

Individual Report - Fa20-MATH-0145-02-Abstract Algebra I - Robert J Lemke-Oliver

Project Title: **Fall 2020 AS&E Course Evaluation**

Courses Audience: **35**
Responses Received: **33**
Response Ratio: **94.29%**

Summary of Results

The Course

Question	Course		Subject (MATH)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. How would you rate the success of the course in accomplishing its objectives as stated on the course syllabus?	4.36	0.70	4.10	0.93
2. How would you rate the use of class time (lectures, discussions, demonstrations, labs, studio work, etc.) to promote your learning?	4.42	0.66	3.80	1.09
3. How would you rate the use of out-of-class activities (reading assignments, homework, papers, projects, studio art practice, etc.) to promote your learning?	4.30	0.73	3.91	1.02
4. How would you rate the way the course engaged your interest?	3.97	0.85	3.63	1.15
5. Based on your answers above, and any other factors you consider important, please provide an overall evaluation of the course.	4.36	0.70	3.88	0.99
Overall	4.28	0.74	3.87	-

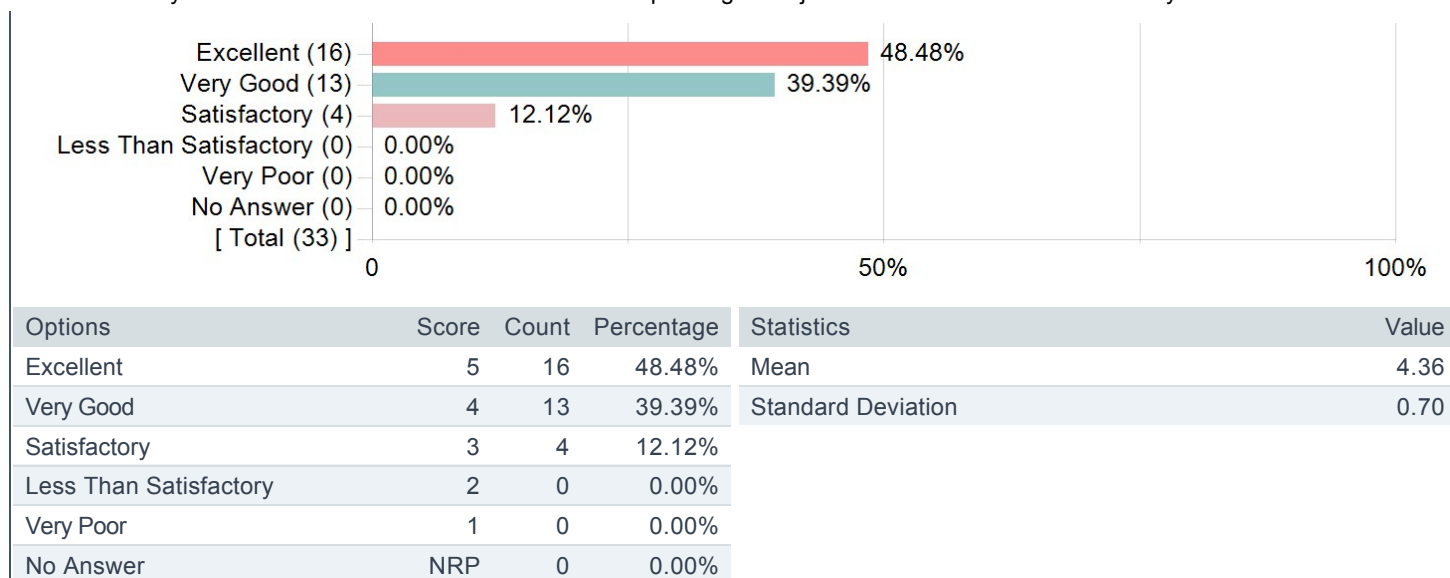
The Instructor

Question	Course		Subject (MATH)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
9. How would you rate the instructor's organization of each class?	4.55	0.67	4.11	0.94
10. How would you rate the instructor's success in explaining concepts and ideas?	4.45	0.56	4.09	0.99
11. How would you rate the timeliness of the instructor's feedback on assignments, exams, and other work?	3.79	0.99	3.94	1.06
12. How would you rate the usefulness of the instructor's feedback on assignments, exams, and other work?	4.15	0.83	3.94	1.03
13. How would you rate the instructor's success in creating and maintaining an inclusive class, respectful of all students?	4.55	0.62	4.35	0.86
14. How would you rate the instructor's communication with you outside of class?	4.52	0.76	4.16	0.97
15. Based on your answers above, and any other factors you consider important, please provide an overall evaluation of the instructor.	4.52	0.71	4.13	0.94
Overall	4.36	0.78	4.10	-

