University of Michigan
Winter 2022 Instructor Report With Comments
EECS 481-001: Software Engin
Westley Weimer

29 out of 161 students responded to this evaluation.

Responses to University-wide questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	Univ-wide Median	School/College Median
This course advanced my understanding of the subject matter. (Q1631)	18	6	0	0	0	0	4.8	4.6	4.4
My interest in the subject has increased because of this course. (Q1632)	13	8	2	0	1	0	4.6	4.2	4.2
I knew what was expected of me in this course.(Q1633)	14	9	1	0	0	0	4.6	4.6	4.4
I had a strong desire to take this course.(Q4)	11	13	0	0	0	0	4.4	4.1	4.0
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)	2	8	14	0	0	0	3.4	3.0	3.0

Responses to University-wide questions about the instructor:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	Univ-wide Median	School/College Median
Westley Weimer seemed well prepared for class meetings.(Q230)	19	5	0	0	0	0	4.9	4.8	4.7
Westley Weimer explained material clearly.(Q199)	19	5	0	0	0	0	4.9	4.7	4.6
Westley Weimer treated students with respect.(Q217)	18	5	1	0	0	0	4.8	4.8	4.7

Responses to questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median
Overall, this was an excellent course. (Q1)	15	6	1	0	0	0	4.8
Prerequisites provided adequate preparation for this course. (Q61)	12	9	0	1	0	0	4.6
The textbook made a valuable contribution to the course. (Q64)	6	3	0	2	1	11	4.5
I felt included and valued when working with other students. (Q253)	15	7	0	0	0	1	4.8
I felt comfortable asking questions in class. (Q521)	13	8	1	0	0	1	4.7
I developed confidence in my abilities as an engineer. (Q1769)	13	9	0	1	0	0	4.6
I developed the ability to solve real world engineering problems. (Q1770)	17	5	1	0	0	0	4.8
The discussion section was a valuable part of this course. (Q1771)	8	4	4	1	3	3	4.0

Responses to questions about the instructor:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median
Overall, Westley Weimer was an excellent teacher. (Q2)	18	4	1	0	0	0	4.9

The medians are calculated from Winter 2022 data. University-wide medians are based on all UM classes in which an item was used. The school/college medians in this report are based on classes that are upper division with enrollment of 75 or greater in College of Engineering.

