

## Fundamentals of Computer Sci 1 (Fall 2021)

Instructor: **Derbinsky, Nathaniel**  
 Subject: **CS**  
 Catalog & Section: **2500 04**  
 Course ID: **11648**  
 Objectives:

Enrollment: **129**  
 Responses Incl Declines: **56**  
 Declines: **2**

### Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
Online course materials were organized to help me navigate through the course week by week.	54	41%	4.3	4.1	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Online interactions with my instructor created a sense of connection in the virtual classroom.	54	41%	3.3	3.2	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Online course interactions created a sense of community and connection to my classmates.	54	41%	3.1	3.2	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
I had the necessary computer skills and technology to successfully complete the course.	54	41%	4.2	4.2	4.1	5.0	5.0	5.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree; 0:N/A;

### Course Related Questions

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
The syllabus was accurate and helpful in delineating expectations and course outcomes.	54	41%	4.6	4.3	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
Required and additional course materials were helpful in achieving course outcomes.	54	41%	4.6	4.2	4.3	5.0	4.0	5.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree;

### Learning Related Questions

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
In-class sessions were helpful for learning.	54	41%	4.7	4.1	4.3	5.0	4.0	5.0
Out-of-class assignments and/or fieldwork were helpful for learning.	54	41%	4.6	4.2	4.2	5.0	4.0	4.0
This course was intellectually challenging.	54	41%	4.7	4.3	4.2	5.0	5.0	4.0
I learned a lot in this course.	54	41%	4.6	4.3	4.3	5.0	5.0	5.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree;

### Instructor Related Questions: Nathaniel Derbinsky

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
The instructor came to class prepared to teach.	54	41%	4.9	4.4	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor used class time effectively.	53	41%	5.0	4.3	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor clearly communicated ideas and information.	54	41%	4.8	4.3	4.3	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor provided sufficient feedback.	54	41%	4.5	4.2	4.2	5.0	4.0	5.0
The instructor fairly evaluated my performance.	54	41%	4.5	4.3	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor was available to assist students outside of class.	54	41%	4.6	4.3	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor facilitated a respectful and inclusive learning environment.	54	41%	4.8	4.5	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor displayed enthusiasm for the course.	54	41%	5.0	4.5	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree;

### Instructor Effectiveness: Nathaniel Derbinsky

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
What is your overall rating of this instructor's teaching effectiveness?	54	41%	4.9	4.4	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0

Note: 5:Almost Always Effective; 4:Usually Effective; 3:Sometimes Effective; 2:Rarely Effective; 1:Never Effective;

### Instructor Related Questions: Nathaniel Derbinsky (95 comments)

#### Q: What were the strengths of this course and/or this instructor?

- 1 Enthusiasm, clarity, super funny, inclusive
- 2 Nate is a very enthusiastic professor. He always greets us with a "Howdy!" before class starts and even played some music towards the end of the semester. He is great at clearly explaining the concepts needed for the homework assignments and makes excellent use of class time by going over many helpful examples.
- 3 Prof. Derbinsky is an excellent teacher who knows the material extremely well and is very good at teaching engaging lectures.
- 4 This course is set up really well for students coming in with little to no prior programming knowledge. Derbinsky is an amazing professor for the class, he explains ideas very well and keeps class captivating.
- 5 Very enthusiastic! Knew the material pretty well.
- 6 The instructor was clear and not boring during his lectures, which makes the class less dreadful.
- 7 Prof. Derbinsky made this course very fun and engaging which helped keep me interested in the class when we were covering a topic I was familiar with.
- 8 Instructor displayed a lot of passion for course, and always clearly and thoughtfully answered questions.
- 9 This course if a great introduction to the world of coding and makes it achievable and understandable to strangers from outside the discipline. The professor is amazing at explaining topics, and provides a wealth of alternative sources for learning and reinforcing what topics are taught in class. The TAs are tremendously helpful as well, and with time this class and instructor definitely contributed to my success.
- 10 Made classes interesting with his enthusiasm, the lecture videos on canvas were very well-made and the most helpful.
- 11 Great instructor, really good at explaining concepts and answering questions from students.
- 12 The instructor was very knowledgeable, kind, clear, organized, and thorough.
- 13 One of the best lecturers ive had. Funny and effective communicator
- 14 Very clear