Detailed Results of Course Evaluation

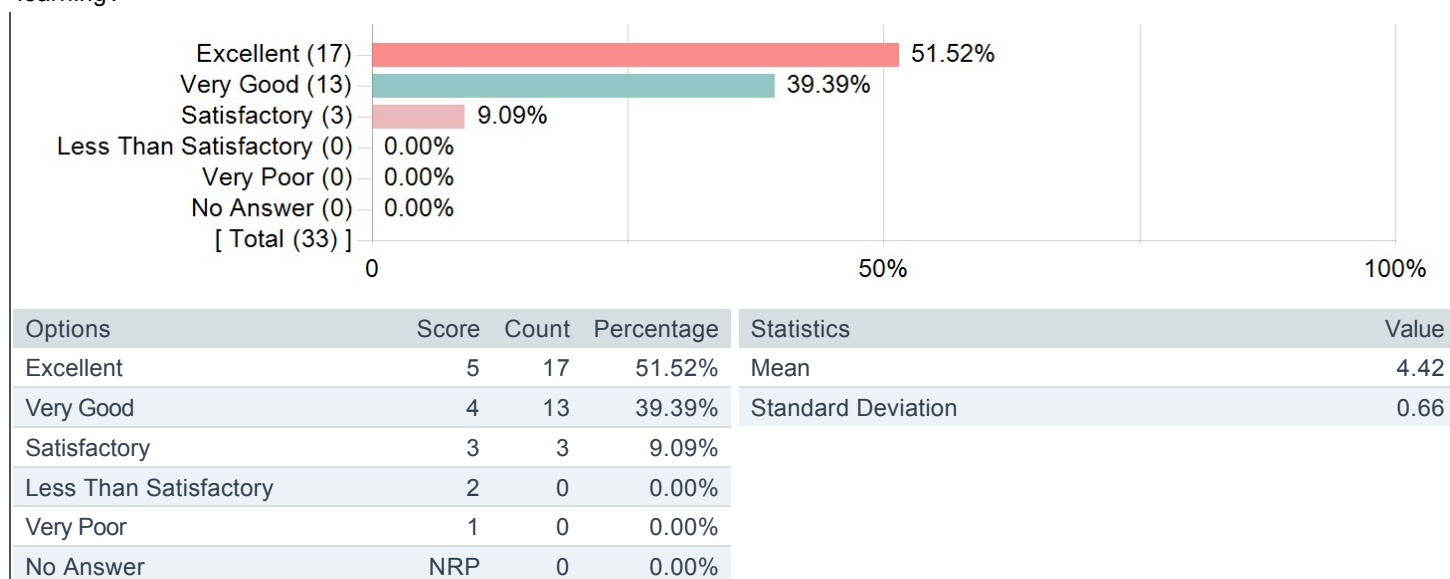
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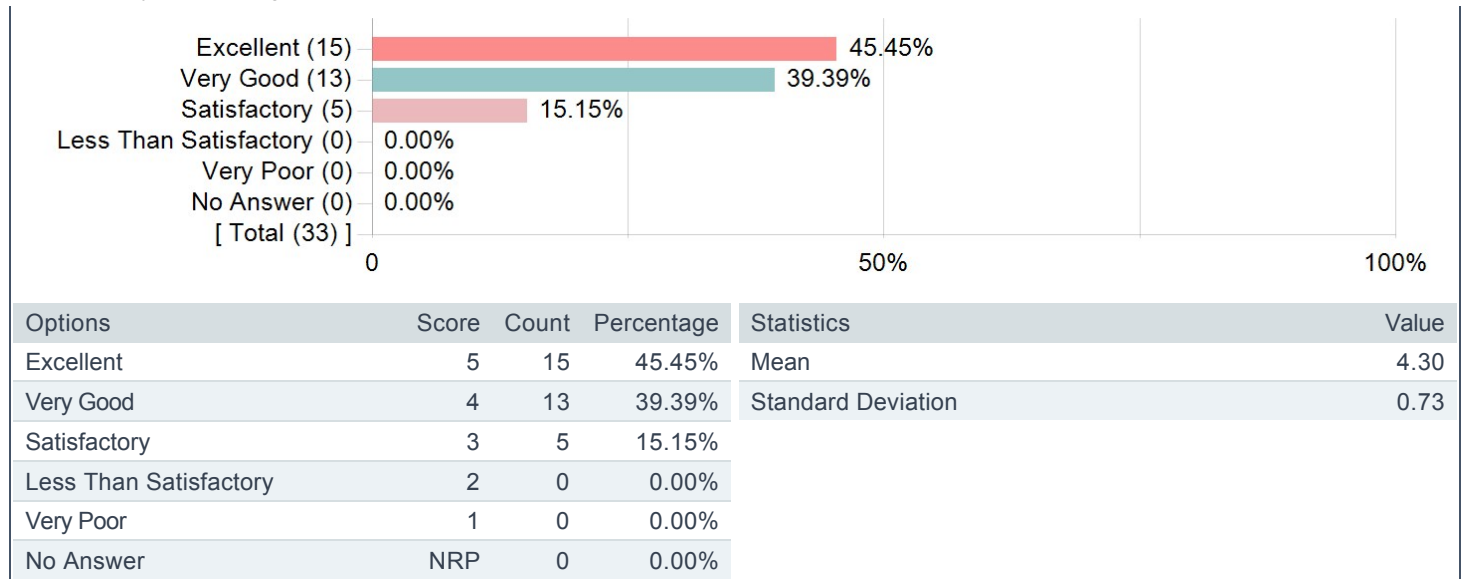
