

Virginia Tech

Spring 2024 VT Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT)

Course: CS_4104_13401_202401: Data and Algorithm Analysis-CS_4104_13401_202401
Instructor: Alex Hicks *
Response Rate: 40/46 (86.96 %)

1 - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1A - The instructor was well prepared.

Alex Hicks

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Strongly disagree	(1)	0	0.00%			5.28	5.30	5.22			
Disagree	(2)	1	2.56%								
Somewhat disagree	(3)	0	0.00%								
Somewhat agree	(4)	4	10.26%	■							
Agree	(5)	16	41.03%	■							
Strongly agree	(6)	18	46.15%	■							
					0 25 50 100	Question	College	Department			
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	College	Mean	STD	Median	Department	Mean	STD	Median
39/46 (84.78%)	5.28	0.86	5.00	20951	5.30	1.03	6.00	4511	5.22	1.03	5.00

1 - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1B - The instructor presented the subject matter clearly.

Alex Hicks

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Strongly disagree	(1)	0	0.00%			4.95	5.12	5.06			
Disagree	(2)	1	2.56%								
Somewhat disagree	(3)	3	7.69%	■							
Somewhat agree	(4)	6	15.38%	■							
Agree	(5)	16	41.03%	■							
Strongly agree	(6)	13	33.33%	■							
					0 25 50 100	Question	College	Department			
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	College	Mean	STD	Median	Department	Mean	STD	Median
39/46 (84.78%)	4.95	1.02	5.00	20794	5.12	1.19	6.00	4476	5.06	1.16	5.00

1 - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1C - The instructor provided feedback intended to improve my course performance.

Alex Hicks

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Strongly disagree	(1)	0	0.00%			4.97	5.09	5.00			
Disagree	(2)	1	2.56%								
Somewhat disagree	(3)	1	2.56%								
Somewhat agree	(4)	9	23.08%	■							
Agree	(5)	15	38.46%	■							
Strongly agree	(6)	13	33.33%	■							
					0 25 50 100	Question	College	Department			
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	College	Mean	STD	Median	Department	Mean	STD	Median
39/46 (84.78%)	4.97	0.96	5.00	20801	5.09	1.20	5.00	4488	5.00	1.23	5.00

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Response Rate: 40/46 (86.96 %)

1 - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1D - The instructor fostered an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Alex Hicks

Response Option		Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Strongly disagree		(1)	0	0.00%								
Disagree		(2)	0	0.00%								
Somewhat disagree		(3)	0	0.00%								
Somewhat agree		(4)	1	2.56%								
Agree		(5)	13	33.33%								
Strongly agree		(6)	25	64.10%								
					0	25	50	100	Question	College	Department	
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	College	Mean	STD	Median	Department	Mean	STD	Median
39/46 (84.78%)		5.62	0.54	6.00	20781	5.38	0.99	6.00	4476	5.31	1.01	6.00

1 - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1E - Overall, the instructor's teaching was effective.

Alex Hicks

Response Option		Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Strongly disagree		(1)	0	0.00%								
Disagree		(2)	1	2.56%								
Somewhat disagree		(3)	2	5.13%								
Somewhat agree		(4)	4	10.26%								
Agree		(5)	18	46.15%								
Strongly agree		(6)	14	35.90%								
					0	25	50	100	Question	College	Department	
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	College	Mean	STD	Median	Department	Mean	STD	Median
39/46 (84.78%)		5.08	0.96	5.00	20662	5.11	1.22	5.00	4459	5.01	1.23	5.00

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2 - 2A - What did the instructor do that most helped in your learning?

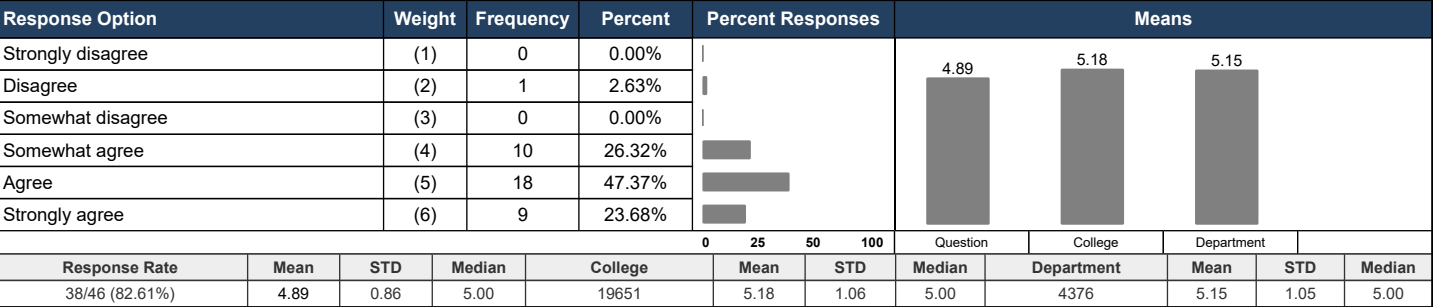
Alex Hicks

Response Rate26/46 (56.52%)

