

University of Michigan

Fall 2024 Instructor Preliminary Report

EECS 398-003: Special Topics

Suraj Rampure

119 out of 135 students responded to this evaluation.

Responses to University-wide questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median
This course advanced my understanding of the subject matter.(Q1631)	83	30	2	1	0	0	4.8
My interest in the subject has increased because of this course.(Q1632)	63	42	8	2	1	0	4.6
I knew what was expected of me in this course.(Q1633)	58	45	10	3	0	0	4.5
I had a strong desire to take this course.(Q4)	63	42	8	3	0	0	4.6
As compared with other courses of equal credit, the workload for this course was (SA=Much Lighter, A=Lighter, N=Typical, D=Heavier, SD=Much Heavier). (Q891)	4	8	49	41	13	0	2.6

Responses to University-wide questions about the instructor:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median
Suraj Rampure seemed well prepared for class meetings.(Q230)	102	11	2	0	0	1	4.9
Suraj Rampure explained material clearly.(Q199)	94	17	3	1	0	0	4.9
Suraj Rampure treated students with respect.(Q217)	99	16	1	0	0	0	4.9

Responses to questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median
Overall, this was an excellent course. (Q1)	77	30	6	1	0	0	4.8
I felt included and valued when working with other students. (Q253)	62	36	7	0	1	6	4.6

Responses to questions about the instructor:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median
Overall, Suraj Rampure was an excellent teacher. (Q2)	91	24	1	0	0	0	4.9

Written Comments

Comment on the quality of instruction in this course. (Q900)

Comments
Content was clearly explained.
The lectures were always very engaging and taught in a way that made it relatively easy to understand. Additionally, the homeworks and office hours were the perfect practice to help solidify the material.
Suraj is awesome. Amazing course!
Suraj is a very passionate professor that cares about his students. No notes.
Suraj does a really good job making the material interesting! I liked the examples he has us walk through during class and since they were interesting it helped to keep me engaged.

Comments
Amazing, interactive
Suraj is great, perfectly taught course
Pretty good
Each of the instructors deliver information in an engaging way that is clear and simple to understand.
The instruction was good. The website was extremely helpful.
The instructional staff was AMAZING. Lectures were well explained, office hours were frequent enough to get help when I needed it. The IAs and GSIs were well versed in the subject matter.
Excellent class, can't recommend enough
great class
Great course and well taught
felt a bit misleading. too much math. students could override but almost felt like we were at a disadvantage the whole time
Very good quality.
Very good
great
Suraj was one of the best professors I had during my time at UMich.
Professor Rampure is one of the coolest and best professors I've had. I learned a lot but also really enjoyed everything we did. There was a lot of work, but everything was fair, well structured, and clearly defined. If I had trouble I just had to communicate with him or go to office hours and he was understanding and accommodating. He really wants students to succeed and understand. Its obvious he really cares about his work, and he has really mastered breaking down a very complicated course into small modules that are easy to understand.
na
All the instructors were so incredibly helpful, during office hours and during lecture! Suraj is incredibly engaging, and I love the mix of live demos, conceptual or applied problems, and discussion in the lectures. I was super excited to learn about this course being offered, since the topics seemed applicable to a variety of different fields, and it has not disappointed: I have learned so many technical skills and concepts that will undoubtedly be useful in my future grad school/career pursuits, and I feel more prepared to take additional ML classes next semester. Thank you so much to the course staff for making this class happen, and I'm really happy with how it's been going so far!
very good!
It felt like a special topics course in that sometimes there were mistakes/miscommunications, but I do think those are growing pains for any new course, and I felt the resulting deadline extensions/cancellations were appropriate. I have a feeling next semester is going to be really good!
Professor Ranpure is definitely the best instructor I have ever in any EECS courses.
Amazing
Even in it's first time being taught, as a senior, I think this course was the best EECS class I have taken here. The material was challenging but there was plenty of resources and guidance. The portfolio project actually ended up being really enjoyable and interesting, allowing a lot of flexibility for me to explore my interests in the class. I think that maybe the portfolio homework could have been a bit more broken up though. I'm imagining a sort of cumulative project over the course of the semester, incorporating steps from the class as we learn them.
its really good
Good
Suraj is awesome – I appreciate how much he's on our team, and it's apparent that he cares immensely about the course and his students.
the quality of instruction was good if a little fast-paced. Having not taken one of the pre-reqs, I found that there were a lot of resources created by the staff for me to use to make up for not taking linear algebra.
Suraj's enthusiasm is genuinely infectious and he makes this course so amazing. He's one of the professors where you see him on a course and you go "Oh, <x> is teaching? Maybe I'll take this class" He makes an effort to be personable in a way that doesn't feel fake or forced. If the hiring committee or any of his higher-ups are reading this, his hiring decision was a great choice that I think you will never come to regret.
Excellent. Suraj is a great lecturer and I always felt like I got something out of each lecture.
Course concepts were well explained.
Suraj is one of the best instructors I've ever had. The dedication he has for this class was made clear from day one. His lectures were always interactive, well structured, and engaging. He was always eager to receive feedback and was looking to constantly