- 
- 15 His online videos where he goes over the course material are 10/10
- 
- 16 The strengths of the course include how comprehensive the content is, the structure with weekly homeworks, and the availability of help through office hours. The strengths for the instructor is that he is always prepared for lecture, always makes sure to go through all of the lecture every time, utilizes class time very well, and is very knowledgeable and passionate about the content.
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- 17 I like this course so much! My professor always organizes the class material well and uses class time effectively.
- 
- 18 Nate was super enthusiastic and so fun to learn with. He is eager to share his knowledge and I loved being class with him.
- 
- 19 Very Enthusiastic and high energy. It kept me engaged everyday in class.
- 
- 20 Professor was fun
- 
- 21 Very loud voice and easy to understand during lectures. Also went through course materials well enough during open discussion times.
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- 22 Very articulate in his examples and if asked questions, adapting explanations for the person who asked the question.
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- 23 Prof Derbinsky is the best and he makes the concepts super understandable. He is happy to answer questions and provide further explanation if you're confused on his explanations. His class environment is very welcoming.
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- 24 I can't speak for someone going in with zero CS knowledge, but the material was well-taught in an understandable manner, and the resources were all there to study very meticulously, even if you didn't quite understand something the first time around. The assignments are also well crafted to make sure you don't forget old concepts as you move into new ones.
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- 25 He made the class fun and light, though the work was hard and the class wasn't feeling the best. His high energy was very appreciated, and he is a great teacher; the course is just very difficult.
- 
- 26 derb
- 
- 27 He did a good job of explaining everything thoroughly and helping students having a harder time.
- 
- 28 Great at explaining concepts
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- 29 The Professor did his best to make the lectures interesting and he was always available to talk about the course. I could tell he genuinely did want his students to succeed, and he did his best to support his students.
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- 30 Professor Derbinsky, this was honestly my favorite class I took this semester. I came into Khoury with absolutely no coding experience so I was really nervous that I would be behind everyone else and that I would struggle a lot, but this course was so amazing at laying a foundation for people who didn't have any prior CS knowledge. Lecture was always fun to go to and the concepts were explained clearly. I especially loved the video lectures because it takes me a few tries to understand the material, so I liked that I could rewatch the lessons as many times as I needed. I also enjoyed pair programming, my partner and I worked really well together and I feel like it made homework assignments more manageable. I am excited for fundies II next semester and I feel really well prepared.
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- 31 Prof. Derbinsky made learning this challenging topic very interesting. His enthusiasm for the class made me stay engaged throughout the lecture. He was always willing to explain or re-explain a topic if a student asked a question, which was very helpful.
- 
- 32 enthusiasm for the subject and mastery over the skill being taught.
- 
- 33 This instructor is very enthusiastic and engages the class really well. No complaints about the lectures!!
- 
- 34 kept me focused
- 
- 35 The course was fairly well organized with lots of resources to supplement our lectures and help our understanding. Derbinsky always showed up to class excited to teach and helpful when answering questions from students.
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- 36 Nate is an absolutely amazing professor. He teaches with so much enthusiasm and excitement which it makes it really enjoyable to go to lecture. He speaks really loudly and clearly and is really good at explaining everything. He does a really good job of answering students' questions concisely and effectively and always checks to make sure everyone understands what's going on. The course itself was challenging at times but the homeworks were really helpful in understanding the material.