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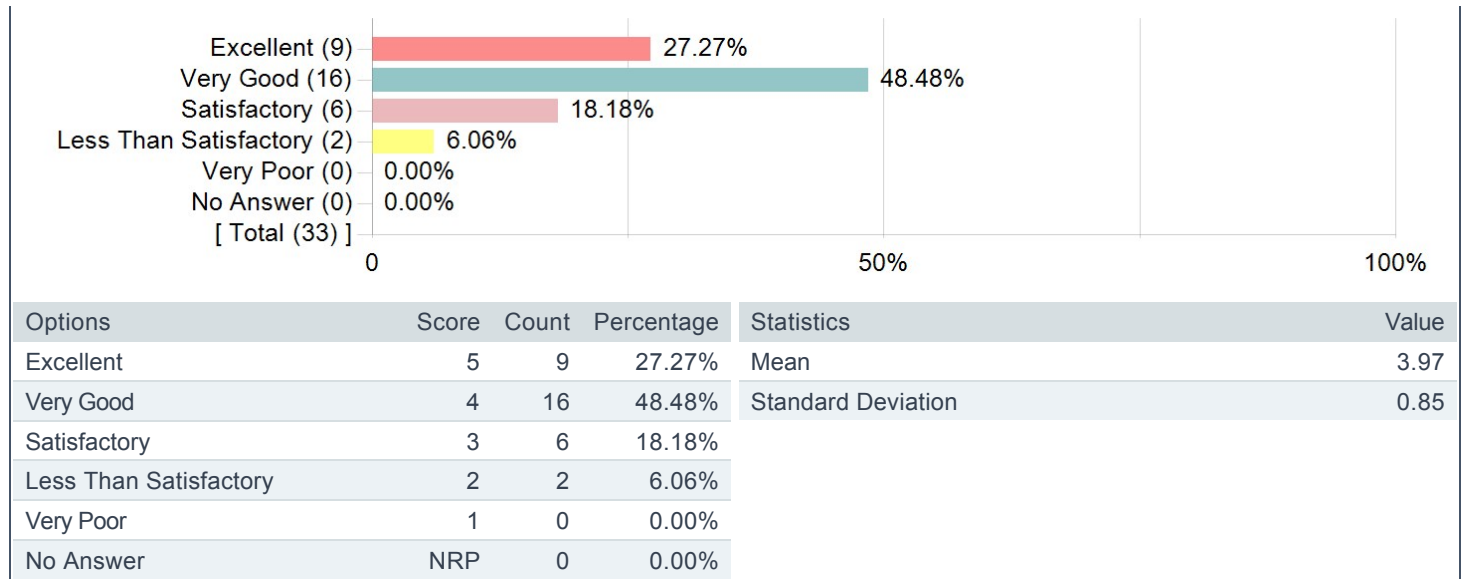
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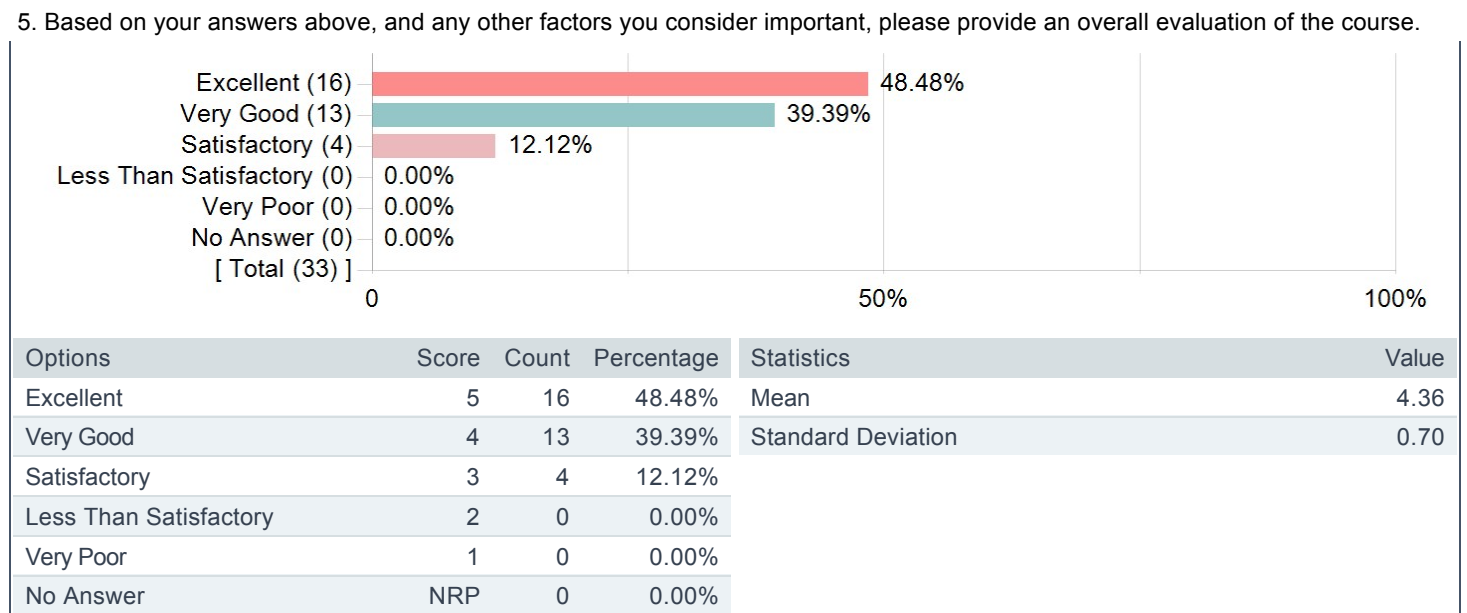


