

Project Title: **Course and Teacher Evaluations CTEC Fall 2024**

Courses Audience: **10**

Responses Received: **5**

Response Ratio: **50.0%**

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### Report Comments

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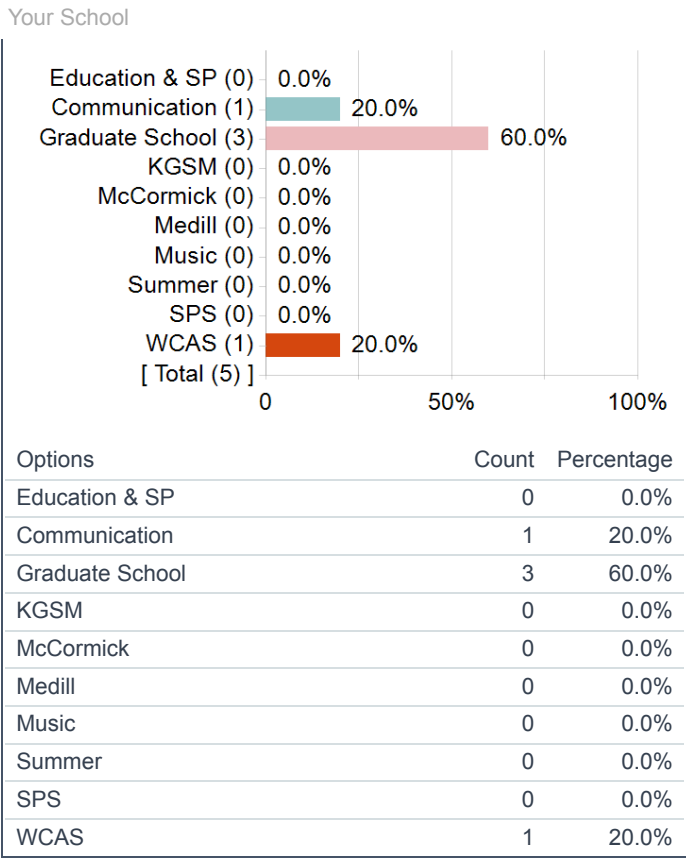
Northwestern University