- He checked if students had questions or thoughts on the subject matter in general.
- good
- Loved the type of problems we went over in lectures and on the homeworks, I found them super interesting. I like how they weren't just copy and pasted from Leetcode, they were real-world problems and sometimes abstract. They really made me think. I felt like I could pay attention and follow along in the lectures and that they were engaging, even for an 8 am. The courseload wasn't overwhelming, but we definitely had to start the homeworks early and use office hours a couple of times.
- Posted the slides online and was always available during office hours
- Answered questions
- He went in-depth in working on problems during class, which helped for exams on how to think.
- I liked his grading scale, and it definitely helped me with working hard in the class
- Post the slides for after class review and studying.
- The homework had good questions on them that helped reinforce what I learned in class
- Upload all presentations online
- Related what we were covering to the real world; covered why these things we were learning are important as computer science students.
- He was very well prepared for class material, and he has been ready to answer questions from the students.
- He explained things clearly and seemed to know the material well.
- Professor Hicks was very kind and not strict. I've found that I learn most effectively in classes where I don't feel a ton of pressure to do some crazy hard assignment and where there's harsh grading on difficult concepts. He made the content accessible and encouraged learning through his grading style. I felt encouraged to attend lecture and study, but not forced, which makes a huge difference.
- Had multiple options in how we can learn and how we can go about class.
- Make the powerpoint more readable
- The Abominal Snowman game really helped me understand the adversary argument. I think more examples like that would help us learn the material.
- Share notes, and give plenty of time for homeworks
- The professor reply email very quick.
- Hands on assignments
- He was very helpful after/outside of class when I had trouble understanding complicated concepts.
- Made the material relevant to what he tested us on, and the homeworks reflected what he expected us to know which was very helpful
- He had very extensive slides and we could tell he understood a lot about the subject, which made it easy to ask clarifying questions.
- Posting the lecture notes online when I was unable to attend class made falling behind much less likely for me.
- Giving constructive feedback and modifying the structure of the class to fit the students taking it.
- The professor provided comprehensive notes.

3 - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

3A - I have a deeper understanding of the subject matter as a result of this course.



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Response Rate:40/46 (86.96 %)

3 - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

3B - My interest in the subject matter was stimulated by this course.

Response Option		Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means									
Strongly disagree		(1)	0	0.00%											
Disagree		(2)	1	2.63%											
Somewhat disagree		(3)	4	10.53%											
Somewhat agree		(4)	12	31.58%											
Agree		(5)	12	31.58%											
Strongly agree		(6)	9	23.68%											
					0	25	50	100	Question		College		Department		
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	College		Mean	STD	Median	Department		Mean	STD	Median	
38/46 (82.61%)		4.63	1.05	5.00	19554		4.98	1.27	5.00	4365		4.96	1.26	5.00	

4 - 4A - What could you have done to be a better learner?

Response Rate	26/46 (56.52%)
<div><div><div>• I could've read the textbook more.</div><div>• good</div><div>• The extra credit work seemed interesting, I just didn't have time to complete it. Busy week.</div><div>• Asked more questions about what I didn't understand</div><div>• Tried harder</div><div>• I could have taken notes throughout the semester, I did not because the lecture slides are posted online.</div><div>• Read the textbook or asked more questions about subjects I didn't understand.</div><div>• Went over notes more, studied more</div><div>• Wake up for class more often</div><div>• Started homeworks earlier.</div><div>• I should have gone to bed earlier since this is 8am class :(</div><div>• I could have focused more in class.</div><div>• Honestly, if this wasn't an 8am I might've absorbed a tad more information. Maybe I could've gotten better about listening when sleepy?</div><div>• Asked the professor more questions and go to office hours more</div><div>• N/A</div><div>• I didn't pay attention much during class.</div><div>• I could've studied more</div><div>• learn something else by myself</div><div>• More hands on coding assignments would have been nice to have</div><div>• I could have attended some more classes. I had trouble getting to class because of how early it was and how late I had to stay up for work.</div><div>• Reviewed the lecture slides more</div><div>• review more about the lecture ppt</div><div>• I could have reviewed lecture notes/slides more before or after class.</div><div>• There were many days that I did not go to class because it was at 8 am. I am a senior. In no way should I be forced to have an 8 am class in my final semester.</div><div>• I could have actively participated in class more.</div><div>• I could have attended more lectures.</div></div></div>	

