



Course and Teacher Evaluation Summary for Instructors

Subject: BIOL_SCI Biological Sciences
Academic Term: Spring 2015
Class Number: 37174

Enrollment: 89
Responses: 58
% Responses 65.17

Class: 109-0-20 The Nature of Plants
Instructor: Norman Wickett

Demographic Questions

	Education & SP	Communication	Graduate School	KGSM	McCormick	Medill	Music	Summer	SCS	WCAS
Your School	6	7	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	38

	a. Freshman	b. Sophomore	c. Junior	d. Senior	e. Graduate	f. Other
Your Class	13	26	8	7	0	0

	a. Distribution requirement	b. Major requirement	c. Minor requirement	d. Elective requirement	e. Other requirement	f. No requirement
Your reason for taking course (mark all that apply).	40	3	1	4	1	6

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total Response	Average Response
Interest in subject before taking course.	8	10	16	12	5	2	53	3.04

Core Questions

	Total Response	1 Very Low	2	3	4	5	6 Very High	Average Response
1. Provide an overall rating of the instruction	51	0	2	4	11	18	16	4.82
2. Provide an overall rating of the course.	51	2	2	6	14	14	13	4.47
3. Estimate how much you learned in the course.	51	0	2	10	14	18	7	4.35
4. Rate the effectiveness of the course in challenging you intellectually.	54	3	5	13	20	5	8	3.80
5. Rate the effectiveness of the instructor(s) in stimulating your interest in the subject.	54	3	1	6	14	11	19	4.59

Time-Survey Question

	Total Response	a. 3 or fewer	b. 4 - 7	c. 8 - 11	d. 12 - 15	e. 16 - 19	f. 20 or more
6. Estimate the average number of hours per week you spent on this course outside of class and lab time.	52	39	10	3	0	0	0

School and Department Questions

	Total Response	1 Very Low	2	3	4	5	6 Very High	Average Response
7. Rate how well prepared the instructor was for the class.	53	0	1	0	7	14	31	5.40
8. Rate the effectiveness with which the instructor communicated course content and ideas.	52	1	1	1	13	11	25	5.06
9. Rate the instructional materials (texts, audiovisual materials, etc.) used in this course.	51	0	2	5	13	15	16	4.75
10. Rate the instructor's enthusiasm in teaching this class.	52	0	1	0	4	9	38	5.60
11. Rate how well the instructor answered students' questions.	52	1	0	0	13	14	24	5.13
12. Rate the clarity with which the grading criteria were defined.	51	2	3	5	12	16	13	4.49
13. Rate how consistently the instructor returned assignments and tests promptly.	51	1	4	7	13	13	13	4.41

Essay Questions

1. What are the primary teaching strengths of the instructor(s)?

if there was an option for the number 7 for the question "How enthusiastic is the instructor..." I would have chosen that./Professor Wickett is a very awesome and excited instructor. He is very good at explaining concepts and getting people interested in lecture material and in plants as a whole./The instructor really knows what he is talking about. Has an extensive knowledge of mosses. Aside from that, he does great at breaking down complicated ideas into regular terms./Professor Wickett is clearly very enthusiastic about his subject./Such a cool guy, really helpful, went in to see him a couple times and he answered every question clearly, and really well. Super nice guy, easy to talk to and genuinely cares about his students./He was very active during lecture/enthusiasm/He explains the information in was that can be easily understood (helpful for non-majors like myself) Tried to make the class fun, even when we didn't laugh at the jokes./He is clear and tries to put an interesting spin on class content./Wickett was great at explaining concepts that were foreign to many of us./--/Norm is very enthusiastic about plants and is very knowledgeable on the subject/He communicates in an effective and humorous fashion./Norm is funny and knows we're taking the class as a distro./The PPTs. /Very enthusiastic/Favorite teacher I've had at Northwestern by far. Amazing at communicating and capturing my interest in a subject I had no interest in originally. Very good at ingraining the basics of plant biology into my head in a very captivating and interesting way. Extremely funny and earned my respect that way. Love that what we were tested on was 100% taught in class./Very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject./Norm really puts in a lot of effort to try to engage the class. While he is usually unsuccessful, you kind of feel bad for him. Definitely a good distro to take though- not too hard and just need to study the slides/Norm is dedicated to what he teaches which makes his class that much more interesting. He has a love for moss which was evident since the first class. I LOVED this class even though the first exam was a little rough./Very enthusiastic about course material./enthusiasm/Professor Wickett is always very excited to begin class./Norm is funny and very enthusiastic about plants. He is also very knowledgeable, especially about moss./very enthusiastic and made me actually want to learn more about plants/This is what a distribution requirement should be like. I learned so much from this course without being burdened by it. I enjoyed each and every lecture very much--not only was the course material interesting, I could see that Norm was excited to teach the material to students. His enthusiasm was a major part of the reason that the course was so great./he wants you to do well and is very willing to help you which was encouraging./Very enthusiastic and effective./He is so enthusiastic and passionate about his lectures and his slides are always very detailed and explanatory!/Sense of humor and ability to make plants interesting to those who would not necessarily be in another class./Teacher is a phenomenal guy, Great to get to know more on a personal level if possible. He loves when anyone goes to visit him and loves to help you if you're struggling/He was very enthusiastic

