

Full Report

Evaluation for 2019 - Term 2 (Winter)

Course Code	Instructor	Response Rate (Respondants/Enrolled)
COMPSCI 1XA3 (C01)	D'Alves, Curtis	35.29% (18/51)

1. Overall for this course, what is your opinion of the effectiveness of the instructor?

(Scale: 1 Very Poor to 10 Excellent)

7 Students (38.89%) said: 9

4 Students (22.22%) said: 8

2 Students (11.11%) said: 1

1 Students (5.56%) said: 3

1 Students (5.56%) said: 10

1 Students (5.56%) said: 6

1 Students (5.56%) said: 2

1 Students (5.56%) said: 7

Median: 8.00	Mean: 6.94	StDev: 3.0190	Variance: 9.1144	Not Responded: 0
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2. The timing and appropriateness of feedback on your progress:

Receiving assignments back in a reasonable time frame, clear explanation of grade

(Scale: 1 Very Poor to 5 Excellent)

9 Students (50.00%) said: 1

5 Students (27.78%) said: 3

2 Students (11.11%) said: 4

1 Students (5.56%) said: 2

1 Students (5.56%) said: 5

Median: 1.50	Mean: 2.17	StDev: 1.3394	Variance: 1.7941	Not Responded: 0
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3. Independent critical judgement was encouraged:

(Scale: 1 Very Poor to 5 Excellent)

9 Students (50.00%) said: 5

5 Students (27.78%) said: 4

2 Students (11.11%) said: 3

2 Students (11.11%) said: 1

Median: 4.50	Mean: 4.06	StDev: 1.3048	Variance: 1.7026	Not Responded: 0
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4. OVERALL, how do you rate the value of this course compared with others you have taken at McMaster?

(Scale: 1 Very Poor to 5 Excellent)

9 Students (50.00%) said: 5

3 Students (16.67%) said: 1

3 Students (16.67%) said: 4

2 Students (11.11%) said: 3

Median: 5.00	Mean: 3.88	StDev: 1.5363	Variance: 2.3603	Not Responded: 1
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5. The organization of this course:

Progression of learning material, resource availability, professor was timely and prepared

(Scale: 1 Very Poor to 5 Excellent)

5 Students (27.78%) said: 5

4 Students (22.22%) said: 4

3 Students (16.67%) said: 3

3 Students (16.67%) said: 1

2 Students (11.11%) said: 2

Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.35	StDev: 1.4975	Variance: 2.2426	Not Responded: 1
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6. The instructor's response to students:

Approachability, attitude, availability, well-explained answers

(Scale: 1 Very Poor to 5 Excellent)

7 Students (38.89%) said: 5

5 Students (27.78%) said: 4

2 Students (11.11%) said: 2

2 Students (11.11%) said: 1

1 Students (5.56%) said: 3

Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.76	StDev: 1.4374	Variance: 2.0662	Not Responded: 1
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7. The coverage and fairness of tests:

Material coverage, mark distribution, difficulty level

(Scale: 1 Very Poor to 5 Excellent)

5 Students (27.78%) said: 4

5 Students (27.78%) said: 5

3 Students (16.67%) said: 3

2 Students (11.11%) said: 1

2 Students (11.11%) said: 2

Median: 4.00	Mean: 3.53	StDev: 1.3747	Variance: 1.8897	Not Responded: 1
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8. Please comment on the quality of the TA's in this course:

- Never met a TA But the professor was so good that he doesn't require a TA
- It is nearly the end of the term, we've had 7 labs thus far, and only 3 have been marked. However, Chris has been active on the class chat, providing helpful resources and insights.
- There were no tutorials and we were not allowed to contact the TAs.
- The TAs are always available for assistance which is provided in a satisfactory manner. They do it quickly and it is done well.
- I didn't know there was TA until like April. There's no TA office hour, it's always Curtis who has

one every Tuesday. The TA is quite helpful on Slack though; is very knowledgeable about the topic.

- Not much interaction with the TA's. Many marks from previous assignments have not been posted for student viewing. Whether this is the responsibility of the TA's or the instructor is unclear. TA Chris has always been available to answer questions on the courses' slack however the other the TA has not really been active.
- n/a
- Very helpful, and approachable TA's.
- due to the nature of this course, we don't really see the TA's that often
- The TAs helped with every question I had. They provided good feedback and it was apparent that they liked doing what they were doing.
- The TA's were very helpful all in all!
- N/A
- The TA's in this course were very good. They are available on a class Slack channel and almost always respond to questions immediately. Participation of the students is encouraged, allowing students to engage in discussions and co-operate to create a supportive and constructive learning environment.
- Not alot of interactions with the TA
- Chris was a very helpful TA, as he often shared resources and answered questions on slack.
- Professional, somewhat low presence, but effective when active.

