CAS SPRING-2011 AS803 A1 Research Methods

PROFESSOR Paul Withers
NUMBER OF STUDENTS RESPONDING: 15
NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED: 15
PERCENT OF ENROLLED STUDENTS RESPONDING: 100

STATISTICS REFLECT FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES

I. SECTION A: COURSE EVALUATION

		NR	1	2	3	4	5		MEAN	ST DEV
1.	RELEVANCE OF ASSIGNED READINGS [(1) LOW TO (5) HIGH]	POOR	1	0	1	4	6	3	EXCELLENT	3.786	0.893
2.	DIFFICULTY OF COURSE [(1) EASY TO (5) DIFFICULT]	POOR	1	0	2	8	4	0	EXCELLENT	3.143	0.663
3.	WORKLOAD IN COURSE [(1) LIGHT TO (5) HEAVY]	POOR	1	1	1	9	3	0	EXCELLENT	3.000	0.784
4.	OVERALL RATING OF DISCUSSION INSTRUCTOR (IF APPLICABLE)	POOR	8	0	0	2	3	2	EXCELLENT	4.000	0.816
5.	OVERALL RATING OF LAB INSTRUCTOR (IF APPLICABLE)	POOR	13	0	0	1	0	1	EXCELLENT	4.000	1.414
6.	USEFULNESS OF ASSIGNMENTS AND PAPERS	POOR	1	0	1	5	4	4	EXCELLENT	3.786	0.975
7.	OVERALL COURSE RATING	POOR	1	0	0	8	4	2	EXCELLENT	3.571	0.756

II. SECTION B: FACULTY EVALUATION

		NR	1	2	3	4	5		MEAN	ST DEV
8.	EFFECTIVENESS IN EXPLAINING CONCEPTS	POOR	1	0	0	4	7	3	EXCELLENT	3.929	0.730
9.	ABILITY TO STIMULATE INTEREST IN SUBJECT	POOR	1	0	1	7	4	2	EXCELLENT	3.500	0.855
10.	ENCOURAGEMENT OF CLASS PARTICIPATION	POOR	1	0	0	4	4	6	EXCELLENT	4.143	0.864
11.	FAIRNESS IN GRADING	POOR	1	0	0	4	4	6	EXCELLENT	4.143	0.864
12.	PROMPTNESS IN RETURNING ASSIGNMENTS	POOR	1	0	0	4	5	4	EXCELLENT	4.000	0.816
13.	QUALITY OF FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS	POOR	1	0	0	6	6	2	EXCELLENT	3.714	0.726
14.	AVAILABILITY OUTSIDE OF CLASS	POOR	1	0	0	1	6	7	EXCELLENT	4.429	0.646
15.	OVERALL RATING OF INSTRUCTOR	POOR	1	0	0	1	9	4	EXCELLENT	4.214	0.579

III. SECTION C: TF/TA EVALUATION

		NR	1	2	3	4	5		MEAN	ST DEV
16.	PREPARATION FOR CLASS	POOR	13	0	0	0	2	0	EXCELLENT	4.000	0.000
17.	COMMAND OF THE SUBJECT	POOR	13	0	0	1	0	0	EXCELLENT	3.000	N/A
18.	ABILITY TO CONVEY FACTS AND EXPLAIN KEY CONCEPTS IN A DIGESTIBLE MANNER	POOR	13	0	0	1	0	0	EXCELLENT	3.000	N/A
19.	ENTHUSIASM FOR THE SUBJECT AND ABILITY TO STIMULATE STUDENT INTEREST	POOR	14	0	0	0	1	0	EXCELLENT	4.000	N/A
20.	AVAILABILITY OUTSIDE CLASS TIME	POOR	13	0	1	0	1	0	EXCELLENT	3.000	1.414
21.	QUALITY OF EVALUATION OF WORK	POOR	13	0	0	0	1	1	EXCELLENT	4.500	0.707
22.	PROMPTNESS OF RETURN OF GRADED ASSIGNMENTS AND COMMUNICATION OF STANDING IN CLASS	POOR	14	0	0	0	1	0	EXCELLENT	4.000	N/A

