

North Carolina State University - ClassEval Report

Emplid: 001123529	Name: Jonathan Williams -- Course: Intro Prob Dist Th
Term: 2020 Fall	ST 371 002 Courses surveyed - ST 371 002
Question	Response
Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	I think it shows this professor does care about his students, and was kind amongst the craziness of the virtual semester and corona virus. The clean notes with good handwriting that stay accessible are really helpful! Also using notability makes the notes in a really good format.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	I think the drop box format makes the class very very hard to be engaged in. Zoom classes are a really good tool, promote students keeping up, and help to keep everyone engaged/ask questions while they do not understand in lecture. I do not at all think the lectures prepare us to do the homework, seeing as they never have any numerical examples, and I do not think the numerical based homework at all prepares us for the theoretical based exams. I just feel there was some overall gaps in this course between students, professor, and for the content between the book and the professor.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	I think this course could be improved the most by working making the homework's/lecture/test align. The difficulty and type of questions posed on the exams do not at all resemble the homework questions, so it is really hard to know how to prepare. After the first exam I tried to study more theory based for the second test, however there is not a lot like this in the book
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	Dr. Williams seems to have a very strong grasp and is very knowledgeable on the subject he teaches. He is very approachable and responds quickly and helpfully to emails and questions.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	Dr. Williams does have a tendency to get a little off-topic during his lectures, or a little rambly on a subject that isn't really necessary for the course material. That being said, this could be due to the online format of the course and the awkwardness of lecturing to a camera with no live listeners.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	The tests in this course are extremely difficult. They don't really cover what is taught in the lectures or the homework problems. They are very theoretical and abstract. I think that if the tests were more of a reflection on the lecture and homework material (with maybe one abstract question that pushes the boundaries of the course) they would be more fair.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	perfect professor
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	good class setup
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	hard to understand what he was explaining sometimes, very complicated material
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	Make sure you read the textbook
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	Dr. Williams was always helpful during office hours and cared about our success!! I really, really like him.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	The major weakness were the lectures and the amount of time dedicated to this class per week. I hate to say this, but I did not find the lectures extremely helpful because there were several rabbit trails throughout that caused confusion, and the amount of derivations just got confusing. That translated into taking a lot more time on the homeworks every week in order to learn the material, which made them overall very, very time-consuming. I also found the grading strategy very strict, which I understand the TA had a lot of material to grade, but it would have been very nice to have more credit for the amount of work we put in to each problem instead of just automatically taking off half credit if there was one portion incorrect.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	More engaging lectures that are perhaps edited for content to make sure it is concise and all helpful.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	He was approachable.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	The tests (particularly the first one) were not on the content that was presented in the class.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	Don't start the class by basically saying "you should probably try to learn it just from the textbook." Fix the tests to actually reflect the course content.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	Helpful, kind, listens to students opinions. Homework grades helpful exam grades
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	Knowledge of the course material, reaching out to students for help
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	Limited access to helping out students live
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	Make the class synchronous to make attendance recommended, or find a way to make attendance mandatory and asking questions acceptable in making class notes with student questions.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	This course was extremely understanding based. You do not do well unless you thoroughly understand, so I definitely got a lot out of this course after struggling a fair amount. However, Dr. Williams is EXTREMELY helpful and willing to meet during office hours and custom times. Dr. Williams always goes above and beyond to supplement the textbook with additional knowledge useful in other applications. He's a really intelligent professor. It was great to learn from him.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	I wish the classes were more interactive. I often have so many questions during lecture and cannot ask them unless I have office hours. By then, there is not enough time for both homework help and lecture questions, so usually most of my questions go unanswered. This semester was unusually hard as well since interaction with peers was close to impossible. This made group studying (which is critical to my learning process) also close to impossible, being

	that I didn't even know who was in my class. If I had known this, I would have taken a synchronous section instead.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	More professor-student collaboration/interaction. Live Zooms other than office hours to go over class material would be so beneficial, even if it was just once a week. Also, it'd be a lot more helpful to have some practice exam questions to understand what types of questions to expect on the exams. It took me the first exam to get it down and it's hard to afford a bad test grade when there are only 2 midterms and a final.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	Dr. Williams always made sure we felt like we could go to him for help with the classes. He was always available for answering questions.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	I feel like this class was way too theoretical in its content with a lot of proofs which I and many others struggled with. We take this class in junior year typically after having completed the rest of our math classes in first year so it is not easy to recall a lot of niche knowledge and techniques used in these proofs.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	I would prefer a course more based on application than theory. Most of use are engineers and will not get much out of knowing how to prove theories if we don't have any idea how to apply them.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	The way lectures are done is nice since I personally like the style of annotating notes since it is something that I can do as well to help me understand the material better instead of just copying the notes themselves word for word.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	Not having homework assignments, tests, notes, etc. on moodle and having to email assignments and having to check a separate website for what I need to do for the class can be a little overly complicated. Having all of my classes in the same place (ie. moodle) helps me stay more organized and helps me to not forget to check for/do any assignments.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	Moving the material from your website to moodle or having it in both places would really streamline the class and help the student stay on top of their work.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	Very understanding Forgiving
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	Does not have the best teaching methods To much written notes and less explaining
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	Go through the uploaded videos and notes every week instead of skipping
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	Dr. Williams is always willing to help students and gives good partial credit. The homework assignments are great practice and the class is well structured.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	The exams are extremely difficult and the lectures are very proof heavy.

