



Individual Instructor Report Spring 2026 Version B for C S 373 - SOFTWARE ENGINEERING (53375) (Glenn Downing)

Project Title: **Course Evaluations Spring 2026**

Courses Audience: **56**
Responses Received: **52**
Response Ratio: **92.9 %**

Subject Details

merged_subject_id

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Report Comments

Guide to the Interpretation of Course Evaluations at UT Austin

The goal of course evaluation process at UT Austin is to drive teaching excellence and to support continuous improvement in teaching and learning experiences. Course evaluations provide snapshots of student perspectives on their course-level learning experiences. Most experts on teaching evaluation advise that no individual method gives the complete picture of an instructor's teaching effectiveness, multiple and diverse measures, on multiple occasions, are advised to give a full picture of the teaching effectiveness of a particular instructor. Moreover, other factors, such as size of class, level of the class, and content of the course, can cause small variations in the ratings. Therefore, student perspectives for a particular instructor or course should be interpreted as a snapshot, and not as providing complete information on the teaching effectiveness of that instructor. For additional details, including the scales and how the Mean scores are calculated, please review the Report Guide at the end of this document or, [UT Austin's Viewing Course Evaluation Results webpage](#).

Creation Date: **Friday, May 15, 2026**

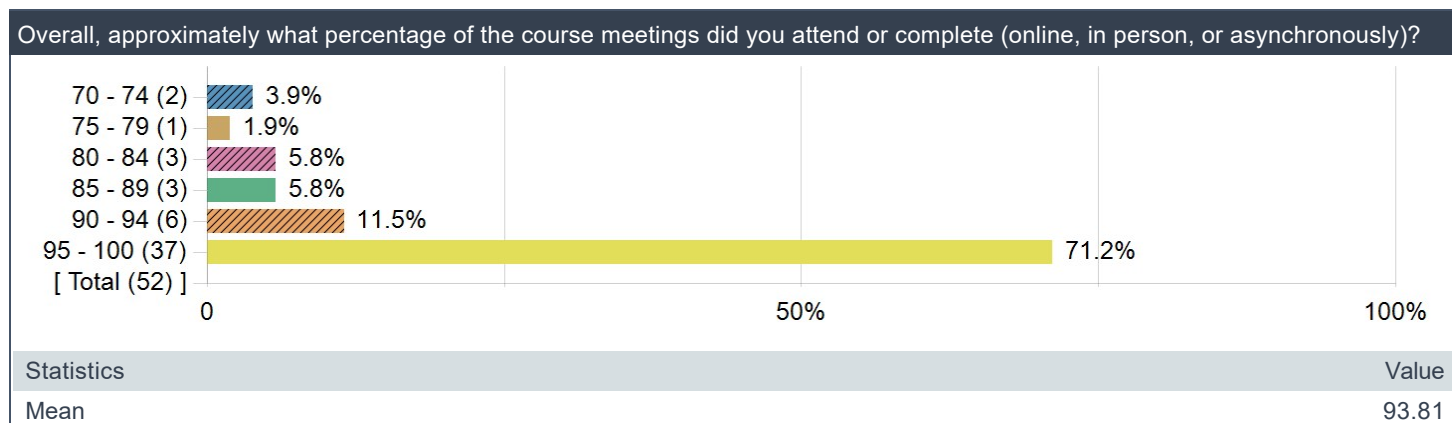
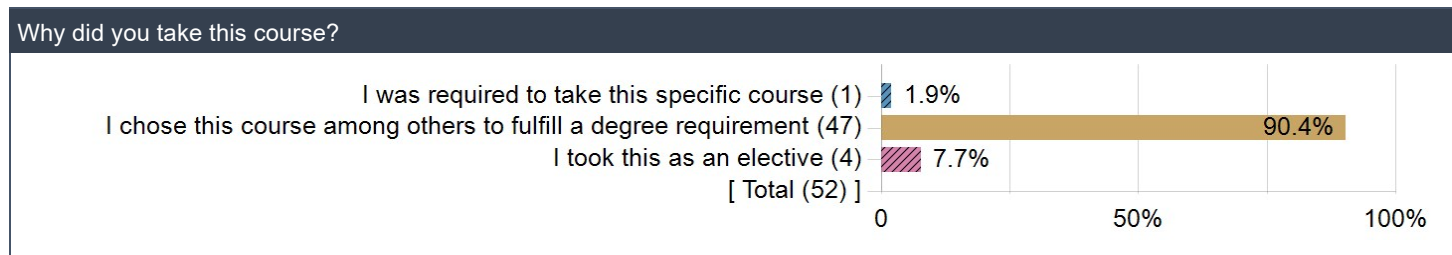
Core Questions