2. What are the primary weaknesses, if any, of the instruction?

Professor Wickett is easily sidetracked and sometimes doesn't make it through the lecture material he expects to. This was not a significant problem though-- Professor Wickett got through enough to make the course quite substantial./His tests are very unclear in terms of what he is looking for in the answers/I took this class because it got good CTECs, but I found Prof. Wickett extremely annoying (tries way too hard to be funny and even goes so far as to make bad jokes during an exam), his tests were poorly written, and he never emphasizes the material that actually corresponds to what makes up the majority of the tests. On the first test, for instance, after spending most of the course up to that point going over life cycles, there was only one question asking us to fill in a life cycle, and the majority of the test came from the first couple days of class. He's also one of those professors who doesn't realize that he's teaching a 100-level distro and that a lot of the students who are taking the class are only doing so because they need a distro outside of their typical area of interest, unless the humour is overcompensation for the distro phenomenon./literally none./His lecture style is not structured. And he makes the class feel very awkward. Nobody could answer his question because we just did not know. And this did not just happen once. It means he is friendly, but not proficient in teaching yet./lack of rigor, cares too much about student opinion/There were a few times on all exams where there was a question that was not really explained in class./His slides are so dense that you miss a lot of what he is saying because you're busy reading the slides or worse trying to copy them down./He was very picky when it came to the details. Considering we don't have a book and are left with slides, if you miss a few seconds of his lecture, you will miss a question on the exam./--/Doesn't hand back tests, hard to know what we can improve better on and does not really talk about the exam the next class, also does not do much review, which could be really helpful for this course/Sometimes he goes too far off with chatting with the class instead of go over the materials./His brand of humor is really sarcastic but can feel

a bit antagonizing to the students at times. It made me less likely to speak in class./Class was too fast paced with all of the material we have to cover and there being a few lectures that were cancelled and no made up./None/I was a little scared when you said we would be competing during class but that isn't really something bad with the instruction. Overall everything was easy to follow and easy to remember./More varied assignments./Sometimes Professor Wickett would go off on tangents rather than speaking on the material we are supposed to be learning and that can be frustrating because although all the material goes up on canvas, one cannot always learn from the slides and that time spent walking through the slides and explaining what they mean is very useful./After awhile, the lectures became less engaging and, frankly, boring. Norm spent too much time trying to be funny. Also, the lecture slides were copied and pasted from Wikipedia, so that kind of changed my perception of the class./sometimes unclear about essay requirements/Norm could do a better job emphasizing what the important points are. Although the lectures are thoroughly interesting, I was a little thrown off by the first exam (but Norm did get a little better at communicating his expectations for subsequent exams)./the tests were hard but if you see him he helps you/None/Did not really teach the material