Course Evaluations

Instructor	Course
Gustavo Diaz	POLI_SCI_403-0_1: Intro Probability & Statistics

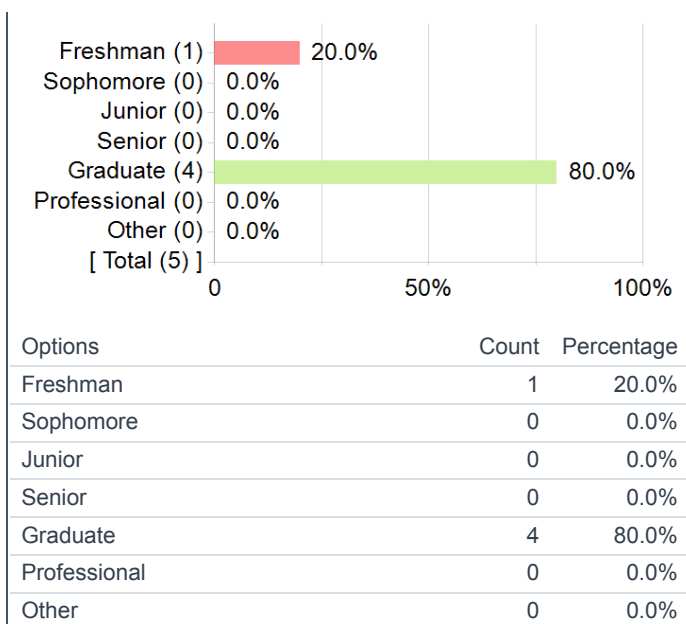
DEMOGRAPHICS

Your School

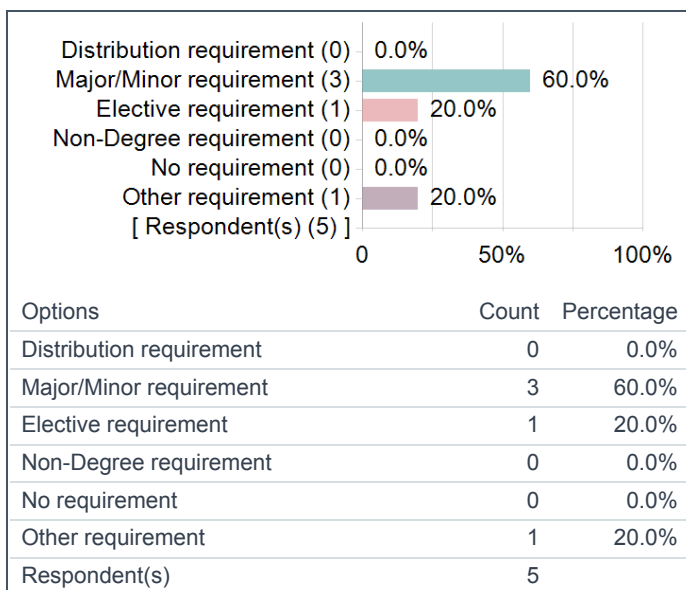


## Your Class

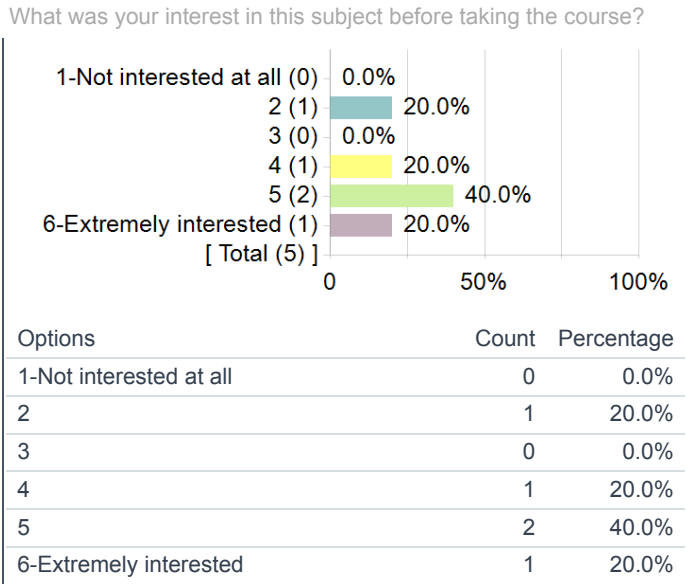
Your Class



## What is your reason for taking the course? (mark all that apply)

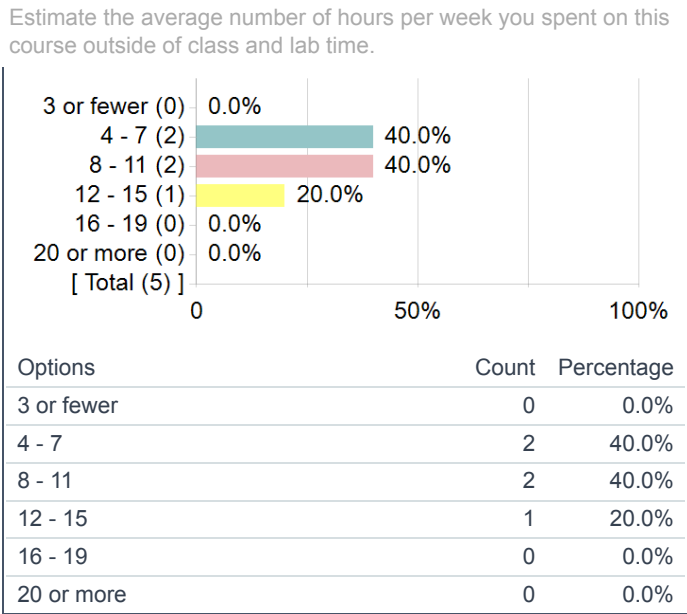


What was your Interest in this subject before taking the course?



TIME-SURVEY QUESTION

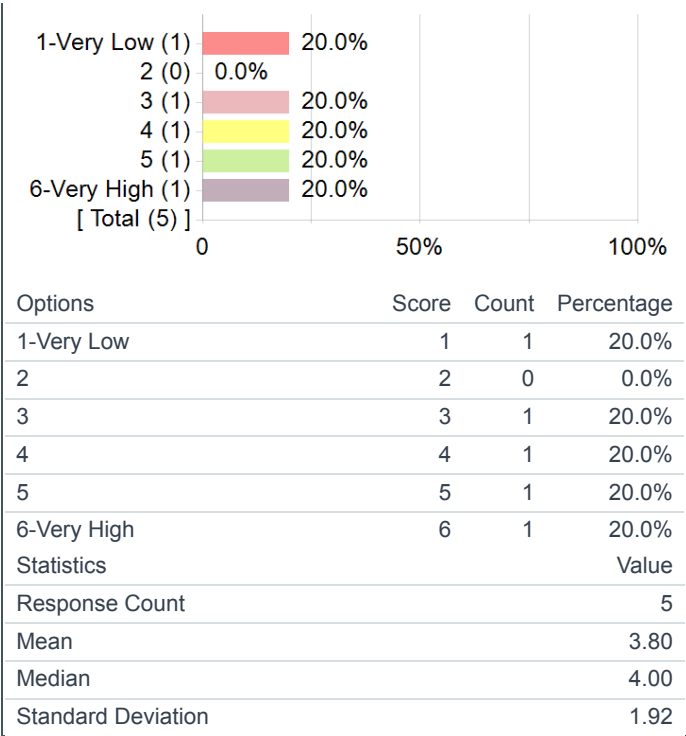
Estimate the average number of hours per week you spent on this course outside of class and lab time.



COURSE QUESTIONS

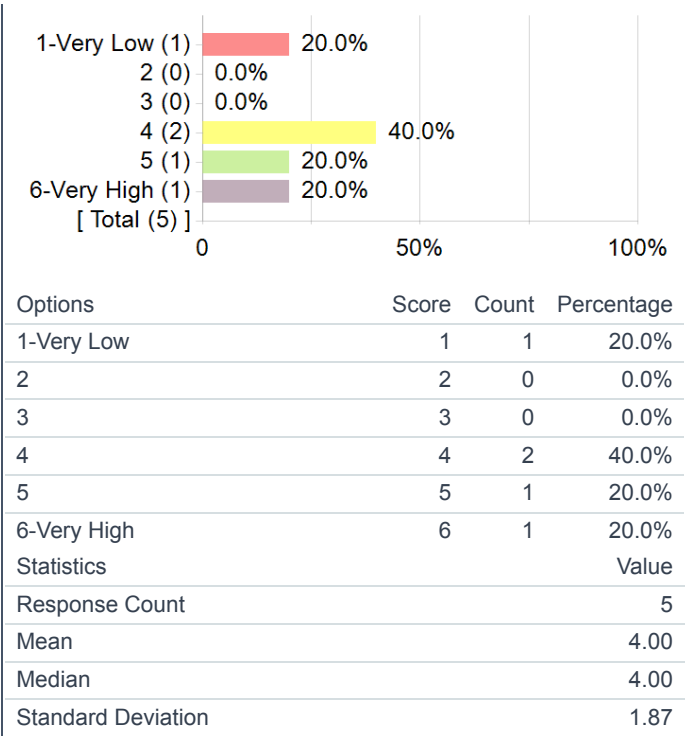
Provide an overall rating of the course.

