CMSC 14200 1 - Introduction to Computer Science II - Instructor(s): Jesus Almaraz-Argueta, Matthew Wachs

Project Title: **College Course Feedback - Winter 2024**

Number Enrolled: **53**
Number of Responses: **26**

Report Comments

Opinions expressed in these evaluations are those of students enrolled in the specific course and do not represent the University.

Creation Date: **Thursday, March 28, 2024**

What are the most important things that you learned in this course? Please reflect on the knowledge and skills you gained.

Comments
Data structures, like graphs and BSTs.
Basic OOP in Python; trees, graphs and their traversal methods; software design skills
I learned how to use abstract base classes, trees, and search algorithms. Also, I learned how to work on a team with github.
More of the 141 material including algorithms and trees. We later used interactive software to code games.
Nothing
Trees, TUI's, GUI's
Object–oriented programming, trees, graphs, functional programming, and software development, design, libraries, and delivery.
tree, graph
How to write algorithms involving graphs and trees and design user interfaces
Modular design
GUI, TUI, how to think more abstractly about programming
Advanced python tools for storing / manipulating data, collaborating on code project
Working in a team to develop (more) complex software.
Basic algorithms and data structures; trees, graphs, search algorithms (BFS, DFS, Djikstra's Algorithm); software development strategies
How to traverse graphs, use type annotation in python, and use pygame
BST, Graphs, software lifecycle
Typing in python, more tree stuff, including algorithms like depth first search and Dijkstra's algorithm
graph traversal techinques
Important tenets of software design and how to write *good* code.
I learned much more about classes and object–oriented programming including abstract base classes and inheriting. I learned typing and type–checking. I learned how to use my own personal environment on my computer. Through the group project I learned how to work collaboratively using git and how to write tests and use pytest in order to code a complex product.
binary trees, rotations, list comprehension, searching methods, using git in a team context and working on code collaboratively.

Describe how aspects of this course (lectures, discussions, labs, assignments, etc.) contributed to your learning.

Comments
Lectures were boring and honestly not that useful. Weekly homework assignments sometimes difficult, always took a while to do.
Lectures were very concise and clear, I liked how they always used examples. Very practical but without compromising the theory behind the things we learned.
I though lectures were not very useful. Neither were the discussion sessions. The assignments were useful, as were the office hours.
Lectures were pretty useful initially but were less useful after the midterm.
honestly, not going to class and sleeping in was more beneficial than wasting 50 minutes in class
Homework and the project were the only real ways to learn the material
Homework assignments were helpful to practice the concepts taught in lectures, and posted lecture notes were also beneficial to review material. The final project was helpful to practice using GitHub and work with a group.
ta discussion, not lecture
The bulk of my learning came through the problem sets, of which there are 4 before the midterm and one afterward (in addition to the final project, which is in place of an exam). All had some interesting tasks and most were manageable time–wise (usually between 4 and 7 hours, though one assignment took close to 15). Not a knock on Prof. Wachs, but the lectures moved a bit slowly – I think all of 142's novel material could have been covered in ~3–4 weeks.
I enjoyed the project.
Homework assignments and lectures
assignmnets challend me to creatively apply methods learned in class
Lectures were generally quite informative, but, while my discussion TA was very good, it felt that much of the information could have been sent out without a meeting of the section.
Lectures were effective, although required a fair bit of learning on my own. Assignments were excellent preparation for the midterm.
Lectures were okay in the beginning of the quarter, just a little slow and boring, but quickly became useless near the end
Lectures were pretty good. HW's where I learned the most.
Lectures were not so concise at times, homeworks were mostly okay, except homeworks 2 and 4 had questions that were wildly more difficult than anything else. We had a midterm exam and final project.
discussions were helpful in learning git
The lecture notes they provide are extraordinarily good, arguably to the point where you don't need to pay attention to any other facet of the class—they're really concise and comprehensive.
Lectures were not helpful. The notes sent out from them were extremely helpful. (It could just be that I am a visual learner.) Discussion sections were interesting and helpful in the first half of the quarter. Assignments were the most helpful in learning how to apply concepts learned in class.
lecture notes were useful to review content, assignments helped reinforce learning

