CMSC 14100 2 - Introduction to Computer Science I - Instructor(s): Jesus Almaraz-Argueta, Timothy Ng

Project Title: **College Course Feedback - Autumn 2022**

Number Enrolled: **57**
Number of Responses: **23**

Report Comments

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

Creation Date: **Tuesday, January 10, 2023**

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

Comments
I reviewed and learned many basic concepts of python that were really helpful in completing the homework. The basic concepts were also essential to understand more complex ideas like recursion, dictionaries, and OOP.
Basics of working with Python
Basics of python
Learning how to code and problem solve, and how to approach problems multiple times to create efficient solutions
intro mindset to coding, proper formats of coding, and python
Basic Python structures and understanding how to apply them to solve problems presented to us.
Python, GIT, recursion.
Since I did A–level in Computer Science and had previous experience in CS, I did not find any information new.
Recursion
Recursion, data structures, for loops, conditionals, etc. in Python
Programming basics, data structures, functions, recursion
loops, classes, recursion were the main things
Types in Python, loops, how to create/implement classes and objects, recursion
Basic programming syntax
I learned about the fundamentals, supported data structures, and functionality of Python.
Basic python skills, how to think critically and improve problem solving skills.
Recursion
I learnt the basics of python programming, linux and how to navigate through github.

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

Comments
The lectures were continuous such that we would essentially pick up where we left off so I was able to easily pick up new concepts and link them to the ones we already learned.
The homeworks were difficult but made me understand how to work with the concept much better.
Homework and midterm were the right level of challenge
The lectures allowed me to learn both theoretical concepts and their practical applications The discussion sections allowed me to learn how to collaborate with classmates on problems
Professor Ng's lectures are clear and helpful to understand the concepts. Great practices in discussion. Assignment is harder than lecture but fairly manageable.
Lectures were useful for understanding basic theory of new material, but discussion sections, where we were given similar problems and worked through them, helped to really understand how to solve each week's assignment. Office hours were most useful for understanding our problems or where we are confused. However, changing the system around midway through the quarter to a waiting room where only one student can talk to a TA at a time made progress substantially slower.
Homework was relevant and fun to complete. You can see that this is one of the most well–organized courses at UChicago, with coherent homework, lectures, and discussion sections. Code quality feedback from TAs was nice to have. I appreciate the TAs for spending so much time reading the messy codes I write.
I found assignments to be the most useful in my studies. Specifically the Project assignments.
Classes are kind of iffy and fast paced. The homework is where things are really absorbed for me
Lectures were pretty good but not 100% necessary, assignments were hard as hell, discussion sections were mostly useless but occasionally priceless
Working with friends on homework and projects was the most important part of learning from the class
Lectures were very informative and helpful
The lectures were very interesting with Prof Ng. Was especially helpful that he had lecture notes, learned mostly through those.
Lectures were not that helpful in the moment – the textbook and lecture notes were definitely more helpful. Homeworks forced me to internalize the concepts I learned, and discussions gave good practice problems I could discuss with other people and reference later on as well.
Discussions are helpful
The lectures and Professor Ng's corresponding notes were very thorough and easy to follow, helping me to retain the material. Spencer's discussions were very informative and helped get me accustomed to the "be–a–computer" problems.
Class notes posted online by Professor Ng as well as the textbook were the most helpful resource besides going to office hours.
I didn't go to class but the assignments were not bad
The lectures taught me the functions to use in python. The discussion sessions taught how to interpret and approach "be–a–computer" problems.

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.19	5.00	4.76%	0.00%	19.05%	23.81%	52.38%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.45	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	4.55%	45.45%	50.00%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.23	4.00	0.00%	4.55%	13.64%	36.36%	45.45%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	3.62	4.00	4.76%	9.52%	33.33%	23.81%	28.57%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.10	4.00	0.00%	4.76%	23.81%	28.57%	42.86%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.32	4.00	0.00%	4.55%	4.55%	45.45%	45.45%
I felt respected in this class.	4.41	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	13.64%	31.82%	54.55%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.05	4.00	0.00%	4.55%	22.73%	36.36%	36.36%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
Many people, including me, did not like the grading structure really well, as for the homework, getting two needs improvements will lock one from getting an A, which we thought is counterproductive, as once people know they won't get an A, their will drop their effort to A– at best.
Code "completeness" (= whether it runs properly) is weighted equally with code "quality" (= aesthetic judgements about how you wrote it), which I didn't love
The course went pretty quickly like we would jump from typical functions to classes. I think if we had more time to cover trees and recursion in more detail, i would like that. Discussion was not as helpful but also just the grouping of students I did not enjoy bc some students would know more than others (which is great), but would not slow down / help the other understand.
Very intense workload, but I felt that what I was learning was meaningful and useful. I overall enjoyed learning Python in this course, but it came with a lot of work (more work than any other class I've had at UChicago).
I thoroughly enjoyed this course and think my coding skills improved vastly because of it!
I was not a beginner to CS, so the class was alright. However, I do think it will be pretty hard for people with no background CS experience at all.
As a beginner of this course, this course poorly taught me how to approach computer science as the homework and projects were unrealistically challenging. Although the rigour of this course is heightened by the quarter system, this course does not teach python to beginners well. There should be leeway in this course, for homeworks and assignments, to let beginners explore and learn computer science at a more manageable pace.

