Graduate Course Evaluation for Julian McAuley
Department of Computer Science and Engineering

CSE 255 - Data Mining & Analytics
Section ID 831462
Section Number A00
Winter 2015

Number of Evaluations Submitted: 33
Number of Students Enrolled: 57

1. The Instructor displayed proficient command of the material.

29 (87.9%):	Strongly Agree
4 (12.1%):	Agree
0 (0.0%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Not Applicable

2. The Instructor was well-prepared for class.

27 (84.4%):	Strongly Agree
3 (9.4%):	Agree
2 (6.3%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
1:	[No Response]

3. The Instructor's voice was clear and audible.

27 (81.8%):	Strongly Agree
5 (15.2%):	Agree
1 (3.0%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Not Applicable

4. The Instructor was accessible to students outside of class (office hours, e-mail, etc.).

26 (81.3%):   Strongly Agree
4 (12.5%):   Agree
2 (6.3%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
1:                [No Response]

5. The Instructor was approachable, courteous and showed interest and concern for students' learning and understanding.

26 (78.8%):   Strongly Agree
5 (15.2%):   Agree
1 (3.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
1 (3.0%):   Not Applicable

6. The Instructor presented material in an intellectually stimulating way that gave students deeper insight into the material.

26 (78.8%):   Strongly Agree
2 (6.1%):   Agree
5 (15.2%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable

7. The Instructor promoted and encouraged questions and discussion.

23 (71.9%):   Strongly Agree
8 (25.0%):   Agree
1 (3.1%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
1:                [No Response]

8. The Instructor organized class activities in a way that promoted learning.

21 (63.6%):   Strongly Agree
9 (27.3%):   Agree
3 (9.1%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree

9. The Instructor provided feedback (written/oral) in a way that promoted learning.

18 (54.5%):   Strongly Agree
8 (24.2%):   Agree
7 (21.2%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree

10. The Instructor is actively helpful when students have difficulty with course material.

23 (69.7%):   Strongly Agree
7 (21.2%):   Agree
3 (9.1%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable

11. The Instructor interacted well with students and treated them with respect and courtesy.

24 (75.0%):   Strongly Agree
8 (25.0%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
1:              [No Response]

12. The Instructor was clear about course expectations.

22 (68.8%):   Strongly Agree
8 (25.0%):   Agree
2 (6.3%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
1:              [No Response]

13. The Instructor was clear about standards for evaluation.

19 (59.4%):   Strongly Agree
9 (28.1%):   Agree
3 (9.4%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (3.1%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
1:              [No Response]

14. I would recommend this instructor overall.

24 (75.0%):   Strongly Agree
7 (21.9%):   Agree
1 (3.1%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
1:             [No Response]

15. What is your overall rating of the Instructor?

23 (74.2%):   Excellent
7 (22.6%):   Above Average
1 (3.2%):   Average
0 (0.0%):   Below Average
0 (0.0%):   Poor
2:             [No Response]

16. General comments about the Instructor's performance

- A very interesting and knowledgeable professor. He was able to break down some complex subjects.

- Great professor! I love his teaching style and topic covered in this course.

- He is really good at presenting concepts and giving the correct level of abstraction

- I think the Professor did a commendable job given that this is only his first class. The thing I disliked is more the format of the class i.e. 3 hours long, which doesn't allow people like myself to digest the material and ask better questions during the class. Additionally, although the class does not require any prerequisite, who are we kidding here? Some background on Machine Learning obviously would help.

- nice lectures, even though they were a bit long. Interesting research and always helpful to see application

- Presented the material very well

- Professor was very helpful in the assignments and stayed back after class too to help students

- The content was good, covered a lot of things. I learned a lot. The assignments could have been made better.
  Assignment 1: Way too open ended. The same thing could have been done with weekly or biweekly checkpoints, where students get feedback from Julian.
  Assignment 2: Giving 3 Kaggle competitions as one assignment was not a good idea. They could have been distributed over 3 assignments decreasing pressure on students. I'm not satisfied with the evaluation either. People who did the competition in groups knew what was working and what was not and were on the top of the leaderboard making it very unfair for those who worked on it alone. Most of the things which worked were hacky making it worse :(

- The slides were very clear and helpful to understand the material, and also the designed homework helped to really understand how data mining is done.

17. The course material was intellectually stimulating.

23 (71.9%):   Strongly Agree
9 (28.1%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
1:              [No Response]

18. The materials for the course (textbooks, handouts, etc.) were useful and well organized.

15 (46.9%):   Strongly Agree
15 (46.9%):   Agree
2 (6.3%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
1:              [No Response]

19. Grading was constructive and assisted learning.

17 (54.8%):   Strongly Agree
6 (19.4%):   Agree
4 (12.9%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4 (12.9%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
2:              [No Response]

20. What is your reason for taking this class?

3 (9.4%):   Core Course Requirement
11 (34.4%):   Subject Area Requirement
9 (28.1%):   Elective
9 (28.1%):   Interest
1:              [No Response]

21. What were the particular strengths of this course?

- - Real data
  - Python
  - Example codes

- -Very interesting.
  -Teaches about the existence of many different tools.