4. How would you rate the way the course engaged your interest?

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5. Based on your answers above, and any other factors you consider important, please provide an overall evaluation of the course.



6. In what ways has this course made you think differently or more deeply? Please provide examples.

Comments
I think that the ideas that were brought up in class were very different compared to what I normally have seen in the past, which made me have to learn a new way of thinking
It has taught me a lot about difficult mathematical topics such as groups and rings.
The class explored a really interesting way of thinking about numbers and their relationships. I found the material to be very interesting.
Abstract Algebra is one of the more difficult courses I've taken at Tufts, as I fully expected it to be. I learned a remarkable amount of new material in a very short time, and while on the surface it didn't seem to overlap with much of what I learned in my Analysis courses, I found that I built on several of the concepts I picked up throughout the earlier courses in the Math major. I especially enjoyed learning about rings and fields, and earlier in the course, permutations/cycles.
The class was very abstract and general which was difficult to think about but interesting nonetheless
Made me think of math way more abstractly and gave me a kind of storytelling ability in a math context. Lots of new ways to look at familiar concepts.
It definitely expanded my concept of abstraction within math and see how powerful math gets once this gets to a certain level of abstraction. Calc, Linear Algebra and Diff Eq all seem incredibly narrow slices within the greater field of mathematics, where concepts from Abstract Algebra like groups, rings and fields are so overarching.
It takes simpler concepts I was familiar with, like the set of integers and polynomials, and expands them to more abstract applications

7. What aspects of this course worked best to facilitate your learning?

Comments
Course materials were explained in a very clear and organized way.
I think that being able to openly collaborate with other students on assignments was really really helpful for people to learn the topics deeper and gain a better understanding as a whole
Walking through examples in class helped best
The material was difficult to learn over zoom, but I found the office hours to very helpful for clarifying things.
The use of a five minute break during our (admittedly, informationally dense) lectures was extremely helpful. I relied on that break to "take a breather" from the material, which I sometimes found confusing, and ask questions to the Professor so I could make sure I understood concepts correctly. Additionally, the use of "bookable office hours" on youcanbook.me was, far and away, the most critically important component of my learning this semester. I booked office hours with Professor Lemke Oliver almost every week to work with him on homework (and sometimes, exam) problems, and being able to work in that one-on-one environment, even in COVID times was unparalleled in its utility. I highly recommend that this booking system remain in place so students can have that one-on-one connection with the Professor.
I thought the lectures were well done for the most part
Recorded lectures work best for me because I like having the ability to pause or rewind if I need more time to understand information.
Typed lecture notes were amazing Well organized lectures Great Office hours
Prof Oliver chose to write the notes simultaneously while lecturing and I found this just about the perfect way to teach a class over zoom. He lectures at a quick pace so that you are forced to continuously engage as the class goes on, which I think is optimal for online learning as well. It's incredibly easy to be distracted during class, but in this class that never happened for me.
The availability of office hours and the clarity of explanations.

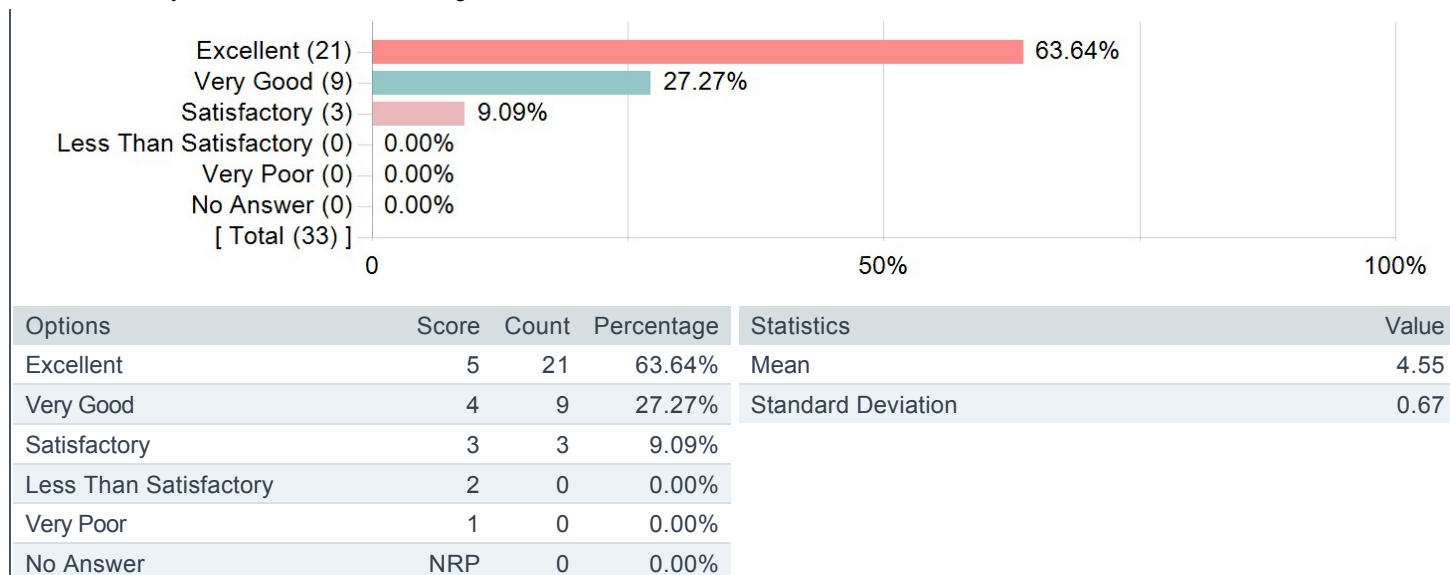
8. What suggestions do you have for improving this course?