3. Can you offer suggestions for improvement?

Skip material sometimes that is less important for getting the message across. Minimize tangent length--tangents help engage the student audience, but too long and the lecture is entirely tangents./More clarity; more practice tests and problems would really help improve the class./Make tests correspond more directly to how the material is taught (and with questions weighted appropriately based on the extent/complexity of each necessary answer), stop writing questions in a way that's meant to trip students up, stop trying so hard to be funny, pace the class better in general (there were some parts that were way over-emphasized and others that were rushed through so they could be added to an exam), stop distracting students during exams, and feel free to offer an option to take the final exam during finals or reading week for those students who end up with all of their finals on the same day because nobody ends up using their finals week time slots./nope. /Please add more definite structure into your slides./pick up the pace and technical content of the lectures/It's great to have access to slides that are so full of information when it comes to studying, but if there could be simpler and more succinct slides for lecture that would be ideal for focusing./More details on slides or follow a book./--/Have a class for review, not just five minutes of it. Hand back tests, it's nice to see what we need to focus on more/Be aware of how your jokes come across. The exams were also formatted a bit strangely, I felt like I studied all the information and was tested on a third of it, not all of which were the key ideas presented in class./Have the final exam during finals week, so the last day of class can be used for an additional lecture day./Stay gold Norm/Make more clear what needs to be known for tests. There is so much information on the slides. I would end up learning all of it and still doing bad on the tests./Other assessments besides just tests./The exams didn't feel like an accurate representation of course content, which could be frustrating./PLEASE take the textbook off the listing on ceasar, because I bought it online before knowing we didn't need it and now it's worthless./It's hard to do anything but a lecture with an 100 person class, but maybe the class could have an added lab where students could see plants in person and have an experiential learning component./provide more of a guideline as to what to study for the exams. there was so much info on the slides that it was hard to know where to focus/This isn't a suggestion, but I just wanted to tell Norm that he is a great instructor. He may be feeling that students aren't interested in the course material (he expresses this concern a lot during class), but there are students like me who don't really speak up/smile in class but are genuinely interested in learning and have appreciation for the instructors./Make it more of an open class, where more questions are asked./Have a textbook and guidelines of the test

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

Great for getting a conversational and overview-type knowledge of plants/Absolutely--it's the best biology-type course I've ever taken because Professor Wickett explains concepts in a way that is understandable to everyone regardless of background./No. I had no interest in the material or the class, so I didn't absorb terribly much. I went to every class and took notes, but clearly that wasn't enough to retain any information about the nature of plants in the long term. The only benefit to going to class seems to be the occasional bonus question from a plant of the day./yupp, it was very well taught./Yes. I certainly learned some./Yes, the course exposed me to phenomena that I would not have noticed on my own. It did not, however, go into very much detail/Yes definitely. I think the information was concise and to the point. I also went to office hours./Yes, I learned a lot but it was a lot of studying for the test./Yes, Norm is great, but his exams are very picky./--/It helped me know more things about plants, but more like the basics of many topics about plants/Yes. Because it was very interesting!/Yes/Yes I usually end up cramming a ton of extra unnecessary knowledge and specifics I'm not interested in for classes the day before, but since we focused so much on the basics

and you were able to pick out the most interesting cases and communicate them in an interesting way, I was able to ingrain everything firmly into long term memory/yes kind of but wasn't too interest in the material/YES! This course was one of my favorites (especially after the first exam was over). It challenged me at the beginning and made me reevaluate my studying habits./Yes, learned a lot about plants./Yes! I actually learned a lot. Now when I see plants I think about them. Like, how they get pollinated and such. Kinda weird. But good./I learned some things, I knew some things, and other things I still only kind of understand. It was mostly memorization, though./yes, i've never known so much about plants/I learned so much about plants from this course. I didn't expect to get so much out of this class, since I had registered for it because I wanted an easy-A natural sciences distro. But I am beyond happy that I took this course, because it actually taught me a lot of interesting things that make me look at plants in a new light./yes/I learned a lot more about plants than I ever would have thought./Yes, I learned a lot about plants and many things that are very interesting./No because it was too disorganized