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	0.00%	100.00%
Anyone interested in the topic	19.05%	80.95%

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

Comments
He was open to and often encouraged questions and those questions were very helpful in understanding more about the data structures or other concepts taught in class.
Lectures Office hours
Being very open and understanding to students' questions
leading us through concepts and problems
He was very straightforward on what we would see, and how we would be able to deal with them in a general sense.
Professor Ng's lecture notes posted online were helpful. He is very logical and straightforward with his teaching.
Nothing.
Examples and clear definitions.
Lectures
Notes and lectures
I liked how clear he was in explaining how to use the methods we learned syntactically.
I appreciated Professor Ng's lecture notes (posted online) – they were helpful because often I didn't understand what was happening in class.
Professor Ng was very good about explaining the theory behind different concepts and illustrating examples both through IPython and on the chalkboard. He also welcomed questions and gave very helpful answers.
Professor Ng had really clear and organized notes posted to his website, these were great especially considering it could be hard to see the board in class or if you missed something in lecture.
Teaching us how to write and interpret basic python functions.

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
I would have liked more about CS theory rather than just python stuff that we could have learned on YouTube
record the lectures
The instructor could discuss examples in class that are more closely related to the problems assigned that week.
I think Professor Ng asked too many questions in class. It sometimes dragged the lecture's pace down and made it boring.
Make on the screen more visible. Be less engaged in communicating with the class and rather just deliver information non–stop. Otherwise, the same questions get asked every class and we spend time unproductively.
Rebalance lecture time to spend more time on harder subjects and less on easier ones.
As extensive as the API for our assignments was, edge cases were regularly omitted from assignment descriptions and you had to instead go into the auto–grader code to find which weird edge cases your code was failing. Might've liked more transparent expectations for our code up front
(To all the instructors): Please provide a more organized office hour structure throughout the quarter. Additionally, I believe that the code quality standards were too high and penalized people for small mistakes that could in turn have a huge effect on what their grade could be. Overall, I don't think that having more than one un–Satisfactory score (out of 2 per each homework and 4 for each project) should completely eliminate someone's chance of getting an A in this class, because that sends the message that what you're looking for is an experienced coder in your class which is supposed to be targeted to beginners.
Nothing to change!
Instead of teaching beginners how to write code perfectly, there could be some space to let beginners learn programming by using more basic and 'messier' code to approach assignments.

The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.53	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	5.00%	35.00%	55.00%	5.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.22	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	15.79%	42.11%	36.84%	5.26%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	3.81	4.00	5.00%	5.00%	15.00%	30.00%	25.00%	20.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.47	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	30.00%	55.00%	5.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.42	5.00	0.00%	5.00%	5.00%	30.00%	55.00%	5.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.28	4.50	0.00%	5.00%	10.00%	30.00%	45.00%	10.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.39	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	15.00%	25.00%	50.00%	10.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.39	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	5.00%	45.00%	40.00%	10.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.21	4.00	0.00%	5.00%	15.00%	30.00%	45.00%	5.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.21	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	15.00%	45.00%	35.00%	5.00%

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
Spencer Ng – He was very open to questions and would provide prompt questions to suggest a specific way of tackling the problem that would enable us to reach the desires outcome / code.
The TAs were helpful in office hours but the switch in the middle of the quarter to have a virtual queue made it very difficult to get help in a timely manner. The discussion sections were not as helpful since it was largely just us working on problems in small groups without much help if we were stuck.
William Wang
Victor Almarez–Argueta: The TA was very open to discussion and adapted the class time allocated for each problem accordingly, which helped adapt how we learned.
There were many TAs that I came to for help, essentially just when we had overlapping availability. However, the one myself and others found most helpful was Olivia Campili, who was very clear in helping us understand the practical aspects of the code, and solve our particular errors we were encountering.
I forgot the name, be the TA hosts discussion sections on Tuesday from 18:00 to 19:00, Room C106. She was kind, cheerful, and always happy to help in discussion sections.
TA answering questions during discussion sections were the most helpful
Zoa Katok
Lily was great in explaining the discussion questions that I often didn't get on the first try around with my group. However, there were too many discussion questions to cover in each session so we were often rushed and it was frustrating.
Spencer Ng ran my discussion sections, and he was very good about helping us workshop our handwritten code, think through what the methods were doing, and come up with real–world applications. No changes!
William Wang. Our TA explained how to approach the discussion questions clearly. The TAs in this course were all helpful and passionate about computer science.