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responded	Mean
During this course, I gained a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	30.8%	51.9%	15.4%	1.9%	0.0%	52	4.12
The course was well organized.	40.4%	53.8%	5.8%	0.0%	0.0%	52	4.35
The instructor clearly explained the course objectives and expectations.	38.5%	59.6%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	52	4.37
The instructor fostered an inclusive learning environment.	44.2%	44.2%	9.6%	1.9%	0.0%	52	4.31
The instructor effectively explained the concepts and subject matter in this course.	30.8%	63.5%	3.8%	1.9%	0.0%	52	4.23
The instructional techniques kept me engaged in learning.	38.5%	46.2%	9.6%	5.8%	0.0%	52	4.17
The instructor checked for student understanding of the concepts presented in the course.	46.2%	46.2%	5.8%	1.9%	0.0%	52	4.37

Overall Questions

	Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very Unsatisfactory	Responded	Mean
Overall, this instructor was	19.2%	65.4%	15.4%	0.0%	0.0%	52	4.04
Overall, this course was	19.2%	46.2%	34.6%	0.0%	0.0%	52	3.85

Other Course Questions



Comment Questions

Identify aspects of the course that were the most effective in helping your learning.

Comment
The lectures were always entertaining and well structured. The projects challenged us to use a variety of different frameworks and tools.
The concepts were explained in a straight forward way.
I think the Ed Lessons we did in class were really good because we applied the concepts we were taught during lecture in a relatively high stress environment.
I liked the cold calling and exercises to test our knowledge
Dr. Downing was a really great instructor, incredibly kind, and always enthusiastic!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – random groups helped simulate industry teams – got to work on full stack development, which helped me learn front end, back end, and database
The quizzes helped reinforce the content learned.
The daily quizzes and the exercises promoted learning and understanding of each daily topic.
The quizzes made sure that we stayed up to date and understood with the concepts going on in class.
The papers and quizzes
Although I did not like his cold calling, it was very effective in helping me learn. I also enjoyed having quizzes every day in the morning.
Ed lessons, semester long project, etc.
It did a good job in teaching different parts of the software development lifecycle to us, and being aware of the other stages to make us better developers and software engineers. The in-class quizzes were helpful in reinforcing concepts we learned throughout the semester.
The projects were great in replicating a true work environment.
The ed lessons were my favorite part of class
The professor did well at keeping the class engaged in the class material by regularly cold-calling us. He went over Python concepts in easily digestible ways.
I found the clear organization of the course to be very helpful in being able to keep track of tasks and such. I also appreciate the built-in drops since they allow for accommodations (accidentally missed a deadline, something happened personally, etc).
Downing is very enthusiastic and the cold calls definitely do help.
The projects were super effective in helping my learning, really big fan of the end-to-end aspect. I was able to apply what I learned to my own projects.
Quizzes
Daily cold calling was helpful in keeping me focused during lecture
The cold calling in class helped me stay engaged since I didn't want to be caught lacking.
I think you just have to make the class harder and teach more concepts related to SWE not just python and little SQL. Teach more technologies like docker and aws and dont assume we can just figure it out on the projects.
The notes being posted. I was able to go back and review the notes the next day. They were super organized.
I liked how there was frequent quizzes and exercises to test our learning in class.
I think the daily quizzes were helpful for testing understanding but a liittle bit difficult compared to what we learned the day prior.
Having a consistent structure in and outside of class.
I think the papers, exercises, projects and kattis problems helped me get the most out of the class. The papers gave me insight into what it's like being a real software developer — the real challenges they face in the industry. The exercises and kattis problems got me adjusted to coding in Python and SQL. The projects helped me develop a strong knowledge of web development using react.
Cold calling in class helped to reinforce concepts learned in class and up engagement.
I found the very clear organization of all the various assignments and projects to be very helpful. It was always very clear what we were learning each day and what assignments we had in the upcoming weeks.
Cold calling is very helpful because it keeps you attentive during the entire class.
Daily quizzes helped keep me on track.
The daily quizzes were good for recalling the material from the last lecture.