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Response Rate:40/46 (86.96 %)

5 - 5A - Please add any additional comments regarding the course and/or instructor here:

Alex Hicks

Response Rate	21/46 (45.65%)
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- good
- I know that Alex Hicks is a graduate student and it was an 8 am class, however, it was clear to me that he did not understand some of the material he was supposed to be teaching us. He said that the slides were not his and it was apparent that he did not read (at least some of them) ahead of time. Therefore, he spent a lot of time reading off of the slides and speaker notes, which I found to be a very ineffective teaching strategy. It was hard to pay attention, especially when he made some fairly egregious mistakes when working examples, because I felt like I could learn better if I just read the slides on my own time and spent the remaining time reading the textbook or OpenDSA. So that's what I did during class time because attendance was part of our grade. Please do not let any lecturer use attendance to directly affect grades. Whether that's through the obvious "attendance quiz" scheme or the less obvious "pop quizzes" strategy. If a class is discussion based or something like senior design where you need to work with your group that's different, but in general I have never enjoyed a lecture-based course with mandatory attendance.
- Would love to take more courses from Professor Hicks in the future. This was one of my favorite classes I've taken at the school so far, I like how algorithm and math oriented the problems were. I feel like he presented the material in a clear and engaging way and it really made the class enjoyable to go to.
- The way the math is presented on the slides is hard to follow sometimes, which left me confused on how to solve some problems.
- Very good teacher
- None
- Good professor and great educator, just sometimes the course was a little "boring" from the subject matter itself.
- Great class, great professor, just found it hard waking up at 8am for class every week.
- At a point studying for quizzes were difficult as those questions were heavily based on problem solving abilities.
- Thank you so much
- It was difficult to stay engaged because it was 8am and it was a more traditional lecture so I wasn't always paying attention
- Great class, great professor!
- Honestly loved the class. I think its worth waking up for the most part at 8am
- N/A
- I think more explanations in the slides might have been good, so it would be easier to understand what was going on when reviewing the material.
- N/A
- He was a great professor!
- if there are sample exams would be better.
- Sometimes he explained things in the slide when I wish he wrote out more logic visually on the board. Some things were hard to understand when I didn't know where the math came from. But overall a well structured class.
- Prof. Hicks was an absolute pleasure to learn from. Smart guy.
- I felt that the course material taught in class was tangentially related to our homework and quizzes. It often felt like the materials we were assessed on were entirely different from those we were learning during class. I also felt like the in-class presentation materials were too closely adapted from OpenDSA, and while I appreciate the more technical approach it takes, I would have liked the slides to focus more on concise explanations of the concepts with alternative examples and explanations. This would have allowed OpenDSA to serve as an additional resource; instead I felt like it was so similar to the presentation material that studying both was pointless, so I prioritized the more comprehensive OpenDSA materials.

6 - 6A - How would you rate the physical environment in which you took this class based upon your ability to see, hear, concentrate, and participate?

Response Option		Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means								
Very Bad		(1)	1	2.56%			5.26	5.27	5.22	Question	College	Department		
Bad		(2)	0	0.00%										
Poor		(3)	0	0.00%										
Fair		(4)	4	10.26%										
Good		(5)	16	41.03%										
Very Good		(6)	18	46.15%										
0 25 50 100														
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	College		Mean	STD	Median	Department		Mean	STD	Median
39/46 (84.78%)		5.26	0.97	5.00	19473		5.27	0.91	5.00	4334		5.22	0.95	5.00

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Response Rate:40/46 (86.96 %)

7 - 7A - Please add any comments about the physical environment here:

Response Rate	17/46 (36.96%)
<div><div>• good</div><div>• Good classroom.</div><div>• It was an 8am class</div><div>• All good!</div><div>• good environment for the course and amount of students.</div><div>• Class was scheduled too early in the morning</div><div>• Good, standard classroom</div><div>• Good</div><div>• Pretty good</div><div>• environment was fine, easy to read screen and hear him</div><div>• nothing it seems chill</div><div>• N/A</div><div>• N/A</div><div>• Bad time and too far</div><div>• Slightly cold all the time</div><div>• that was good</div><div>• N/A</div></div>	

8 - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

I improved my ability to problem solve.

