

## A First Course in Probability (Spring 2019)

Instructor: **Sarantsev, Andrey**

Subject: **STAT**

Catalog & Section: **461 1001**

Course ID: **27380**

Objectives: **Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:**

**1. demonstrate understanding of randomness and be able to use probability models to explain simple random phenomena. In addition, students will be able to compute summaries of probability distributions (univariate and multivariate).**

**2. compute measures of location, dispersion, and association, as well as probability of interest for many univariate and multivariate distributions.**

**3. assess and make use of the asymptotic results provided by the Law of Large Numbers and the Central Limit Theorem and their connection to the estimates of quantities from data.**

**Enrollment: 60**

**Responses Incl Declines: 22**

**Declines: 0**

### Teaching (Lecture) (36 comments)

**Q: Please provide your thoughts on the instructor's teaching, including strengths and areas for possible improvement.**

- 1 He explains everything clearly, with examples.**
- 2 Dr. Sarantsev was clear and concise in his lectures. He would answer any questions fully. There was a good amount of homework to prepare us for exams, but not too much to overwhelm us. Dr. Sarantsev clearly cares very much about statistics and his students.**
- 3 The teacher was amazing. He had great pacing and was really good at explaining material. He answered questions really in depth, and really wanted us to succeed. He had many office hours, and even if you couldn't make the office hours, he was great about answering questions through email. Overall a great teacher I would recommend to other students.**
- 4 I really enjoyed Dr. Sarantsev teaching. He made this class very enjoyable by showing up with a positive attitude every day. I would very much enjoy taking another course with Dr. Sarantsev. I have no suggestions for possible improvements.**
- 5 Great and straightforward, I wish professors were more like him.**
- 6 Sometimes there would be awkward pauses in the middle of lecture with just silence and I feel like we could be done a lot faster.**
- 7 Professor Sarantsev, you are an awesome professor. When you lecture, you are very clear and concise in your definitions, theorems, etc. You also provide many examples and are good at answering questions directly.**  
  
**The one single thing I would like to see you do in the future is provide more examples that aren't from the SOA (or otherwise finance-related). Statistics can be applied to ALL SORTS of things, and it feels like I am only somewhat prepared to apply my knowledge of statistics since the only context we have used it in is finance.**
- 8 Andrey is a great teacher. He is super attentive to his student's needs, and is super willing to help and answer questions. I have never seen another teacher who has as many office hours as he has, and I really wish some other teachers would follow that example because it really helps.**
- 9 Clear and concise. Made this class easy**
- 10 Instructor had the best interests of the students in mind when assigning hw, tests, etc.**
- 11 I really thought that Professor Sarantsev's teaching style was very effective. I think he does a good job of bringing up topics and giving enough examples in class that give us enough preparation on the expected application. For the most part, the homework was fair, and I thought that it asked questions that were very similar to the exams, so it was good preparation. Towards the end of the semester however, there were various questions on the homework that I thought were extremely difficult to do correctly, and oftentimes took me a long time to even understand how I was supposed to do them. Generally the homework would take me 2 hours to finish every week. The exams I thought were very fair. They always asked questions that were direct examples from class, so if you went to class and understood the material, the tests were very easy to do.**
- 12 Made it difficult to follow. I tried attending office hours but it didn't help me. He questioned why I was taking so many classes and working so much and that this affected my school work, however, not everyone has a choice.**
- 13 Dr. Sarantsev allowed plenty of time to copy down notes, ask questions, and asked for student feedback to tailor**

his teaching style to the students.

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- 14 I enjoyed this class. The instructor was very clear with what the lesson was for the day and what information was important to remember or master. I also appreciated the amount of examples provided. It made it easier to understand the concepts being shown in class.
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- 15 I like Dr. Sarantsev! He was a very helpful professor, and tried his best to help the students understand the material.
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- 16 Repeats himself too much but is definitely knowledgeable in the course material.
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- 17 Excellent lectures with relevant examples. Nice job Andrey, your namesake would be proud.
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- 18 Andrey is a good professor in my opinion, however I feel he had a hard time pacing the class in an effective way. We spent a lot of time on the simple beginning stuff at the cost of the harder, more complicated parts. Also, the in class examples were often too easy, so on the harder homework problems, you had to learn a lot on your own. He was very helpful, his tests were fair, and his lectures were good. Overall I liked Andrey as a professor.
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- 19 This is an incredible professor. He needs to keep doing exactly what he's doing.

**Q: Please provide your thoughts on the course as a whole, including strengths and areas for possible improvement.**

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- 1 The first half of the course was very easy, with difficulty ramping up very quickly after the second midterm (halfway through the course). I wish that we had spent less time on the easy stuff in the beginning so we could have spent more time on the more difficult material in the second half of the course.
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- 2 The course was easy to succeed, and very fair. The final is an extensive portion of the overall grade though. I would have liked it to be a little less just so it doesn't make your grade go down so much if you don't do the best on it.
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- 3 This course was a great introduction course to statistics. I feel like the content covered was applicable to real world problems, and I appreciated this. It was nice seeing math actually being used so solve real problems. I have no suggestions for possible improvements.
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- 4 I don't understand why this can't be in place of a regular stat 352 class. The material is practically identical but 461 is more theoretical.
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- 5 I don't like how some of the important points or equations are in the online notes but not necessarily explicitly discussed in class.
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- 6 Overall, the class felt a bit too easy. More proofs / more rigorous definitions and theorems would be nice, especially since it's a 400-level class. In addition, the exams were so easy that it felt like I, as a student who studied a lot for this class, did not feel rewarded for going the extra mile.
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- 7 The class was hard, but he allows us to succeed by his teaching and standards.
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- 8 For a 400 level course, I felt like this class was equivalent to an introductory level STAT course.
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- 9 I thought the course was well organised. I went in knowing very little about statistics, and came out knowing pretty much everything that was expected. To be honest, the only thing I didn't really like about the class was that it was a monday wednesday friday class instead of just a monday wednesday class.
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- 10 I am awful at stats and taking a 400 level class with no prior knowledge of stats is very difficult.
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- 11 Some of this class content crosses over with STAT 352, but it was good to have some review of concepts.
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- 12 Overall, I enjoyed this course. The homework was always consistent, and when it was difficult the professor was okay with giving us more time to finish it. The exams were also straightforward; however, there were times where the questions did not align with the questions on the study guide. I also don't understand the scoring of the exams. Even if the work is incorrect, students should still get points for attempting the problem instead of a zero.
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- 13 I think the course as a whole is structured well. There was adequate time allotted to each topic and it was fairly easy to understand. I only started to get confused on material towards the end of the class because school was getting more hectic.
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- 14 Great way of teaching, maybe more hands on?
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- 15 The lectures covered necessary facets of a 400-600 course in probability. For more advanced topics, students could refer to the Probability-120.pdf in Canvas. That is an excellent document.
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- 16 I don't like stats.
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- 17 This class can be tough at times but overall it is a great class.