

North Carolina State University - ClassEval Report	
Emplid: 001123529	Name: Jonathan Williams -- Course: Intro Math Stat I
Term: 2024 Fall	ST 421 001 Courses surveyed - ST 421 001
Question	Response
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor	Taught the course with a mild enthusiasm, and at times brushed through some of the simpler elements of statistics. As someone with a shaky foundation in stats, I feel that some components of the class never got fully explained. I asked questions and got answers, but on homework I ran into these issues as well. I did not enjoy having to navigate a different website to get my homework assignments. It wasn't bad once I got there, but for the first couple of weeks I had no idea we had homework. As well, homework was never graded nor expected to be turned in, merely a set of problems to practice. I very much rely on feedback to learn. However, office hours conflicted with my schedule. Without this feedback, I would have to miss a class or disrupt my schedule just to try to catch up, which generated a lot of stress for me. One of the main reasons I had to switch the grading of this class to pass/fail.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the course	The structure of the course was good, but at times it felt like the subject matter would just come out of nowhere. It was hard to think through how I would approach newer problems, perhaps that may be more a reflection of my not so well stats background.
Give suggestions on how the course or how the instruction could be improved.	I feel that with graded homework I would have preformed much better than I have.
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor	I really wanted to like Dr. Williams but he made it so challenging. His lectures were okay, although, in his absence, his grad student often gave better, clearer lectures. His decision to make exams the only graded material felt unfair considering how poorly the exams were written. We often saw material for the first time on exams. I can remember multiple times when Dr. Williams explicitly told the class that certain concepts would be omitted from exams, only to put those concepts on the exam. Class averages for exams were often under 70, necessitating the larges curves I've ever seen in my journey at NC State. Exams took weeks to come back. The homework assignments were ungraded, long, arduous, and did not particularly help on the exams. Dr. Williams did not provide solutions to the homework. Apart from the homework and exams, there was no other material assigned.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the course	ST 421 was exceedingly challenging in a deeply unsatisfying way. I was prepared to work hard, but was quickly exhausted as I studied for days preceding exams, only to arrive and see concepts we hadn't ever covered. Much of my frustration with this course is related to my professor, but I felt helpless in this class. I am scared to take ST 421 next semester because I feel so rocky about the content from this course. This is not the sign of a good class.
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor	It is clear that Dr. Williams is incredibly knowledgeable in the field and is genuinely interested in the subject. However, the way that he taught this class felt ineffective and jumbled. I acknowledge that it is a tough subject but even after low class average exam grades it felt like his teaching never changed to address our needs. He was more than willing to help, and did a great job, in office hours but his teaching during class time mitigated any benefit from office hours. During lecture he often got a little off course and rambled or had to take a pause to figure out what we needed to talk about, as a student this made it seem like he never prepared the things he was lecturing that day before walking in to the classroom.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the course	It is clear that this class is meant to be tough and prepare students for grad school level courses. While I don't believe the classroom instruction was the best, I also don't believe that the textbook chosen to base the class on was the best. There were no detailed solutions to any of the practice exercises and the topic is relatively niche which made finding the problem worked out anywhere online was hard. The professor taking the time to workout the problems assigned as "homework" and posting them somewhere would have been very beneficial for the times when they were tricky.
Give suggestions on how the course or how the instruction could be improved.	One thing that was frustrating about the instruction of this course was the lack of class recording. I believe the reason given was "the recording sometimes messes up so it isn't worth it to keep it on". I don't understand what the harm was in just letting it go anyways and if it messes up, it messes up. As someone who attended every class, being able to go back through after class and write down points missed or just listen to the words again would have been excellent. Another weakness of the course is the lack of consistency between sections. I understand not wanting to grade a ton of work and allowing professors to chose their own course weights but one section having their grade, in a very new a tricky subject area, be made up solely by 4 exams while the other had homework and classwork accounted for seems inconsistent and unfair.
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor	Would sometimes ponder in silence for a minute or two trying to think of a response to a question or a way to explain something.
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor	The instructor did not record class, did not provide lecture notes, did not provide HW solutions (HW was not graded) and did not allow any formula sheet for exams.
Give suggestions on how the course or how the instruction could be improved.	If lectures were recorded (or lecture notes were provided in place of the recording) and if HW solutions were posted, the course would be bearable. There were not enough resources provided and I was essentially teaching myself the material (especially if I was unable to fully understand the concepts during the class period. ) I strongly benefit from reviewing resources outside of my own notes(lecture recordings, instructor written notes, worked out HW solutions) after class especially if I am still unclear on a concept, no such resources were provided.
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor	Dr Williams is a very smart person, and he knows the subject that he teaches really well. I think his biggest strength is his ability to teach a topic from different viewpoints and perspectives, and I really feel that he has the potential to make 421 a great class. He teaches mainly through proofs, which is useful. Also, the ambiance in his office is really stellar. The main weaknesses of Dr Williams is that he often teaches from such a zoomed in, high level perspective that following the lecture can be really difficult. I think it would be really beneficial to take a step back and talk about how the chapter we're on fits into the course as a whole. Similarly, going over a subject in Lehman's terms before diving into it would really solve a lot of confusion for students. Frequently, I find myself confused as to why we were learning something, and then a month later it finally clicks as to why we spent time on it.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the course	I would have greatly appreciated more resources outside of the class than just the textbook homework problems. Practice tests, routine quizzes, or even just a study guide would be greatly appreciated, as I feel like my studying for the final is like throwing darts at a board I can't see. Also, I felt like the homework problems didn't always prepare me for the tests. For test 3, I went in with the mindset that there would be a significant amount of practical questions on discrete distributions, and there were none.
Give suggestions on how the course or how the instruction could be improved.	I think that Dr Williams should sit in on other 421 lectures, and look at their tests, resources, and homeworks to see how other professors tackle the course. I think that he is a good instructor, but I think that he could really improve the quality of his course. Also, I saw the TRC sticker on your office door. NC State has 3 climbing walls at the gym, and I know that teachers get to take classes, and state offers HESO 258 and HESO 259, which are rock climbing 1 and 2. Also, there's a really sick outdoor bouldering wall on a retaining wall at Carmichael that's a 5.12- called the traverse wall. Wicked sick climb!
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the course	like what even was this class