

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

CSE 258 - Recommender Sys&Web Mining
Section ID 61310
Section Number B00
Fall 2021

Number of Evaluations Submitted: 121
Number of Students Enrolled: 229

1. The Instructor displayed proficient command of the material.

94 (84.7%): Strongly Agree
17 (15.3%): Agree
0 (0.0%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%): Not Applicable
10: [No Response]

2. The Instructor was well-prepared for class.

91 (82.0%): Strongly Agree
20 (18.0%): Agree
0 (0.0%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
10: [No Response]

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

77 (69.4%): Strongly Agree
27 (24.3%): Agree
6 (5.4%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (0.9%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%): Not Applicable
10: [No Response]

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

79 (71.8%): Strongly Agree
25 (22.7%): Agree
6 (5.5%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
11: [No Response]

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

89 (80.9%): Strongly Agree
19 (17.3%): Agree
1 (0.9%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
1 (0.9%): Not Applicable
11: [No Response]

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

75 (68.2%): Strongly Agree
25 (22.7%): Agree
8 (7.3%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
2 (1.8%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%): Not Applicable
11: [No Response]

7. The Instructor promoted and encouraged questions and discussion.

83 (75.5%): Strongly Agree
20 (18.2%): Agree
6 (5.5%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (0.9%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
11: [No Response]

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

80 (72.1%): Strongly Agree
22 (19.8%): Agree
9 (8.1%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
10: [No Response]

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

78 (70.3%): Strongly Agree
22 (19.8%): Agree
10 (9.0%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (0.9%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
10: [No Response]

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

85 (78.0%): Strongly Agree
18 (16.5%): Agree
6 (5.5%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%): Not Applicable
12: [No Response]

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

90 (81.8%): Strongly Agree
17 (15.5%): Agree
3 (2.7%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%): Not Applicable
11: [No Response]

12. The Instructor was clear about course expectations.

88 (80.7%): Strongly Agree
19 (17.4%): Agree
2 (1.8%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
12: [No Response]

13. The Instructor was clear about standards for evaluation.

86 (78.2%): Strongly Agree
22 (20.0%): Agree
2 (1.8%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%): Not Applicable
11: [No Response]

14. I would recommend this instructor overall.

96 (79.3%): Strongly Agree
21 (17.4%): Agree
4 (3.3%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%): Disagree
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree

15. What is your overall rating of the Instructor?

98 (81.0%): Excellent
17 (14.0%): Above Average
6 (5.0%): Average
0 (0.0%): Below Average
0 (0.0%): Poor

16. General comments about the Instructor's performance

Please keep your comments constructive and professional, abiding by the Principles of Community

- Enjoyable lectures, great content, amazing professor!
- Good professor
- Good topics. Application oriented instead of coding oriented, hence the professor did not mind sharing code samples too. Real world applications were taught which were very useful.
- Great.
- He has very good command over the research area and machine learning in general. The course materials were very well organized. And the course load was very light considering how much news things I learned.
- I had a great time learning from Prof. McCauley as the class was fun and the assignments were interesting!
- Love the professor! Clear delivery, and occasional humor made the course really engaging.
- Professor McAuley is a great lecturer (both in person and over twitch). He speaks well and with passion about the subject area, and frequently adds humor into the lectures to keep things light

hearted. He's active on Piazza and answers questions quickly in Twitch chat. Overall, he has been my favorite professor in all of grad school.

- Really appreciated the surprise lecture before Thanksgiving -- two hours of live Bach!
- Thanks for a great quarter professor!
- Thanks for the wonderful quarter!!
- The professor's way of teaching is very industry-oriented, which is exactly what I was looking for.
- The teacher displays his professionalism during the class. He is also very helpful on piazza. I think the learning experience is great.
- Very active on piazza and helping in solving doubts. Course work is crystal clear.

17. The course material was intellectually stimulating.

65 (63.1%):	Strongly Agree
28 (27.2%):	Agree
8 (7.8%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (1.0%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
1 (1.0%):	Not Applicable
18:	[No Response]

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

81 (78.6%):	Strongly Agree
17 (16.5%):	Agree
4 (3.9%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (1.0%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Not Applicable
18:	[No Response]

19. Grading was constructive and assisted learning.

70 (68.6%):	Strongly Agree
21 (20.6%):	Agree
8 (7.8%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
2 (2.0%):	Disagree
1 (1.0%):	Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Not Applicable
19:	[No Response]

20. What is your reason for taking this class?

32 (32.0%): Core Course Requirement
21 (21.0%): Subject Area Requirement
10 (10.0%): Elective
37 (37.0%): Interest
21: [No Response]