Provide an overall rating of the course.



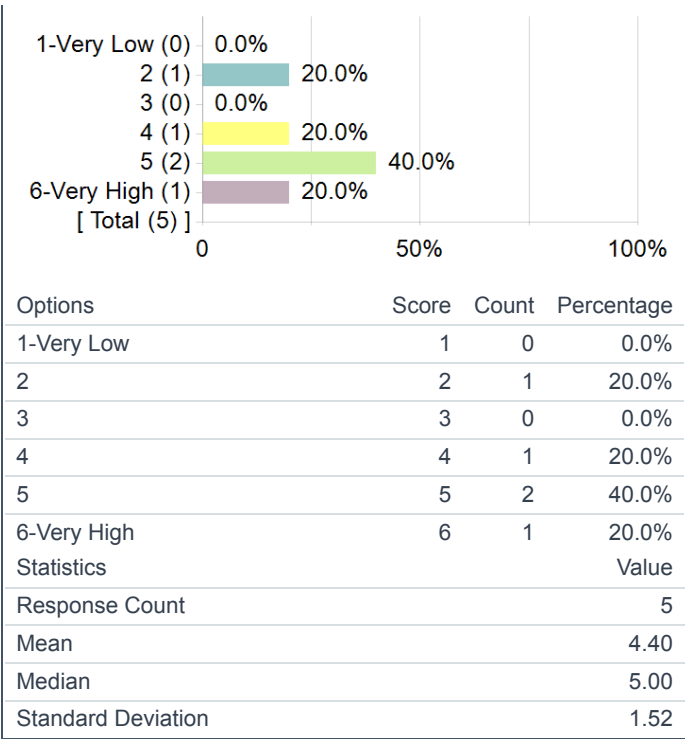
Estimate how much you learned in the course.

Estimate how much you learned in the course.



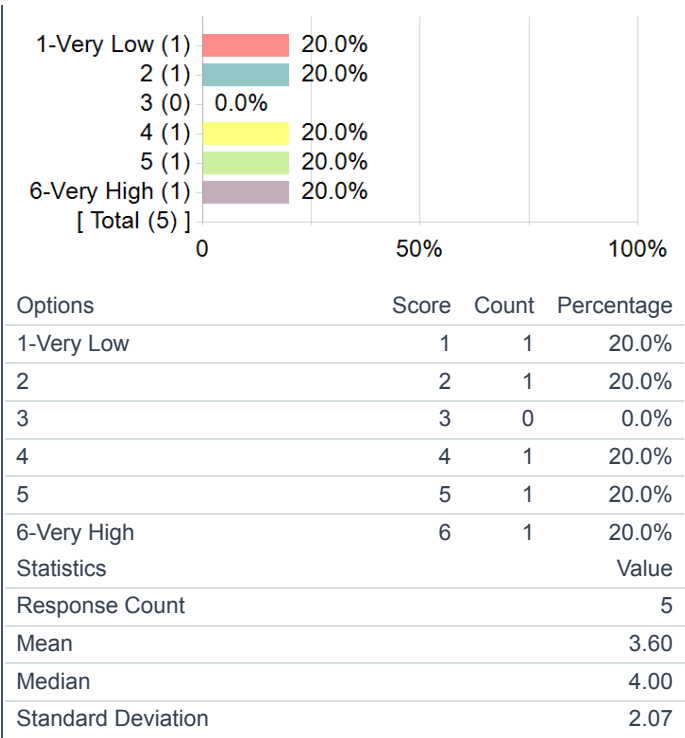
Rate the effectiveness of the course in challenging you intellectually.

Rate the effectiveness of the course in challenging you intellectually.



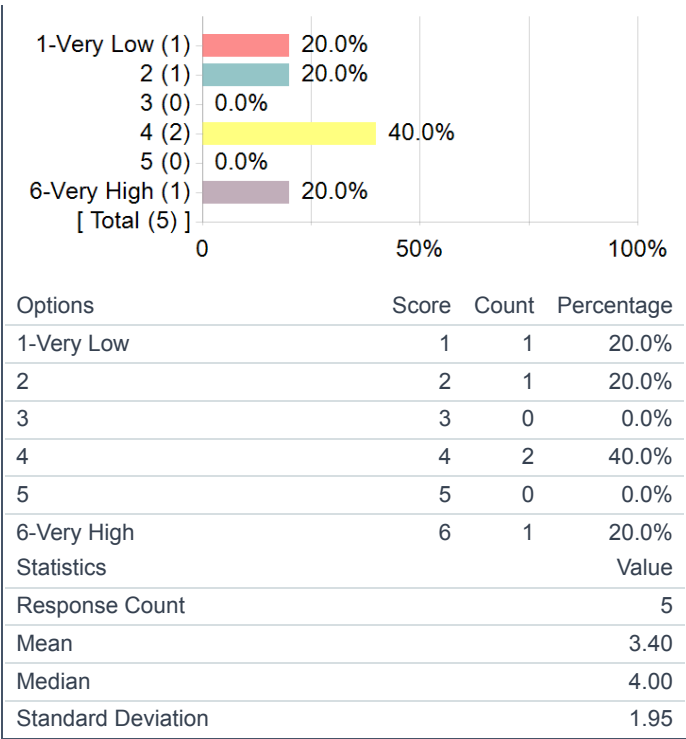
Rate the instructional materials (texts, audiovisual materials, etc.) used in this course.