Comments
I think it is extremely difficult to teach a mathematics course effectively on zoom.
If proofs are not a big portion of our grade, maybe spend a little less time in class on the proofs of the smaller lemmas and more time on examples.
I think that adding more ways for students to collaborate with others would drastically improve the classes ability to function
The course was very fast paced. I understand there is a lot of material to cover, so I am not sure how to rectify this.
Maybe restating important concepts in different ways at the beginning of each lesson (eg cosets, quotient groups, isomorphisms)
I would institute a recitation or review section of some sort for the course. In my Analysis I and II courses, we had a problem session once per week led by a TA or the professor, and I found it useful to see some of the material a second time. I'm not proposing an entirely separate lecture or anything like that, but maybe a TA-led recitation or material review session would be useful for students looking to fully grasp the material they may have missed in lecture.
None, writing on the iPad was not ideal but nothing to be done about that due to COVID
Extra credit opportunities Better HW comments
Given the online format and the topic, I think this course overall was taught very well. Personally, in previous math courses I've found the use of previous exams / study guides as study material for an exam incredibly helpful, and I wish there was some element of that in this course.
None

Detailed Results of Instructor Evaluation

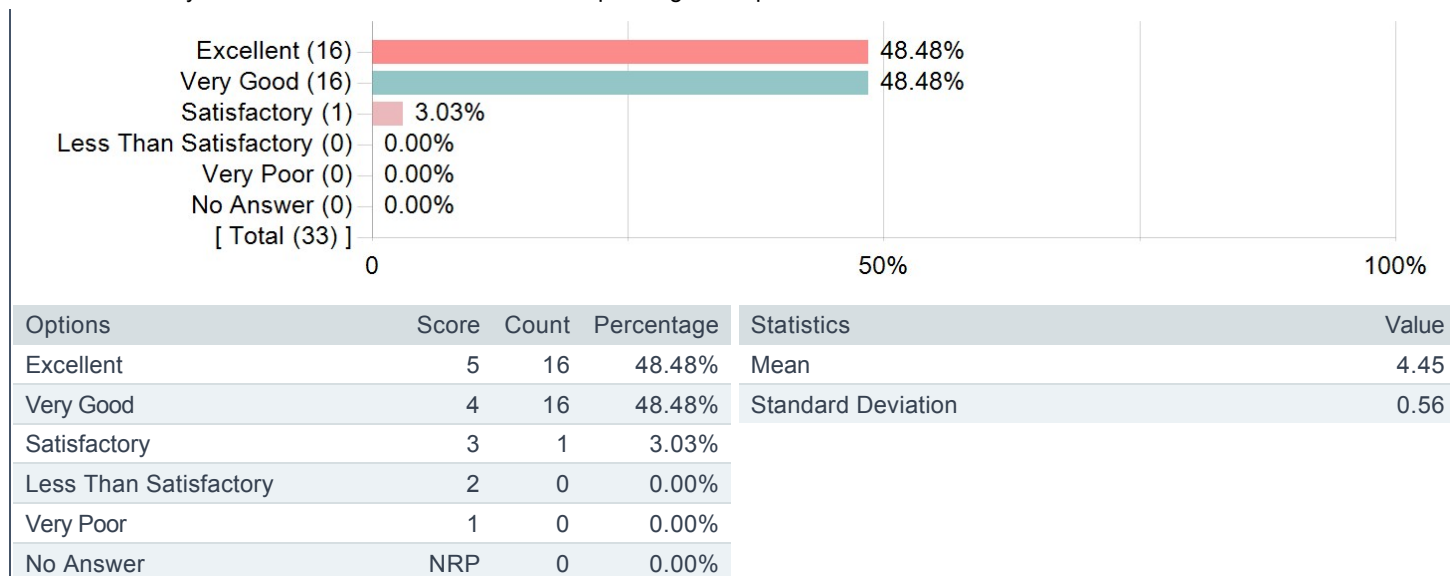
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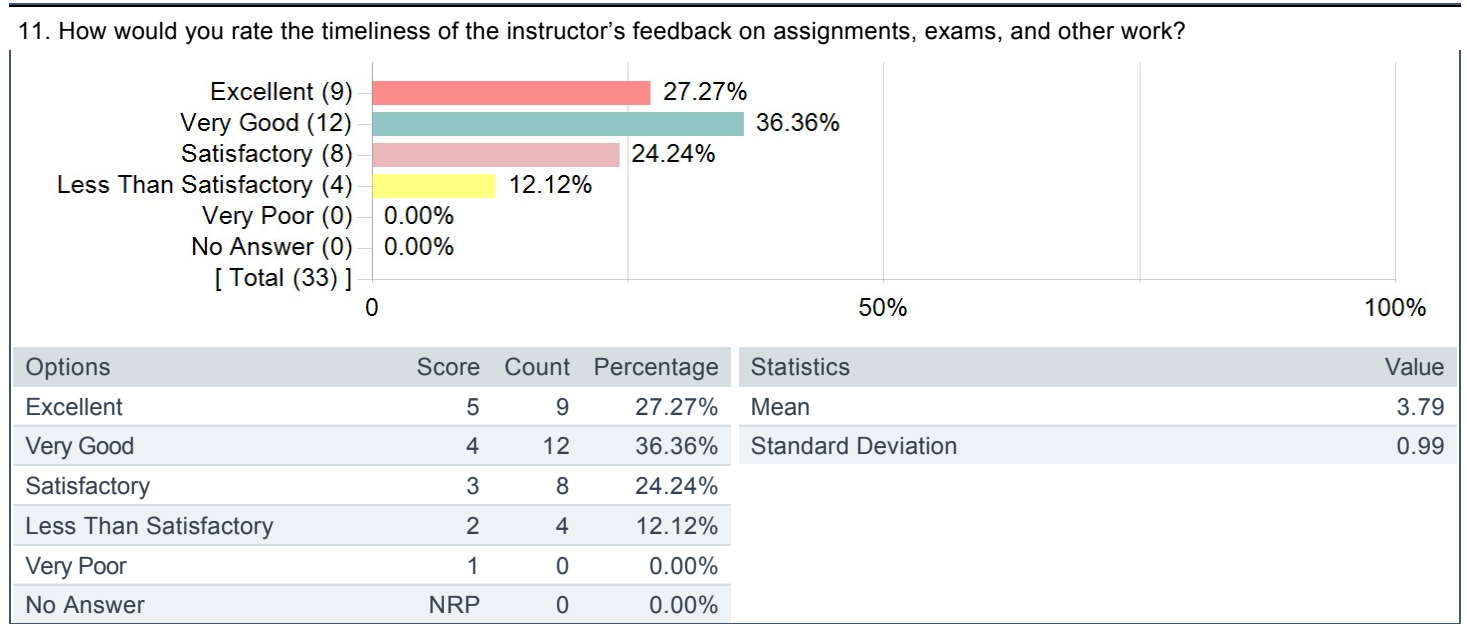