Comments

improve the quality of instruction with extensive supplemental materials that were creative and extremely well made. I always felt like I had the resources to succeed in this class, even if it was difficult at times given that I had less programming experience than other students coming into the class. I can't stress enough how much I appreciate Suraj and this course as a whole. I had a few goals coming into the class: improve my programming skills, learn Python, and improve my basic data science skills so I could apply data science methods to projects I am interested in. I feel that this class more than delivered to help me accomplish those goals. One of the most useful classes I've taken at Michigan.

Suraj is a great instructor who explains everything clearly.

Suraj was an amazing lecturer!!! I got an override (did not have LinAlg) to take this class and he explained everything so thoroughly that I was able to follow along really well given my experience. His lectures explained the content so much better than my other ULCS classes have — honestly just a great teacher!

What were the strengths of the course ? (Q953)

Comments

I think the homework and lectures.

The strengths were the homework questions, as the types of problems we would do in homework really helped with certain concepts that may have been hard to grasp from lecture.

Great teaching, great structure with homeworks.

Coding

Instructor, learning how to code in python really well

Interactive and kept students engaged. Well paced

Homeworks are great and lectures are incredibly explained

the materials are full and clear, homeworks are challenging

The largest strength of this course was the clear and effective demonstration of the Python programming language for data science, which is not taught sufficiently in other courses such as EECS 183, 280, or 281, due to their focus on C++.

It's coverage of many different topics. It taught a lot in a considerably short amount of time. It can get overwhelming, but I think it is worth it.

The course seems like a really accurate representation of what data science is actually like. I'm a CS major, so I wasn't super certain of what I was getting into when I took the class, but the material is well explained and the homework really helps me develop my skills.

Broad topics, a lot of things covered, creative, fun

lecture and projects, clear instructions

It was interactive and engaging

It create a solid prerequisite understanding of databases and machine learning.

Concise material, open to questions, personal meetings

Good lectures

covered a wide variety of material

The professor and IA's are all really great. Lecture was interactive and the notebooks really helped with understanding and having a place for consolidated notes. Overall the course really prepared me for the assignments, which were all very practical and helpful.

The material is well-prepared, focusing on tools, techniques, and real-world applications that are directly relevant to the field. The inclusion of practical exercises allowed us to apply concepts to realistic scenarios, making the learning process engaging and effective.

Suraj is a very enthusiastic and engaging professor.

na

I actually really like the homeworks: sometimes they're quite long, but the course offers tons of leeway in the form of flex days and one dropped assignment, and I come out of them with a much better grasp of lecture concepts and applications. I also enjoy the breadth of topics (databases, web scraping/APIs, now ML concepts), which are helpful in gaining exposure to different techniques while also allowing me to find areas that I want to explore in future ULCS classes.

interesting homework assignments that allow us to practice the skills we learned in class
clear instruction

Lecture materials were very interactive, the homeworks were relevant and interesting.

Introduce practical tools that could be used widely

Comments
The amount of content learned
the teaching style
Clarity of instruction
I think the course was good at covering a broad range of topics relating to data science and covering both practical coding applications and the math and theory behind data science.
Suraj is amazing as I denoted in my comment on the quality of instruction, the content of the course is generally interesting, and it feels pretty achievable to score high on the homeworks.
Very organized, lots of real world application
Definitely Suraj. He made this class excellent, and the class policies allow for mistakes to happen and account for events such as a poor exam performance.
Homeworks were very interesting.
As stated above, the resources made available were numerous and all very helpful. The lectures were well made and easy to follow, the study site provided good resources to prepare for exams, the website was easy to access and very informative, and the homeworks were interesting and challenging. I found value in almost every aspect of the course.
Setup and resources
Course was pretty organized and the homeworks were interesting and applicable for potential work outside the class.
Very practical course content, great instruction, well prepared lecture and practice material.

