

*** PROVISIONAL REPORT ***

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
Downing, Glenn P C S373 51630
E100 EXPANDED

COURSE-INSTRUCTOR SURVEY
SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

Spring 2018 DEPARTMENT COPY
Enrollment = 54
Surveys Returned = 53

	NUMBER CHOOSING EACH RESPONSE					NO. REPLIES THIS ITEM	AVG.
	Str Disag	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Str Agree		
1 COURSE OBJECTIVES DEFINED-EXPLAINED	0	1	0	22	30	53	4.5
2 INSTRUCTOR PREPARED	0	0	0	9	44	53	4.8
3 COMMUNICATED INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY	0	2	1	15	35	53	4.6
4 STUDENTS ENCOURAGED-ACTIVE ROLE	0	0	0	12	41	53	4.8
5 INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY	0	0	2	16	35	53	4.6
6 COURSE WELL-ORGANIZED	0	1	8	16	28	53	4.3
7 STUDENT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION	1	0	5	16	31	53	4.4
8 CLASS PARTICIPATION ENCOURAGED	0	0	0	10	43	53	4.8
9 ENGAGING INSTRUCTION	1	0	3	21	27	52	4.4
10 INST. HAD THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF SUBJECT	0	0	0	15	38	53	4.7
11 INSTRUCTOR EXPLANATIONS CLEAR	0	0	0	22	30	52	4.6
12 GENUINELY INTERESTED IN TEACHING COURSE	0	0	0	10	43	53	4.8
13 HELPFUL COURSE MATERIALS	1	4	17	13	18	53	3.8
14 ADEQUATE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENTS	1	6	6	19	21	53	4.0
15 ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS RETURNED PROMPTLY	6	13	12	12	10	53	3.1
16 ASSIGNMENTS USUALLY WORTHWHILE	0	1	2	14	36	53	4.6
17 STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATED FAIRLY	0	3	5	19	26	53	4.3
18 STUDENT PERCEPTION OF AMOUNT LEARNED	0	1	3	10	39	53	4.6
	Vry Unsat	Unsat	Satisfact	Very Good	Excellent		
19 OVERALL INSTRUCTOR RATING	0	1	1	12	39	53	4.7
20 OVERALL COURSE RATING	0	2	7	15	29	53	4.3
	Excessive	High	Right	Light	Insuff		
21 STUDENT RATING OF COURSE WORKLOAD	4	30	18	0	0	52	
	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	0	6	21	26	53	
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>F</u>		
23 PROBABLE COURSE GRADE	22	27	4	0	0	53	