The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	4.23	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	46.15%	38.46%	0.00%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.15	4.00	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	46.15%	38.46%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	7.69%	15.38%	46.15%	30.77%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.08	4.00	0.00%	7.69%	15.38%	38.46%	38.46%	0.00%
Helped you succeed in the class.	4.23	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	23.08%	30.77%	46.15%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.17	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	23.08%	30.77%	38.46%	7.69%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.00	4.00	0.00%	7.69%	15.38%	46.15%	30.77%	0.00%

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	1.00	1.00	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	66.67%
Writing Seminars	4.00	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	75.00%

Other course elements not mentioned above:

Comments
Discussion session
Discussion sections
Discussion session
Discussion Sessions

Is this class a requirement of some sort?

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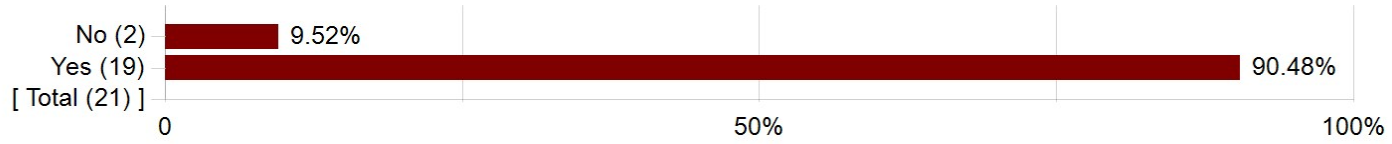
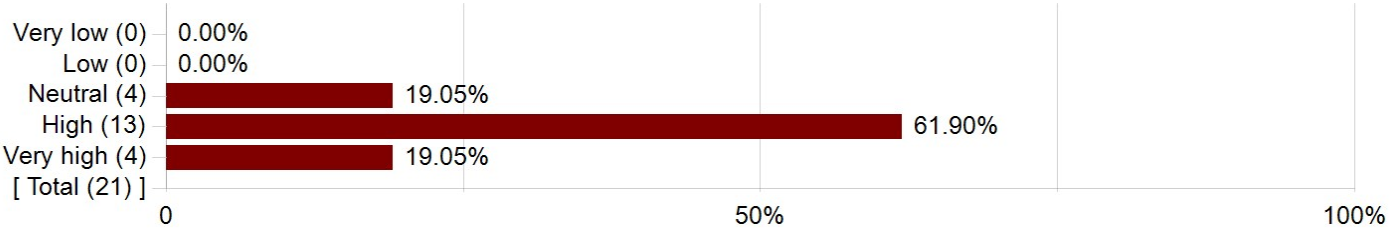


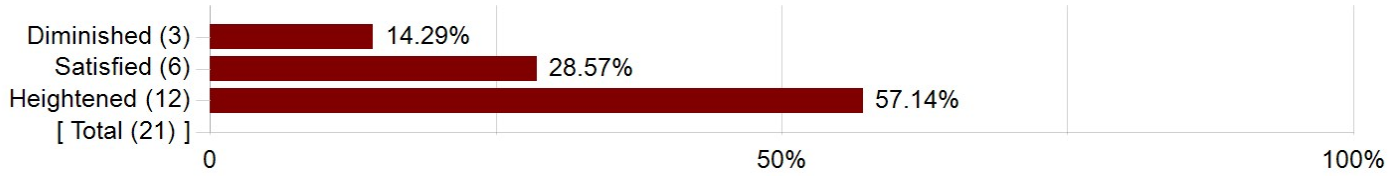
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?

Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?