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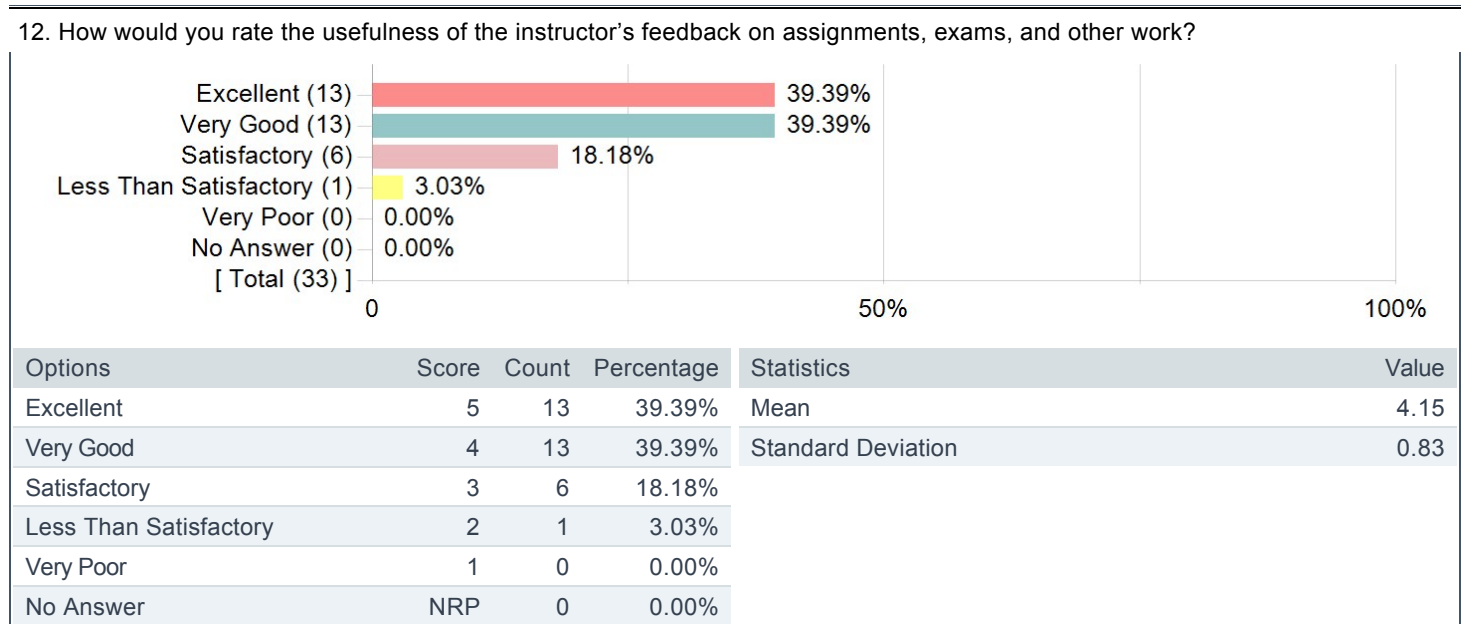
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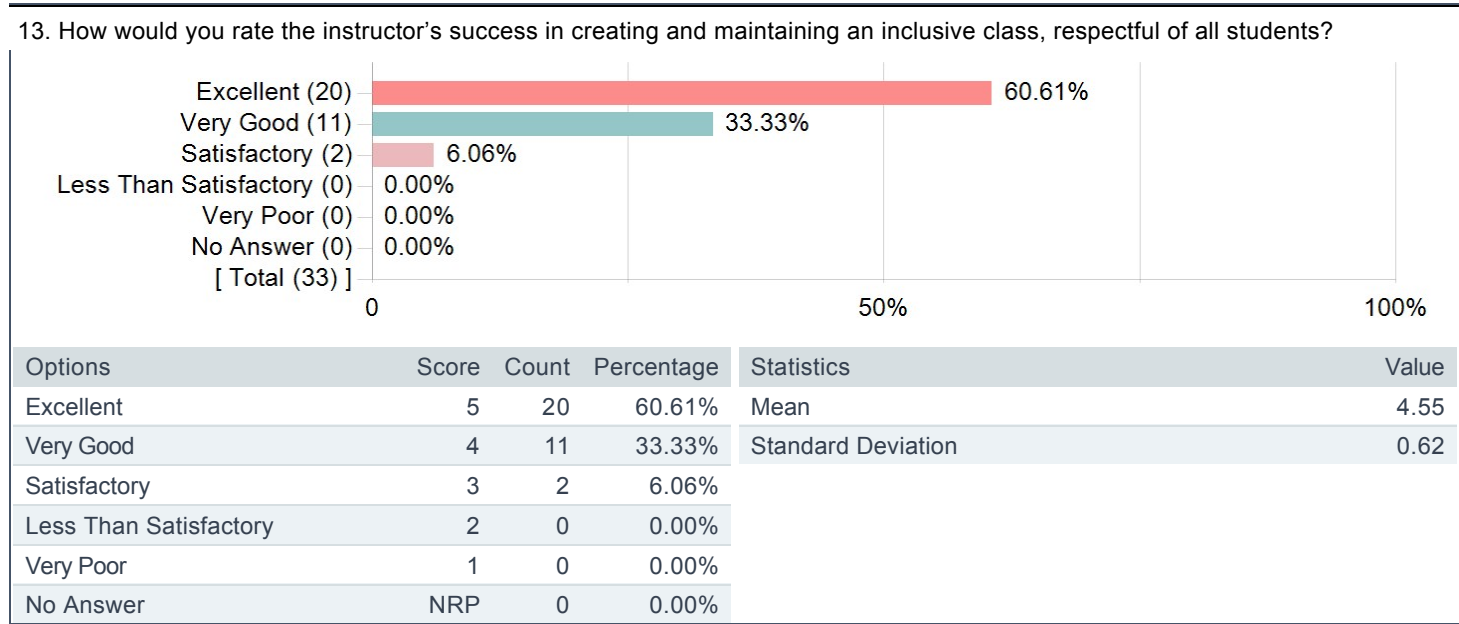
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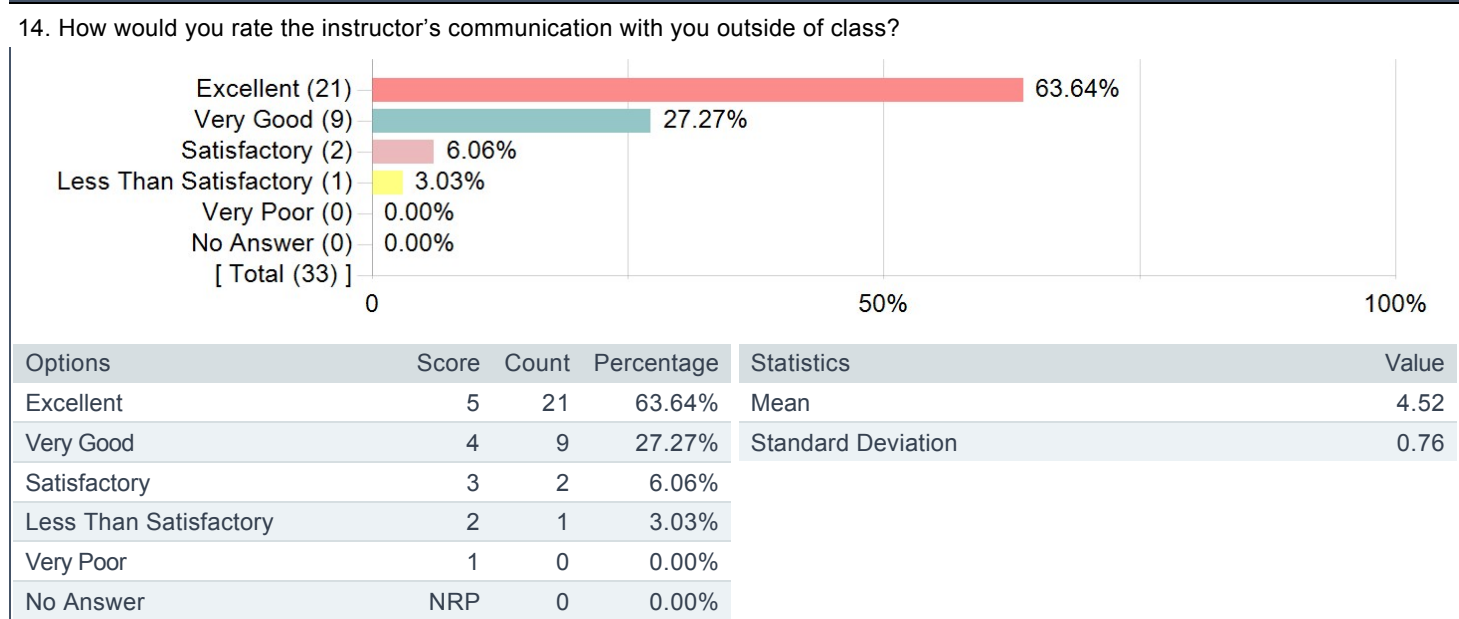
