Year of study: Senior

a) Distributed Systems (CS 582)  
b)I would also totally recommend it. If you like netcen, then distributed systems will surely be interesting for you. A genuine advice if you take the course: attend all lectures and participate in the class discussion because it will clarify your concepts as compared to watching recorded lectures. Also, Zir Zafar encourages everyone to do discussions in class.  
Workload: Your programming assignments will be in Go lang so there will be a slight learning curve. I took this course with other advance courses so it became a little nightmare for me, but in the end it was worth it.  
So, take it if you are confident that you can handle the workload and really interested in exploring this area.  
c) 3

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