Rate the instructional materials (texts, audiovisual materials, etc.) used in this course.



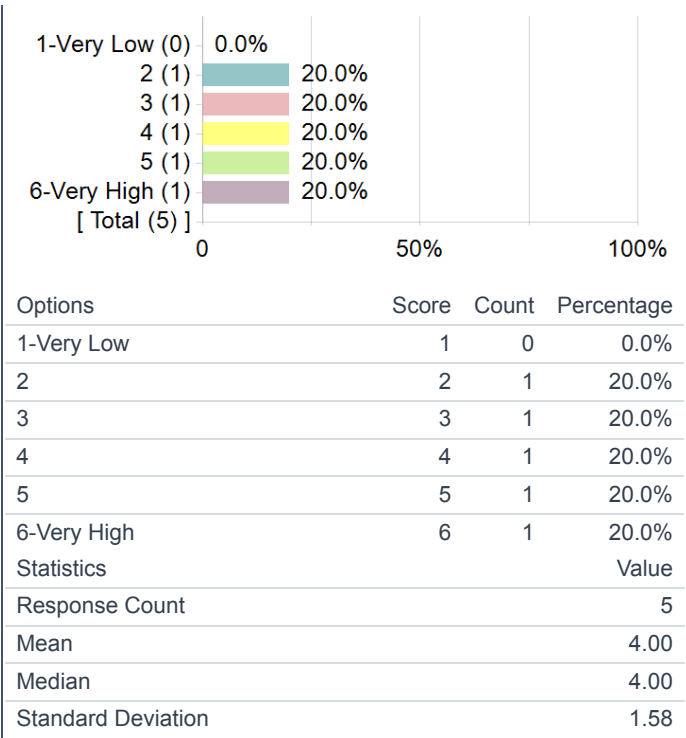
Rate how well the overall organization of the course facilitated learning.

Rate how well the overall organization of the course facilitated learning.



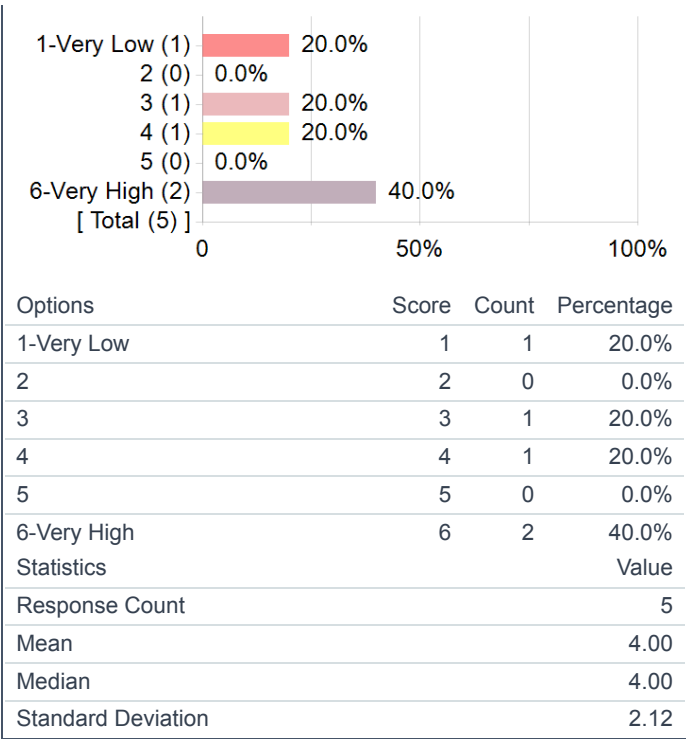
Rate how well this course helped you improve your ability to read critically.

Rate how well this course helped you improve your ability to read critically.



Rate how well the examinations accurately measured your achievement in this course.

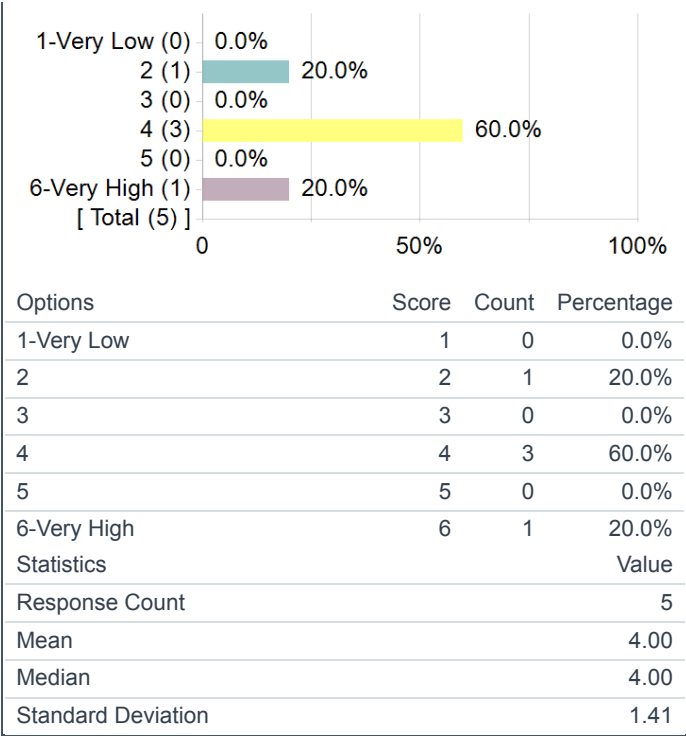
Rate how well the examinations accurately measured your achievement in this course.