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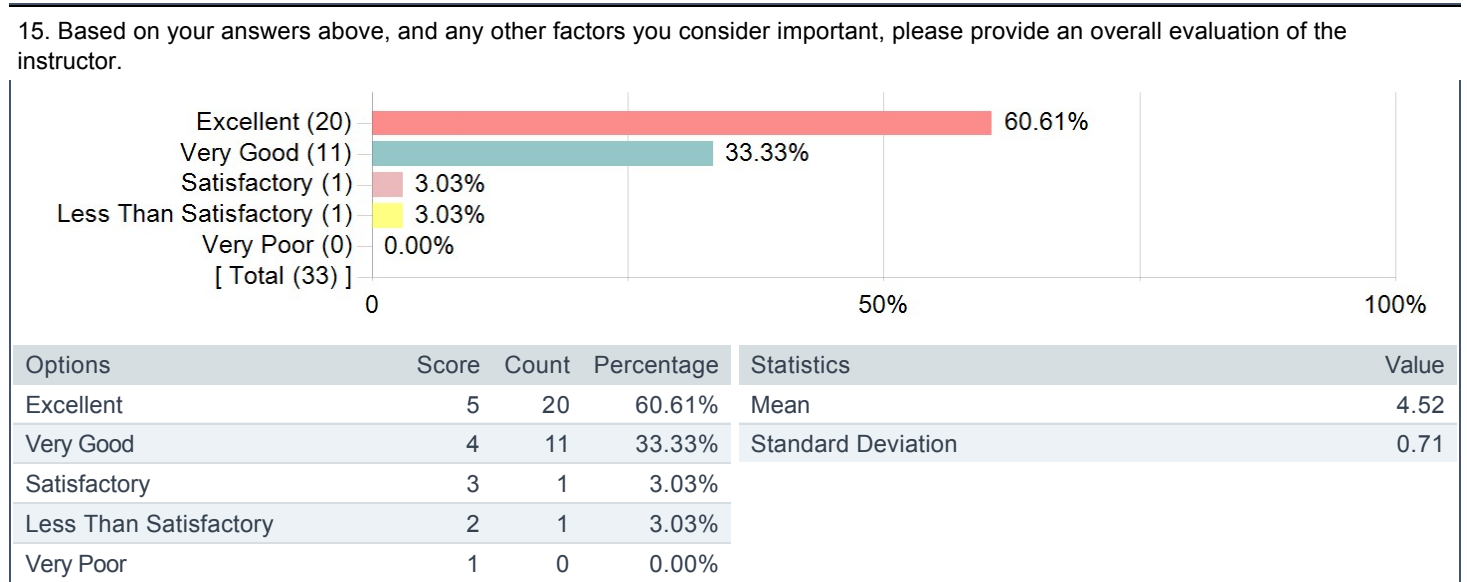
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14. How would you rate the instructor's communication with you outside of class?



