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

CSE 258 - Recommender Sys&Web Mining
Section ID 894627
Section Number A00
Winter 2017

Number of Evaluations Submitted: 131
Number of Students Enrolled: 332

1. The Instructor displayed proficient command of the material.

114 (87.7%):	Strongly Agree
16 (12.3%):	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]

2. The Instructor was well-prepared for class.

110 (85.3%):	Strongly Agree
17 (13.2%):	Agree
1 (0.8%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (0.8%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
2:	[No Response]

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

104 (80.6%):	Strongly Agree
22 (17.1%):	Agree
1 (0.8%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
2 (1.6%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Not Applicable
2:	[No Response]

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

99 (77.3%):   Strongly Agree
21 (16.4%):   Agree
8 (6.3%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
3:              [No Response]

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

99 (77.3%):   Strongly Agree
26 (20.3%):   Agree
3 (2.3%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
3:              [No Response]

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

96 (75.0%):   Strongly Agree
24 (18.8%):   Agree
7 (5.5%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
3:              [No Response]

7. The Instructor promoted and encouraged questions and discussion.

89 (70.1%):   Strongly Agree
29 (22.8%):   Agree
8 (6.3%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
4:              [No Response]

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

83 (65.4%):   Strongly Agree
28 (22.0%):   Agree
13 (10.2%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
2 (1.6%):   Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Strongly Disagree
4:      [No Response]

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

85 (66.4%):   Strongly Agree
30 (23.4%):   Agree
12 (9.4%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
3:      [No Response]

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

92 (72.4%):   Strongly Agree
32 (25.2%):   Agree
2 (1.6%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Not Applicable
4:      [No Response]

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

101 (78.9%):   Strongly Agree
25 (19.5%):   Agree
2 (1.6%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
3:      [No Response]

12. The Instructor was clear about course expectations.

95 (74.2%):   Strongly Agree
30 (23.4%):   Agree
1 (0.8%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Strongly Disagree
3:      [No Response]

13. The Instructor was clear about standards for evaluation.

84 (65.6%):	Strongly Agree
28 (21.9%):	Agree
10 (7.8%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
3 (2.3%):	Disagree
3 (2.3%):	Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Not Applicable
3:	[No Response]

14. I would recommend this instructor overall.

94 (73.4%):	Strongly Agree
31 (24.2%):	Agree
2 (1.6%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (0.8%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
3:	[No Response]

15. What is your overall rating of the Instructor?

100 (78.1%):	Excellent
25 (19.5%):	Above Average
3 (2.3%):	Average
0 (0.0%):	Below Average
0 (0.0%):	Poor
3:	[No Response]

16. General comments about the Instructor's performance
Please keep your comments constructive and professional, abiding by the Principles of Community

- Awesome course structure ! Great experience :)

- careful and responsible instructor

- Dr. McAuley was wonderful. The only issue I have about the course is that he wasn't clear on how the Kaggle assignment would be graded for the private leaderboard. Almost everyone misinterpreted his words to have got full score if one beat the baseline, and not the actual grading rubric of a range of scores matching to how well you beat the baseline.

- Excellent teaching and really interesting content!

- Great explanations

- Great Teacher, Great course!

- He is very responsible for lecturing. Even though the next slide gives the answer, he always shows you the process to solve the problem by hands.

- I appreciate how you answered many of the Piazza questions.

- I loved the variety of topics. I wish there was more math but I guess there are other courses one could take. I liked that everything is recorded. The accent was so refreshing!

- Instructor was great, had solid understanding of machine learning concepts. One of the best professors at UCSD so far.

- neat

- Nice professor and good teaching!

- Please incorporate more interaction with class instead of just giving lecture from podium. I was difficult to concentrate on lecture at odd time.

- Prof. McAuley teaches very well.

- Professor has a clear logic and is keen to answer students' questions.

- Professor McAuley was easily one of the friendliest and most dedicated professors I have seen. It was great taking this course with him and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was a light yet enlightening course. The material was well organized and the expectations were clear.

- Really great instructor!

- Strengths:
  1. Enthusiastic
  2. Provides good resources.
  3. One of the very few instructors here who probably understands cricket references.

- Thanks for presenting applicable ideas in a way that makes them graspable.

