2023-2024 (Spring 2024) Question and Course Report for CSCI 2320 - Principles of Programming Lang - Westley Weimer

Project Title: **BCQ Spring 2024 (AY 2023-2024)**

Course Audience: **12**
Responses Received: **5**
Response Ratio: **41.67%**

Subject Details	
Department	Computer Science

Report Comments

This report contains both numeric analysis and content of comments of the course questionnaires from Spring 2024 for the course identified above.

As you review these results, I encourage you to keep in mind the following:

- Bowdoin Course Questionnaires are intended to provide you with useful feedback on your courses and to help you approach improvements or refinements in future courses. While student responses on these questionnaires can sometimes seem contradictory or different from your own experience of the course, I urge you to remain open to the issues and insights they might offer as you reflect on your own teaching.
- Your department chair/program director will also receive access to your reports and is encouraged to follow up with you to offer support and guidance in interpreting these results. Lab Instructors, please note that the faculty instructing the course also receive access to your reports.
- You should keep your reports in your files. For tenure-line faculty and continuing lecturers, course questionnaires are an important part of the evaluative process and will be included as part of the reappointment and promotion reviews, as well as any subsequent reviews. For visiting and adjunct faculty, these may be important to your candidacy for future positions. If you are looking for a streamlined way to reflect on your courses and BCQs, please consider the BCQ reflection guide found at the top of the BCQ Reports page, from which you may download, modify, and use it as you feel most appropriate.
- With regard to course questionnaires, you may want to review Section V.L. (Procedures for Administration and Use of the Course Questionnaires) and Section IV (Policies and Procedures Governing Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion, Tenure, and Faculty Evaluation) of The Faculty Handbook.
- I encourage you to reach out to Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Inclusion Dharni Vasudevan (dvasudev@bowdoin.edu) and/or Director of the Baldwin Center for Learning and Teaching Katie Byrnes (kbyrnes@bowdoin.edu) for consultation and advice. I am also available to any faculty member. Please feel free to reach out to either of us if you would like to discuss your reports.

Jennifer Scanlon
Senior Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs
207-725-3578
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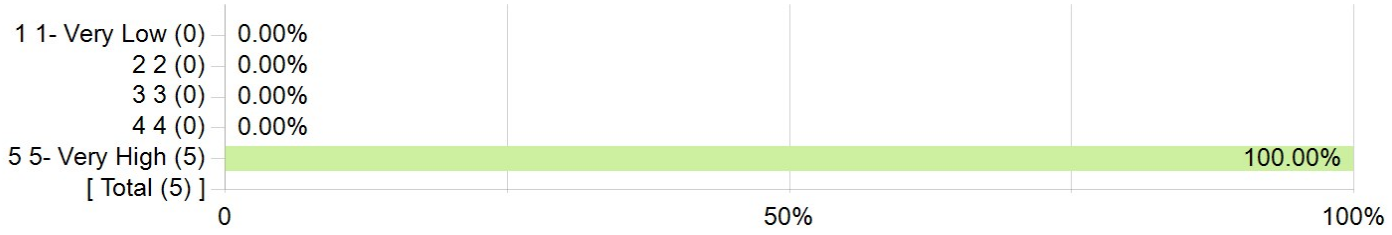
Creation Date: **Thursday, May 30, 2024**

Frequency Analysis

1. Please rate the level of effort you put into your learning in this course.



Statistics	Value
Mean	5.00
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.00

