

University of Michigan
Fall 2019 Instructor Report With Comments
EECS 280-002: Prog&Data Struct
Nicole Hamilton

67 out of 147 students responded to this evaluation.

Responses to the University-wide questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	University- Wide Median	School/College Median
This course advanced my understanding of the subject matter.(Q1631)	37	25	3	0	0	1	4.6	4.5	4.4
My interest in the subject has increased because of this course.(Q1632)	30	26	7	2	0	1	4.4	4.2	4.1
I knew what was expected of me in this course.(Q1633)	33	25	5	1	1	1	4.5	4.4	4.3
Overall, this was an excellent course.(Q1)	30	27	5	3	0	1	4.4	4.2	4.1
I had a strong desire to take this course.(Q4)	33	25	5	1	1	1	4.5	4.0	4.0
As compared with other courses of equal credit, the workload for this course was...(SA=Much Lighter to SD=Much Heavier) (Q891)	3	1	19	22	19	1	2.1	3.0	2.6

Responses to University-wide questions about the instructor:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	University-Wide Median	School/College Median
Overall, Nicole Hamilton was an excellent teacher. (Q2)	26	22	8	4	0	6	4.3	4.6	4.4
Nicole Hamilton seemed well prepared for class meetings.(Q230)	34	20	5	1	0	6	4.6	4.8	4.6
Nicole Hamilton explained material clearly.(Q199)	25	22	9	3	0	6	4.3	4.6	4.4
Nicole Hamilton treated students with respect.(Q217)	38	17	3	1	1	6	4.7	4.8	4.7

Responses to additional questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	University-Wide Median
Prerequisites provided adequate preparation for this course. (Q61)	19	33	8	3	0	3	4.1	4.3
The textbook made a valuable contribution to the course. (Q64)	8	6	12	11	13	16	2.6	3.6
The laboratory was a valuable part of this course. (Q331)	25	21	11	5	2	2	4.2	4.3
Laboratory assignments required a reasonable amount of time and effort. (Q336)	22	29	8	5	1	1	4.1	4.1
Laboratory assignments were relevant to what was presented in class. (Q337)	36	25	4	0	0	1	4.6	4.3
I developed confidence in my abilities as an engineer. (Q1769)	26	29	6	2	2	1	4.3	4.1
I developed the ability to solve real world engineering problems. (Q1770)	26	27	9	1	1	1	4.3	4.1

The medians are calculated from Fall 2019 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 lower 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 think nicole hamilton did a good job as an instructor, but my favorite was fu
Pretty good.
The instruction itself was very well done, however, there were aspects of the projects that should have warranted some discussion in lecture, which were never touched on. This led to quite a bit of confusion, where the spec for the project was unclear how what the implementation should be. However, office hours felt totally inaccessible, for much of the course it was unclear that the difference between the professor office hours and the staff office hours, which often had multi-hour wait lines. This caused me to feel like office hours were inaccessible and I couldn't ask for help very well.
good
pretty good teaching code is hard but Hamilton did a nice job
Extremely high
All of the professors were knowledgeable in the topics taught in lecture, and the projects/labs allowed us to put to use what we learned.
Professor Hamilton was very knowledgeable on the subject matter and explained concepts clearly. She was also very open to questions and encouraged class participation.
Great
good
n/a
I liked Professor Hamilton, although at times her questions would come off a little aggressive I no one volunteered to answer right away. Otherwise, she was great
After my comment about raised hands occasionally not being seen in the previous evaluation, Professor Hamilton now makes sure to keep an eye out for questions. She always makes sure that we understand the material and makes her lectures fun to attend.
I loved this course, and Professor Hamilton helped so much during her lectures. Everything she taught was clear, and many examples were given to fully understand the content.
She was a really great and fun professor! I really enjoyed her soundtrack!
Nicole Hamilton is a great professor but sometimes the way she asks questions is a little intimidating.
The teachers were fantastic.
good professor
The quality of instruction in this course varies at times, but has been good for the most part.
It was a pleasure to have someone as experienced as Hamilton teaching me. This class has easily been my favorite in college so far and the people who organized it did a fantastic job.
The instruction was done well. It wasn't very engaging, but the Nicole knew what she was talking about and was funny.
Lectures were recorded so I usually watched them online. However, it was great to see them online as I was able to learn at my own pace.
This could be taught better
Well done
I ended up finding I preferred Professor Fu's lectures, but overall this was a great course that was well taught
Very strong, but only effective to a certain extent. Most of the learning comes from simply doing the assignment. That being said, the instructors are effective in explaining a top-down view of the material.
Nicole Hamilton brings real life practices into the classroom.
Excellent quality overall
The instruction is very great. Kevin Fu is a very effective, charismatic teacher. I love his axioms, especially the one where he goes "C++ allows you to shoot yourself in the foot."
I really liked Nicole Hamilton's teaching style. I would like to take a different course taught by her in the future if I am able.