INSTRUCTOR QUESTIONS

Provide an overall rating of the instruction.

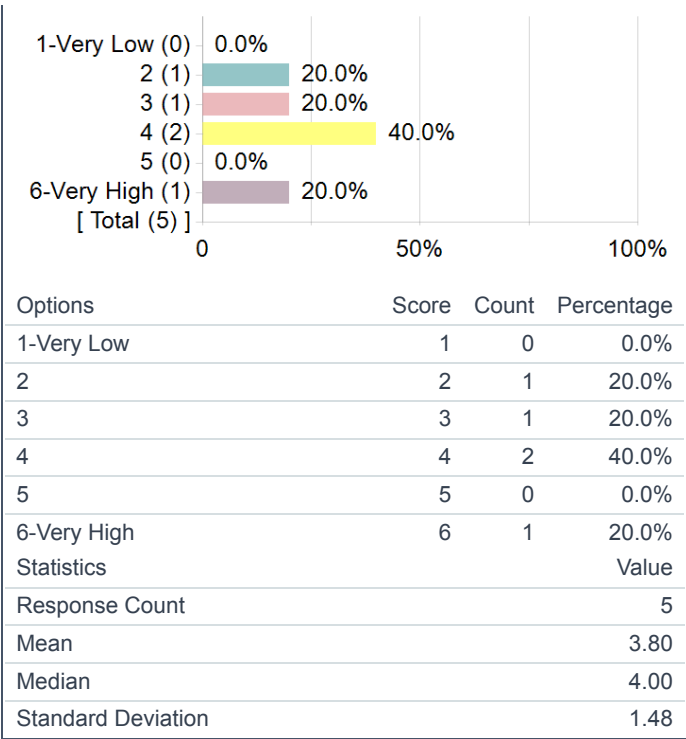
Provide an overall rating of the instruction.





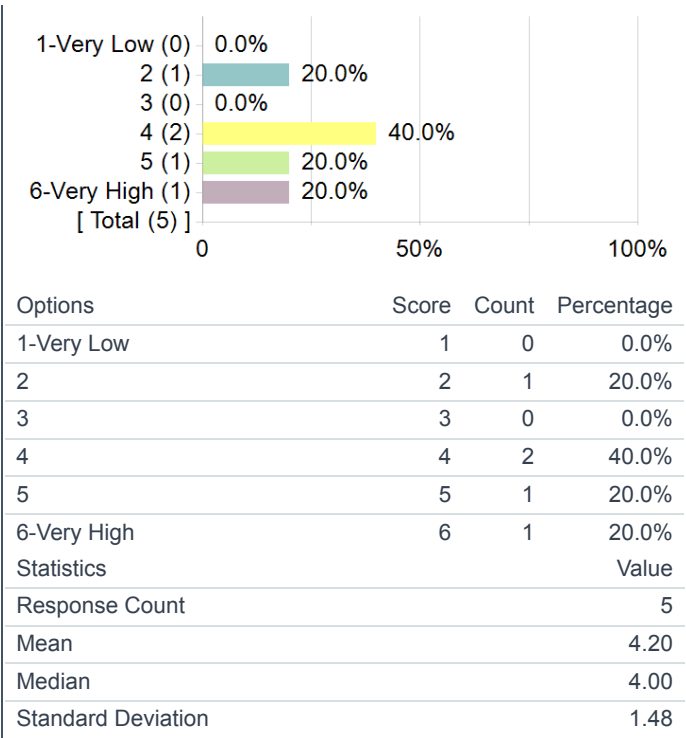
Rate the effectiveness of the instructor in stimulating your interest in the subject.

Rate the effectiveness of the instructor in stimulating your interest in the subject.



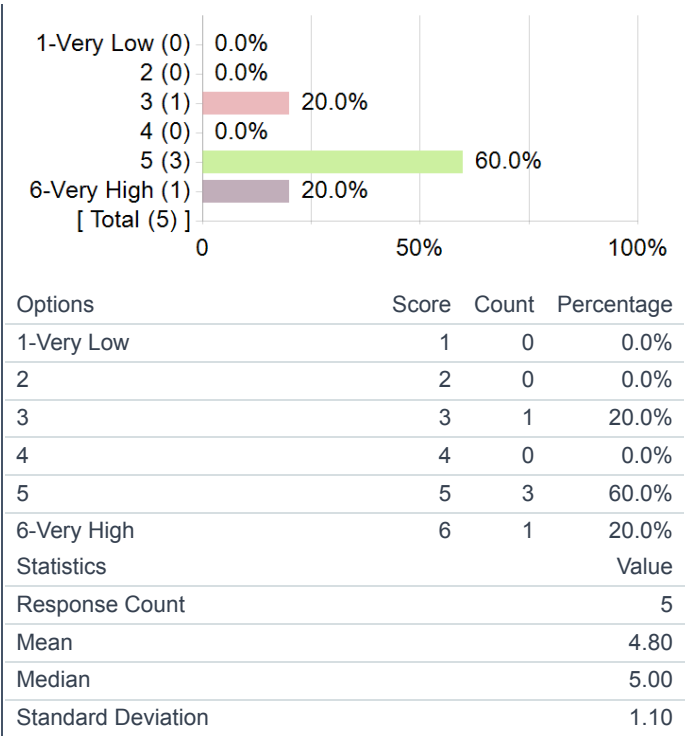
Rate how well the instructor identified the important concepts in the course.

