

*** PROVISIONAL REPORT ***

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
Downing, Glenn P C S371P 50525
E100 EXPANDED

COURSE-INSTRUCTOR SURVEY
OBJECT-ORIENTED PROGRAMMING

Fall 2019 DEPARTMENT COPY
Grade-eligible enrollment = 68
Surveys Returned = 65

	NUMBER CHOOSING EACH RESPONSE					NO. REPLIES THIS ITEM	AVG.
	Str	Disag	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Str Agree	
1 COURSE OBJECTIVES DEFINED-EXPLAINED	0		1	2	20	41	64 4.6
2 INSTRUCTOR PREPARED	0		0	0	7	57	64 4.9
3 COMMUNICATED INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY	0		0	0	15	48	63 4.8
4 STUDENTS ENCOURAGED-ACTIVE ROLE	0		0	2	19	43	64 4.6
5 INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY	0		1	2	15	46	64 4.7
6 COURSE WELL-ORGANIZED	0		1	5	16	42	64 4.5
7 STUDENT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION	0		2	5	17	40	64 4.5
8 CLASS PARTICIPATION ENCOURAGED	1		0	1	11	50	63 4.7
9 ENGAGING INSTRUCTION	0		1	3	22	38	64 4.5
10 INST. HAD THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF SUBJECT	0		0	0	8	56	64 4.9
11 INSTRUCTOR EXPLANATIONS CLEAR	1		0	1	22	40	64 4.6
12 GENUINELY INTERESTED IN TEACHING COURSE	0		0	0	13	50	63 4.8
13 HELPFUL COURSE MATERIALS	1		8	14	22	19	64 3.8
14 ADEQUATE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENTS	2		1	5	24	32	64 4.3
15 ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS RETURNED PROMPTLY	0		2	6	26	30	64 4.3
16 ASSIGNMENTS USUALLY WORTHWHILE	0		0	2	21	41	64 4.6
17 STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATED FAIRLY	2		1	8	26	27	64 4.2
18 STUDENT PERCEPTION OF AMOUNT LEARNED	0		0	3	14	46	63 4.7
	Vry	Unsat	Unsat	Satisfact	Very Good	Excellent	
19 OVERALL INSTRUCTOR RATING	0		1	2	16	45	64 4.6
20 OVERALL COURSE RATING	0		1	3	28	32	64 4.4
	Excessive	High	Right	Light	Insuff		
21 STUDENT RATING OF COURSE WORKLOAD	0	14	48	1	1	64	
	Less 2.00	2.00-2.49	2.50-2.99	3.00-3.49	3.50-4.00		
22 OVERALL UT GRADE POINT AVERAGE	0	2	7	20	35	64	
	A	B	C	D	F		
23 PROBABLE COURSE GRADE	20	34	8	2	0	64	

For the computation of averages, values were assigned on a 5-point scale so that the most favorable response was assigned a value of 5 and the least favorable response was assigned a value of 1.

COMMENTS:

Total Number of Comments: 30

1. This is course is called "Object-oriented Programming" and is taught in C++. In some sense, this is also a C++ course because we spent quite some time teaching C++. One thing I don't like, though, is the nuances and irregular details of C++. It seems to me that C++ is very ancient and difficult to learn especially when I learned Java prior to this course, so, I will often compare the topics we covered in class to what Java would do. In almost all cases, Java does a better job in the sense of simplicity and regularity. This brings me into thinking this question "do we spend too much on teaching C++ and not the object-oriented design part? Will it be better to teach this course in Java so that we can focus more on the object-oriented part?"

2. Overall, I enjoyed this class. The lectures were engaging (cold-calling isn't as bad as it seems). The programming assignments were manageable, interesting, and introduced tools like Gitlab CI that are useful (even if they weren't particularly enjoyable to use sometimes). I liked the new structure of the quizzes, where we could take a second attempt and work with people around us. However, I did not like that Professor Downing implemented a similar structure (one attempt by yourself, second attempt with others) on the first exam without any prior notice. I felt like the first attempt was really rushed and that many people did poorly as a result. While the structure is being updated based on our feedback, it was still unfortunate.

3. I love how well organized the class was, notes were posted, and everything was clear. The professor explained everything clearly and concisely and is very knowledgeable. The only thing I would say could be improved was that I was taken aback by the format of the midterm - I wish we had more notice about the format change. The daily quizzes were also better as partner quizzes (2 attempts).

4. great course

5. HackerRank tests and coding assignments need more guidance [i.e. commenting out unit tests in exams, project specs] Some parts of workflow seem unnecessary. Also think TAs ought to be more lenient with blogs [if you've done them but forgot to submit to Canvas]. Minor criticisms. Lectures were engaging and brilliant; best CS class I've taken here.

6. I think that this course was very well-organized, and as someone who is planning to take Graphics next semester, I feel like this course was exactly what I was looking for. I've learned a lot about C++, and I have come to appreciate some aspects of the language. Cold-calling wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. For the most part, I feel like my performance in this class has been evaluated fairly; however, I strongly believe that our first exam wasn't necessarily evaluated fairly. While some people did well, a good number of people were not able to complete the exam during the first attempt, and this drastically affected their grade. The format of the first exam wasn't communicated well, and I believe that this caused undue stress for me.

7. I really enjoyed your course. The lessons were very engaging and I never felt bored. I felt like I learned a lot from the different projects that we did. This is one of the best classes that I have taken. I do however feel like that the tests on HackerRank aren't appropriate to evaluate us. Another project would be much more appropriate here. I and other students that I've talked to don't feel that we get prepared for such a test. For the projects so are we given plenty of time to solve them ourselves using outside resourced with no short timelimit. We aren't learning how to "solve x within y" in class and we get no preparation for it for the test. Our grades have suffered because of this and we would like a better way to be evaluated.