Comment
The most effective aspect of the course was the cold calling.
The course has bunch of papers, quiz and projects that can help me gain more understanding about this course.
The in class ed Lessons were great at practicing what we had just learned/covered. ALSO the cold calling helps A LOT, it ensures that I'm attempting to listen and the no device rule is also a great one!
Exercises
Cold calling helped us pay attention
In-class quizzes that were collaborative along with the cold calling helped to keep me focused while also reviewing the content from the previous lectures and making sure I stayed engaged with the content. The schedule was nice to follow along with, and the repo with all of the different notes and separating by some of the topics was useful.
Cold calling, the exercises, and the problems
I feel like the different learning methods (quizzes, exercises, papers) helped give some variety to the material and were helpful for learning.
The projects were the most effective in helping with my learning . I already came into the class with good knowledge on python and believed I was able to learn how to build a full stack web based application at a high level through the projects.
I liked the in class exercises and collaborative quizzes because it helped to talk through solutions with my peers as we solved problems.
Cold calling and daily quizzes were most effective because they made sure you were always on top of the content if you had missed a class or something. Same goes for the daily quizzes, it's also interactive so you have an opportunity to learn/review.

Identify the aspect of the course that you found most challenging, why you found it was challenging, and suggest one thing that could be done to help future students meet that challenge more effectively.

Comment
The most challenging parts of the course were required attendance combined with time of lecture and the projects.
The lecture content has very little to do with the projects.
The projects were very challenging and time consuming.
I think working with your group for the projects was challenging because it was hard to coordinate between them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ed lessons (time pressure): giving more guidance beforehand could make the time pressure feel less stressful – cold calling put pressure on the student – daily quizzes at time felt random.
The quizzes because the amount of time given for it is most of the time too little. Even though it is collaborative, the time limit prevents you from really discussing the questions with the people around you because it takes more time trying to solve the problems first. The collaborative part becomes more of a copy the correct answers or just compare answers rather than a discuss your thoughts.
The Kattis problems were probably the most challenging thing besides the project and didn't really connect to the rest of the course. While the style of problems is important to learn for technical interviews, the content covered in the course didn't have anything to do with the problems. I would suggest problems more in line with promoting programming best practices, as in the exercises. Additionally, the cold calling, while good to promote overall understanding in the class, often slowed down the class.
I found the time limit on exercises slightly challenging especially when the time was cut short due the lesson going long. Perhaps the time limit could be extended so its 20 minutes no matter what?
We found it challenging to navigate the project as the tools used in that werent really gone over. I would have liked to learn more about AWS, scraping, etc in class because I personally feel like thats more useful to learn.
I would say creating the website at first was challenging as we were not that equipped with the knowledge and I feel like a little more guidance on that process would have helped.
The projects were the most challenging part as there is a lot of new things I had to learn to complete it. Also since it is a randomly assigned group, several of my group members didn't do their share which meant that I had to cover for them. This made the class more work than it should have been.
Sometimes the lectures moved very quick.
The project can be challenging simply because you are working with random members on a team and some of them may not be great at communication or helping the group.
I found working on the projects challenging as I had no background in web development. The lectures do not prepare us for this, and I wish there were a greater focus on how to create our projects. If the class material were more clearly tied to the projects, it would be very helpful.