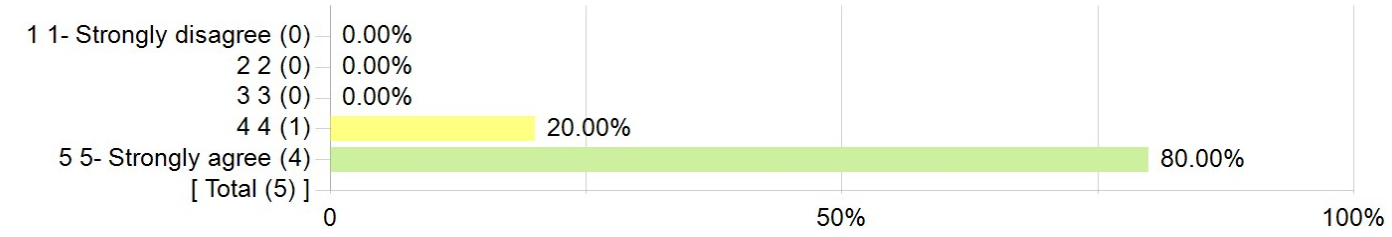
2. Please comment on your own level of effort.

Students (FO)
I put a lot of effort into this course both during and outside of class time.
This was one of the toughest classes I've taken at Bowdoin. The combination of the coding intense projects in addition to 2x a week material dense lectures and 2 exams.
I put a lot of effort into this course because the content was challenging for me, so I had to put a lot of effort to do well in it.
I have never worked harder on any class at Bowdoin. I spent about 10–20 hours a week on average, so as to complete all programming assignments to the best of my ability. I also studied a significant amount for exams.

3. Please describe what motivated you to take this course (to fulfill major, minor, distribution requirement, or time slot; because of the professor; because of your interest in the topic).

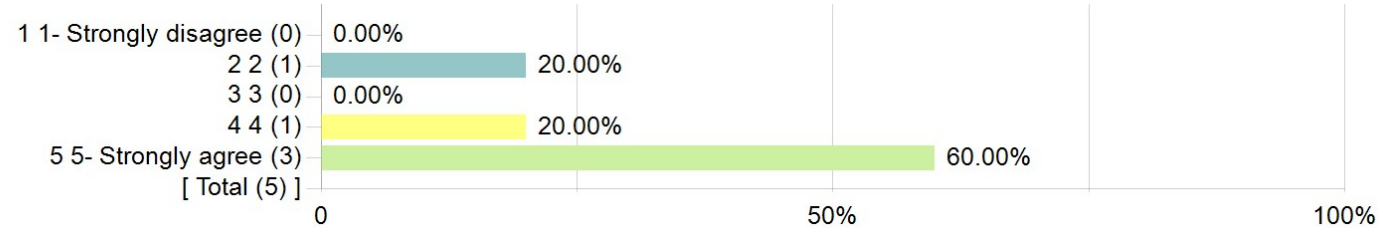
Comments
I was motivated to take this course to fulfill a major requirement.
I heard that a professor from U Michigan was coming for a semester and I wanted to take one of his classes.
I was originally a computer science major, and it would have been hard to get the major had I not taken this course.
I could not get into another CS class and I thought it would be interesting.

4. I found the course content intellectually challenging.



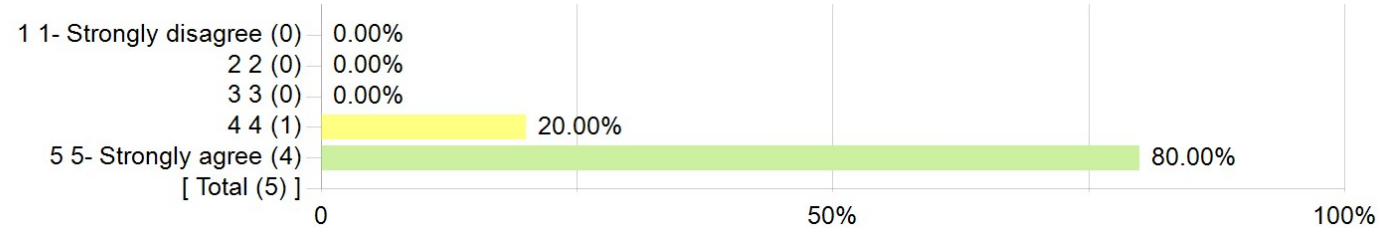
Statistics	Value
Mean	4.80
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.45