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

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1. Solid teacher. Only a couple complaints. First of all the time it took to get back grades for each phase was absolutely ridiculous. For phase II and III of IDB we received the grades literally the DAY the next phase was due. As a result, it was impossible to incorporate the feedback into the next phase. Terrible grading by the TA's and overall one of the worst TA staff in my four years here at UT. Downing on the other hand was a great professor and the only complaints I had were a couple of unfair quizzes here and there. I think students would much prefer learning about react though than refactoring since other classes teach refactoring/python/SQL but none teach react. We essentially had to learn react ourselves.
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2. Awesome professor, really engaging during lecture. I felt that the tools Downing shows us are extremely important and useful, such as Docker, CI, etc. However, I wish that he gave more information than a simple introduction. The group project really teaches you how to use relevant resources, such as AWS, REACT, etc. It's a lot of self-learning, but I think it's worthwhile.
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3. I hope Gitpitch will be replaced with a different documentation software, such as notion. GitPitch had a lot of problems with our team and cause unnecessary issues.
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4. Glenn Downing is an excellent professor and I'm glad I had him.
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5. The course was very worthwhile and I learned a great deal. However my biggest complaint would be how long it took the TAs to grade assignments. Receiving feedback on the previous assignment hours before the next would be due doesn't allow us to correct our errors. Also the modular arithmetic and standard deviation on the first exam caught me by surprise, and it would've been nice to cover those concepts in class before. Overall the class and exams were fair.
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6. I have enjoyed Professor Downing's Software Engineering course thoroughly. I personally think this is as close as it gets to getting a feel for the industry process/standard of software engineering. It has been a treat to make a website together with my team and see it grow over the weeks, using various tools of which I was not familiar with. Getting familiar with tools such as GitHub, ReactJS, AWS, etc. are definitely invaluable experiences, that will no doubt prove useful in the future. The tests on Hackerrank are fair and reassuring, given that they are all code-based questions. Downing's lectures are clear and to-the-point, and his cold calls are nothing to be afraid of. Everything discussed is practical and easy to understand.
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7. Overall, I think the course and instructor were excellent. I only had two issues that I think are easy to address: 1) The production website and API need to be updated to the latest commit at time of due date. It is extremely annoying to have to sit on Piazza waiting for confirmation that we can update our site because the grading was "taking longer than expected" or "encountered some hiccups". 2) It is more likely to be interrupted in the middle of answering a question with a new/followup question than it is to be allowed to finish your sentence. If the instructor were to wait a few seconds, he might be surprised to hear an answer to the exact question he was about to interrupt you with.
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8. I thought this class was very good and I learned a lot from it. Some critiques: - Grading faster: Getting the grade from the last phase on the day the next phase is due is very stressful when we have to fix things last minute and run out of time. - Two of the TAs were very knowledgeable about the projects since they'd taken the class, but the other two were pretty unhelpful when it came to asking questions on projects.
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9. I learned a great deal about Python and SQL, as well as all the tools we learned in the projects. The course was challenging but worthwhile. I do think it would be a lot harder for a group who did not have experience with any of the tools we used, but luckily my group has a broad range of skills. Some of the grading that was done by the TA's on the projects seemed unfair. For example, no specifications were given on certain aspects of the gitbook, so we did what we believed was the most organized and made the most sense. The TA's took off points because they personally didn't like it. This seemed too subjective to me. Also, the grad TA's were not familiar with ANY of the tools or the projects at all. They asked students for explanations.
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10. I think the biggest issue is that the 2 grad TAs had no previous experience with any of the course material. It was pointless to go to office hours with them because they usually would ask us to explain the tools since they didn't know about them. It was hard to ask for help. The other two TAs are great and very helpful. The issue was that the 2 grad TAs had lab hours on wednesday and the other two had them on thursday. Since the projects were due thursday, we weren't able to get many of our problems solved on wednesday which would have been ideal. Other than that, the class was very useful and has a good format. The only thing is the cold calling sometimes becomes a little too much. Otherwise, I enjoyed it a lot.
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11. Very nice. Nothing to complain about. Maybe quizzing over readings more often would be beneficial; most students don't complete the readings and I found them very worthwhile.
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12. Excellent class. I learned more about each language we went over in a week with Professor Downing than I did in over a month with other professors. It's a unique experience to start and finish a product with a team in a semester. I really enjoyed learning everything in this class and there's nothing I would have changed.
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13. I think the course material was much more helpful for the backend developers than the frontend developers. I think some time going over a few things in React/Selenium at the beginning would have helped the frontend developers significantly in getting their feet wet. Some suggestions might be to teach a few basics in class like normal or maybe have the proctors have a React workshop for a week during the beginning of phase 2.
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14. I think the project IMDB description pages could be organized better, they give the general idea but there a lot of specific points that are left out or confusing. I'd also like to mention that I really liked Miriam Grobman as a speaker!
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15. Quizzes are more python trivia than concepts, and getting one question wrong greatly impacts your quiz grade.
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16. What an excellent professor. I love Downing's teaching style, how he engages with every single person in the room and makes them interact with him and show their knowledge of the material constantly. I learned a great deal in this course, and I will be applying what I've learned in this class in my career every single day. I'm sad to leave UT because I won't be in this course any longer; I hope that future students enjoy it as much as I did!
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17. I really enjoyed how you dissect the languages, but personally I only seemed interested in the python and java stuff. The javascript portion at the start wasn't as engaging for whatever reason.

18. This course becomes exponentially more difficult with individuals that prioritize other courses of theirs over the well-being of the team. For example, I was my team's sole front-end developer. Throughout the entire semester, my team members were consistently willing to mention in passing the slightest of quirks related to the front-end, yet when it came time to learning React or actually implementing any of the necessary changes, they were often nowhere to be found. I find this to be especially troubling, given that of my team members, I will likely be the one to fail the course due to poor performance on the midterm. I appreciate the content, and the depth of the lectures. I just honestly feel like my effort isn't reflected in the grade.

19. There were a lot of positives about this class but also a fair amount of negatives. I did not like how the professor interrupted students while they were answering a question. The test reviews should be released earlier. I don't think the hackerrank tested concepts well. For ex., with the digits iterator, you had to know the trick to get the question right and that doesn't test you know how to make an iterator well. The TA's didn't show up to their office hours on time or where they said they'd be a lot of the time. On the positive side, I think the website side of the class was set up well and enjoyed learning the tools, even if it was a lot of work. Gitbook is not a good tool. If you say there will be an attendance quiz, give the quiz?