Rate how well the instructor identified the important concepts in the course.



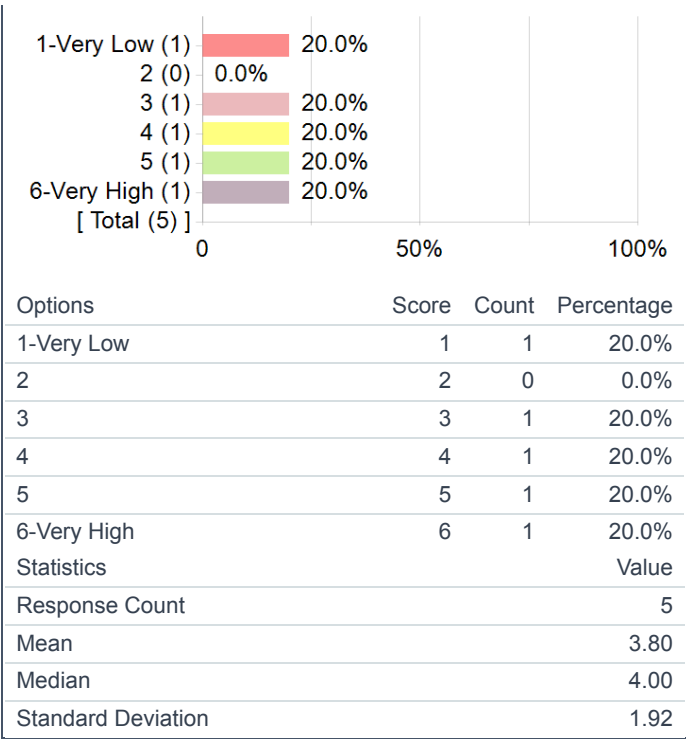
Rate how well prepared the instructor was for the class.

Rate how well prepared the instructor was for the class.



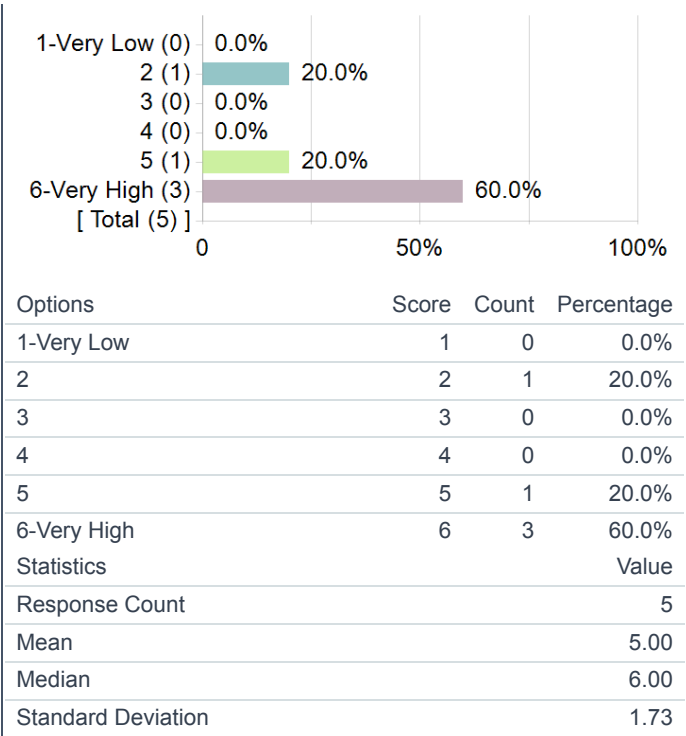
Rate the effectiveness with which the instructor communicated course content and ideas.

Rate the effectiveness with which the instructor communicated course content and ideas.



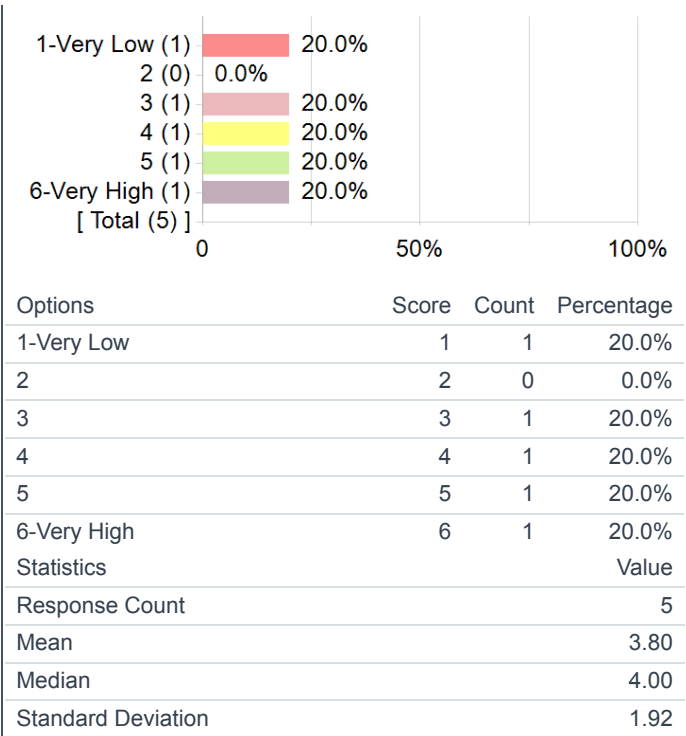
Rate the instructor's enthusiasm in teaching this class.