5. The course content fostered my growth as a student.



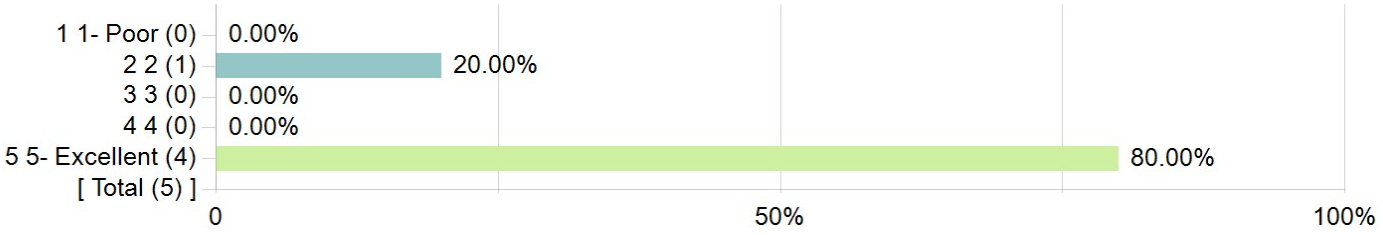
Statistics	Value
Mean	4.20
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	1.30

6. The course objectives were clear.



Statistics	Value
Mean	4.80
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.45

7. Thinking about the answers you provided above, and other factors, what is your overall assessment of the course content?

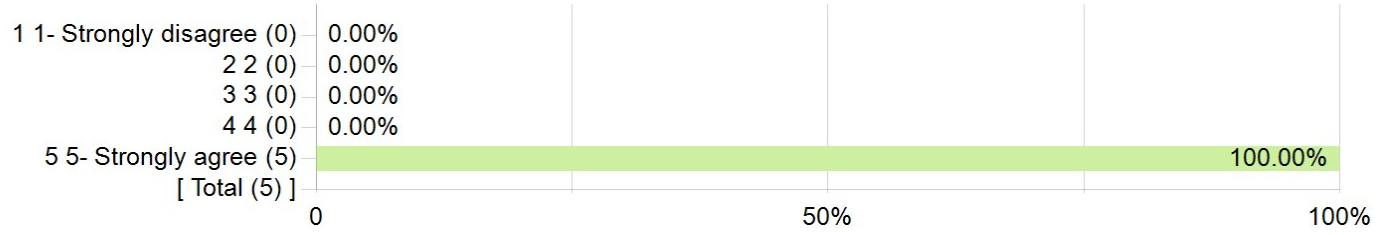


Statistics	Value
Mean	4.40
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	1.34

8. Please comment on your overall assessment of the course content.

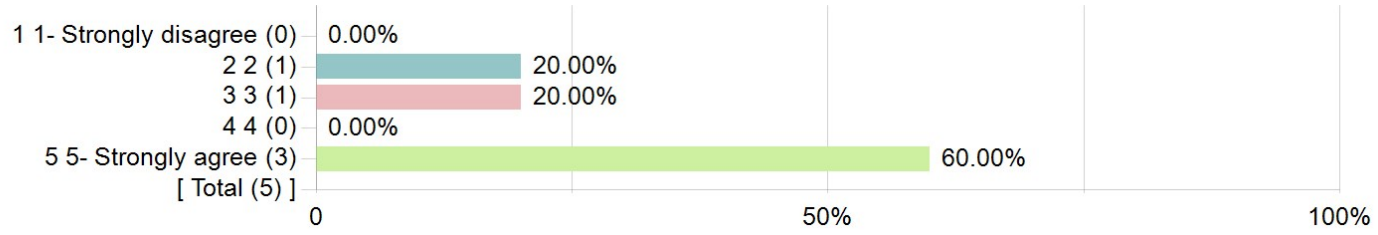
Comments
The course content was well–structured and intellectually challenging.
Course content was great.
This was one of the hardest courses I have taken at Bowdoin so far, but it was also pretty interesting learning about different programming languages. I grew a lot as a programmer, and the course objectives were made clear at the start of each class.
This course was extremely challenging and I felt like it pushed me as a CS major. However, it was quite uninteresting. Most topics covered in the class were extremely niche and only useful for people who are going to work in compiler companies are who are interested in PL research. Furthermore, I did not feel like I learned a significant amount. The programming assignments were long and tedious and simply made me unhappy with the class. Lectures were often on topics that seemed loosely related to assignments. I felt like I learned more about time management than actual course content.