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

take this course if you are at all interested in plants. the course is very easy if you attend lecture and pay attention. Norm is an awesome teacher and will be at least moderately funny all quarter...thats a promise. he is incredibly enthusiastic and will talk to about plants until the sun sets if you'd like!/Nature of Plants is an awesome class and Professor Wickett teaches it very well. The class is straightforward as long as you pay attention in class and study the key words before tests. Listen to Professor Wickett when he says that something is on the test--he is honest about such things and values your learning over trying to trick you./Overall, it was an interesting course, and a semi-easy distro. No multiple choice tests./I took this class because it got good CTECs, but I found Prof. Wickett extremely annoying (tries way too hard to be funny and even goes so far as to make bad jokes during an exam), his tests are poorly written, and he never emphasizes the material that actually corresponds to what makes up the majority of the test material. Overall, this class didn't live up to the CTECs for me, I was not happy at all to be there, and it really made me hate the idea of distros even more. I also wish I'd had time winter quarter to take Plant-People Interactions instead..../This is exactly the way that distro classes should be here. It was engaging and interesting, and I was able to learn a lot about a subject that I was interested in without having to worry about it taking a toll on my grade or falling behind because I didn't bring much previous knowledge. Highly recommend!/SUPER CHILL CLASS, TESTS GET LESS SCEINCY AS THE QUARTER GOES ON, NO TEXTBOOK, NORM IS SUPER CHILL, REALLY HELPFUL IF YOU GO SEE HIM AND REALLY CARES ABOUT HIS STUDENTS, LECTURE FLYS BY, ITS NOT BORING/This course turned out to be not that easy for me. All about memorizing./I literally just needed this class to log the right number of credit hours to graduate. Fit that bill well: it was interesting and didn't require much time commitment. Definitely not as stimulating as more rigorous science courses./Good class especially for non-science majors. Definitely go to office hours/email if you don't understand something. Studying in groups is helpful. Also, be able to understand and explain the terms./OK DISTRO, more information heavy than I expected, NO READING but that means class lecture is very DENSE in 50 minutes and they'll throw questions at you that you didn't realize you had even learned./As a Bio major, I thought this class would be easy. Wrong. His first exam was a killer and the next two were very picky. Considering there is no book, you need to write down everything he says because his slides aren't very specific./--/It is not an easy course, while there's no book or homework the exam are extremely detailed and Norm is a really tough grader, he wants the answers to be really detailed. If you take this course go to lectures and look them over afterwards, studying for these exams take time to memorize lots of slides./Excellent distro/random elective. Norm is chill, sometimes funny, and teaches you a lot about plants. 3 evenly weighted tests so no final, homework, or book./Junior plant biology major taking this class just for fun... what do I have to say :)/Pretty good science distro, not as easy as Plant People Interactions but pretty engaging and simple./Norm is a funny, interesting and charismatic teacher whose passion for plants garners the interest of even the most ambivalent student. The class is simple but very interesting and will get you thinking about the calvin cycle the next time you see a flower. /A lot of work for uninteresting material. Norm is really funny and tries to make lectures a good experience though!/The course looks fairly easy, but you have to put in the time to study if you want the good grade that you were expecting from this course./Take this class with Norm! super chill guy, and the class is super easy. a nice environment for a distro/FAVORITE TEACHER/COURSE I HAVE TAKEN HERE. TAKE THIS CLASS!!! NORM IS THE FUNNIEST teacher I have ever met. Amazing sense of humor and communicates material super well. Never respected/loved a teacher/class more. only material tested on is taught in class and on powerpoints accessible on Canvas. NO SUPPLEMENTARY READING OR HOMEWORK. Only cover very basic plant biology and knowledge. Super easy A. Extremely small amount of material to study, only have to memorize and be able to produce in short answer for three midterms./Not as easy as you might think. Go to class and listen. Otherwise, you'll be stuck reading through a ton of information on the slides and have no clue what is important to know./Norm is really awesome. More likely than not, you'll take this as a distro, blow it off, and not do super well as a result. But if you come to class most of the time and study