Written Comments

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

Comments
Great
I mostly attended Wes's lecture but I cannot say enough great things about Wes. He is hands down the best professor I have had at U of M (and I have taken soooo many different courses because I changed my major many times). He is so kind to students during class, one on one interactions, and on Piazza. He takes genuine time to make sure students understand the information and never makes students feel stupid, lesser, dumb, etc. Wes also is extremely engaging and down to earth which not only makes his lectures interesting and fun, but students feel comfortable asking questions.   One interaction with Wes that stands out is when I missed Monday lecture once and attendance was taken but the Wednesday lecture did not have attendance taken. I went to Wes to ask him how I can make up the attendance point and he said "it doesn't seem fair to double dip on your time since you are already here, so I will email myself to make sure you get an attendance point for this week." Most professors would not do this, and when Wes said he would do this I was taken aback and grateful. He is very keen on making good relationships with students.   Wes's lectures are so interesting! He uses psychology techniques while teaching (rest times, changing information to "trivia", and think pair share activities) to make sure that students are well engaged throughout the entire hour and a half. He also is really funny, poking fun at software engineering topics, other classes, or himself, which also helps the lectures stay interesting. Lastly, he is real and down to earth. He said on the first day of class how many students chose 481 because "it was the last open upper level" (which I did not, I really liked this course so I decided to take it for fun) but with that, he made sure that students understood everything, from the psychology trivia to the lecture material and homeworks to exam grades. He makes students feel comfortable to ask questions by throwing out candy when someone answers a question (whether it is wrong or right) and when students ask a question. I haven't seen something like this done since middle school, but it works insanely well. I have never seen students more willing to ask questions, answer questions, and engage in lectures.   Wes also makes an amazing effort to answer questions on Piazza. I cannot tell you how many times I have seen answers in other classes like "look at the spec", "look at lecture slide X", "look at the explanation from the exam key", or referencing another post. This makes students less willing to ask questions, but Wes replies with in depth detail, using the resources already provided to answer the question, not using them as the answer for the question.   The last thing I will point out is the grading. I really, really, like the grading for this class. Especially since it is an upper level CS course, having multiple areas of grading (quizzes, attendance, exams, homeworks) and putting less emphasis on the exam grades is really important. Everyone in the class has already been through 280, 203, 281, and many have taken either 370, 376, or both. CS students already know the difficulty of curving outrageous exams scores so only a certain percentage of people can pass, but Wes structures his class so there doesn't need to be a curve. He wants students to succeed, and he said by doing so he makes the exams slightly less difficult and less weight in case someone is having a bad day. It makes an incredible difference in course climate when students are able to talk about what they learned and study together to help each other, rather than feeling a need to cram information in order to pass the class.   Overall, this is the best course I have taken at U of M, heavily due to the instruction. I cannot thank Wes and the other course staff enough for making this course enjoyable and interesting and I will 100% be recommending this class to every CS student.
I really enjoyed this course. Prof Weimer is a really good lecturer who makes things interesting. I think the lectures are fun, the topics seem practical. I'm still not sold on the surprise reading quizes.
Wes is one of the best professors in the EECS department. Very passionate, great at explaining content, and made learning fun.
Great course. Wes is an amazing instructor that knows how to keep students engaged and deliver content in a way that wants people to learn more. I think this content would not be as interesting if a different professor taught this course. Wes has funny jokes and makes the material sound interesting even if he is just talking about data flow analysis. He keeps you wanting to learn more and includes a lot of way to do so. He always has his sources and has all these readings – both required and optional – to allow you to learn more. The course content is very relevant to all of us and give us first hand experience on the real world. This class was probably one of the most useful classes at the University of Michigan, and Wes is one of the best professors I have had in my academic career.
really great course. interactive and interesting lectures that kept the students very engaged
wes gives me frog vibes i dont know why
Great!
I love Wes, he's probably the best professor I've had. You can tell he really cares about students. I love his long posts on piazza too.
Maybe Prof. Weimer could be more concise when answering questions and explaining concepts. Too wordy can have a perversive impact on our studying. It's not always the more the better. We appreciate your time.
It genuinely could not be better. I only had one lecture with Xinyu Wang, so I can't give much valuable feedback to him, though I really enjoyed his lecture and did not have any criticisms.   Westley Weimer is what every lecturer should aspire to be: engaging, entertaining, knowledgeable, and caring.   I don't have much more to say; I cannot think of a single gripe.

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

Comments
N/A
Honestly, I am not sure. I am a Hispanic female and this is the most included I've felt since I started CS. Wes points out the disparities, acknowledges them, and acts to prevent them both in his lectures and on Piazza. I never felt dumb in this course, whereas other courses have made me feel that way (not necessarily because of the course content, but the way professors and IAs reacted towards me and other classmates). Even the IAs are very willing to answer any and all questions and fully explain the answer. I am not sure how other diverse students feel, but from my experience they were all positive.
Wes is doing a great job of being inclusive both in lecture and on the Piazza forum. I'm not sure how this could be improved, the climate is much better than that of other EECS classes.
N/A
n/a very inclusive
N/A
Professor Weimer is the only course instructor I've had who openly acknowledges the problems of inclusivity in our campus community and the CS industry at large. Likely as a result of this, it seemed to me that the climate was very friendly to everyone participating. I of course cannot speak for everyone and do not want to invalidate others' experience, but I never observed any issues. Other courses should take notes from Professor Weimer if they seek to improve their climates.

What were the strengths of the course ? (Q953)

Comments
Homeworks were interesting
I just talked about so many above, so I will just list them: interesting lectures, Wes is funny, course grading is amazing, homeworks are interesting and well thought out, IAs work really hard and do a great job, exams are fair, Piazza questions (and all questions) are answered thoroughly and explained well, students feel welcome to ask/answer questions in lecture, and many other things!
Very good lecturer, I really liked the bits of humanities/liberal art topics that Weimer squeezes in.
Interesting material and great course staff.
The stretchy trivia time was probably the best strength of this course. There are a lot of times in class where I get tired or start to stop paying attention because the classes are so long. The trivia breaks are placed in the perfect place, giving me a nice 5 minute time to chill for a second. It keeps me engaged and the trivia is also pretty fun.
I really appreciate how the tests actually tested our knowledge on the subject area and wasnt trying to trick us.
Great instruction, interesting assignments, and a great curriculum
Every aspect of it was remarkably strong, but the greatest strength in my opinion was easily the lectures. I don't think there was a single day I left the room without feeling like I learned or discussed something incredibly interesting, and more often than not that I had never learned or thought about before.