9. The instructor was prepared for class.



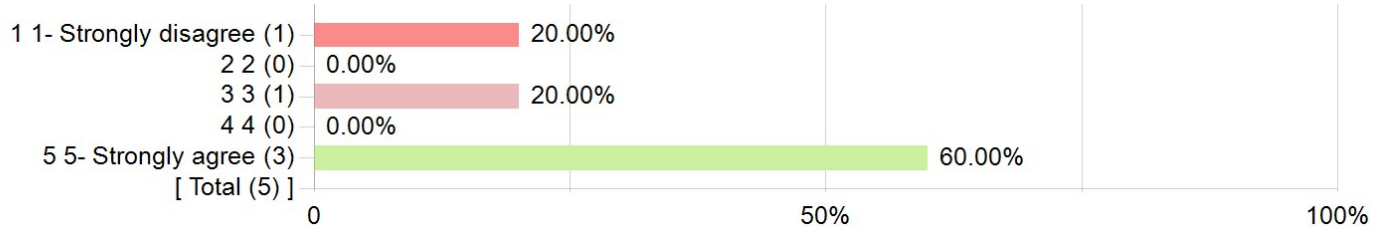
Statistics	Value
Mean	5.00
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.00

10. The instructor was able to communicate ideas, theories, skills, and/or concepts effectively.



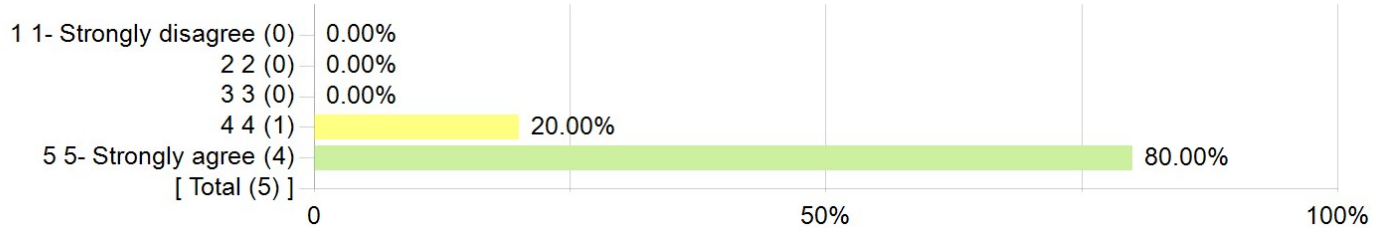
Statistics	Value
Mean	4.00
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	1.41

11. The instructor's teaching methods facilitated my learning.



Statistics	Value
Mean	3.80
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	1.79

12. The instructor encourages, as appropriate, critical and independent thinking.

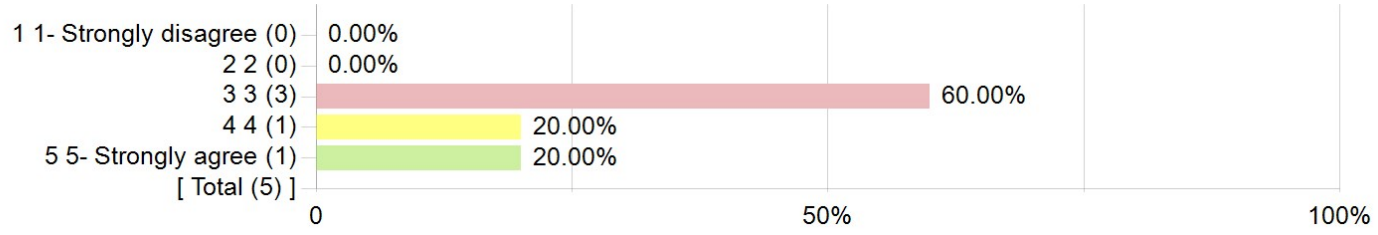


Statistics	Value
Mean	4.80
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.45