9. Please list aspects of this course that you found valuable and should be continued:

- Nice Labs and Lecture schedule and pattern
- I found front-end development with Elm an interesting topic of study.
- Encouraged to work on our own.
- Git, Django
- The use of slack to connect the students. the encouragement to do things my own way, as long as it is not bad/negative.
- This course was perhaps the most useful course I've taken in first year as a Computer Science major; it teaches you all the essential tools programmers need such as using Github, server, and giving practical hands on experience in doing a project
- The course offers material used in real-world work environments that is really helpful. Concepts like source control, http requests and responses, front-end development and back-end scripting are very useful to learn as well. The emphasis on job-ready concepts and applicable projects such as the online CV make for a great teaching approach. The teaching style that encourages freedom of choice and student independence creates in the student a sense of real-world environments and problem solving skills that are not cultivated by other courses with set problems and solutions.
- Content of the course is a great way for students to quickly learn basic full-stack developer skills, very useful for the real world.
- I really appreciate being taught industry demanding technologies like GIT -content of the Course is well structured -I really like how the projects can help when applying to COOP
- I think everything I've learned in this course is extremely valuable. I believe that if we had not lost a week to the snow day, the overall pace would've been a lot more smoother.
- The Slack group for the class is arguably the greatest asset employed in a classroom environment. Getting help from classmates, TAs and the instructor all happen within at most a few hours. It allows for sharing resources that are beneficial to the class and a professional workspace to chat and discuss work. Regarding the instructor and TAs, they are online at reasonable times so that you can ask whenever you need help or need to talk about important matters regarding late work etc. Slack is naturally appealing to students nowadays because of its

similarity to social messaging platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat. Slack was more effective in this specific course because the course material was programming: bugs and errors are often tricky and it just may take a fresh set of eyes to help find the bug or error. Due to its instant messaging capability, ability to share media and private message capability, there's no real reason students will have a hard time communicating with their instructor and TAs. A project-based course ensures that the theory we learn is actually used in practice. Instead of just memorizing how the model/update/view architecture works in Elm and regurgitating that information on a midterm, producing a project (whether an app, game etc.) using Elm ingrains that information into the student's mind by making the student think about what they've learned and how to use it. The trial and error helps students remember what they've done because it takes time and effort to fix the errors. Memorization is sometimes given a hollow effort that doesn't always work, especially for subjects like programming, databases, servers, etc. You can only learn these subjects if you actually code, if you try and set up a server etc. Personally, I had trouble with Elm (even with my familiarity with Haskell) because of its different nature and the way I was applying it (the architecture and making a game). After finishing the game project, I've now understood the architecture and have a much better understanding of Elm and how it works. I will almost never make the same mistakes and struggles. The lab assignments were another aspect which helped teach the material, they were small and doable. Although, I would say the Django lab assignment was the trickiest one.

- The course content was very useful in terms of what is used in industry.
- Use of slack is good. Freedom in projects is good. The course being centered around projects is good.
- The project oriented nature of this course is very important, as it not only provides us with marketable experience that we can use when applying to co-ops, but also allows us to learn practical applications of what we have learned in the real world.
- The content was good
- I found the content covered in this course to be very valuable and one of the most useful out of all the other courses here at McMaster, as it was practical. The project based approach was also refreshing and rewarding.
- I have to get a bit personal this time, since majority of this course is designed by the instructor himself... This course taps into every aspect of the IT industry, and points us to the right direction for future study.

10. Please list aspects of this course that might be improved:

- Please lessen the amount you teach.... not everyone is as brilliant as you are. Don't expect that if you can do it, everyone can do it. Instead of going for 10 languages or types, you can teach 5 but teach them nicely so that we can remember what you taught rather than cramming up just to clear out the labs or projects..... make your teaching worthwhile and remembered forever and thanked forever. You need to slow down the pace (had the problem with you in 1JC3 as well) And try to teach the class, not yourself..... at times you give the feeling of teaching yourself no matter how much you interact, the pace gets so much that only if you knew the things, then you can understand otherwise you can not. Slight modifications to the difficulty and lowering it down can help us perform better.
- The instructor is intimidating and can come off very condescending.
- The back-end development section of this course has been taught sloppily and without sufficient depth. We were told to simply use Django following step-by-step instructions from Curtis, without understanding the inner workings at all. It would be much better if this course simply focused on front-end development without trying to make us fake full stack developers.
- Class needs much more structure and planning.
- The timeframe which the grades are given back.