- The best thing about Prof. McAuley is that he wants his students to do well, and is always ready to help them. Great attitude!

- The Kaggle competition is a terribly unfair way to give grades. There were students who worked in groups and performed well while some students adhered to ethics and lost on rank. Although in the beginning it was mentioned that only a fraction of points were going to be given for rank, the rubric had a very high amount of points towards the rank and it is terribly unfair!

- The lecture and slides are clear.

- The project assigned is very interesting and help us to develop more and more on the course.

- This course topics about machine theory is very interesting. I have advice for professor:
  1. Badly handwritting on slides. Always need a lot of effort on understanding what did professor write on the slides. Those notes are sooooo blur. I am wondering, did the professor want us to understand what he is writting or nor?
  2. Speak so fast.
  3. Please do not use slides anymore. I think if you can write those concepts down on blackboard would be better.

- This guy is fantastic. He knows the material backwards and forwards and doesn't indulge off-topic questions to the detriment of other learners. His slides are great and the annotations he makes on them during lecture are super effective.

- Very clear presentation and very thoughtful about students' needs.

17. The course material was intellectually stimulating.

84 (66.1%):   Strongly Agree
36 (28.3%):   Agree
4 (3.1%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
3 (2.4%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
4:              [No Response]

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

86 (67.2%):   Strongly Agree
31 (24.2%):   Agree
9 (7.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Not Applicable
3:              [No Response]

19. Grading was constructive and assisted learning.

74 (57.8%):   Strongly Agree
36 (28.1%):   Agree
11 (8.6%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Disagree
5 (3.9%):   Strongly Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Not Applicable
3:              [No Response]

20. What is your reason for taking this class?

39 (30.5%):   Core Course Requirement
19 (14.8%):   Subject Area Requirement
18 (14.1%):   Elective
52 (40.6%):   Interest
3:              [No Response]

21. What were the particular strengths of this course?

• Cover most of the machine learning topics

• Felt extremely useful.

• Getting to work with real data!

- Gives an overview of many techniques used in recommendations. The assignments were useful in developing understanding.

- Good explanation of L1 and L2 regularization.

- Good structure of class.

- Great Lectures and Assignments.

- Hands on demonstration in class

- Hands-on experience with machine learning tools

- Hands-on starter to machine learning.

- I thought the code examples very very helpful in showing students how good code was written

- Interesting topics in machine theory.

- Introduced the state-of-art methodologies in data mining and provided sufficient practical exercises for students.

- It teaches us a lot on a very hot area and useful.

- Lectures are good. We can practice ML methods in practical ways.

- Overall the material and the way it was presented

- Practical knowledge - implemented algorithms and wrote a lot of code.

- practical materials and homework

- really help me know about how machine learning work in web mining

- The assignments were fun, the professor was fun

- The content is really up-to-date and interesting. All mathematics and concepts are clearly explained and demonstrated in the class.
  And the podcast is very helpful for me to review the class.

- The Kaggle Assignments and Final Project are really helpful, motivating and fun to do.

- Very hands-on experience.

- Very practical and applicable in real life

- Very well managed

- We learned concrete, state of the art techniques for doing data mining with python. I went in knowing little to no python and now feel rather proficient.
  Lectures were captured perfectly by the podcasting system.

- You will learn practical use of machine learning and data mining techniques, not fully about theory.

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

- A final/second mid-term would be good as people tend to avoid attending the class after mid-term one.

- add a end term exam

- Better assignment evaluation methods and transparent rubric so that students are evaluated based on their efforts and learning rather than their performance on a leaderboard which induces unhealthy competition and provokes unfair practices even though assignments are individual

- Better evaluation criteria than Kaggle scores (as they can be easily manipulated). Better dataset than Assignment 1 dataset.
  Evaluate approach and code as well.

- Better handwriting (or typing maybe?) on the lecture notes

- Competition in Kaggle is somehow determined by if you are lucky enough. Maybe some improvement on this part. And hw is too simple, maybe more challenging?

- Don't grade based on Kaggle rank!

- fewer student in one lecture.

- Have a homework 5 and/or a final

- I would suggest conducting exams in different rooms so that students do not sit on adjacent chairs.

- Introduce Neural networks

- It'd be my preference to go less easy with the mathematical theory :) but... That wasn't the point of the class, and everything we did was enlightening.