13. Please comment on the teaching effectiveness of the instructor.

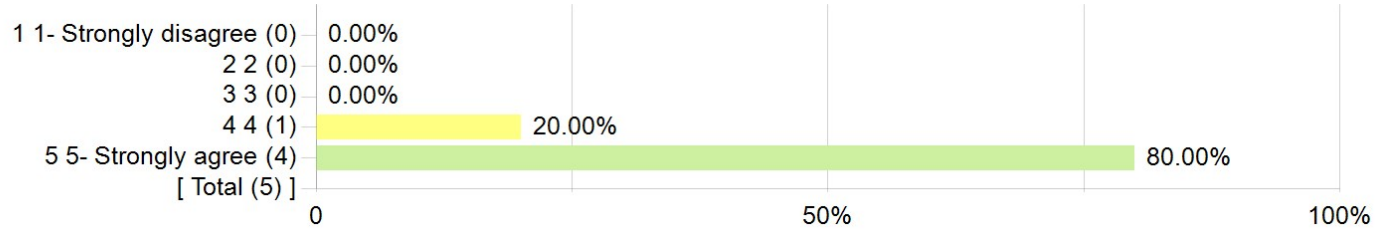
Comments
Professor Weimer is a great instructor and was always prepared with helpful lecture materials. At times, he covers topics too quickly, though he is always open to questions.
Bowdoin was extremely lucky to have professor Weimer here for the semester. I learned alot from him and gained a lot of experience and knowledge.
While the instructor was always prepared for class, I often felt confused during lectures, and it was hard for me to talk with the instructor to go over anything I was confused by, since there weren't many times to do so. The instructor encouraged critical thinking for all of the programming assignments.
Professor Weimer was prepared for class. He lectured well, but the course content was still uninteresting. He did make us think through problems using various skills from the class. He is a very interesting person to talk to.

14. The assignments and exams adequately assessed my learning.



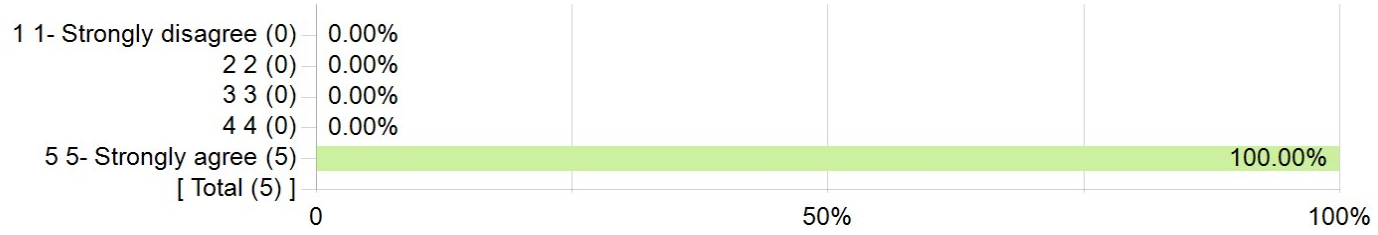
Statistics	Value
Mean	3.60
Median	3.00
Standard Deviation	0.89