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**Q: What could the instructor do to make this course better?**

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- 1 Couldn't be improved!!
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- 2 Nothing, it was good.
- 
- 3 I think it would be good if Prof. Derbinsky explained more of the content through the perspective of beginners. As a beginner it was hard to understand some parts of the lecture.
- 
- 4 Nothing really, absolute genius.
- 
- 5 This is more on the course structure but sometimes I feel like it's going too fast. Especially the transition from HW2 to HW3 made me almost want to drop the course.
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- 6 I think the grading scale for homework assignments can be quite harsh. I often find myself quite nervous about receiving homework feedback because even a small mistake could often result in a low final grade. I think that this fear for my grade often distracted me from actually focusing on what I got wrong and how I could build on this. As a result, I think having a grading scale that does not penalize

students as harshly for small errors could improve moral and shift student perspective from their grade to the actual feedback as others have told me they also feel the same regarding their homework grades.

- 7 Thought course was good as is
- 8 The professor already does a great job, perhaps having a note page of key takeaways from each week for the homework would be nice.
- 9 I took this class and a non-CS major (as an elective) and I feel I was assumed to have to understand a lot of concepts that do not naturally come to non-CS majors. I did feel disadvantaged because of this, and the homework was really heavy and difficult. I would have loved to see this course more inclusive for non-majors just taking it as an elective (or to provide extra help to those students specifically), because I found the difficulty a bit discouraging to continue exploring coding. Also, since it was an elective for me and I'm not moving forward to the next class, I feel Dr Racket might not help me in real-world applications.
- 10 After programming in class, it would help to post the final code at the end of the lecture online. This way, students have sort of an answer key to compare their work in class to.
- 11 I think that some homework problems and exam problems could have been worded more clearly. If you asked for clarification on piazza, the professor could never really answer a question as they said that answering the question would be helping you solve the problem (despite the question being for clarification on what the problem was asking).
- 12 Go slower
- 13 Going to lecture is useless, because he has a lot of code pre prepared and types super quickly so taking notes is really hard unless you download the starter files before class. Also class is an hour long but the online videos cover the same material in like ~30 mins so just watch those are your own pace instead.
- 14 The instructor could possibly make the communication between grades and students more streamlined, and also communicate expectations to students from day one to eliminate the lack of clarity that is sometimes present.
- 15 I have nothing to complain about the professor. He is super great!  
Learning Dr.Racket is the worst part of this course because, in my opinion, it is a language that will no longer be used in my DS major life,
- 16 Not much. I think the only thing is that he doesn't really know the students but thats more by virtue of being in a big class.
- 17 n/a
- 18 Everything was done pretty well
- 19 Level the balance of difficulty between the homework and exams.
- 20 Type just like 5% slower
- 21 Nothing in my mind, he was exactly what I needed in this class.
- 22 As someone with coding experience in Python and Java, it was frustrating to be so harshly evaluated on things that didn't matter in my 4 high school courses. I also don't understand the point of teaching people DrRacket, and not just jumping into Python or C, coding languages actually used in the work force, like every other school. This is much more an issue with the curriculum than the instructor.
- 23 Slow the course down a little, or rather what we learn together/ in the same week. Sometimes it seemed I was supposed to understand certain things right away. The course was also very fast-paced, and it seemed I was always playing catch up. I needed more time with the material, at least more than one week.
- 24 have it no be in racket
- 25 The grading felt inconsistent at times, and certain aspects of the code seemed more heavily weighted than they should have been
- 26 Provide a copy of the notes taken in class,  
Many times he would write code faster then I could type so a lot of my code ended up not working and the lectures would use different words or not have all of the code that was gone over in class.  
The lectures still helped a lot tho but would have been better to have the original code as well.
- 27 It would be awesome to have more example/practice problems for the exams, I always did the practice exams and then I would redo homeworks/labs to study, but I think that if I had more problems to do that were completely new to me and I had never seen before that would help me prepare more for taking the exam and coding on the spot. Also, I struggled with the multiple choice, so maybe extra multiple choice practice outside of the video lectures would be helpful too.
- 28 Somehow rework coding partners. I felt that me and my coding partners knowledge level was unbalanced causing me to "carry" the team for the most part.
- 29 The only suggestion would be to take time to show the class every useful shortcut on the keyboard.
- 30 Sometimes I wish that instead of going through so many examples we went through part by part one TO DO and really broke down what each part meant and how it affected each part of the function.
- 31 nothing
- 32 At points he went a little too quickly when writing code so that at some points I was a little lost.
- 33 Don't change a thing.