15. Based on your answers above, and any other factors you consider important, please provide an overall evaluation of the instructor.



16. Please provide any additional comments regarding the instructor.

Comments
Easily one of the best professors I have had at Tufts! Made a very complicated subject much easier to understand.
Professor Lemke Oliver was phenomenal. He made every effort to make this a manageable class during COVID–19. He completely understands the reality of online learning and the potential stress from the pandemic, and he made every effort to make the students feel comfortable. I am very fortunate to have taken this course with Professor Lemke Oliver. I was nervous to take such an involved class remotely, but I can say with 100% confidence that the professor alleviated any concerns I might have had. A+!
Professor Oliver is very helpful during office hours and want his students to succeed.
Many office hours slots available, very approachable
I wish the homework was given back in a more timely manner, but besides that, it was great having you as an instructor :)
Robert is good at explaining topics and answering questions.
Professor Lemke Oliver was a great teacher. I really appreciated how respectful he was of the stresses the semester put on students and how he worked to make things less stressful. I do wish the homeworks were released on a more consistent schedule.
Professor Lemke Oliver has been nothing but accommodating this semester. He has given us the opportunity to be flexible on certain homework assignments, has recognized and worked with us to craft a course better suited to COVID times and an election year than I would have expected, and has been extremely approachable all semester. His willingness to have bookable office hours over the course of the week is a testament to how much he cares about the students' understanding of the material, and he has been communicative with us all semester in regards to exams, COVID–adjusted policies, and resources for success. Great job, and thanks for all you do Professor!
Feedback on assignments was really slow. Other than that, I don't think algebra is my strong suit but I enjoyed the lectures anyways. I think one thing you could do to improve is give more examples, especially with how abstract everything is, especially in the second half of the class. I tend to understand things better when I can pair a concept with an example.
Robert is one of the best teachers I've had during my four years here. He adapted well to the challenges of this semester, and really went out of his way to be helpful and available outside of class. It was a pleasure to take this class with him.
I wish I could give better than excellent for #9 and #13. The lectures are always deliberate and clear, and he's always thinking of the students.
Second class with this professor, second time having a great experience. He has an amazing ability to make every lecture almost exactly 4 pages of notes in my notebook. Every lecture flows seamlessly as if he has written a timed script. This shows true mastery of the content to me.
Would love to take another class with him!

17. How would you rate the space in which instruction occurred (classrooms, laboratories, etc.)?

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