adequately for the three exams, you will definitely get an A. But seriously, Norm is super awesome, likes to joke around and makes a class on an arguably boring topic a treat to go to./definitely a good distro/This class is easy if you make it easy for yourself. Go to class and if you miss class, ask someone for the notes. There is information from slides and notes on the exams. The first exam will most likely catch you by surprise because it requires more work than you might think. I studied mostly one part of the information for the exams but ended up not doing well. Norm is very understanding and knows that most of the students in his class are taking this class for a distro or major requirement and aren't science people. He does a good job making the information interesting and he is extremely accessible as a professor. I thoroughly enjoyed this class after I got my feet under me. Definitely recommend!/Class was just for an elective requirement, not the most interesting of material. The professor made the class worth your time. He was very interested/ passionate about the material he was teaching. He did everything possible to make the material easy to understand, while still learning something about plants/Decent science distro overall./This course is cool. Take it. /Probably one of the most fun classes I have taken here. Norm was genuinely enthusiastic about the subject. However, the exams were a little difficult. You had to study literally everything./This class isn't the best or the worst class I've ever taken. Norm uses the same jokes excessively which gets a little old. I never looked at the information at any point except for the night before each exam and got Bs. I'm sure if you put in more effort it would be an easy A./NORM IS GREAT!!! As someone with very little interest in the class from the beginning, Norm did a great job of livening up what could otherwise be very dry material. I might be alone in this sentiment, but I do wish Norm had assigned worksheets or something to go along with lecture, so that I could actually see where I was lacking in terms of the powerpoints. Other than that, pretty easy science distro, and fairly interesting!/relatively easy distro. Norm is a very interesting professor. He really makes coming to class not unbearable, sometimes actually fun. no book for this class, all slides posted online. don't underestimate the exams though; they are actually very detailed./I don't know how I feel about Norm. It could be good, it could be bad, I guess./I loved this course. Norm is great. Just take it./GO IN AND SEE HIM HE WILL HELP YOU AND YOUR GRADE./I was looking for a not-too-difficult natural science distro and this was a great class for it. I'm not super into plants but Norm did his best to make it fun and interesting. All in all a good course, and no outside class work, which is nice./Professor Wickett is a great professor. His tests are tough, but he is there to help. Very approachable./Norm is an awesome teacher, you just have to give him some of your time. GO TO OFFICE HOURS! He loves it when students show that they care- he will care about you! I got a C on the first exam with little studying and never talking to him, the next two exams I met at least twice with him at office hours, emailed him any questions I had (which he promptly replied to in full in about an hour) and got A's on the last two exams! Norm wants to help you, just show him you care! He is probably the most passionate teacher I have had at NU!/This class was pretty tough. It was a lot harder than expected. You need to go to class to get a good grade. Professor Wickett is a great teacher and is passionate about his field of teaching. The exams are hard but if you study and pay attention and take notes in class you should be fine./Professor Wickett is awesome, but the exams were hard. I studied a ton for the second one and really thought I knew what I was doing but did not receive the grade I thought I deserved./First of all, it is a travesty that science distros exist. I thought this class was going to be a lot easier than it was. Norm is a good professor, very enthusiastic about plants and such, but there is a lot of information on the tests and a lot of time must be put into studying if you want to be successful. Not the easiest science distro, and the material just frankly isn't that interesting for most people until the last midterm./Overall sounds like it would be a simple, easy class but this is not the case at all. I would not take this class if you are looking for an easy distro. The lectures seemed somewhat confusing and it was hard to see the big picture that tied everything together. It was also difficult because there was no textbook for the class so you couldn't read up on the material. The exams were ALL short answer or fill in the blank, so it is important to really understand the material and not just memorize it. The professor was great overall and he was very entertaining./This class is amazing. Norm is a great lecturer and class is interesting to go to. The class is super easy and it isn't necessary to go all the time but Norm is hilarious so you should./it was a difficult class in regards of tests/This is a good class because there's no homework and only 3 exams. Even though I was in this class to get a science distro, I still wished I was challenged more or got to learn cooler things. It was like learning about plants in high school bio only less in depth. The teacher was enthusiastic and fairly engaging but I often found myself not paying attention during lectures.