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

Comments
N/A
Honestly I cannot think of anything. This class is amazing! Thank you course staff!
Reading quizzes don't have to be a surprise.
More notifications for assignments. In this class, we had three main sources for course info: the course website, Piazza, and Gradescope. It was hard to keep up with all of them, especially the reading quizzes since they come out randomly and there are no notifications saying when they come out. I think if maybe there were some way to take the quizzes on the course website or Gradescope could send a notification every time a reading quiz came out would be very useful.
really good course.
wes should include a reading about healthy nutrition to combat his throwing candy at already unhealthy cs students.
I prefer having late days for assignments, but i understand why they were not put in to the course
N/A

Among the courses you have already taken, which proved the most (or least) effective in preparing you for this course, and why? (Q1098)

Comments
EECS 281 as it prepared me to plan and write code for open ended tasks
EECS 281 because it introduced important coding concepts that were used during the homeworks
Nothing has really prepped me for this course since the focus is so much more practical but perhaps 280/281 has given me general coding/algorithm knowledge for some parts of the projects.
Not sure, this is different from most other EECS classes (in a good way, I learned a lot and enjoyed it).
EECS 445 (machine learning) was the most effective. The content of EECS 445 had nothing to do with the content of EECS 481, but the projects in 445 helped a lot with the projects in 481. 90% of projects in EECS are all coding, but 445 was my first course that had more writing than coding, so it was a big switch for me. In 481, the projects are similar. Two of the projects have almost no coding and are all writing. Having that writing aspect in 445 prepared me for the writing in 481.
none really prepped me, it was really easy to get what was going on in the class
482, taught me to code for 10 hours straight with no breaks
To be honest, no course very directly prepared me for this one. It was very different than what I was used to, but was definitely aware that none of us had taken anything like it, so this was not at all a problem.

University of Michigan
Winter 2022 Instructor Report With Comments
EECS 481-002: Software Engin
Westley Weimer

28 out of 138 students responded to this evaluation.

Responses to University-wide questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	Univ-wide Median	School/College Median
This course advanced my understanding of the subject matter. (Q1631)	17	5	1	0	1	0	4.8	4.6	4.4
My interest in the subject has increased because of this course. (Q1632)	13	6	4	0	1	0	4.6	4.2	4.2
I knew what was expected of me in this course.(Q1633)	14	7	2	0	1	0	4.6	4.6	4.4
I had a strong desire to take this course.(Q4)	16	6	1	0	1	0	4.8	4.1	4.0
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)	1	6	16	1	0	0	3.2	3.0	3.0

Responses to University-wide questions about the instructor:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	Univ-wide Median	School/College Median
Westley Weimer seemed well prepared for class meetings.(Q230)	23	0	1	0	0	0	5.0	4.8	4.7
Westley Weimer explained material clearly.(Q199)	22	1	1	0	0	0	5.0	4.7	4.6
Westley Weimer treated students with respect.(Q217)	20	2	2	0	0	0	4.9	4.8	4.7

Responses to questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median
Overall, this was an excellent course. (Q1)	19	3	1	0	1	0	4.9
Prerequisites provided adequate preparation for this course. (Q61)	16	4	1	2	0	1	4.8
The textbook made a valuable contribution to the course. (Q64)	4	0	2	0	3	15	3.3
I felt included and valued when working with other students. (Q253)	13	8	1	0	1	1	4.6
I felt comfortable asking questions in class. (Q521)	14	4	4	1	0	1	4.7
I developed confidence in my abilities as an engineer. (Q1769)	16	5	3	0	0	0	4.8
I developed the ability to solve real world engineering problems. (Q1770)	16	5	3	0	0	0	4.8
The discussion section was a valuable part of this course. (Q1771)	4	6	4	3	2	4	3.6

Responses to questions about the instructor:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median
Overall, Westley Weimer was an excellent teacher. (Q2)	21	1	2	0	0	0	4.9

The medians are calculated from Winter 2022 data. University-wide medians are based on all UM classes in which an item was used. The school/college medians in this report are based on classes that are upper division with enrollment of 75 or greater in College of Engineering.