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.12	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	23.08%	42.31%	34.62%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.35	5.00	3.85%	3.85%	3.85%	30.77%	57.69%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.38	5.00	3.85%	7.69%	0.00%	23.08%	65.38%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	3.31	3.50	11.54%	15.38%	23.08%	30.77%	19.23%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.28	4.00	0.00%	8.00%	4.00%	40.00%	48.00%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.38	5.00	0.00%	7.69%	3.85%	30.77%	57.69%
I felt respected in this class.	4.32	5.00	0.00%	8.00%	8.00%	28.00%	56.00%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.15	4.00	3.85%	7.69%	3.85%	38.46%	46.15%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
CMSC 14200 is very fun, however this might be different if you do not have some experience in basic coding, or you hate data structures and algorithms.
The course can feel impersonal. There are too many students taking it for the number of staff members.
This was a terribly run course. The staff running these courses emphasize the most useless topics. Additionally, they "emphasize" readable code, but on our practice midterm / actual midterm, we were given the most unreadable and terribly written code.
This course felt somewhat pointless. It does not present a significant amount of new material compared to 141 and frankly the first half of the course feels like a recap of 141 with no real extra value added. That said, I do feel like the project brough a lot of value with it. I would even say that a second project to replace the first half of the course would make the course far more interesting.
This was an excellent course! I enjoyed especially the section on graph algorithms—I felt they were very well explained.
Second half of the course (post–midterm) is a bit strange, and a bit all over the place. I like the software development portion, and I think it's very useful, but the accompanying lectures did not help me all that much.
The group project was very fun and helpful. I learned a lot from it. The lecture notes were the most helpful in learning the course concepts. Advice: start on homework assignments early and the course will be easy.

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	3.85%	96.15%
Anyone interested in the topic	15.38%	84.62%

Thinking about your time in the class, what aspect of the instructor's teaching contributed most to your learning?

Comments
The examples
The examples used in the slides as well as how organized he was.
I thought the instructor was just ok.
not going to class
Not much. Class time was mostly the professor reading of the lecture notes that would later be posted. half the times the class was the professor explaining a broad concept, as if every class was an 'introduction class" to a topic we never delved into.
The professors held a lot of office hours that were helpful to ask questions about course material and assignments. They were also quick to answer questions on Ed.
na
Prof. Wachs is nice, responsive, and a good lecturer. I would prefer if he always used the blackboard rather than put code up on the projector, since already–written code is hard to digest in real time and Wachs's blackboard pseudo–code is great.
I appreciated the instructors attention to detail.
Nothing worth mentioning.
I really appreciated the examples which gave context as to the why behind how we worked/problem solved
posting full notes online
Professor Wachs was very clear, and he always took care to motivate the reasons *why* we were creating a specific technical solution.
Diagramming things out on the board.
Posting the lecture notes on canvas helped
I think the notes posted to canvas were extremely helpful and I found myself going back to them often – especially pseudocode for a certain algorithm, for example
The lecture notes he sent out.
slides walking through code

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
Engage students more, I know this is mostly a lecture–based class, but I could see some value in engaging students with some questions.
I would have appreciated lectures which more directly covered the aspects of the homework we were working on, or the material of the test.
actually teach useful information
be more apply, less theoretical. And the assignment instruction is very hard to understand
The content of lectures was usually very by–the–books. Honestly there was little incentive to attend class when we weren't covering much beyond what was there in the lecture notes
NA
not much
While Professor Wachs is very responsive to questions, I think his system of "shouting out the question" tends to discourage participation, as it can be a little intimidating.
Prof. Wachs' lectures were not that engaging, and I struggled to pay attention.
Try to be a bit more engaging with the class it felt very dead most of the time
Use more visuals in class.
different styles of teaching to prevent monotony