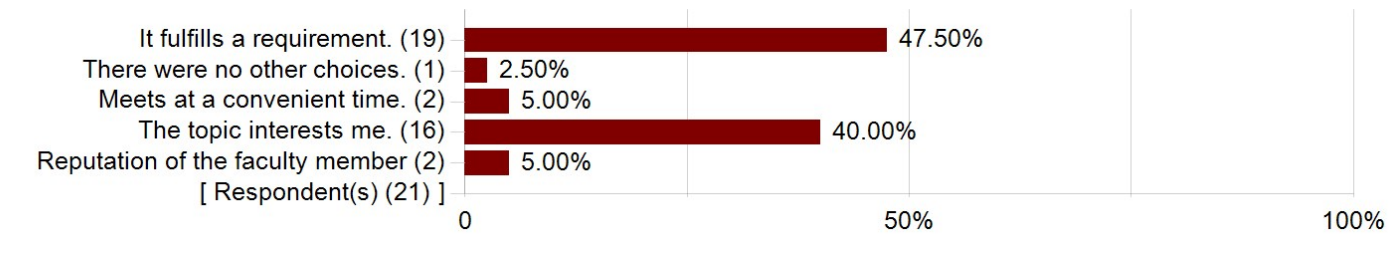


Now that this class is over, your interest is?

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?

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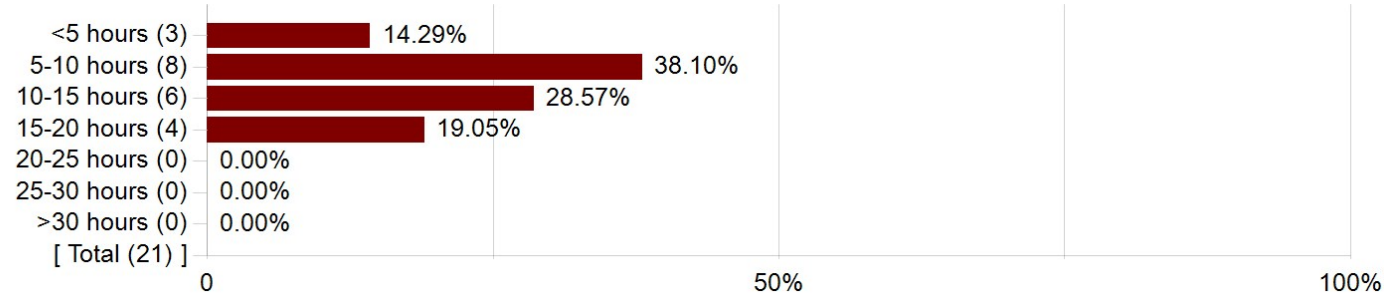

What proportion of classes did you attend?

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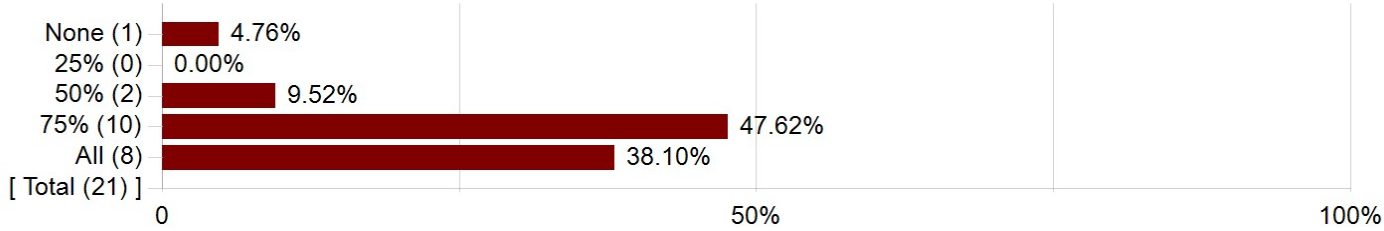

Please comment on the level of difficulty of the course relative to your background and experience.

Comments
I took IB HL computer science and so the concepts introduced were often reviewing and adding onto what I already knew.
This course is easy for people who have experience with Python. I did not have that much experience and struggled much more as a result.
I found it easy, but I also had previous CS experience.
With previous coding and CS experience, it was about a 5/10 difficulty (10 being hardest)
fair
Not hard
Easy but interesting since topics such recursion were discussed in greater detail than I have covered them prior.
Since I had prior CS experience, I would give this course a 6.5 out of 10 for difficulty.
Still too hard lol – sounds better than 131 but like...
Had no background, so not too difficult until we hit recursion.
For someone with 3 years coding experience, time–consuming and sometimes difficult
I had some programming experience from the summer and I found the course ok
I think its definitely a difficult course and I had previous experience so I thought it ok.
Very challenging for me due to the workload and difficulty of homework questions, as someone who had the slightest bit of Python experience beforehand.
I did have some experience with Python and Java before, so some parts of this class were review. However, other parts helped me build on my knowledge and even grew it in different directions.
I had no experience in computer science, the class was a little challenging but if you go to office hours and put in the work you can do very well
It was easy for me because I had a lot of CS experience in high school (AP CS A and Post–AP Courses), but I think it'll be hard for beginners
This intro course was too challenging and unrealistic for beginners with no background and experience in computer science.