- application

- Certain (important) interesting subtleties were covered in the theory part.

- Intellectually stimulating, covers many useful topics, projects instead of exams.
  There's board work to explain some of the proofs and the more mathematical component.

- Interesting topics, very engaged professor!

- Introduction to a number of different topics in Data Mining.

- It covers a wide range of topics in data mining and for students with some background in
  Machine learning, its a great course to get their hands dirty in the different ares of data mining.

- Its application and practical use

- Practical

- Projects are interesting and challenging.

- The 2 projects were very useful and helped students gain useful experience in applying
  techniques learned in class to real-world problems and applications.

- The breadth of the content and the instructor's practical knowledge. He has done a lot of work
  himself!

- We were able to build and customize our own algorithms.

22. What suggestions do you have for making this course more effective?

- - I felt like the material was too broad and we did not get in too much detail. I would prefer less
    material, but delve deeper into subjects/principles.
    - Slides are great for showing many things, but I think old-school writing on the board transfers
    knowledge a bit better.

- Assignments, assignments! They need to be improved.

- For projects maybe have some sort of midpoint checkpoint we need to complete prior to the
  final deadline. Ideally graduate students shouldn't need that, but then again graduate students
  are busy and will work on whatever has the closest deadline. Clearly we all procrastinated a lot
  (eg. submission histories on assignment 2). For assignment 1 we could have benefited from
  some sort of deadline to at least choose our dataset and maybe do some of the initial data
  exploration or literature review.

- Having a competition for the final did not really encourage students to try various possible
  approaches. A project would have been more suited.

  It seemed like certain parts (esp. networks) were rushed through, for lack of time.

- I think the load of the course was un balanced since the hw were nice and they help involving
  with the material, but the open ended project was a lot of work while he still had homeworks to
  do.

- It would be nice to learn more about implementing latent factor models with features.

- larger classroom

- Maybe one fewer/a few shorter homework to make more time for the projects.
  As a personal opinion, I really enjoyed the method building part of the recommender project rather than the competition. Perhaps make the project more practical/useful oriented rather than competition focused that more favors tricks.

- More group collaborative project as opposed to constant competition. Isn't the objective to learn i.e. sharing best techniques etc?

- Provide more guidance for the first project. It was hard to come up with a project, given the few classes before starting the project.

- Remove the homeworks since they did not really help in learning. All of the learning happened through the projects. Further, the homeworks were all about getting the correct final number, which does not differentiate between lack of understanding vs a minor mistake which led to an incorrect answer. Either remove the homeworks altogether or change the nature of the problems and the way they are graded.

  Announce the first project by week 2 or 3 and keep it due by week 6 so that there is no overlap between the 1st and the 2nd project. The 2 projects overlapping each other by a duration of 2 weeks basically meant that students got only 2 weeks for the 2nd project.

- the hws can be better. they were too easy or just required programming skills rather than ml skill. the curve for all hws was pretty much flat. silly mistake will get you down. basically the grade is based on the projects which was great

- Though it's an application driven course, it would have been nice to dig deep into one of the methods atleast. Now, I only know how to apply techniques and only a little bit about how they actually work.

- Twice a week lectures

23. I would recommend this course overall.

25 (78.1%):   Strongly Agree
7 (21.9%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
1:              [No Response]

24. What is your overall rating of this course?

20 (64.5%):   Excellent
10 (32.3%):   Above Average
1 (3.2%):   Average
0 (0.0%):   Below Average
0 (0.0%):   Poor
2:              [No Response]

25. What are the most important concepts that you learned in this class that you expect will be useful in the long term?

- Combining multiple ML/datamining techniques to solve a larger problem. It was fun as hell.

- Practical use of Machine Learning

- prediction

- SVM, Eigenvalues and Eigenvectors, tfidf and text prediction

- The thinking behind training and implementing different algorithms.

- When it comes to machine learning/data mining, it's not enough to be clever. Being educated in it is critical, since the tools many, and advanced; you cannot get to them by intuition alone.

26. Do you have any other comments to add to your evaluation?
Please provide any additional constructive comments

- - About the open ended assignment, I think you could make so that each part (out of the six) is due every week or so. Doing this will result in better assignments, because it will force students to pick up a subject soon (week 1), and make them do a bit of work every week.

- Assigning homework due the same week as projects or assigning a second project before the first project is due is not a good idea from the student's perspective. But it's greatly appreciated that there was no work to be due during final's week. There's a trade-off I suppose.

- I think the load of the course was un balanced since the hw were nice and they help involving with the material, but the open ended project was a lot of work while he still had homeworks to do.

- Increase class capacity, the class was too small for the number of students attending it and sitting at the end of class would make it hard to hear instructor's voice!

- very informative class, I learned a lot, thanks!

Please note that any responses or comments submitted by evaluators do not necessarily reflect the opinions of instructors, Computer Science and Engineering, Academic Affairs, or UC San Diego. Responses and comments are made available without auditing or editing, and they may not be modified or deleted, to ensure that each evaluator has an opportunity to express his or her opinion.