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Strongly disagree	(1)	0	0.00%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div>5.08</div><div>5.15</div><div>5.12</div></div>						
Disagree	(2)	0	0.00%								
Somewhat disagree	(3)	0	0.00%								
Somewhat agree	(4)	9	23.08%								
Agree	(5)	18	46.15%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>							
Strongly agree	(6)	12	30.77%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>							
				02550100	Question	College	Department				
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	College	Mean	STD	Median	Department	Mean	STD	Median
39/46 (84.78%)	5.08	0.74	5.00	19602	5.15	1.01	5.00	4359	5.12	1.00	5.00

8 - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

The textbook or course readings made a valuable contribution to my learning.

Response Option	Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Strongly disagree	(1)	4	10.26%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div>4.03</div><div>4.73</div><div>4.79</div></div>						
Disagree	(2)	3	7.69%								
Somewhat disagree	(3)	7	17.95%								
Somewhat agree	(4)	8	20.51%								
Agree	(5)	8	20.51%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>							
Strongly agree	(6)	9	23.08%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>							
				02550100	Question	College	Department				
Response Rate	Mean	STD	Median	College	Mean	STD	Median	Department	Mean	STD	Median
39/46 (84.78%)	4.03	1.61	4.00	19499	4.73	1.37	5.00	4334	4.79	1.33	5.00

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Instructor: Alex Hicks *
Response Rate: 40/46 (86.96 %)

8 - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

The objectives of the course were clearly explained.

Response Option		Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means							
Strongly disagree		(1)	0	0.00%	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div>5.21</div><div>5.16</div><div>5.08</div></div>							
Disagree		(2)	0	0.00%									
Somewhat disagree		(3)	0	0.00%									
Somewhat agree		(4)	7	17.95%									
Agree		(5)	17	43.59%									
Strongly agree		(6)	15	38.46%									
					02550100	Question	College		Department				
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	College	Mean	STD	Median	Department		Mean	STD	Median
39/46 (84.78%)		5.21	0.73	5.00	19538	5.16	1.08	5.00	4345		5.08	1.09	5.00

8 - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

The out-of-class assignments were educationally valuable.

Response Option		Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means							
Strongly disagree		(1)	0	0.00%		5.03	5.11	5.08		Question	College	Department	
Disagree		(2)	0	0.00%									
Somewhat disagree		(3)	2	5.13%									
Somewhat agree		(4)	9	23.08%									
Agree		(5)	14	35.90%									
Strongly agree		(6)	14	35.90%									
					02550100								
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	College	Mean	STD	Median	Department	Mean	STD	Median	
39/46 (84.78%)		5.03	0.90	5.00	19377	5.11	1.12	5.00	4298	5.08	1.13	5.00	

9 - The instructor related theories and concepts to practical issues.

Alex Hicks

Response Option		Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means						
Strongly disagree		(1)	0	0.00%								
Disagree		(2)	0	0.00%								
Somewhat disagree		(3)	1	2.56%								
Somewhat agree		(4)	4	10.26%								
Agree		(5)	17	43.59%								
Strongly agree		(6)	17	43.59%								
					02550100	Question	College	Department				
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	College	Mean	STD	Median	Department	Mean	STD	Median
39/46 (84.78%)		5.28	0.76	5.00	20554	5.31	0.98	6.00	4420	5.16	1.04	5.00

10 - I learned to apply principles from this course to new situations.

Response Option		Weight	Frequency	Percent	Percent Responses	Means								
Strongly disagree		(1)	0	0.00%					Question	College	Department			
Disagree		(2)	0	0.00%										
Somewhat disagree		(3)	1	2.56%										
Somewhat agree		(4)	7	17.95%										
Agree		(5)	19	48.72%										
Strongly agree		(6)	12	30.77%										
					02550100									
Response Rate		Mean	STD	Median	College		Mean	STD	Median	Department		Mean	STD	Median
39/46 (84.78%)		5.08	0.77	5.00	4371		5.12	1.05	5.00	4371		5.12	1.05	5.00