IV. SECTION D: OTHER

		NR	1	2	3	4	5		MEAN	ST DEV
23.	CLARITY AND ACHIEVEMENT OF COURSE OBJECTIVES	POOR	1	0	0	5	5	4	EXCELLENT	3.929	0.829
24.	EFFECTIVENESS OF THE USE OF CLASS TIME	POOR	1	0	0	3	6	5	EXCELLENT	4.143	0.770
25.	VALUE OF COURSE TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLECTUAL SKILLS (CRITICAL ANALYSIS, WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATION, RESEARCH)	POOR	2	0	1	3	5	4	EXCELLENT	3.923	0.954
26.	LEVEL OF INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION OF THE COURSE	POOR	1	0	3	5	4	2	EXCELLENT	3.357	1.008
27.	VALUE OF LAB/DISCUSSION AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE LECTURE/READING	POOR	3	0	0	2	3	7	EXCELLENT	4.417	0.793
28.	PROFESSOR'S PREPARATION FOR CLASS	POOR	1	0	0	1	4	9	EXCELLENT	4.571	0.646
29.	PROFESSOR'S COMMAND OF THE SUBJECT	POOR	1	0	0	3	5	6	EXCELLENT	4.214	0.802
30.	PROFESSOR'S ENTHUSIASM FOR SUBJECT OF THE COURSE	POOR	1	0	0	2	9	3	EXCELLENT	4.071	0.616
31.	TO WHOM WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THIS COURSE? (SELECT ONE PLEASE) [1=NOBODY, 2=ONLY MAJORS/MINORS, 3=ONLY MAJORS/MINORS WITH GREAT INTEREST IN SUBJECT, 4=STUDENTS SEEKING DISTRIBUTION/DIVISIONAL STUDIES CREDIT, 5=STUDENTS SEEKING AN INTERESTING ELECTIVE]	POOR	2	0	9	2	1	1	EXCELLENT	2.538	0.967
32.	HOW MUCH TIME PER WEEK OUTSIDE OF CLASS DID YOU SPEND ON THE COURSE? [1=LESS THAN 1 HR., 2=1-3 HRS., 3=3-5 HRS., 4=5-10 HRS., 5=MORE THAN 10 HRS.]	POOR	1	1	4	4	5	0	EXCELLENT	2.929	0.997
33.	WHAT GRADE DO YOU EXPECT IN THE COURSE SOLELY BASED ON WORK COMPLETED THUS FAR? [1=F, 2=D, 3=C, 4=B, 5=A]	POOR	1	0	0	0	4	10	EXCELLENT	4.714	0.469

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STATISTICS REFLECT PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES

I. SECTION A: COURSE EVALUATION

		NR	1	2	3	4	5		MEAN	ST DEV
1.	RELEVANCE OF ASSIGNED READINGS [(1) LOW TO (5) HIGH]	POOR	7	0	7	27	40	20	EXCELLENT	3.786	0.893
2.	DIFFICULTY OF COURSE [(1) EASY TO (5) DIFFICULT]	POOR	7	0	13	53	27	0	EXCELLENT	3.143	0.663
3.	WORKLOAD IN COURSE [(1) LIGHT TO (5) HEAVY]	POOR	7	7	7	60	20	0	EXCELLENT	3.000	0.784
4.	OVERALL RATING OF DISCUSSION INSTRUCTOR (IF APPLICABLE)	POOR	53	0	0	13	20	13	EXCELLENT	4.000	0.816
5.	OVERALL RATING OF LAB INSTRUCTOR (IF APPLICABLE)	POOR	87	0	0	7	0	7	EXCELLENT	4.000	1.414
6.	USEFULNESS OF ASSIGNMENTS AND PAPERS	POOR	7	0	7	33	27	27	EXCELLENT	3.786	0.975
7.	OVERALL COURSE RATING	POOR	7	0	0	53	27	13	EXCELLENT	3.571	0.756