Written Comments

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

Comments
I really liked Wes' lectures. I also really enjoyed Xinyu's guest lecture. I attended lecture section 1 despite being enrolled in section 2
Wes was a great lecturer. I think the content breaks in the middle of each lecture were very helpful for me as someone who has a habit of getting distracted during lectures. It definitely helped me pay attention for longer.
Extremely High Quality
The level of detail to cover all of the topics seemed appropriate. I enjoyed hearing about specific tools and having some experience using them in homeworks.
Prof Weimer's style of teaching lent really well to my preferences in learning, and the constant interjection of jokes and puns helped me to stay focused and interested. Even though the lectures were "death by powerpoint" as Prof Weimer puts it, Prof Weimer made sure to explain everything in a way that allowed me to understand the things I was unsure on and also to get more "aha" moments.
great
Wes is a fantastic professor and made class fun and engaging
The lectures were very engaging and I enjoyed showing up to class each lecture day (which, says a lot). The instriction was top–notch and I think this is a must–take for anyone in CS.
Great and engaging

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

Comments
One thing that I asked to be changed is that a few lectures colloquially mentioned cases/causes of cancer. For my family and I at the moment, school is one of the only escapes I have from this disease. I would hope that this term and really any serious medical conditions are removed from statistical analysis and cause/effect relationships in the lectures. As software engineers, many of us are very poorly read in biology and students should not be taught oversimplified health condition analyses when many factors are at play and chances are a large portion of the class has loved ones affected by these serious conditions. I found myself having to skip over the chunks of lecture relating to this term because it is unbearable to me at the moment.
not sure

What were the strengths of the course ? (Q953)

Comments
Taught about a wide range of different strategies to be a better SWE
Everything! More specifically, the lectures were great!
I thought that the lectures were the most valuable part of the course. I had never done a software engineering internship before, so this was very useful material before starting one this summer.
The key strength of this course is to make you prepare for the software engineering industry for those who did not have a software engineering internship in the past like me.
Prof Weimer. He will always be a strength to any course.
interesting material
Encourging interaction between and from students

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

Comments
Although the candy is supposed to motivate class participation, it personally deterred me from answering questions because I did not want the candy thrown at me. I felt like it unnecessarily brought more attention to the person answering. Maybe instead the IAs could bring candy to the student or the student could pick up candy at the end of class if they wanted it.
I would ideally like to see the trivia portion of lecture shortened— perhaps just keeping the psychology portion of it. After all, many students are taking this course to learn SWE techniques and this amount of trivia time adds up to a lot over the course of the semester.
keep up the good work
not sure
More helpful suggestions on Piazza would be nice. Currently responses seem to be passive aggressive and treat students as unable to find information for themselves.
Don't assign project over spring break
There was just a lot of work, especially during crunch times like midterms and finals, to the point where we felt like we had to work on break, something the university really doesn't want to happen. I'm not sure what I'd cut, but if there was anything that could be done to tone down the work slightly, it'd be greatly appreciated by future students

Among the courses you have already taken, which proved the most (or least) effective in preparing you for this course, and why? (Q1098)

Comments
I would say that there really isn't a single course that prepared me incredibly well for this class since it is so different from other eecs classes. I wasn't prepared for as much reading/writing as expected, but overall from a programming standpoint, eecs 281 was more than enough to prepare me well enough for even the hardest programming issues I faced in the class.
281 gave me a general sense of setting up files/DS&A so that would be the leading class. 482 would help as well.
EECS 281 is enough for preparing for this course.
No course really prepares you for this course, though the most effect of the courses I have taken is EECS 281, which gave a fundamental understanding of coding in general that can transfer to learning the other languages of this course.
EECS 376, a lot of concepts from that course were brought up here
EECS482 and EECS201 were invaluable for understanding some of the more technical topics.
Eecs 485 probably helped the most just from being the most professional in terms of CLI use