Year of study: Senior

a) Distributed Systems (CS 582)  
b)Distributed Systems is an amazing course, probably one of my favorites during my undergrad. But only take it if you enjoyed netcen and would like to learn more about the systems and networks field.  
I'll summarize the workload over here too. Similar to netcen, you will have a quiz almost every 3rd-4th class so a total of 8-9 quizzes. You will have 4 PA in Go. Go takes some getting used to but it is not a very difficult language if you already know C++ and Python (its somewhat of a mix of the two) and its a super interesting language in terms of the concurrency APIs it provides. All assignments are doable in a < 3 day span except PA3. You will implement a real-world consensus algorithm (Raft) by yourself and that assignment will be extremely difficult and time consuming but very rewarding in terms of learning as well. As for the paper readings, they begin towards the end of semester. In the last ~10 classes you will study a paper in each class about real-world distributed systems used in the industry. 1)papers are very interesting and 2) i disagree with what others have said, it usually takes 3-4 hours to do this task. So you can even do it the night it is due. You are given a small analytical question and based on what you have learnt from the paper, you answer that question.  
As far as the instructor is concerned, I might be biased, but I think Dr Zafar is hands down the best instructor in the CS department. Knows his stuff very well, explains everything in detail, very encouraging of questions and class discussion, and most importantly very empathetic. If you have an extenuating circumstance, he will try his best to accommodate you. At the same time, he's also very strict in terms of rules, especially cheating/plagiarism. Dont do that in any of his courses, he usually sends to DC directly.  
c) 5

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