Year of study: Senior

a) Distributed Systems (CS 582)  
b)It opens more opportunities for you in Sproj and you will gain a deeper insight into world of networks and backend programming. I obviously loved how we were reading research papers for the famous distributed systems in the industry and completely understand their intuition and design choices. Especially if you love creating applications and want to head towards industry, it is totally recommended. For me, making a decision about my favorite field became more clearer as I took advanced courses in Junior fall.  
Workload: Let me be clear, it's a very demanding course and you would have to read and reflect on research papers every week. There will be very hard assignments which might seem impossible at first but they require a lot of time as debugging them requires a very different mindset.  
Personally, I would recommend taking but be warned that it is very very workload intensive and your junior fall is already pretty heavy already. So only take it if you are passionate about it otherwise it will be a nightmare.  
c) 4

Gpa: a) Distributed Systems (CS 582)  
b)CS 582 - Distributed Systems Review  
As Rafae said, DS is one of the courses, you learn most about networks in. You not only learn about state of the art network protocols and system designs but you also learn about their applications in industry. The course is actually not very hard, it is quite interesting. Also the way Dr Zafar teaches it is great, he makes you think about algorithms and protocols in class. This is also one of the most organised grad level course I have taken. Dr. Zafar is kind of lenient with grade as well.  
The course mainly consists of 4 programming assignments and few paper summaries. Assignments are not as long as netcen ones but you may spend a lot more time thinking about design. Also assignments’ programming language is Go, so having taken AP may give you a marginal benefit.  
c) 5