What suggestions would you make for improving the course ? (Q955)

Comments
I think including even machine learning concepts would make the class better. Maybe change the percentage split of the first and second half of the course.
I would say adding in one more mini project for the first half of the course could be beneficial as students would get to practice more data manipulation before diving into the ML-related topics in the second half.
Maybe go a little quicker at the beginning and slow down the material at the end
I really didn't realize how math heavy the course would become (probably my fault)
Making a zoom
There was a lot of content in the second half of the semester that took me by surprise. Maybe skimming some things or creating a lecture that touches on every single important topic altogether as review would be good. Also a lot of organizational things that heavily affected students. Standardizing the HW deadlines would be better for future semesters because it allows students to have a schedule & helps us know what is expected and when.
More office hours on central and on the weekends
Maybe a little lighter workload but for the most part it was great
The portfolio homework has so much workload and the dataset is much more complicated / poor than the one we got in the homework, maybe more tips/ instructions guide through the process so that student would feel less frustrating.
One method to improve the course would be to provide more opportunities for working with exam-type problems directly in class, since these are an essential portion of the course.
I think having a quick overview for prospective students would be nice. (Approximately just one sentence for every homework that was assigned).
Making sure the homeworks are actually released Friday mornings (like initially stated in the syllabus). Most of the homeworks were released later on Fridays, but a couple were released a couple of days later. I know there was an extension if it was released later, but it messed with me having a consistent schedule for the course since the homeworks were always released and due at different times.
Also, more exam materials would be very helpful.
Maybe a little bit more time covering things
more time on each hw
I wish discussions were longer
be clear and upfront how math heavy and theoretical it is
Slowing down the pace of the second half.

Comments
More studying materials besides discussion and review sessions that go through new problems rather than existing ones
maybe add labs instead of discussion
n/a
Not sure. Maybe more activities that get students interacting, like an earlier group assignment or something.
The course was very informative with valuable knowledge to me, but the fast-paced nature made it a bit challenging to absorb and process everything fully
HW 10 was a bit of a nightmare with the release date getting pushed back so close to Thanksgiving. I tried to aim having it done by the Tuesday before but the HW had many updates and question 6 needed Tuesday's lecture. It felt a bit overwhelming to have HW 10, HW 11, portfolio hw, and upcoming exam all in the same week and felt unnecessary when HW 9 was due so long ago.
na
Sometimes the homeworks really are quite long But again, this has definitely helped more than it's hurt, and I think a lot of my success on the midterm (and hopefully the final... fingers crossed) is because I was forced to really wrestle with the concepts and understand them in great detail.
maybe less stacking of multiple homeworks at the end it felt like we couldn't do portfolio homework until the last couple of weeks
I hope IAs could prepare review session better
Get rid of the SQL portion and don't test on regex
less homework, its too much
It's good now
The workload was a little heavy for the end of the class. I also think that the content deviated a bit from the "practical" part of data science – I didn't necessarily expect to be doing proofs for this course.
I think there is a lot of content that was aiming to be covered in the course and it could be overwhelming in the sense that it was not all given in lecture/lab. I think adjusting labs to introduce more content could help alleviate some of this, and allow a slower pace in lecture and possibly for less concepts to be introduced in a homework.
I think that the exams are tad difficult, and I don't really think the more mathematical/handwritten questions on the homework really improve my understanding of concepts. To put it into perspective, I got ~90% on the midterm and I should have around that or higher on the homeworks, so I'm not just complaining because I did poorly.
More supplemental videos on challenging problems and some practice exams.
I think that it might be valuable to incentivize discussion attendance. I also saw that the instructors were thinking of developing short-form content as a supplemental resource for students to get a summary of a topic quickly. I think thats a great idea.
Practice exams would be nice to prepare for the exam.
Heavy workload — I think the homeworks were a bit heavy and had a lot of content — a slightly lesser workload would do wonders for keeping up with the class.

How might the class climate be made more inclusive of diverse students? (Q910)

Comments
The class is inclusive of all.
I would say it is already quite inclusive, and does not need to be improved in this aspect.
N/A
I'm not sure
Having discussion sections on weekdays other than Fridays would inspire a variety of students and give them motivation to attend discussions.
I think it is currently pretty inclusive.
good
I think it's already inclusive
no
already good
I think this class climate is inclusive
I think its really great how it is and Professor Rampure makes the class environment welcoming and fun.
na
n/a
N/A
I'm not sure
already good
It's good now
I felt the climate currently was as inclusive as it could have been.
I felt that the class climate was very inclusive.
Nothing