8. Professor Downing is the best Professor I have had in the CS Department at UT. I will be taking SWE next semester just to have another class with him.

9. I didn't like how the test format for the first test suddenly cut the time in half the day of the test without a curve, I think I and a lot of people feel we would have gotten higher overall scores with the full time and we were not prepared for the time intensity of the new format test. I think it only benefited people who would have failed in the total time and punished the slow test takers who would have done well in the total time. Otherwise, all that is left is praise which is deserved. Great lecturer, very in-depth understanding of C++, engaging, and good person.

10. The professor is smart and knows the material, and communicates it effectively. However the grading on this course is frankly complete bullshit. The format of the first test was not explained to us whatsoever (which I am certain of, because I have not missed a single day of his class), which resulted in me only getting half the points because it was not explained that our second attempt would be averaged with our first attempt rather than replace it. He also makes us do these terrible blogs with arbitrary criteria, and will give you a zero if you miss something very insignificant in it. To give you an idea of how unfairly he treats grading, I was not even given a chance to make up the first quiz which I missed due to being waitlisted.

11. Good class. I enjoyed learning in depth of c++.

12. The only suggestion I would like to provide is that there needs to be better explanation of the assignments. Additionally, the vast majority of information needed to carry out an assignment should be provided before the assignment is handed out and not just a few days before it's due. This would help students avoid a lot of bugs they don't know how to fix just because they didn't learn about those yet. I am usually able to fix my bugs (even if it takes a long time), but not everyone may be able to.

13. The reason why I took this class was because I began sitting in lecture in the middle of Spring 2019 and really enjoyed the lectures on the subtleties of cpp. Getting a chance to do the HR exercises, it allowed me to apply what we had learned practically and gave us practice in getting comfortable in cpp. I liked the comparisons to Java in particular since it gave me a perspective of the differences and how they applied in cpp. One thing I would change about the class was the format of the exams. I would prefer the original, 90-minute format since it would've gave others more time to finish the test under their own power. I look forward to completing this course with more knowledge in cpp and in oop constructs.

14. Great course. Found the split on tests between group and single participation to be somewhat flawed. Would've liked more time to work on the test problems by myself instead of a 50/50 split.

15. I really enjoyed this class! I think it could have been better publicized that a lot of the class focuses on teaching C++ in addition to abstract OO principles, but overall, I enjoyed the class a lot and learned a great deal.

16. Professor Downing is excellent at promoting student interaction in the course, however he tried varying the structure of the course in regards to exams and quizzes and it did not seem that effective.

17. The first exam being so close to the Allocator project, the little help we got with makfiles and other "setup" files, and not having gone over the material in time needed to complete the Life project are about my only complaints for this course. I think Professor Downing is a good lecturer and I liked the course's overall structure. The cold-calling was a little stressful at times, but it was good for making us pay attention and engaging us in the class. I also really liked the first exam. It was a different experience but in a good way. If there had been more examples or exercises for us to do then students (myself included) would have done better on the first half. Still, overall it was a great course.

18. It should be called C++ instead of OOP

19. no

20. Amazing class! I really enjoyed lectures and Downing has a really great way of getting people to participate in class but not feel bad if they don't get every answer right. Definitely plan to take his SWE class in the future!

21. Learning the material relevant to a project 1-2 weeks after figuring them out on my own felt bad, specifically for Life. Additionally, the weekly blog post often felt like a chore, and having to submit the response on both Canvas and Piazza was clunky. Forgetting to submit the link to Canvas, even though the TAs clearly had a link to reply to, resulted in an instant zero for that assignment.

22. Good class to learn C++.

23. Awesome course and awesome professor!

24. I enjoyed the class, the only things I wish was that the notes provided after every lecture were much more thorough and if the class was recorded.

25. Great lectures, and a fantastic class overall.

26. I learned a lot in this course. My only complaint would be the blog posts, I do not think that I got anything out of them.

27. I had a lot of personal problems during the semester, and my performance is not a reflection of the quality of his class. Had I had more time or a partner on a couple of the projects, I believe I would've performed better. I did not know what to expect going into the exams (specifically the structure for the first one). This coupled with being unable to make-up assignments did really kill any hope of me passing the course, and I fell off mentally during the second half of the semester. Again, this is no fault of Professor Downing. As a critique, I'd recommend posting a sample exam with instruction so students would know what to expect going into the exam room.

28. Professor Downing tested out this brand new testing process on us where we took the first exam once by ourselves in a 45 min slot but then retook it with the class in the next 45 min slot, having to redo all the problems that we completed on the first run again, wasting time that could have been used to complete the tough questions on the second run. He then averaged the two scores together. There clearly wasn't enough time to complete the first run in the allotted time and my score suffered as a consequence. Overall, if we were going to be guinea pigs for such a testing environment, a little heads up from Downing would have been nice. My grade in the class dropped a full letter grade, and I was feeling depressed and defeated as a result.

29. I didn't really care for the blogs, but other than that I absolutely loved the class. The test format was a little strange but I understand that this was the first semester Prof. Downing tried it so I expect he will have the finer points hashed out next semester. I liked the Darwin and Life projects quite a lot.

30. I thought the class was very good. The lectures were very engaging and I hardly ever got distracted. That's a rarity. The projects were fun and interesting. The HackerRank tests were awful though. There was just way too much to do in way too short of a time. Even if I knew all the right things off the top of my head, I would never have been able to type it fast enough in HackerRank due to its finickiness.
