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

CSE 258 - Recommender Sys&Web Mining
Section ID 90129
Section Number A01
Fall 2022

Number of Evaluations Submitted: 98
Number of Students Enrolled: 196

1. The Instructor displayed proficient command of the material.

85 (90.4%):	Strongly Agree
8 (8.5%):	Agree
1 (1.1%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Not Applicable
4:	[No Response]

2. The Instructor was well-prepared for class.

82 (87.2%):	Strongly Agree
12 (12.8%):	Agree
0 (0.0%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
4:	[No Response]

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

77 (83.7%):	Strongly Agree
13 (14.1%):	Agree
2 (2.2%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Not Applicable
6:	[No Response]

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

74 (81.3%):   Strongly Agree
14 (15.4%):   Agree
3 (3.3%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
7:      [No Response]

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

78 (84.8%):   Strongly Agree
12 (13.0%):   Agree
2 (2.2%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
6:      [No Response]

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

69 (74.2%):   Strongly Agree
18 (19.4%):   Agree
4 (4.3%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (1.1%):   Disagree
1 (1.1%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
5:      [No Response]

7. The Instructor promoted and encouraged questions and discussion.

72 (78.3%):   Strongly Agree
19 (20.7%):   Agree
1 (1.1%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
6:      [No Response]

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

72 (80.0%):   Strongly Agree
14 (15.6%):   Agree
2 (2.2%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (1.1%):   Disagree
1 (1.1%):   Strongly Disagree
8:      [No Response]

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

70 (76.9%):   Strongly Agree
15 (16.5%):   Agree
5 (5.5%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (1.1%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
7:      [No Response]

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

73 (81.1%):   Strongly Agree
17 (18.9%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
8:      [No Response]

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

76 (83.5%):   Strongly Agree
15 (16.5%):   Agree
0 (0.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
7:      [No Response]

12. The Instructor was clear about course expectations.

73 (81.1%):   Strongly Agree
16 (17.8%):   Agree
1 (1.1%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
8:      [No Response]

13. The Instructor was clear about standards for evaluation.

73 (81.1%):   Strongly Agree
15 (16.7%):   Agree
1 (1.1%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
1 (1.1%):   Not Applicable
8:             [No Response]

14. I would recommend this instructor overall.

82 (83.7%):   Strongly Agree
14 (14.3%):   Agree
1 (1.0%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (1.0%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree

15. What is your overall rating of the Instructor?

84 (85.7%):   Excellent
12 (12.2%):   Above Average
2 (2.0%):   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

- Engaging lectures and provided very good material.

- good

- Great instructor. I like the way he gives lots of examples to explain the concepts and discusses pros and cons of everything rather than just going over it mathematically. Helped me build an intuition about the concepts taught in the class.
  He's also very active on piazza which is very difficult to do in a class with such a huge batch size. We can see that he really cares about the learning of students.

- He is really chill and at the same time has command of the course and the class.

- I am very happy with the instructor. The only thing I missed is a bit more technical and implementation details that would help us tackle the machine learning models we might want to implement during the course/in the future.

- I think the professor know the materials and is pretty clear during lectures

- Loved the course, Professor Julian is brilliant!

- Perfect!

- Prof Julain is too cool to be a professor! Was fun attending his classes!

- Prof. Julian was extremely approachable and quite interactive. I enjoyed his classes.

- The best instructor I've studied with till date. Professor makes the course structure interesting and fun. He manages to make the course contents intuitive and explains the underlying problems we're trying to fix before going on to the solutions directly which is generally the case in courses.

- The Instructor deserves great appreciation for making the course more 'fun' and learning-centric. While some topics of the course are dry by nature the instructor did a great job of explaining the content. The Instructor adapted the course requirements and evaluation metrics in times of uncertainty (like the strike) and did a very good job of keeping the course appropriately-paced and engaging.

- The instructor is really responsive when the student encounter any problems in class.

- The instructor was very accomodating for all the reasonable requests of students throughout the quarter. The way he managed the course with such a huge strength was commendable! All the grading was done on time and learning was continuous.

- The live demos are very helpful.

- Very kind and patient in teaching to such a huge class.

17. The course material was intellectually stimulating.

55 (65.5%):	Strongly Agree
24 (28.6%):	Agree
2 (2.4%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
2 (2.4%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
1 (1.2%):	Not Applicable
14:	[No Response]

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

63 (76.8%):	Strongly Agree
16 (19.5%):	Agree
0 (0.0%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
1 (1.2%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree
2 (2.4%):	Not Applicable
16:	[No Response]

19. Grading was constructive and assisted learning.

56 (68.3%):   Strongly Agree
20 (24.4%):   Agree
2 (2.4%):   Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4 (4.9%):   Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Strongly Disagree
0 (0.0%):   Not Applicable
16:      [No Response]

20. What is your reason for taking this class?

16 (19.5%):   Core Course Requirement
17 (20.7%):   Subject Area Requirement
18 (22.0%):   Elective
31 (37.8%):   Interest
16:      [No Response]

21. What were the particular strengths of this course?

- A good deal of emphasis on programming assignments which was helpful in seeing how things really work in practice.

- A great introduction to recommender systems. Lectures are quite fun.

- Application-based assignments.

- Discussion about research papers.

- Exposed to the world of recommender systems.