The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.09	4.00	8.33%	0.00%	12.50%	29.17%	45.83%	4.17%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	3.42	3.50	8.33%	12.50%	29.17%	29.17%	20.83%	0.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	3.38	3.00	8.33%	12.50%	29.17%	12.50%	25.00%	12.50%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	3.79	4.00	8.33%	0.00%	20.83%	45.83%	25.00%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	3.83	4.00	8.33%	0.00%	20.83%	41.67%	29.17%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	3.83	4.00	8.33%	0.00%	25.00%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	3.95	4.00	4.17%	0.00%	29.17%	12.50%	37.50%	16.67%
Motivated you to think independently.	3.96	4.00	4.17%	4.17%	12.50%	50.00%	29.17%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.17	4.00	4.17%	0.00%	12.50%	41.67%	41.67%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	3.75	4.00	8.33%	0.00%	20.83%	50.00%	20.83%	0.00%

Please include the name of the TA/CA/Intern you are evaluating. What aspects of the TA's teaching contributed most to your learning? What could the TA modify to help you learn more? Please include any additional feedback for the TA/CA/Intern.

Comments
I don't remember.
Joshua Ahn was my TA and he was great—his discussion lectures were very concise but also went into more detail than he was otherwise obligated to give (in a good way! It was very helpful and educational). He was also always happy to answer questions afterwards and was overall a super helpful part of the class for me.
Eric Liu: TA was sometimes underprepared for discussion and went a little fast through the content. Overall helpful though.

The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	4.40	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	33.33%	16.67%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.33	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	16.67%	50.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	4.20	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	33.33%	33.33%	16.67%
Challenged you to learn.	4.20	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	33.33%	33.33%	16.67%
Helped you succeed in the class.	4.20	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	33.33%	33.33%	16.67%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.40	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	33.33%	16.67%

How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	Mean	Median	No Gain	A Little Gain	Moderate Gain	Good Gain	Great Gain	N/A
Laboratory Experience	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Field Trips	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Library Sessions	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Review Sessions	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Writing Seminars	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Other course elements not mentioned above:

Comments
discussion section
Discussion sessions helpful in the first half of the quarter. Learned interesting and applicable concepts in discussion.

Is this class a requirement of some sort?

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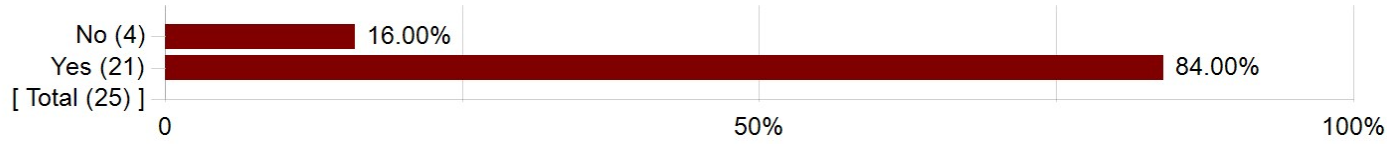

Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?