II. SECTION B: FACULTY EVALUATION

		NR	1	2	3	4	5		MEAN	ST DEV
8.	EFFECTIVENESS IN EXPLAINING CONCEPTS	POOR	7	0	0	27	47	20	EXCELLENT	3.929	0.730
9.	ABILITY TO STIMULATE INTEREST IN SUBJECT	POOR	7	0	7	47	27	13	EXCELLENT	3.500	0.855
10.	ENCOURAGEMENT OF CLASS PARTICIPATION	POOR	7	0	0	27	27	40	EXCELLENT	4.143	0.864
11.	FAIRNESS IN GRADING	POOR	7	0	0	27	27	40	EXCELLENT	4.143	0.864
12.	PROMPTNESS IN RETURNING ASSIGNMENTS	POOR	7	0	0	27	33	27	EXCELLENT	4.000	0.816
13.	QUALITY OF FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS	POOR	7	0	0	40	40	13	EXCELLENT	3.714	0.726
14.	AVAILABILITY OUTSIDE OF CLASS	POOR	7	0	0	7	40	47	EXCELLENT	4.429	0.646
15.	OVERALL RATING OF INSTRUCTOR	POOR	7	0	0	7	60	27	EXCELLENT	4.214	0.579

III. SECTION C: TF/TA EVALUATION

		NR	1	2	3	4	5		MEAN	ST DEV
16.	PREPARATION FOR CLASS	POOR	87	0	0	0	13	0	EXCELLENT	4.000	0.000
17.	COMMAND OF THE SUBJECT	POOR	87	0	0	7	0	0	EXCELLENT	3.000	N/A
18.	ABILITY TO CONVEY FACTS AND EXPLAIN KEY CONCEPTS IN A DIGESTIBLE MANNER	POOR	87	0	0	7	0	0	EXCELLENT	3.000	N/A
19.	ENTHUSIASM FOR THE SUBJECT AND ABILITY TO STIMULATE STUDENT INTEREST	POOR	93	0	0	0	7	0	EXCELLENT	4.000	N/A
20.	AVAILABILITY OUTSIDE CLASS TIME	POOR	87	0	7	0	7	0	EXCELLENT	3.000	1.414
21.	QUALITY OF EVALUATION OF WORK	POOR	87	0	0	0	7	7	EXCELLENT	4.500	0.707
22.	PROMPTNESS OF RETURN OF GRADED ASSIGNMENTS AND COMMUNICATION OF STANDING IN CLASS	POOR	93	0	0	0	7	0	EXCELLENT	4.000	N/A

IV. SECTION D: OTHER

		NR	1	2	3	4	5		MEAN	ST DEV
23.	CLARITY AND ACHIEVEMENT OF COURSE OBJECTIVES	POOR	7	0	0	33	33	27	EXCELLENT	3.929	0.829
24.	EFFECTIVENESS OF THE USE OF CLASS TIME	POOR	7	0	0	20	40	33	EXCELLENT	4.143	0.770
25.	VALUE OF COURSE TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLECTUAL SKILLS (CRITICAL ANALYSIS, WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATION, RESEARCH)	POOR	13	0	7	20	33	27	EXCELLENT	3.923	0.954
26.	LEVEL OF INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION OF THE COURSE	POOR	7	0	20	33	27	13	EXCELLENT	3.357	1.008
27.	VALUE OF LAB/DISCUSSION AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE LECTURE/READING	POOR	20	0	0	13	20	47	EXCELLENT	4.417	0.793
28.	PROFESSOR'S PREPARATION FOR CLASS	POOR	7	0	0	7	27	60	EXCELLENT	4.571	0.646
29.	PROFESSOR'S COMMAND OF THE SUBJECT	POOR	7	0	0	20	33	40	EXCELLENT	4.214	0.802
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32.	HOW MUCH TIME PER WEEK OUTSIDE OF CLASS DID YOU SPEND ON THE COURSE? [1=LESS THAN 1 HR., 2=1-3 HRS., 3=3-5 HRS., 4=5-10 HRS., 5=MORE THAN 10 HRS.]	POOR	7	7	27	27	33	0	EXCELLENT	2.929	0.997
33.	WHAT GRADE DO YOU EXPECT IN THE COURSE SOLELY BASED ON WORK COMPLETED THUS FAR? [1=F, 2=D, 3=C, 4=B, 5=A]	POOR	7	0	0	0	27	67	EXCELLENT	4.714	0.469

