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Graduate Course Evaluation for James Foulds
Department of Computer Science and Engineering

CSE 291 - Top/Computer Sci & Engineering
Section ID 873005
Section Number D00
Spring 2016

Number of Evaluations Submitted: 17
Number of Students Enrolled: 29

1. The Instructor displayed proficient command of the material.

14 (82.4%):   Strongly Agree
3 (17.6%):   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.

15 (88.2%):   Strongly Agree
2 (11.8%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree

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

10 (58.8%):   Strongly Agree
2 (11.8%):   Agree
1 (5.9%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
3 (17.6%):   Disagree
1 (5.9%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable

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

16 (94.1%):   Strongly Agree
1 (5.9%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree

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

13 (76.5%):   Strongly Agree
2 (11.8%):   Agree
1 (5.9%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (5.9%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable

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

12 (70.6%):   Strongly Agree
2 (11.8%):   Agree
2 (11.8%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
1 (5.9%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable

7. The Instructor promoted and encouraged questions and discussion.

16 (94.1%):   Strongly Agree
0 (0.0%):   Agree
1 (5.9%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree

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

17 (100.0%):   Strongly Agree
0 (0.0%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   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.

14 (82.4%):   Strongly Agree
2 (11.8%):   Agree
1 (5.9%):   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.

15 (88.2%):   Strongly Agree
2 (11.8%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   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.

15 (88.2%):   Strongly Agree
2 (11.8%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable

12. The Instructor was clear about course expectations.

14 (82.4%):   Strongly Agree
1 (5.9%):   Agree
2 (11.8%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree

13. The Instructor was clear about standards for evaluation.

12 (70.6%):   Strongly Agree
3 (17.6%):   Agree
1 (5.9%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
1 (5.9%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable

14. I would recommend this instructor overall.

13 (76.5%):   Strongly Agree
2 (11.8%):   Agree
1 (5.9%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (5.9%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree

15. What is your overall rating of the Instructor?

11 (68.8%):   Excellent
4 (25.0%):   Above Average
1 (6.3%):   Average
0 (0.0%):   Below Average
0 (0.0%):   Poor
1:              [No Response]

16. General comments about the Instructor's performance

- Awesome high quality class. More resources(TAs/OHs) would have been great but the professor made up for it.

- Fantastic instructor. Went above and beyond to prepare to lectures, office hours, and reply to any concern students had.

- He has very strong command on the course material. Active learning he uses for his classes is particularly very effective.

- Lecture preparation was awesome. Especially I liked the reading + in class quizzes using PollEverywhere. Please continue to do so. Project description was very vague, had much trouble with selecting one. Nevertheless, very good experience. Finally understand what is Variational Inference.

- Prof James Foulds really encourages learning and I loved the way he took classes with the polls and the ''Think-Pair-Share'' concept at the end of every class.

- The instructor was great!

- The material is too much! And the lectures are really hard to understand for beginners sometime. You have to be more specific about what do you mean by each term. Give examples or explanations about the terms before using them.

17. The course material was intellectually stimulating.

12 (70.6%):   Strongly Agree
5 (29.4%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable

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

13 (76.5%):   Strongly Agree
3 (17.6%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
1 (5.9%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable

19. Grading was constructive and assisted learning.

12 (70.6%):   Strongly Agree
2 (11.8%):   Agree
1 (5.9%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (5.9%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
1 (5.9%):   Not Applicable

20. What is your reason for taking this class?

3 (17.6%):   Core Course Requirement
1 (5.9%):   Subject Area Requirement
2 (11.8%):   Elective
11 (64.7%):   Interest

21. What were the particular strengths of this course?

- Enrich my knowledge base about data mining.

- Good material.

- Incredible depth. Delivers quintessential modern machine learning methods in ways that really makes the students understand them.

  Great literature selection for reading.

  One of the best courses I have taken. Should be made a 250s course instead.

- It taught me a lot!

- Readings - MUST!

- The participation questions.

- Very cool subject. The course was taught well. The prof. was well organized, knowledgable, nice, and interested in the subject matter.

  I really hope UCSD continues to teach LVM's

- Very interesting, relevant topic, well taught, modern

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

- I would say that its too big a jump from CSE 250A. The first few lectures were great but as the class progressed the learning curve became too steep. Also, I feel like I know a little bit of different things but I am not confident about what I know. I feel that the portion that was covered should be lesser and that we should have taken some topics a little slower.

- Less material is better for beginners. Sometimes the material you explained are very hard for us to understand. This is because we are not familiar with the terms and the logic that you want to explain. For example, I still don't know the meaning of inference. What is the steps of inference? Something like that. I am not interested in any mathematical theories but higher level ideas. So please slow down and try to explain the idea thoroughly.

- Organize homeworks in better fashion, I would like to do 5th, but it's due on finals week.

- Some of the maths in the slides are still tough to grasp. Perhaps a few optional, recommended exercise problems from the textbook or elsewhere would have helped enormously, as practical examples.

- The murphy book is kind of bad...

- The only critique I can think of:
  I wished there were more explicit examples of the graphical models, Gibb's samplers, and variational inference. There's no time in lecture for this, but perhaps it could be given in the readings.
  Without examples, there was a certain disconnect between theory and implementation. You'd think you understand an idea, but then trying to implement it for the first time became incredibly difficult.

- The project is a little bit vague. Maybe a little too much time is spend on polls and final idea discussions.

23. I would recommend this course overall.

14 (82.4%):   Strongly Agree
2 (11.8%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (5.9%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree

24. What is your overall rating of this course?

12 (70.6%):   Excellent
5 (29.4%):   Above Average
0 (0.0%):   Average
0 (0.0%):   Below Average
0 (0.0%):   Poor

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

- Models!

- The bayesian framework.

- The practicalities/impracticalities of various latent variable models and their algorithms

- Too many things: conjugate priors, Dirichlet distro, MRF, LDA, belief prop, evaluation methods... everything's just so interesting

- Variational Inference, Bayesian methods, MCMC methods, Plate notation.

- Whole course honestly.

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

- Fantastic class and I hope it is taught regularly in the future. Should be a requirement for all ML students, rather than a 291.

- I didn't think I'd ever take a class so interesting. The material is perfect.

- Please, make the instructor to teach more classes.

- Think Pair Share was interesting