- Keep another midterm/final, or reduce the weight on midterm. One midterm deciding a fate of person's grade for good is terrible. If one performed badly in just this one midterm, there's really no way he can improve his grade in any way.

- Looking forward to an advanced level course.

- Probably another project instead of exams/homework would just make it the perfect course (which I think it already is !)

- Solutions of midterm were released after re-grading deadline. It would be better if solutions are released with grading so that we can check where we got wrong. Atleast extend the re-grade deadline so that we can put re-grade after checking solutions.

- Split up the grading for Masters and PhD students. One of the assignments had a competitive grading component and I feel that Masters students simply have more time to sink into optimizing their predictors.

- Suggest suitable reading material before the beginning of the class to catch up on the concepts which are sometimes hard to grasp and the time to understand and implement code in a week's time along with other courses is not enough.
  More guidelines to the assignment 1 would be helpful.

- The actual grading rubric for Assignment 1 was different from what was actually mentioned in the class.

The Assignment 1 wasn't clear in its testing of the material taught in class.
It was more of a test of what all ML functions can you use in Python which is not a good evaluation metric of how well you have mastered the material in the course.
The assignments should have been more focused on implementing recommender system from scratch.
I took the course to learn more about Recommender System Design but this class wasn't very useful as the material was very basic and already covered in Stanford's Andrew Ng lectures on Recommender Systems.

- The competition on Kaggle altought fun was not very fair. The position on the ranking did not reflect the learnings from the course since anything was allowed to solve the tasks. Many students with more machine learning background had an advantage over the others.

- The description on homework handout is not very clear.

- The grad version of this class should be more detailed and in-depth.

- There isn't any extra motivation to visit lecture in the last weeks as there is no homework or final about the material, so I didn't go even though the lecture really is great, just because I had so many other things to do

- This course covers a wide range of topics, which is great. However, professor maybe can try to deepen each sub-section.

23. I would recommend this course overall.

90 (70.9%):   Strongly Agree
33 (26.0%):   Agree
2 (1.6%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Disagree
1 (0.8%):   Strongly Disagree
4:              [No Response]

24. What is your overall rating of this course?

91 (71.7%):   Excellent
31 (24.4%):   Above Average
5 (3.9%):   Average
0 (0.0%):   Below Average
0 (0.0%):   Poor
4:              [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?

- Approaching data science problems, working with machine learning tools

- Buncha python libraries. TBH Latent Factors was pretty sweet.

- Clustering, collaborative filtering, etc.

- Concept of choosing model

- Data mining

- Data mining approaches

- Dimensionality reduction, clustering, collaborative filtering, implementation in Python

- Feature Design and Machine Learning in Practice.

- getting introduced to various algorithms, coding them in Python

- How to apply Machine Learning to real world data

- How to make efficient recommendations

- How to solve the real problem and utilize data.

- How to think about melding math and computer science

- It introduced me to Kaggle, which is addictive!

- Kaggle competitions.

- Latent factor model, Community detection

- Matrix factorization. A revision of basic ML concepts

- ML methods and when and how to use them

- parameter tuning

- Probably everything

- python, data mining, recommender systems

- Recommender systems and network models

- Recommender systems concepts

- Recommender Systems, Regressions, Basic Machine Learning

- Recommender Systems, Text Mining

26. Do you have any other comments to add to your evaluation?
Please keep your comments constructive and professional, abiding by the Principles of Community

- A good course, I am glad I took it

- Great course. Only course in 250 series where you get a competition environment.

- I was very anti-ML, data mining, having discarded them as buzzwords. I had somehow not found the Math behind it too interesting as well. But the wealth of techniques and examples in this course changed my mind. I am indebted to Julian for that!

- Inappropriate evaluation and grading methods which can be highly demotivating when student

groups resolve to unfair practices during unhealthy competition even though assignments are meant to be done individually

- One thing that the course lacked was proper feedback. The first two homeworks were graded without a visible rubric and the students could not see where they went wrong. TA replies on gradescope were curt and sometime borderline rude (eg. "Your grade is correct, please don't submit any more regrade requests.")

- practical use of machine learning and data mining techniques

- Really love your class. Thank you so much!

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.