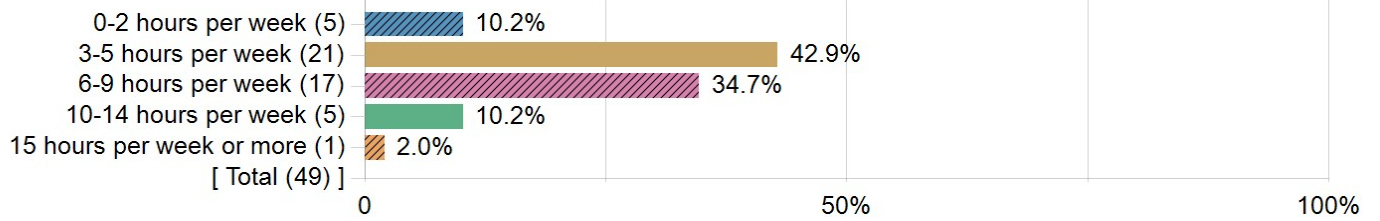
Comment
Ed-Lessons were the most difficult. Although useful and did cover what we had barely discussed in class, some of the later Ed-Lessons became overly long (sometimes had 6 different tests and/or files) and hard to do within the time constraint. On top of that sometimes we'd be released to do ed-lesson at like 10:34 or so, which meant we had even less than the allocated 20 minutes, we'd only be left with 16 minutes.
The most challenging part was the quizzes. Showing up to class was difficult for me. Less quizzes I think would be more effective.
Projects. Maybe more in depth information about the projects
Group work was challenging because of random groups. In the future, I would recommend letting students pick groups.
Figuring out how to use the recommended tools for the projects was difficult since it was pretty open ended and didn't relate to the lecture material.
Most challenging part was having to be in a team of people you didn't know for the projects.
During the end of the course, it felt like the content covered and the ED lessons did not really relate to what the professor tested us on. Like the quizzes, ED lessons, and notes felt very different.
I think that some of the exercises were challenging since we were given the same timeframe for all exercises, regardless of how difficult they were.
I think something that could help is doing a little review before to quiz to refresh our memory.
I found the team and project work to be the most challenging. Since most of the project was self taught and managed, there was a lot of responsibility there.
I think the quizzes were a bit challenging — sometimes it was hard to remember the material from the class when we did not take notes ourselves. I know that the notes are posted after class, but I think I learn the best when I'm actively engaged with something, like by writing it down.
Quizzes were sometimes challenging due to the time limit, and sometimes the content. Quizzes could have a longer allotted time limit.
I personally found the Ed Lessons to be the most challenging aspect of the course. Towards the beginning of the semester, I found them to be manageable within the 15–20 minute time frame (considering that they were smaller problems, and thus doable). However, being given an Ed Lesson for every single lecture within the SQL and OOP sections of the course proved to be rather frustrating, as I wasn't able to understand the content immediately presented to us in lecture quickly enough to understand how to do the Ed Lessons well. I wish that the Ed Lessons were shorter or that they were given as take home assignments for us to complete, as it was pretty difficult to do them without being able to reference code from lecture or searching up certain syntax online.
I found the exercises (ed lessons) most challenging because they were under time pressure. I would suggest thinking first about what needs to be done before typing any code.
Projects were very challenging because they were very abstract and had very general requirements.
The projects were the hardest part of the course because we are entirely on our own. I wish the class material went into the tools that we were required to use for the projects.
The most challenging part of the course was the projects.
I think the projects at first seems pretty overwhelming because lots of people do not have the experience in react, flask and some tech stack related to full stack development. I think in the future the course should teach more stuff on those full stack development frameworks.
The projects should have not been as challenging as they were, however, with a 4 person group where 1 member who dropped off around phase 2 and another who came last minute to help it did become challenging to complete the projects.
None
there was nothing challenging
The inconsistencies in the rubric on Canvas vs Issues doc vs the project requirements/instructions on the 373 website were kind of confusing. Having to cross-reference all of them to ensure we would get every expectation was tedious, especially when starting. If they could all be more consistent with each other, that would've been very helpful. Some of the instructions also feel a little vague or not detailed enough, so my group wouldn't be aware that the TAs were looking for something specifically and get docked points on parts of the checkpoint.
Some directions could be unclear at times
I found the project probably the most challenging, a lot of individual research had to be done to figure out different components of our website. I'm not sure what can be done to fix this, as it's just part of the process of building a website.
I found the cold calling to be the most challenging. I found myself being out in a very stressful situation and had not been put on the spot like that before. Apart from that the class was structured very well.
The group projects were sometimes challenging because there were a lot of requirements for each part and our groups were random, so at times my group was not communicate with me as I texted in the group. Getting to choose our own groups would be nice, but I also understand the idea of random groups.