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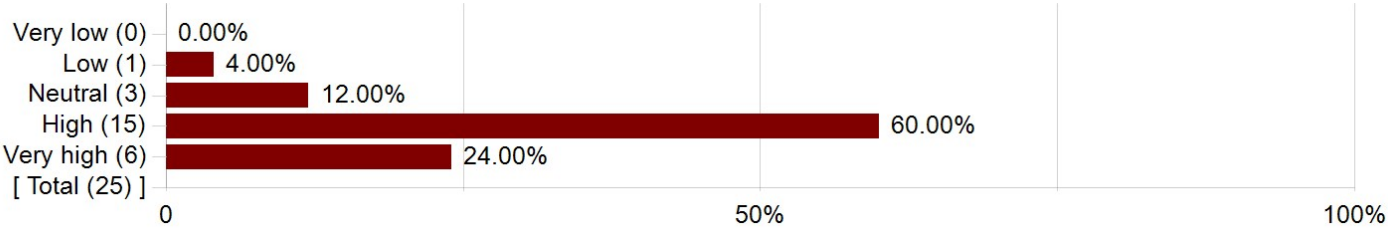
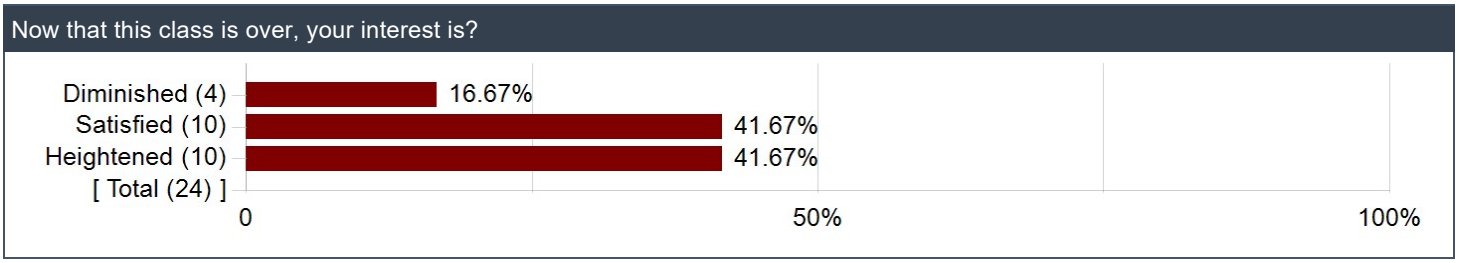
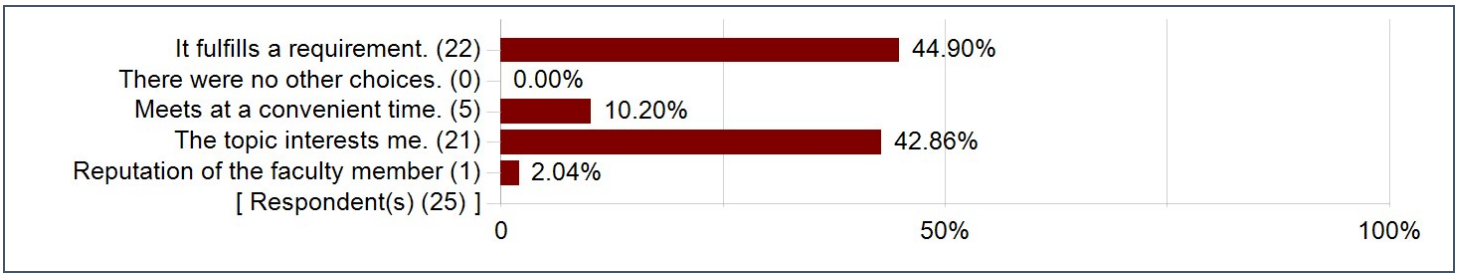


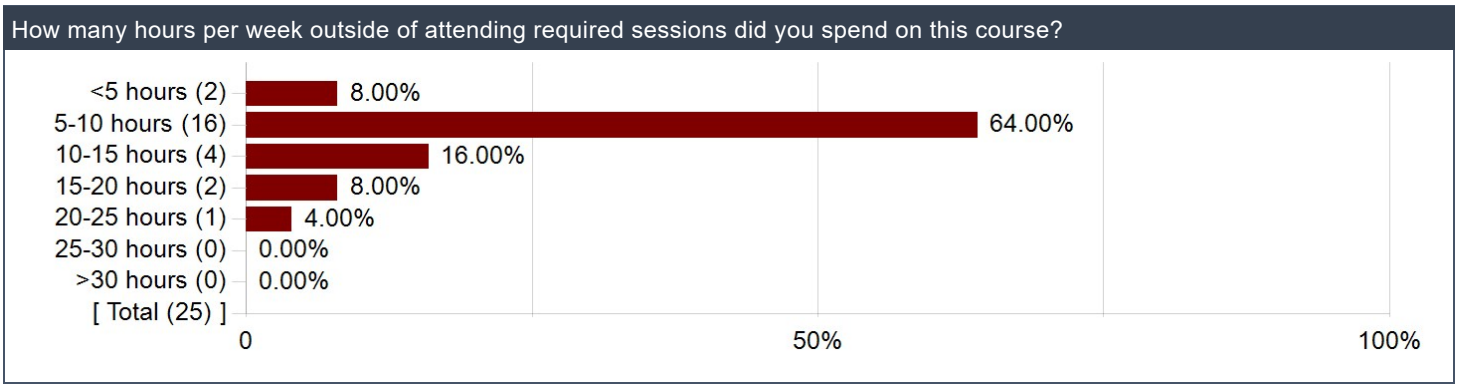
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