21. What were the particular strengths of this course?

- All materials taught in the course is accompanied by programming resource (code+dataset) so that we can try it out, which is very helpful for learning.
- Clear expectations and requirements to do well in the class. Professor McAuley is very reasonable and rational. Provided materials and course lectures help directly with the homework and other assignments. Homeworks require a good amount of work, but are easy to score well on.
- Good applications and homework/assignment format
- Great content.
- Hands-on course. Cool Prof.
- leaderboard based grading
- Practical oriented coursework
- Practical approach to every concept
- Relevant material
- Solid coding skill training.
- Teaches you the practical aspects of creating machine learning models from model selection, to feature engineering, to tuning hyperparameters, to validating and testing. Also super fun to try all of these various models out!
- The course is well-structured. The competition of assignment can sometimes be interesting but for a long time annoying. Nevertheless, it makes learning recommendation system interesting.
- The course teaches us a bunch of useful technologies in recommender systems and can improve your Python coding skills to a large extent.
- The TA I interacted with most is not listed for evaluation. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Bhanu Garg for making himself available when I needed help. He was also the TA that gave the clearest and most succinct explanation, which I extremely appreciate. I added the class a week and a half late and his explanations for hw1 solutions help me catch up with the course.
- There was a textbook that the professor followed precisely. Made it much easier to look up reference materials whenever we wanted.
- Understanding recommendation systems, Machine learning.
- Wide coverage of methods used in recommender systems.

One can really get a whole picture of techniques used in recommender systems after taking this course.

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

- Assignments need to be spread out more. The last 4 weeks there's an assignment due every single week on a pretty large task.
- Better twitch moderators maybe? :D
- Difficult to keep pace with the live lectures, mathematical derivations are difficult to follow in the lecture
- I would scrap the assignment-based evaluation in this course. The assignments although meant to reinforce the concepts taught in the class ended up being quite unrelated as I focused on optimizing the assignment only for the grade. I could not focus on the recommendation techniques taught in the latter half of the course (after the midterm) as there was little incentive for that. Having 2 midterms + 4 homework or 1 midterm + 1 assignment + homework would result in a better course structure.
- Maybe just lower the intensity of assignment competition.
- More code comments in the workbook.
- One more exam/quiz could be added towards the end so that more students attend the lectures after the mid-term.
- Please take this course over zoom instead of twitch
- Smaller class size, stop in between for questions so that the class is more like a discussion rather than a one way lecture
- Smaller class size.
- The homeworks can be a bit more challenging instead of a kaggle competition for one assignment.
- The Kaggle assignment was tough for me in that my early models scored well in terms of accuracy and ranking so I ended there but ultimately got rocked when the private leaderboard/data was revealed. So I'm obviously a little bitter since my ranks shot down, but in general I don't love the "hidden" results aspect on Kaggle in the context of learning, it feels more luck based. Not sure how else we would do it though.
- the kaggle competition should have been more competitive. i.e. instead of providing make up marks, 10 marks should have been dedicated to ranking.
- This time, the Kaggle assignment dataset and task-1 (i.e., cook prediction) was weird. There was not much structure in the data and the task-1 did not make much sense for me due to the way of test-data generation.

23. I would recommend this course overall.

91 (75.2%):	Strongly Agree
25 (20.7%):	Agree
5 (4.1%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree

24. What is your overall rating of this course?

93 (76.9%):	Excellent
20 (16.5%):	Above Average
8 (6.6%):	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?

- Basic ideas and solutions to the recommendation system.
- BPR, Factorized Machines, Box of Words, temporal recommendation ...
- Building recommender systems
- Classification, FM, Text mining, Latent-factor models
- Classification, Regression, Jaccard Similarity and so on.
- Factorization Machines
- Latent Factorization
- Learned new machine learning python libraries and many many many new machine learning models and how to effectively build and test them
- Personalized Machine Learning, Classic Recommender Systems
- personalized recommender systems
- Python, Regression, Classification, Recommender Systems
- Rapid implementation of popular predictive models (regression, classification, latent factor models)
- Recommendation Systems, Different machine learning algorithms for classification, regression.
- recommender system, classification, regression, text mining
- recommender systems

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

- I think the grading team is sometimes really biased. I definitely agree that the score should be given in a fair manner. Sometimes, however, they just give heavy penalty to minor mistakes, which disturbs me a lot.
- Keep up the good work!
- Loved the course - thanks Professor!
- Thank you for creating an accessible ML course. I am a grad student from another department with some experience with Python for data analysis but have never done any ML ever. This course was very difficult for me throughout but I went to almost every single office hour with all the TAs and they have been very helpful with explaining concepts I did not understand well. I also very much appreciate the code examples from the textbook. Will purchase a print copy.

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.