Comment

The attendance structure was super rigid. I had 3 job interviews over the first couple of weeks of class, and somehow missed 2 exercises off the bat. So, it was pretty merciless going forward. Missing quizzes isn't too bad since there are a lot, but maybe provide a little more leeway for the exercises as well.

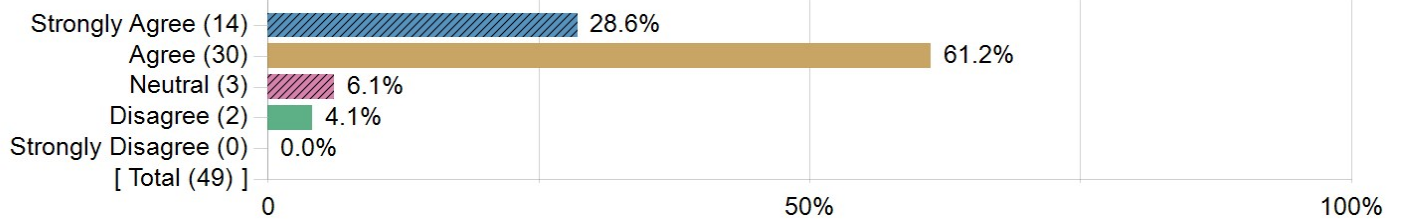
College, School, or Unit Questions

On average, approximately how many hours per week did you spend working outside of the course? Include time on homework, reading, reviewing, papers, projects, etc.



Statistics	Value
Mean	2.51

The course format (online, hybrid, face-to-face) helped me to learn.



Statistics	Value
Mean	4.14

Report Guide

Guide to the Interpretation of Course Evaluations at UT Austin

The goal of course evaluation process at UT Austin is to drive teaching excellence and to support continuous improvement in teaching and learning experiences. The two sets of scales used for core evaluation questions and the associated weights are:

Strongly Agree (5)
Agree (4)
Neutral (3)
Disagree (2)
Strongly Disagree (1)

Excellent (5)
Very Good (4)
Satisfactory (3)
Unsatisfactory (2)
Very Unsatisfactory (1)

The Mean is calculated by adding all of the weights for a single question and dividing by the number of respondents. The course workload question is not averaged.

The number of students (e.g. respondents) marking each option is reported for each of the items. These frequency distributions provide information about the level of student ratings and the spread and shape of the class distribution of responses. The distributions thus provide a picture of student perception of a course.

Course evaluations provide snapshots of student perspectives on their course-level learning experiences. Most experts on teaching evaluation advise that no individual method gives the complete picture of an instructor's teaching effectiveness; multiple and diverse measures, on multiple occasions, are advised to give a full picture of the teaching effectiveness of a particular instructor. Moreover, other factors, such as size of class, level of the class, and content of the course, can cause small variations in the ratings. Therefore, student perspectives for a particular instructor or course should be interpreted as a snapshot, and not as providing complete information on the teaching effectiveness of that instructor.