Rate the instructor's enthusiasm in teaching this class.



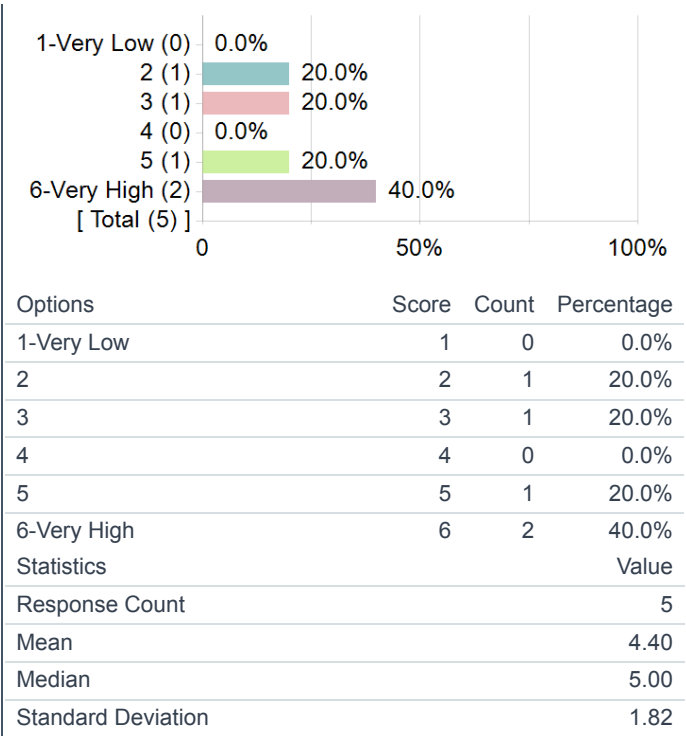
Rate how well the instructor motivated you to do your best work.

Rate how well the instructor motivated you to do your best work.



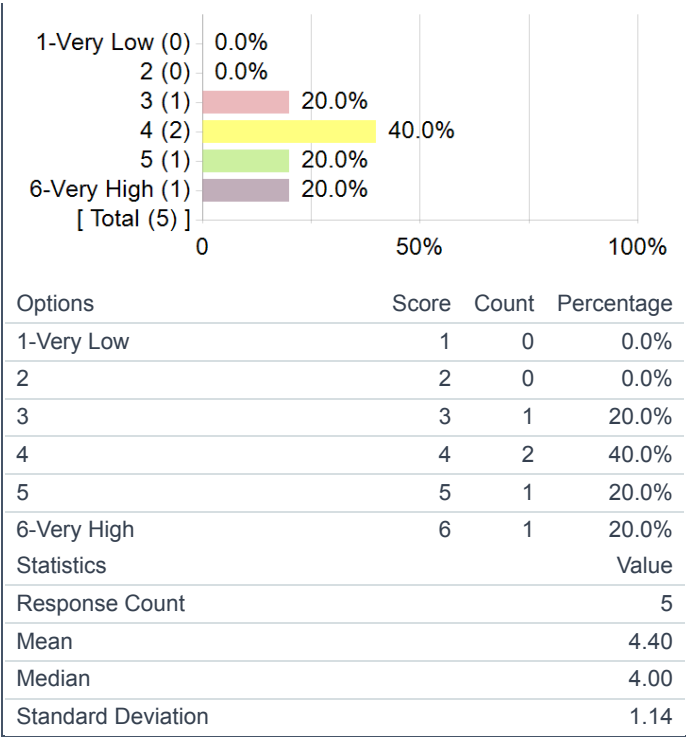
Rate how well the instructor encouraged you to think for yourself.

Rate how well the instructor encouraged you to think for yourself.



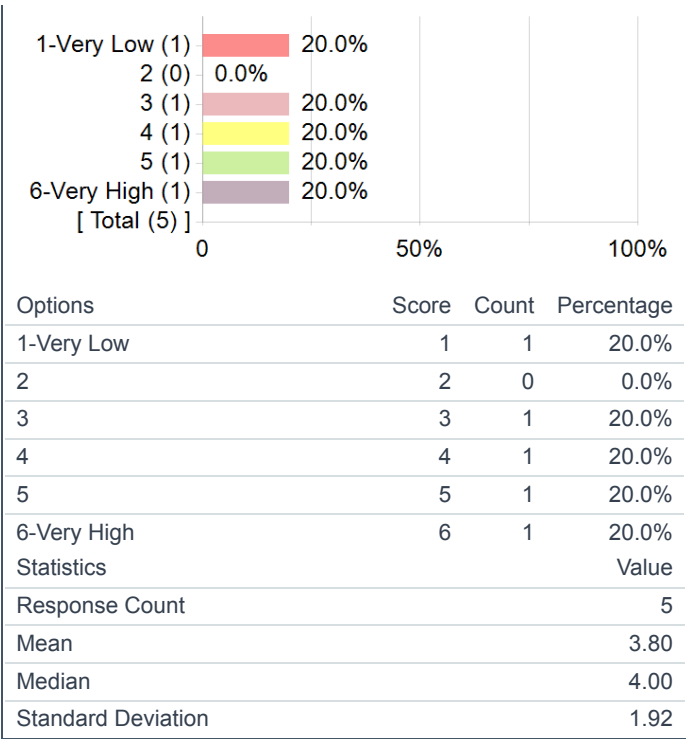
Rate how well the instructor taught you how to recognize good arguments in this field.