Comments
instruction quality varied. had to start watching other lecturers
Ok
She was a good instructor a lot of respect for her knowledge
Amazing
Nicole Hamilton cared about the subject, but sometimes introduced ideas without any explanation
I found that this course was taught well overall. Having the ability to watch or attend lectures of any section was very helpful.

What were the strengths of the course ? (Q953)

Comments
The projects really helped me to understand the subject
labs
Dove into a lot of complicated programing.
The material was covered very well, and the projects reinforced the material very well.
labs
allowed for teamwork with the projects, and had lots of coding practice
Well structured
The strengths of this course are the teaching staff, challenging projects, and overall organization.
Instructors were very knowledgeable, and projects were very engaging. Lab sections and office hours were also very helpful.
Lab assignments and projects
computers
n/a
I think the projects and labs were really well built so we got to learn a lot from them
The projects are practical and hands-on. However, it took a while for me to learn Euchre because I'm from Malaysia.
All of the material aligned well with the projects and the labs were also very helpful to touch on the subjects that the projects didn't cover.
The projects and labs really helped reinforce the concepts in the class
In-class exercises are helpful.
The teachers were great.
interesting topics
280 really pushes you to understand the material.
The projects, while time consuming and difficult, were set up extremely well and always were interesting and relevant. Most of my learning in this course was through the projects.
The strengths were the projects really help develop understanding.
The projects were definitely helpful and provided the level of difficult needed to improve my coding. I definitely believe my coding knowledge has improved and become more efficient.
You learned a lot. I would say the projects are a little hard but not too bad
Projects and labs
Assignments are hands on, instructors are good, my lab IA in particular was very good at explaining things deeply that helped me understand the material better. Piazza is a good resource.
The guided example problems in class were very useful.
the projects were especially pertinent to the material being covered
All of the online resources, such as the lecture slides, help a good deal for reviewing material. Additionally, all of the support staff on piazza, during discussion, and during office hours are really great. The content is very interesting and the projects are very stimulating.
I really liked how structured the course was and how easy it was to figure out was was expected of you.
that all lectures are recorded. thats key
Lab

Comments
This course taught me that I am not cut out for the EECS curriculum. Even though I find coding relaxing and somewhat enjoy the topic being taught, the class is fucking brutal. I feel like you guys are trying to kill me during project 5. Overall, I got fucked. But at least I got fucked here and didn't waste my time taking 281. If I didn't have a good time here, I doubt I'll have a good time in any other CS courses. I'll elaborate on how you could have not fucked me in the "What suggestions would you make for improving the course" part of the survey.
Thank you for the semester though
Super well structured
Strengths are that the labs targeted the important stuff and helped with understanding
The in-depth explanations of the material being learned was helpful to conceptualizing what was actually happening with code being worked on. I found these explanations to be useful to my work.

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

Comments
The exams suck
make labs harder
More accessible help on projects.
Find ways to prevent some of the side aspects of the projects from being such as focus. I felt some of these side elements required so much effort, I was unable to truly focus on the parts of the project meant to reinforce the material.
more talk about projects in lecture
making more optional sections for labs that are relatable to the exams
I understand that the projects are parallel to class material but having the 3rd project be by far the hardest, due at the same time as midterms seems like poor structure.
I would suggest figuring out a better system for office hours, especially around the project deadline. Sometimes I'll be done there a few days before the deadline and there would only 2 IAs helping students.
I think the specs for projects could be made clearer for students. It may also be helpful to have reductions in office hours queue times during busy times.
None
euchre
n/a
The exams seem unfairly hard because some of the material tested would never appear in real world code
Maybe relate more material to the projects. They can sometimes feel out of sync with the lectures.
Nothing, everything was well planned and helped me learn.
More submits for the project!
Elaborate more on project specs to make them easier to read and work with.
The projects and exams were occasionally difficult. If we had more practice or access to practice problems that would be helpful. Also, if we had smaller incremental writing homework in addition to the labs, we would have more of a sense of how well we are doing before actually taking the exams or doing the projects. There isn't really a middle assignment between lectures and exams, so I have no idea if I know what I'm doing before exams or the project.
more gsis during office hours
Have the content explained by different professors be more consistent.
Project 4 felt less relevant to me than the others, and my partner and I were lost for a decent chunk of the project. I could be in the minority here though, I don't know for sure.
The office hours queue, and the free response on the exams. I didn't feel like I had sufficient time to complete it at all. Also it didn't represent my understanding of the material.
This course is well organized and developed.
The Midterm and Final are insanely hard
Make lectures more easy to follow
The exams are not very practical in my mind. A big part of a computer science job in the future will involve a computer so it seems only fair to be afforded such materials on exams so that we are tested on different bits of the course rather than compiling errors.