To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	Provide more examples and practice exams.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	An amazing teacher. Always was willing to help and wanted to do anything he could to help his students. Granted it was hard having to watch lectures online and not learning in class but he worked hard to help us.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	It is just hard. Dr. Williams worked hard to teach us but with it being online it was just hard to learn it all. Maybe having PowerPoints instead of just lecture notes could help.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	Have PowerPoints instead of just lecture notes for class.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	Very friendly and open to helping students with working through things. Kept lectures simple and was good about updating the class. Appreciated the addition of student sessions.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	Lectured very theoretically, which is understandable, but this is an intro class where some if not most of the class have never really had a statistics class before so it was hard to wrap my mind around the concepts when they were explained as so.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	Keeping in mind that this is a new subject to a lot of the students and breaking things down completely so it can be better understood to the class. Also, the use of moodle or some platform that kept everything in one place rather than having dropbox for the lectures, the website for notes and homework, and emailing to turn things in.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	Very verbose in his lectures. Explains each and every topic in great detail.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	Overall I felt that this course was made harder than it needed to be. The homework was fairly arduous and lengthy. His tests were really hard. Grading in this course was harsh; partial credit was very slim so there was little to no room for error. I found this especially discouraging for questions that contained several parts. I would miss only 1 to 2 parts of the question and yet would only receive half credit for it.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	More lenient grading in this course would be an improvement.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	The material was explained in much depth.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	The material was sometimes explained in too much depth or went a little of topic into material out of the class material.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	The exams are much harder than the tests making it very difficult to study for and complete.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	I am essentially finished with my physics degree (gen ed stuff left) and I find Dr. William's explanations very interesting and I appreciate the mathematical rigor. Although I have a solid background in mathematics, it really is a more 'fly by the seat of my pants' than anything rigorous. I have plans to learn more formalisms. With that said, I have a peculiar interest in statistics because I have this huge hang-up in quantum principles about the nature of the calculations and how phenomenon seem to boil down to statistical occurrences. This class was needed for my engineering major, but I enjoyed the mathematical rigor. All statistics I did prior were taught alongside physics (error analysis, thermal, etc.) and were not as detailed.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	Although I personally enjoyed the class, I also heard a lot from others. I do believe that the class kind of loses focus of the fact it is for engineers and scientist and what makes it different than my experiences in physics. This could just be because it is introductory. That being said, I think everyone would appreciate more practical problems, that are focused on engineering examples for the test.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	See other comments.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	The course's structure was simple and effective, each week's homework built upon the previous week's assignment. The professor was also very understanding with the demands of an online semester.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	The class was very confusing at times, as the test would often not resemble the homework. I also found the content of the course to be very dry but that may be due to personal bias and not the structure of the course nor the instructor.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	I believe the course could be improved by providing example questions and solutions closer to the questions in the actual exams.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	Professor is very helpful during office hours. Makes sure to be available every week and also responsive to emails. Shows enthusiasm for the material being taught and does a good job of motivating the purpose of learning at the beginning of each chapter. Very well written lecture notes available to students.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	This course had a very demanding work load especially considering the special circumstances of this semester due to Covid. The exams were very intensive and since they only had 4 questions each, misunderstanding a question lead to major points lost. A bit too much focus on proofs that takes away from learning some of the distributions and how to use them.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	Lowering the amount of homework problems assigned each week to a more reasonable amount. Providing a summarized list of distributions covered in ch.3 and 4 and their properties (expected value, variance, pmf or pdf, etc) would be incredibly helpful. Providing a title for lecture videos (maybe just what chapters or sections are being covered) would help with referencing videos for information. More examples on questions similar to those that will be on exams and homework.