15. The instructor's feedback on assignments and exams was helpful to me.



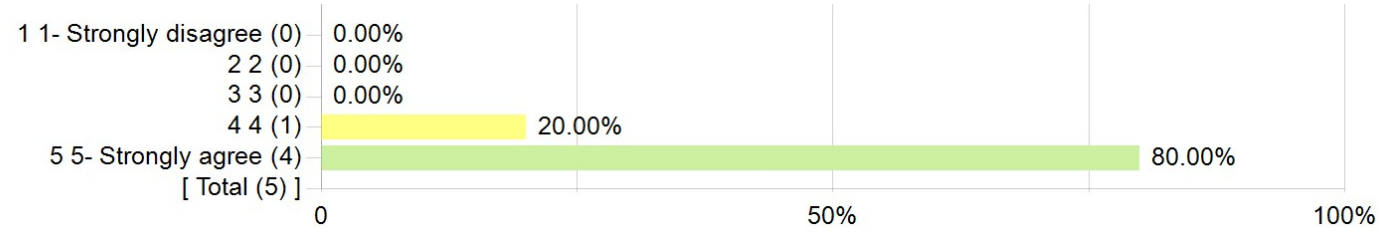
Statistics	Value
Mean	4.80
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.45

16. The instructor returned assignments and exams with enough time to benefit my learning.



Statistics	Value
Mean	5.00
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.00

17. The instructor's standards for grading were clearly communicated.

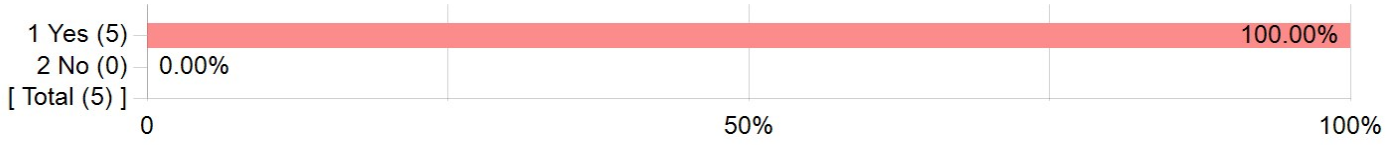


Statistics	Value
Mean	4.80
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.45

18. Please comment on the assignments, feedback, and grading.

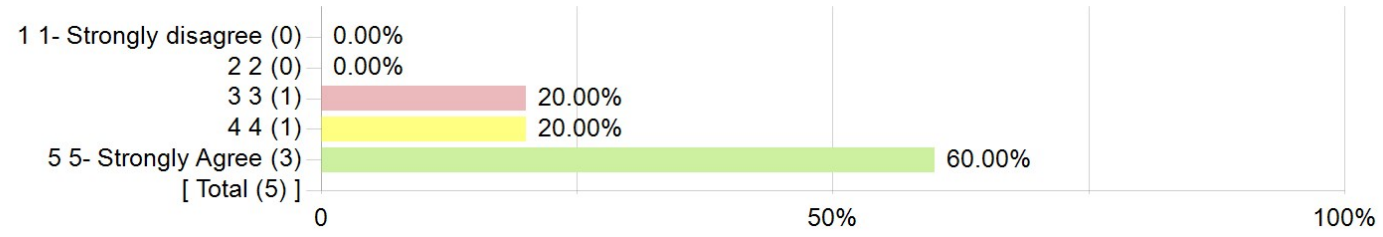
Comments
Professor Weimer returned assignments with grades and helpful feedback very quickly, usually the day after the due date. The assignments were very challenging and required many hours of time outside of class.
The returning of assignments was at times a little concerning, if an exam closed at midnight on a friday he would had them graded by 9am Saturday. I hope he was not up all night. Assignments were fair, exam questions were fair. no thing to note
Assignments did adequately assess what we learned at that point, but I also felt like exams tested us on some stuff (especially actual programming) that wasn't taught in class. Assignments were given back a few days after being turned in with useful feedback, and standards for grading were communicated clearly for each assignment.
Assignments and exams were graded very quickly with plenty of comments. I really appreciated that Professor Weimer was clear about grading.