- There needs to be more lectures per week. There's only one 1-hour lecture and one 2-hr lab per week, which so students are expected to do their own learning outside of class. It would have been more useful to help students actually understand the topic if there were more lecture periods so that we can go through topics in detail. Also, more TA office hours please. There's a limit to how much we can ask/understand on Slack. Please grade our labs/projects it's April now and we've not been getting our marks back since like December. Also I feel like the participation mark is quite heavy; for beginner programmers like me it's hard to contribute in online discussions :/
- The lab timing and room are not ideal for this course. The 7:00 pm lab can be slow, boring and tedious especially when the instructor does not give time to actually work on a lab. The course may be improved by providing the instructor with supplementary lecture times, such as other classes have. 2-3 lectures a week would greatly improve student comprehension and provide students with time to actually complete the lab with instructor supervision. This would give time for questions instead of supplementary teaching time in labs. Marks were especially slow coming out and feedback was sketchy.
- Pretty badly organized course. Marks/feedback were received much too late (at the time of writing this I have not received any feedback since February). Also I wasn't a fan of Elm, I think it would've been more useful for students to learn a popular front-end framework such as React.js or Angular.js.
- I think some people might find it easier to follow if the pace was it a bit slower, but overall it was a pretty good course.
- Honestly not sure. Maybe more time for lectures because it can be hard to keep up with all the material in the lectures/labs
- Prof says he'll correct assignments this week, or he'll post lecture recordings this week, but it doesn't happen. Haven't gotten any marks back in over a month.
- We do not get feedback for our work in a timely manner. For example, we don't have any feedback for our first project, which may be valuable when working on our current project.
- Marking and feedback still haven't received any on the work done
- The marking was very slow, which is somewhat understandable as I would expect that projects would take longer to mark than tests, but I still feel like feedback for smaller things could've been a little faster (ie labs).
- Coverage is wide but shallow to say the least. Absurd extra-curriculum knowledge is expected. But all that pushes us to strive so I'm fine with it.

11. Additional comments:

- don't say that if you are not worth the course and if I think you can not perform in the upcoming years, I'll fail you..... you never know when somebody might rise and shine.... everyone has their own time to get the hang of it..... You need to be one with the class. and favouring smart students won't help the world..... it would only help your selfish purpose TEACH EVERYONE You give such weird vibes that I don't even prefer asking you doubts. You are scary when you should be FRIENDLY. Dr.Farmer was scary and hard but he was approachable and friendly (always had a positive vibe and smiled)..... the things you said in the first few days makes me stay away from you rather than getting in the student teacher relationship..... Give positive vibes instead of making students scared about their future..... You professors and teachers are there to make students learn and make them capable of doing stuff but instead you say I'll fail you..... that shows how negative and pessimistic you are..... you are not a visionary at all
- Pretty awful. Instructor was rude and bad at relating to beginners, being patient, and empathetic. He also stopped marking anything in February.
- Our instructor for this course does not seem to care a lot about his job. His marking is very lazy, at the point of writing this course evaluation, he still hasn't given our marks back for the lab we completed about 6 weeks ago. Therefore, the students have no idea what our marks are like,

how we're doing and are worried of the mark we'll get in the end.

- I really enjoyed this course though; although the project was hard I actually enjoyed doing them and I feel I learned a lot from this course. Thanks Curtis :)

- The slides can be titled to better help find the right slides. Some of the slides could use more description regarding certain concepts

- Overall I think the course is a good idea but definitely needs to be re-organized/re-structured.

- I enjoy the content covered in the course, keep up the good work!

- This is probably one of the better courses I've taken and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

- His style of teaching includes keeping the lecture slide on for a while, but mainly focusing on in-class examples to follow and learn from. This is much more receptive to students as they can learn how to do things as they are being taught, and can pose questions when something goes wrong. On the other hand, just reading from a lecture slide can be sometimes boring and information may not be absorbed fully by students, which is something I have not seen him do. Curtis himself has a good attitude and is approachable. This is mainly due to him being younger than most instructors, and therefore more relatable. He interacts with students in a professional yet fun manner, cracking jokes, providing advice from experience and guidance when needed. He loves what he does, and it makes students enjoy their learning. It is apparent that Curtis wants us to truly understand the concepts in class by his attitude towards projects and assignments. He tells us to not worry about marks as if you only care about the marks (and work hard enough to only get marks) you will have a hard time working in the real world. The grading of projects/assignments are fair as they do employ course material, but they also require understanding of all concepts used in the project. You can't just have good code and lack proper documentation: both are equally important in the software development process and knowing how to create good code and good documentation is essential in a real development environment. His passion for computing and desire for us to learn good practices inspires me to learn about these concepts myself and make sure I'm actually learning instead of just memorizing it (it also helps that this course is project-based, so it is easier to learn through practice). This kind of attitude and position on projects/work is not explicitly evident in most other instructors I have been taught by. This attitude is then therefore rare, and is what makes him a good instructor. He truly cares for our learning and wants us to be prepared for the working world.
- Curtis is a good teacher. He provides good content and feed back and doesn't hold back the truth. Although that might upset some students I think the pros outweigh the cons with that attitude. All in all great course, very useful.

- N/A

- Overall, this is a great course, and I strongly believe that the way this course is structured should be kept the same.