

North Carolina State University - ClassEval Report

Emplid: 001123529	Name: Jonathan Williams -- Course: Lin Mod & Var Comp
Term: 2024 Sprg	ST 705 001 Courses surveyed - ST 705 001
Question	Response
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the lab (if applicable)	The TA was not that helpful. He did nothing in the Lab sessions.
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor	The instructor do not provide solution to homework problems which makes it difficult to assessed whether your given solution is in line or correct.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the course	The mode of grading assignments wasn't effective because the course is very difficult and most of the students find it difficult to comprehend. So just imagine such a student grading your work, you might not know whether your solutions really makes sense or are correct.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the lab (if applicable)	We were not solving most of the posted lab problems during the lab
Give suggestions on how the course or how the instruction could be improved.	More practice problems should be solved during the lab session to enhance student's understanding of the course content. The instructor should as much as possible provide solutions to homework problems. The homework problems should be graded by the TA not the students so that appropriate feedback will be given.
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor	I enjoyed the style of lecture where we are going through proofs and working them as a class.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the course	A good class to delve deeper into linear algebra from a theoretical perspective, something that many of us were sorely lacking prior.
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor	I wish there was a bit more explanation as to why we're doing what we're doing. For example, what is the use of the Aitken model? I know what the model is, but not why I would use it (or its properties) after this class.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the lab (if applicable)	Labs were useless. The TA didn't know what to do for practically anything, and it became a glorified study hall. If you want us to practice the lab problems, then have the TA go over it, at least (and maybe give the TA solutions in case they don't know what to do either).
Give suggestions on how the course or how the instruction could be improved.	There should be a way on Moodle to send out peer-graded and reviewed assignments. I would look into that, because waiting for the TA to send out emails (and managing those emails) was a little annoying. My biggest gripe is the lack of feedback. I get it, you want us to be like academics, where there's no omniscient voice telling you you are right or wrong. However, SOME feedback on SOME of the problems wouldn't hurt, since at the end of the day, you want us to know what we're doing. We may think we know what we're doing, and be completely wrong, and the exam scores reflect that (especially the homework and lab problem).
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<p>Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor</p>	<p>Dr. Williams is a skilled and passionate instructor. He is caring, prepared for each lecture, and knows the material extremely well. However, feedback was an issue this semester - the midterm exam took a month to be returned to us with very little feedback on it - and there was always a discrepancy between him and the TA when it came down to important aspects of the course and learning objectives. I enjoyed learning from him this semester!</p>
<p>Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the course</p>	<p>Peer Grading: I get the idea of the peer-grading system and I think it does make a lot of sense, but even if feedback was left for us, anytime we received full credit we never got the feedback from our grader via the TA. Also I would propose releasing homework solutions and stop allowing new revisions for the first half of the assignments after the midterm and then doing the same at the end of the semester, as otherwise the only time to ever get feedback from the instructor was on the exams (and in office hours but there is not enough time to go over all questions).</p>
<p>Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the lab (if applicable)</p>	<p>If there is going to be a lab session for the course, I think that the instructor should provide more of an expectation for the TA on what should be done. The TA said at the first lab meeting that since he thought that the lab questions would not be on the exam that we should just focus on the homework problems and not do the lab problems. However, we came to find out a week prior to the midterm exam from Dr. Williams that there would actually be a lab problem on each exam and that we should have actually been doing them the whole semester. I found this to be a flaw of both the instructor and the TA: while it was the TA's decision to encourage using the time as office hours, the responsibility of the lab session ultimately falls onto the instructor as the one setting the expectation for the TA and being the instructor of record for this lab session. In the future, I would strongly encourage the instructor to request that the TA hold 1-2 hours of office hours outside of class (as is done with 701, 702, 703, and 704) and utilize the in-class time to focus on the lab problems.</p>
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<p>Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the lab (if applicable)</p>	<p>I did not feel that the lab sessions were well organized since no instruction was given. It did nothing to help my understanding of the course content.</p>
<p>Give suggestions on how the course or how the instruction could be improved.</p>	<p>It would be helpful to have solutions to practice problems or homework to ensure that the work I am doing is actually correct.</p>
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<p>Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor</p>	<p>I have relatively mixed feelings on Dr. Williams. I think he is a nice, very intelligent, and kind guy who does genuinely care to see students' success. I got some mixed signals from him about multiple things throughout the course. I remember multiple students discussing with him about concerns with grades, and he mentioned "don't worry, you guys will be fine, you will get B's in the course and it will all be okay". Then, after some of us got our first Exam grades back, it suddenly became "It's okay to get a C in just one grad course". He also appeared to get more and more stressed as the semester went on, and it was saddening to see a lot of the light leave his eyes and hear him sigh much more heavily during lecture. Overall, he is clearly very wise, and he is good at connecting with students, I just wish he was more consistent with what he says from the beginning.</p>

Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the course	Peer grading SUCKS. I submitted solutions that were half-correct on multiple occasions hoping to get some feedback to improve it but every single time without fail, they were accepted. I had to start leaving questions blank to get any sort of feedback, and even then, I rarely got anything meaningful. It's like no one actually cares, and it severely hurt my progress in the course since I didn't learn how to properly prove many things. There needs to be some checks and balances.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the lab (if applicable)	It was intended for the TA to go through lab problems in lab, and we didn't realize that until when it got close to the first exam. So the lab was just used as extra office hours, and the lab TA was relatively unhelpful with regards to solutions for anything. Cool guy, though.
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor	Professor Williams is excited about a lot of the material. I appreciate him working through the proofs with us in class instead of just presenting them. I wish there were more office hours. Often the professor was meeting with undergrads during a large section of our office hours, and there were no TA office hours. They were also (purposefully?) placed at a difficult time to go. They were always very entertaining though. The expectations for the exams are unclear. Currently I have conflicting information about what (if any) homework and/or lab problems will be on it.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the course	I'm conflicted on the grading scheme. It's helpful to be able to look at other people's work and try to critique it. On the other hand, I've barely had any feedback on my homeworks and I know I've gotten a lot wrong. It's also a large time sink in addition to the homeworks, which are already very time consuming. It makes it worse that the TA was often late giving us our feedback/homeworks to grade, so it would get backlogged. And I didn't learn til the exam that my solutions were not correct. It's difficult that these last homeworks won't have any feedback and there was only one office hours after they were posted.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the lab (if applicable)	The information between the TA and the professor was very conflicting. The first week he told us that the lab problems were not worth doing because they wouldn't be on the exam and were much easier than the exam material, so we might as well just have an office hours. However, usually when people asked him questions he would say I don't know ask the professor. We did not go over a single lab until after the first exam, and only learned that there would be a lab problem on the midterm a week or two before when Professor Williams told us.
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the lab (if applicable)	The labs were effectively office hours (we were given the option, whether that be what was supposed to happen or not); on very few occasions, I asked the TA questions and was referenced to Dr. Williams a nonzero amount of times. Toward the end of the semester, it seemed as though the TA began to *actually* structure lab as a lab, presumably because it had been realized that lab was not being as helpful as it could have been.
Give suggestions on how the course or how the instruction could be improved.	This course really needs to be split into two.
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Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the instructor	Very available to students outside of class. That really helped us out a lot.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the course	Great course overall. Very challenging, but I didn't find it too difficult to keep up with the pace of the homework/exams with enough effort.
Comment on strengths and weaknesses of the lab (if applicable)	At least for the first part of the semester, labs were mostly "TA office hours," which turned out to be mostly "working on homework" sessions. I thought that rendered moot the "extra learning" or however you would typically describe what lab sessions are usually for. The labs were definitely the largest weakness of this course, at least for this year.
Give suggestions on how the course or how the instruction could be improved.	Main thing would be altering how the lab sessions work. I would have liked it to be more engaging, much like the instructor office hours, which were great. One thing I would suggest continuing is making sure that there is at least a few days between when the instructor office hours are held and when the weekly homework is released, so we have some time to gather our questions. Good course overall, though.