**Q: Please expand on the instructor's strengths and/or areas for improvement in facilitating inclusive learning.**

- 1 So enthusiastic about teaching and the course content! Lectures are always funny and light hearted but still very informative. Prof Derbinsky is great at explaining complex ideas. I have no previous experience in computer science, but I was able to excel in the class and didn't feel excluded from the subject.
- 2 Prof. Derbinsky is very kind and charismatic which helps the class atmosphere greatly.
- 3 Derbinsky is a wonderful professor who through the way he teaches, you can tell he loves and is passionate about his job and what he is teaching. The way he teaches actively involves student participation, which makes it much easier to pay attention during lecture.
- 4 Kept the class engaged at all times.
- 5 Thank god for the videos
- 6 Prof. Derbinsky really made our lectures very inclusive by inviting us to share our ideas and ask questions. Whenever someone shared an answer that was incorrect, instead of directly correcting them which can be embarrassing in such a large lecture, he would guide them towards the right answer which allows for them to learn more and clear up the misunderstanding for anyone else struggling with the concept who might have been too nervous to ask.
- 7 Professor teaches extremely well, answer questions smoothly and thoughtfully, and keeps the class interesting and moving forwards. Always uses time effectively and helps with comprehension if needed. It would be nice to have more time with the professor in smaller groups, but the lecture style doesn't allow for this type of learning.
- 8 The course was very organized and well-structured, easy to follow what was needed week-to-week. I feel that the homework was very heavy, especially leading up to exam weeks and the final exam right after the thanksgiving break which was stressful. I might have a different perspective as a non-CS major, but I feel the course should be inclusive for everyone, even those who are taking it as an elective, but it felt overwhelming for me and took more hours a week than some of my major courses.
- 9 I cannot really think of anything as the professor did a very good job.
- 10 Effective teacher
- 11 Entusiastic, move too quick in class
- 12 The instructor is overall a very effective instructor: he is passionate and that comes through effective teaching and lecturing. By answering all the questions in class, no matter what the caliber was, he promoted an inclusive learning environment.
- 13 Kind, effective using the class time, helping students as much as he can
- 14 I think Nate Derbinsky created a ver inclusive space.
- 15 most of the non-perfect scores were from me not using the online sources myself
- 16 N/A
- 17 He is very passionate about the course and you can tell, his explanations are always really easy to follow.
- 18 Please continue with your silly jokes, and the relatable way you navigate and teach this course, it really helped, and thank you so so much for your understanding of one exam not defining our whole semester.
- 19 good
- 20 I always enjoyed going to Professor Derbinsky's lectures because he always did his best to make it fun and incorporate jokes into the examples, we used in class in order to make the lecture more interesting. He was also always available after class if anyone wanted to talk to him about anything about the class.
- 21 This was a great class and I made a ton of friends! Lecture was always fun to go to; I learned a lot and I'm excited for my future CS classes. Thank you so much!
- 22 n/a
- 23 The teacher was able to teach the class effectively.
- 24 god level
- 25 nothing
- 26 Prof. Derbinsky understands that his course can be difficult for a lot of students and trys really hard to combat the stress and confusion from his students by being positive and eager to help.

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience (26 comments)

**Q: Please comment on your experience of the online course environment in the open-ended text box.**

- 1 Very well organized and good communication!