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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	The class and homework assignments are fair and reasonable as to what is expected in an statistics course. The instructor provides the information needed to complete the course.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	The homework assignments are extremely long and repetitive. The tests are very non-representative of the homework and lectures provided. The tests are very theory based and the grading scale is not fair due to missing a small portion of a question gets you a 2/3 when 10 points per question might be more adequate so maybe an 8 or 9/10 could be rewarded for a mostly correct answer. The test questions did not represent the questions we had answered before so there is no way to prepare for them thoroughly.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	Provide a test that is representative more of the questions we have been given for learning.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	The instructor is always reachable and offers plenty of way to get in touch with him if you need to which I appreciate. The notes that he uploads is also very useful as well and help.
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	The only weakness I could say about the course is really just the overall grades in the class. When both of the only midterms that will take place for this course and their averages are D's, that is usually not a good sign. I personally have not had grades that bad in this course, but I will say when you have a lot of time on these midterms and people still perform badly, that is usually not a good sign.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	Emphasize that the homework is meant to be worked on throughout the week but students will learn quickly haha.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	Dr. Williams clearly loves what he teaches and loves to teach it to those who have no experience with it. I have never had a professor that delved so deeply into the understanding of the material being taught, and allowed his students to think beyond the equations provided in the course textbook. Almost every single equation that was provided to us via lecture was painstakingly proven and given meaning that went beyond a formula that was merely useful for fulfilling some specific task with relation to the class. It was the first time that I had a professor that actually spent time to ensure that his students actually bore an understanding of what was being taught, and focused on the "why" behind much of the material of the class, as opposed to the purely the "what" or "how". As an engineering student, I am used to being given an array of equations that pertain to a specific idea or concept in a class and being expected to know *how* and *when* to use it, and I have rarely ever been questioned or tested on *why* it is used and where it comes from. At first, Dr. Williams's class was a shock to my system, as he expected an in depth understanding of the material and its origins. But, as the semester went on, I began to appreciate and even love his approach to teaching. Everything that we did had a clear meaning, and I understood *why* the concepts were used and where they came from. Naturally, as a result of this teaching method, I began to embrace actually learning the material as opposed to simply absorbing it and using it where applicable. Who would have thought that a class would finally teach me to learn, think and be able to appropriately apply material

	outside of the confines of the course? I plan to maintain Dr. Williams's approach to learning and understanding material, and asking "why?" as opposed to merely accepting some mathematical formula as fact. School is about learning and understanding material from the ground up, and I'm glad that I've
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	The only thing that I can really complain about with this course is the fact that Dr. Williams did not push his office hours more. They were an excellent supplement to the course, and he was always willing to work over the allotted time listed in the syllabus to help any student with homework, or to provide them with a better understanding of something that was discussed in lecture. Also, given the virtual nature of the course when I took it, the office hours were an excellent source of "face-to-face" interaction that I obviously lacked while watching the asynchronous lectures or reading the notes or textbook on my own.
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	I can only speak about the class in a virtual environment, as that was how I experienced it, but if other students do take Dr. Williams's class online again in the future, I would make sure that they are fully aware of the usefulness of the resources provided by him. As stated above, the office hours for this course are extremely helpful and are the student's only real option to talk to the professor in person. It took a few weeks for me realize that I needed to attend office hours, and if Dr. Williams could somehow find a way to encourage more participation this way (as there were rarely more than 4 or 5 students attending during each session), I think that more students would be able to appreciate his method of teaching and explaining things more fully.
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	very understanding professor
To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?	maybe practice tests, or formula sheet, basically more resources. For online lectures maybe instead of annotating on notes maybe working through examples from scratch
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Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.	-The course assignment expectations and calendar was very consistent. -The videos were posted consistently -Regular office hours were held
Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.	- The notes were unhelpfully long. While examples and derivations are beneficial, once notes become a textbook unto themselves, they begin to lose utility. Also a large portion of the notes seemed more or less just a transcript from the videos. Finally, if you're going to make notes that contain a very large quantity of text, making them easy to read is essential. In my opinion cursive works against this. -The grading methodology was one of the biggest issues with this course. Starting with the homework. A two point grading spread, on problems that very often have both multiple parts and multiple calculations, makes it easy to do poorly on the homework. It might be slightly more work to grade on a larger point spread, but if a problem has four parts and half a dozen calculations per part, you should not get the same partial credit for a few minor errors as opposed to large conceptual errors. I suggest a 10 point spread if you're only going to grade 6 of the problems. This same idea carries forward to the exams. Yes, there were more possible points on the exam, but for the complexity of the questions, it still should have been a larger spread. It think this can be clearly seen by looking at the tests, and what people lost credit for. -Lastly, the tests themselves were problematic in many ways.

	<p>However, I don't know how to convey my issues with them without it simply seeming like a student who didn't like hard tests. So I'll limit my critique to one general problem and a suggested course of action to help with the problem. These tests felt like what I imagine would be reasonable for a graduate course covering these same concepts, but for a student's very first statistics class, and for what the homework had us practice, they seemed unsuitable and honestly unfair. The course of action I would suggest is that the tests need to be reviewed by an NCSU instructor that has taught this course for a while. If they think that the tests were reasonable</p>
<p>To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?</p>	<p>Most of my recommendations were laid out in the previous sections. My only other recommendation is that I believe Dr. Williams would benefit greatly from getting a good amount of advice from ST371 instructors who have taught this course for a while.</p>
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<p>Please comment on the strengths of the course and instructor.</p>	<p>He always answers emails, and from the times I went to office hours he answers all your questions.</p>
<p>Please comment on the weaknesses of the course and instructor.</p>	<p>Tests are too tough and I do not feel like I have learned in enough from the classes in order to take the exams. It's like teaching a 6 year old addition, but then testing the child on multiplication. I understand that we are in an online class and all resources are available, but I think more examples of things he will test us on gives us more intuition of what to do in a test instead of being clueless.</p>
<p>To help other students in the future and enhance student success, what could be improved in the course?</p>	<p>If there is a common issue that students have a problem understanding, then please emphasize it more.</p>