**Spring 2011
Course Evaluation Comments**

Course: AS803 A1, Research Methods
Instructor: Withers

1. What were the most positive aspects of the course?
- Learned some IDL things I didn't know before.
- Learnt IDL.
- The one-on-one instruction in the computer lab.
- Experience with IDL (as much as I loathe IDL syntax, I concede that this is an important skill).
- Practical! Have learned things I actually use. Good use of the time.
- Learning IDL and numerical techniques for working with data.
- The time in the computer labs.

2. What, if any, changes would you recommend for the next offering of the course? Be as specific as possible.
- It is hard to make the class on appropriate level for everyone when people have such different backgrounds. Either make optional or have beginners and advanced courses.
- The last couple of assignments have been particularly difficult to understand. They could be better explained or the programs better documented/ variable naming.
- A lot of the assignments were tedious and not very informative. Too much time was taken up just fighting with IDL.
- Some more mathematical understanding of the techniques used in lab would be helpful.
- More application to real astrophysics. What do experts in the field really do with IDL?
- The example programs could be a little cleaner, but they were still helpful.
- I would make this be two courses: IDL course and numerical techniques for astronomers.
- Branch out of IDL. More focus on numerical methods.

3. What, if any, adjustments would you recommend to the instructor's teaching method or style?
- Be a little more explicit about what you want in homework.
- Nothing, he is very good with this subject.

4. Comment on the feedback you received from the instructor of the course. Was it useful?
- It was useful.
- Sparse.. 86%.
- Comments on assignments were brief, but sufficient.
- Yes, he found bugs in my code and pointed them out to me.
- More details needed.

5. Comment on the frequency and length of assignments, exams, and lab reports.

Note: (?) indicates that the student's handwriting was illegible and the best effort was made to interpret what was written.

- More than a 2 unit class should have.
- Some were too long!!
- Sometimes too difficult and lengthy.
- Early assignments were a bit involved, later assignments didn't involve much thinking.
- Frequency: good, length usually good.. some took longer and could have been simpler if we had better hone over some material in lab.
- Very flexible with our schedules in other classes, which is appreciated.
- Ok.
- Good.
- Assignment difficult was inconsistent, but they were reasonable and useful.

6. Comment on the selection and amount of reading. Which readings were the most and which were the least valuable? Why?

- Neither book was particularly helpful. A good IDL reference would be useful. Benington is ok as a reference.
- Most people don't like Bowmann, but I liked it and thought the program format suggestions were useful.
- Readings were exactly what was needed to complete assignments.

7. Comment on the TA/TF or lab instructor for the course. What did he/she do well? What could he/she improve?

- See separate TA/TF comments if applicable.

8. What skills and understanding have you gained from this course?

- IDL takes patience!
- Learnt IDL usage to draw graphs.
- A better understanding of IDL, especially using it to plot.
- Familiarity with IDL.
- Gained better programming style, learned IDL tricks, and learned various numeral techniques.
- IDL programming.

9. General Comments:

- Professor Withers is a great instructor for this course because he's an excellent programmer.
- Ugh this class was like eating brussel sprouts. I hated it but it was good for me. Paul is wonderful, me hating had nothing to do with him, he did a great job and clearly spent a lot of time and energy preparing for this class.

Note: (?) indicates that the student's handwriting was illegible and the best effort was made to interpret what was written.