19. Did you communicate with the instructor outside of class about your learning? (Scheduled office hours/meetings by appointment/email/other)



Statistics	Value
Mean	1.00
Median	1.00
Standard Deviation	0.00

20. These communications outside of class were helpful to my learning.

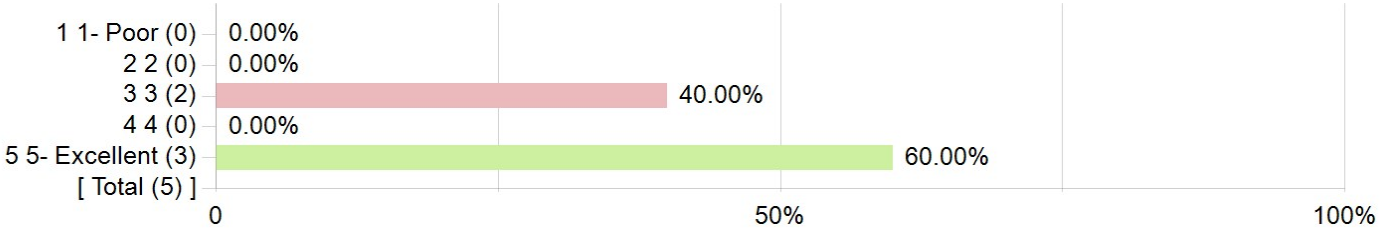


Statistics	Value
Mean	4.40
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.89

21. Please elaborate.

Comments
I would've liked to have seen more than 30 minutes a week of dedicated to Office hours. Bur professor Weimar was always willing to meet outside those hours, so niot really an issue.
While there weren't many available office hours, I still found it very helpful to go to them when I had the chance, since I often had questions about either the course content or the assignment we were working on at that time.
Professor Weimer is very helpful in person. However he is not great at replying to emails—even important ones. He replied to only 50% of my emails. In fact, Professor Weimer provided almost no support to me when I was struggling with something outside of class. He was unresponsive, showed no compassion, and unhelpful.

22. Considering your answers above (course content, teaching effectiveness; assignments, feedback, and grading; and communication), how would you rate the overall quality of the instruction in this course?



Statistics	Value
Mean	4.20
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	1.10

23. Please comment on your overall assessment of the course.

Comments
This is a great course and covers a broad array of topics. In addition, it builds necessary skills in programming, creative thinking, and problem solving.
I loved the class. Was fortunate to have Prof. Weimer here for the semester.
While the concepts were certainly interesting, I felt like some of them could have been communicated a little better. But I am glad that I took this course, as it challenged me a lot and made me grow a lot as a programmer.
This course made me discouraged about being a CS major. Professor Weimer is cool, but the course content is boring and unhelpful. I felt like he was also bad at communicating by email. Professor Weimer has a way of making students feel bad about studying CS and a liberal arts institution. Throughout the semester, I felt more and more disillusioned with being a CS major at a liberal arts school. Constantly making unfair comparisons between Bowdoin students and students at larger universities with established CS programs, Professor Weimer made me feel like I made a poor choice in my college decision. I was also very frustrated that this course was not taught in the same way as previous semesters, which could have fixed a lot of issues with the course. One thing I did learn from this course is that I will never take a CS course from a visiting professor again in my time at Bowdoin.

24. What worked best about the course? What suggestions, if any, would you offer?

Comments
What worked best about the course was the lectures and the Professor. Some suggestions I would offer are spending more time in class to discuss the programming assignments.
My biggest complain was lack of feedback from the Autograder on the PA's. I know that it was a decision made to encourage students to write test cases and but I feel that with limited submissions per day anyways, I think you have to write the test cases regardless but having something that says you threw an error, or your output included x instead of y would go a long way and allow for students to focus on concepts as opposed to busy work.
Having pre–recorded videos for the assignments was very helpful, since they usually helped me get started with each of the programming assignments. I think that more examples of problems in class would have been helpful for me, since I think that would have helped me feel more confident about the material.
Professor Weimer's video tutorials were helpful. But the fact that they were only in OCaml for PA4 and PA5 made things very difficult. I understand part of this course is learning to use other languages, but if we have not been taught Ocaml properly, which we were not, then the videos in OCaml did not help us.