Comments

The projects can be vague and not in a good way. While Piazza helps, if the base instructions involve us using things we haven't learned about in class, that is detrimental to our morale and our ability to complete our projects. In the future, more details on the project spec would be nice.

N/A

Limit private tests in Autograder. Having over half of the available points entirely hidden from a student is a poor, poor way to run this class. In the real world, programmers know what is expected of them. Obscuring information does not help a student learn.

It would be appreciated if the solutions to the lab worksheets were posted! I know the reason to withhold them is to incentivize attending discussion, but sometimes things come up and students cannot go, and not posting the lab worksheet solutions makes it harder for students to test their knowledge of the material.

honestly, my only suggestion would be to extend the project due date to the midnight of whatever day it is due to allow more time to finish up the last minute details.

talk about projects more in lecture

Harder projects

Please, have more office hours. I genuinely wanted to go and learn more about various topics but was discouraged to do so due to the long queues or other problems. I understand you guys have made great strides in improving the learning outside of lectures but I really do not feel like I had the resources necessary to learn the material to mastery. Unlike other classes where the material is very clear about understanding I felt like this class failed to teach outside of the typical lecture style. The class did not fit the way I learn and I usually find ways around that but there was just no time for me to do so and when I did have a bit of time, there was a queue and lines of people asking questions about the project. The lab was a good addition and the IAs were really good although I felt lost some weeks as the course felt like it was moving too fast and did not stop unless there was an exam which was very stressful. At times, I feel like the EECS department hates their students since this class is still technically an intro programming course.

TL:DR

If I were to change the class, I would fix by creating a better office hours environment for students. For example, finding and reserving a room and then having teachers and IAs present. Obviously, the basement queue would still be a thing but providing a more social and interactive environment to learn and collaborate with others is amazing for students like me who struggle to learn without discussion as they spark conversation and increase my depth of knowledge as I try to teach others and have others teach me. Kind of like the physics help room but scaled up to accommodate the EECS students.

Also, for God's sake give us just like a few more days on the projects. Just like 1 or 2 more days. I feel like my total lifespan has shortened by years. I am learning how to code for the first time in college and I already feel like I'm at a disadvantage trying to learn and finish these projects in an efficient manner. The reason why students do well is that they already know how to code or invest an insane amount of time into this class. Or at the very least just release projects early with a description of what we can currently do. Like you did that for project 4. You guys did good with Project 4. Or give us a break in-between. Time feels very crunched for no reason at all.

More interesting lectures

Making the project specifications clearer would be helpful; sometimes very pertinent information was in obscure places in the spec.

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

Comments
engr 101, taught basics of c++
101, helped most with programming.
n/a, as a Freshman, I have not taken any courses here prior to this one, though I did find AP computer science to be immensely helpful.
eeecs 183
engin 151 the most because it also dealt with c++ coding and pretty much made the first half of the course mostly review
Honestly having the summer to code for work prepared me for this course much more than any prereqs
EECS 183 was the most effective in preparing me for this course.
I think EECS 183 was the most helpful, because the structure was pretty similar to that of 280.
ENGR101
engr 101
EECS 183 definitely prepared me to take this course.
n/a
engineering 101 was the most helpful preparing me for this class
N/A
Engineering 101 was a helpful base for this course because it kept me coding, but I had a better C++ base from high school.
EECS 183!
Engineering 101 because we learned C++ there.
Engineering 101 was helpful.
EECS 183 prepared me the most for this course, as it introduced me to coding in C++.
ENGR 101 of course.
EECS 183
EECS 183 provided me with the basic structure of code to be successful in this course.
Engineering 101
EECS 203 was the least effective
ENG 101 could be more helpful. While it's good for teaching you C++, the first few projects can take you off guard.
Engr101 was the most effective. It would be more effective if Michigan had small mini-courses that targeted setting up the computer/the parts of the computer that we take for granted.
N/A
EECS 183 has proved to be the most effective because it taught me many of the underlying concepts that allowed me to effectively learn the material in 280.
EECS 183 proved to be the most effective in preparing me for this course because it was the preparatory course for 280.
EECS 183, it is the prerequisite lol
EEcs 183
This class is basically a time management course so anything like EECS 183 or eng 101 which helped decrease time spent on projects and classes with a high time demand to help increase time usage effectiveness. Overall, I think EECS 183 is probably the best as it gets you used to the coding environment ish
Engineering 101 was most effective
Eng 101 was the most effective as it gave me a background in C++.