do not think I could devote more time if do it again.
3	I put enormous of time in this course