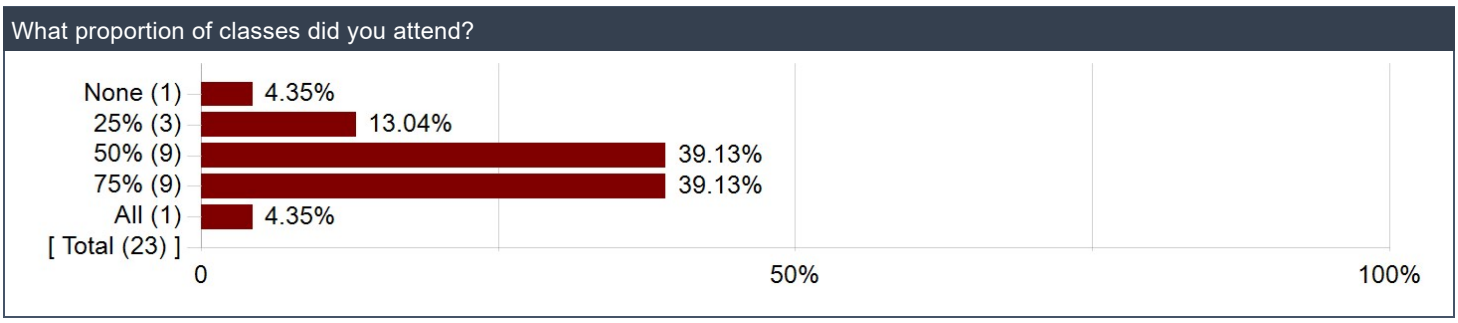
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



How many hours per week outside of attending required sessions did you spend on this course?



What proportion of classes did you attend?



Please comment on the level of difficulty of the course relative to your background and experience.

Comments
not that difficult— granted, I already took a data structures class in high school, but still even for those without that experience it feels fairly manageable.
Very reasonable for someone with a coding background. Challenging sometimes, but mostly very relaxed.
Equal, though the grading could be annoyingly strict
lot of redundant, tedious work where you often question the point of doing it.
Compared to 141 this was a fairly easy course (besides one homework). The difficulty of the homework was about the same as last quarter, and the project is certainly manageable if approached with patience and time
Mostly not too difficult but some interesting problems – third–year math major without too much coding experience
Very do–able coming from 141. Sometimes it felt like they maybe even held our hand a little bit too much…
as someone who found 141 relatively easy, 142 was definitely more challenging but not impossible
no coding experience prior to 141, class was challenging but fair
I am not a computer science major whose only prior exposure to CS was 141, but I felt that the class was quite reasonable (although the midterm was quite high stakes)
Tested out of 141; came in with a significant background in software development, but little to no DSA skills. Found it to be manageable, although the homework can be time–consuming.
Easier than 141 in my opinion
As a fourth year math/stats major, not very difficult
If you're already somewhat familiar with coding, regardless of the language, you shouldn't have much trouble with this class, though you'll still probably learn some good programming practices.
As a math major with little computer science background other than 141, the course was pretty easy and the workload was manageable.