- good

- Great introduction, I finally think recommender systems is its own domain

- Highly well structured course design, course is exceedingly clear on what is expected of students and how the instruction aligns with assessment content.

- I think the course is a really good introduction to machine learning and recommender systems. I feel like I learned a lot but I don't feel like I am overwhelmed

- It covers the breadth of recommender systems domain.

- Multiple methods of evaluation make this course very effective (A competition-style assignment, another peer-grading/open-ended assignment, Multiple simple-to-follow HWs).

- Showing how to approach recommender systems with either machine learning or simple heuristics

- The hands-on nature of the course helped me understand the concepts better. Professor's textbook assisted me understand the technical concepts.

- The homework and assignments were quite fun and challenging. Does not need too much math like other AI courses. Overall I really like the course!

- Very well structured.

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

- Could've covered more advanced topics towards the end instead of keeping 3 weeks for introductions.

- good

- I feel the professor should modify the homeworks a bit that makes them different from the stub notebooks on the course website. Also he could have put in more time on the later topics like text mining, temporal dynamics. I just felt like he spent more time than necessary on the topics that were covered in homework although those were simpler.

- I think this course is great and the content it tries to cover is really exciting and a very hot topic in the current market!
That said I have a few humble suggestions I would want to make -
1. I understand the class is large and hence twitch was used. I have no problem with it! But I would request the Prof to not give much attention to the unwanted discussions and comments there (especially from random people who join the stream). Try using zoom, it is more formal!
2. Make the course content more rigorous! I felt the material and teaching were superfluous! Don't get me wrong, I know Prof Julian is extremely knowledgeable but I am sure a lot of students wouldn't have realized the subtle differences across the concepts. I myself felt clueless when revisiting the topics from the course for assignment 2. Like how is text data used by a recommender system when deployed? What is the difference between a recommender system and a basic machine learning task? I understand it's the student's responsibility to revisit these deeper questions but I think the teaching can be made more rigorous and in-depth.

- I would really appreciate more attention put towards technical and implementation details. I hoped to increase my machine learning skills, which did not happen because the main focus was on pure ideas and methods without spending too much time on implementation, while it is a big part of a successful recommender system.

- Let's start a follow up course where we can touch upon ML side of things as well

- Make the initial assignments more challenging.

- Maybe cover more content.

- Most of the homework seems to be covering the initial part of class, need to be tested on the advanced models taught later in the class as well.

- Some slides could be revised a little after the annotation is given. Some annotation is a little hard to related to which slide is in.

- The course content could be a bit harder in my opinion. I find that especially for graduate students, the assignments could be more focused on implementing more complex recommendation systems from scratch in one large executable pipeline, rather than what feels like rather narrow-scoped assignments that align with the reference material heavily. Additionally, I'm not sure about the usefulness of Assignment 1, as performing well both absolutely and relative to other students can quickly become just throwing as many possible heuristics at the problem until performance increases. I think that the spirit of Assignment 1 and Assignment 2 could be combined: students have one large assignment (with maybe a midway report) where teams must propose their own solution to a shared task, justify the solution chosen, and get a grade that incorporates a small relative component rewarding the best

performing solutions (in this way, sort of mimicking common "Challenge" type events that happen at ML conferences).

- The course had 4 homeworks which were really helpful in understanding concepts through practical implementation. It would be good to have more homeworks to get an opportunity to implement more techniques being taught in the course. I understand that the students can always do more themselves but if the implementation is given out as an assignment, there is a formal focus on it.

- The course is too easy. All the sample codes and the code stubs make it easy to complete homeworks, midterm and assignments without even understanding half of the implementations.

  Please conduct the undergrad CSE 158 and grad CSE 258 sections separately and cover more theory and math in the grad section.

23. I would recommend this course overall.

78 (79.6%):	Strongly Agree
17 (17.3%):	Agree
3 (3.1%):	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Disagree
0 (0.0%):	Strongly Disagree

24. What is your overall rating of this course?

76 (77.6%):	Excellent
18 (18.4%):	Above Average
3 (3.1%):	Average
0 (0.0%):	Below Average
1 (1.0%):	Poor

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

- 1. Text Mining 2. Modeling temporal and sequence data. I plan on pursuing Fashion Recommendation and Music Recommendation in the future.

- Building recommender systems using heuristic and machine learning models.

- Collaborative filtering, latent factor models, factorization machines, text mining

- Collaborative Filtering, Visual Recommendation, Singular Value Decomposition

- Fundamentals of Recommender Systems.

- good

- Jaccard similarities and related application.

- Jaccard Similarity == IoU!

- Jaccard similarity, cosine similarity, Pearson similarity, latent factor models, alternating least squares

- Latent factor models and related heuristics

- linear regression, text sentiment analysis

- Recommender Systems

- Recommender Systems and ML-pipeline implementations from scratch

- Recommender Systems, Evaluation of Recommender Systems, Basics of text mining, one class recommendation, bpr

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

- good

- Indicated it above!

- It would be amazing if when evaluating our assignments, we could get some feedback on our approach with possible comments on what we could improve. I know it's time-consuming, but with machine learning often being a magical black box, it's hard to deduce why the model is(n't) effective and evaluation feedback is one of the greatest ways to learn about our mistakes and correct them

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.