Rate how well the instructor taught you how to recognize good arguments in this field.



Rate how well the instructor presented class lectures in an organized fashion.

Rate how well the instructor presented class lectures in an organized fashion.



OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Did the course help you learn? Why or why not?

Comments
Yes, this course definitely helped me gain some additional knowledge about concepts and ideas behind statistical inference.
No. It was too fast, the textbook was not appropriate, and the lectures were not really helpful. It was too fast and more focused on advanced content, skipping the basic concepts – which snowballed to not understanding most of the content. The textbook was for more advanced students, or at least students who understand math–language. In the beginning I read all the chapters but could not understand anything. I would spend more time watching YouTube videos about the content than actually reading the material. If I had not watched videos, I would not have been able to understand the bare minimum. The lectures were also not that helpful, it was basically just a repetition of quotes and formulas from the textbook. Later in the course the lectures had some examples, which helped more. But overall, I don't think I learned much.
Helped me a lot with some stats basics.
Gustavo started with high expectations and standards, which many people had difficulty catching. He became more accommodating as he saw that at least half of the class was clearly struggling. The overall problem with the course was the structure of the syllabus. The topic distribution of the syllabus was very demanding and tiring rather than engaging. This. It is not entirely the instructor's fault. The department should have been more guiding and stayed in touch with the teaching team to set the tone for a new course rather than adopting a hands–off approach. One such problem was the need for lab hours. Both Artur and Gustavo tried to maximize their office hours to compensate for that lack. However, the department has not been more engaged with the whole process in fundamental things like putting a lab session. Also, the department could have included at least a specific recommendation about the syllabus (like stating that we already have separate classes for these individual topics of weeks, etc). Overall, the course structure might be very helpful for people with a decent background. Yet, for the future years, it might need a change.

## Please summarize your reaction to this course focusing on the aspects that were most important to you.

Comments
I was able to get a better sense of ideas and concepts related to basic statistical techniques as well as some more advanced methods.
I was really excited to take this course because I thought it would be an opportunity to start learning quantitative methods. But unfortunately that did not happen. The course would probably be great for advanced students or students who are already really naturally good at math. So it is the opposite of what I was expected, that is, an introductory course. Instead of focusing on introductory knowledge, the professor prioritized advanced topics and advanced coding (such as creating functions, loops, bootstrap, etc). And at the same time, there was little to no guidance to learn this advanced things. So it was awful. You would spend more time trying to do the labs than actually learning the topics. The labs basically required us to use ChatGPT because there is no resource offered in class to enable you to do the labs autonomously/by yourself. It was very counterproductive. High workload, little learning de facto.
NA

## What are the primary teaching strengths of the instructor?

Comments
Knowledgeable, excellent preparation of lab materials, highly motivated.
Professor Diaz is really helpful during office hours. He is also good at presenting criticism on certain mainstream quantitative methods
He's very patient.
I think Gustavo is very enthusiastic and super up-to-date about his field. He is a good asset for graduate students who want to embrace this methodology.

## What are the primary weaknesses, if any, of the instruction?

Comments
Lack of substantive feedback on assigned labs, large discrepancy between lecture content and lab assignments.
I think he chose a pedagogical method that is simply not suited for this class, and even though students gave several and overwhelming feedback that the method was not working for half (or more) of the students, he chose to stick to the method which he described as "throwing us in the river to see if we swim or sink". He focused on advanced topics and skipped the basic stuff – which should have been the emphasis of this course. The slides were also not very helpful, it was basically formulas. It lacked examples. He also would digress a lot during lectures which would sometimes make it more confusing. Several times when we asked questions he would say there was no time to answer it – which is true, because the syllabus was packed with unnecessary content – or to Google it. He expected us to have autonomy but we can only do things by ourselves if we have basic knowledge, which we did not. Overall, that made students increasingly give up on taking this course seriously and at least half of the quarter the students were clearly not engaging in class.
NA
For the first month, he was unaware of how much of a workload we were facing, significantly detaining us from the course.

## Can you offer suggestions for improvement?

Comments
It makes sense to provide feedback on assigned labs and to better align lectures with labs.
I would suggest to focus on the basic and spend time really explaining it. I would also suggest to offer guidance of how to do things, instead of just expecting us to learn 100% on our own. It is time consuming and the reality is that we have to give up on learning to be able to do the labs, instead of focusing on what is actually important: to learn the intuition and basic logic of basic statistical thinking. I would also suggest for the class to occur in only one day, instead of breaking into 2 days/week. We would spend too much time reviewing on Thursday what we discussed on Tuesday. I would also suggest to offer another textbook, that is more accessible to people who don't really know how to read/understand math proofs, etc.
NA
He could have introduced more fundamental ideas before delving into the unknown world. Changing the textbook could be a good start.