20. Tools - Mocha was very hard to figure out without any instruction. I felt I often did not know what to use or the best way to use it until the TA's presented and by then it was too late or we had to go back and redo work. Earlier TA presentations would have made a huge difference. Collatz- Thought this was a good project although it was my second time doing it and the first time I had a very hard time with it. Speakers- Interesting and engaging speakers and nice for attendance boost. Other- Really enjoyed the testing style. Having to explicitly answer the blog Qs made it hard to be original/interesting. Grading did not follow rubric, consistently got pts off for things not on the rubric at all. Grades out too late to make changes.

21. I loved the main project. It was very valuable. I found the professor very engaging in the classroom. He's a great lecturer. However, I wish that the lecture content aligned with the project content. Having to do the projects and learn all these frameworks and then study and learn an entirely new part of the course for the tests was overwhelming. It also meant we had to learn everything for the projects on our own. I also think that the documentation for the projects could be improved. We were constantly confused about the requirements because the documentation was not clear and conflicted with what professors and TAs said on Piazza. The grades were also returned so slowly that we couldn't fix critiques in time for the next deadline.

22. The assignments were graded pretty late. It would've been nice to have grades back earlier to fix any issues before the next submission.

23. I thought this class was a mixed bag but overall very useful. Learning how to make a web application and use all the tools specified was frustrating and tough. After I got it though, I felt much more confident in my development abilities. The lectures were hit-or-miss. Some of the programming stuff was interesting and some was not. In particular, I would have preferred to learn modern Javascript (ES5 or 6). Also, I would like to have been taught more higher-level programming patterns instead of lower-level language specifics. All of the tools were useful and relevant to my future work. I really liked the HackerRank tests and exercises. My favorite part was the group project. Collatz was meh. It wasn't very exciting or memorable.

24. I found the HackerRank exercises to be very helpful. They gave me a controlled environment to practice the concepts we learned in class, and it gave me a better idea of what the test would be like. I liked the first project well enough; even though I had done OOP before this, completing Collatz in Python still gave me enough of a challenge. I think this class was probably one of the most important ones I've taken. I feel like what I've learned here will help me in my career.

25. This class was wonderful. I feel the title could be somewhat misleading to those who aren't already aware of what the course entails. Much of the class revolves around learning python and SQL and building a website. There is a little bit of refactoring, however, the class focuses more on modern tools and development rather than design practices. My only complaint is that our projects were usually graded the day the next phase was due. Because we are continually adding to a website, not getting the feedback further in advance makes for a lot of work and changes the day of the submission. Other than that, a great course! The discussion-based teaching method is engaging and I feel that I have learned a lot.

26. I enjoyed doing the Hackerrank exercises and would like to see more of these in the future, either as in-class assignments or as additional work. I especially liked the IDB project since it provided many learning opportunities and gave me a positive group experience.

27. The only hard thing is that Downing does not really go over much about the tools that the projects are about. In the beginning, the quizzes also had nothing to do with the lecture, but as time progressed they became solely about the lectures (which I think is better because that way it gives the lectures some relevance). Otherwise it would be like taking 3 mini-classes with web-dev projects, good coding practice quizzes, and lectures over Python, JS, and SQL.

28. Grades for projects were usually graded the day we turn in the next project, which caused our group to not be prepared to fix the issues we had previously submitted. I think the attendance quizzes were either worth too many points or too difficult to finish on time. The class was very interesting, but it's pretty difficult to recall past lectures within 4 minutes. The projects were a great learning experience.

29. Honestly my favorite CS class at UT so far. Every lecture for the most part was engaging. The project was exciting to complete despite being slightly tired of it towards the end of the semester. The project details could have been slightly more clear (ex: what does "many pages" mean. Some groups only had 5-10 pages of content for each model, did that count as many?) Quizzes were nice and helpful in reinforcing the material. Having a CS professor who wants to know his students and individually engages with them in class was quite nice in settling in an atmosphere of feeling like the student's knowledge and success is valued. The exams were good. The blog posts could have had more of a creative twist to it to fulfill the 350 word count.

30. It would be nice if you could make the project specifications more detailed, since sometimes project requirements would be stated for the first time by TAs in response to piazza questions less than a week from the deadline which wasn't really fair. Other than that, though, I really enjoyed the course and learned a lot.