- 2 Great layout of course- easy to know when things are due and where to submit them.
- 3 Very good videos that explained the course material pretty well!
- 4 The only thing I wish was different about the Canvas page was that the dates were listed next to the week numbers. As we got later into the year, I struggled to remember what week number we were on, which made looking at the outline for the course confusing. I feel that having dates written next to these week numbers could solve this problem. Everything else was very easy though, and I especially liked how the assignments, cards, and starter files were organized.
- 5 Professor made very helpful videos on the week's content that could be watched in addition to lecture. Very good!
- 6 The lectures available online helped reinforce my knowledge and fill in the gaps of things I did not understand in-class.
- 7 Classes were in person but the lecture videos uploaded to canvas were helpful. Virtual office hours with the TA's were helpful too.
- 8 All content posted online is helpful, and promotes self learning
- 9 I attended this class in-person. The canvas page was very organized, and I was able to easily find assignments.
- 10 online lecture and course organization are dope
- 11 Great experience and intro to CS
- 12 online video lessons r godsend
- 13 The online course environment is pretty organized with the Canvas home page and all of the class's content is divided well. There was not exactly any interaction online between classmates the only communication online that would happen was between graders and students.
- 14 It was really good! I always felt supported.
- 15 I primarily went to this class in-person.
- 16 The online video modules were super helpful and the home page on canvas was very organized and easy to follow.
- 17 N/A
- 18 good
- 19 I think the materials could be organized better. Everything was only accessible on the home page. It would be nice if things were organized into modules that way we don't have to scroll and search through and entire list to find what we are looking for.
- 20 There were numerous videos that were available online and posted to the canvas page that went over different topics that were talked about during the lecture and helped give more understanding about those topics. In addition, the piazza and online office hours were very helpful when it came to questions about the homework.
- 21 Easy to navigate overall and find any files/resources I needed. I loved the video lectures to help reinforce concepts.
- 22 The TA office hours were immensely helpful and the online presentation made them easy to access in my schedule.
- 23 The videos used to go along with the class were excellent and helped in understanding of the subject.
- 24 I never really used the online material unless I was really stuck on something. Learnt well from in class
- 25 I wish that there was a section on our canvas page that had a list of assignments that were due along with the due dates since the beginning of the semester to help plan out the semester in the early weeks.
- 26 Canvas was really organized and Nate was really responsive on Piazza.

### Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (31 comments)

#### **Q: What I could have done to make this course better for myself.**

- 1 I should've started on the homework assignments earlier. In particular, I should've started over the weekend they are first assigned so that it's easier to ask questions to TAs (office hours gets extremely busy later in the week, so coming in early is critical). Also, reviewing the homework and lab solutions more frequently would've helped me better understand the lecture materials.
- 2 If I had wanted to study a little more I could have utilized the textbook better.
- 3 I could have tried writing code independently more often to practice the skills that we learned in lecture while they were still fresh in my mind.
- 4 Done more practice w/ programming during my free time to get myself familiar with the new computer language.
- 5 Looking over all the walkthroughs and videos would help me gigantically.
- 6 Watching the videos outside of class was an extra step I could have taken; however, I felt that everything was explained well in class, so I did not feel the need to watch them.

- 7 Check my work on tests and homework. Lost a lot of points this semester for careless errors.

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- 8 Coming in with some coding experience most likely would've helped with some basic coding skills. However, it wasn't necessary, I just had to set a lot of time aside to learn.

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- 9 Read more of the textbook - the class lectures were sufficient to cover for the homework and exams and to most it seems the textbook was optional and very dense. I feel it could have helped me grasp concepts quicker though,

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- 10 Reach out to office hours.

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- 11 I could have gone to office hours more for whenever I did not understand something.

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- 12 attend lecture more

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- 13 Start HW earlier

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- 14 attend the accel lectures

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- 15 I could have kept up with the textbook readings so that I would understand information presented in the lecture better.

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- 16 I could have done the reading but I found the lectures were a great learning tool.

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- 17 Go to Office hours more often.

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- 18 Reach out to the professor more often.

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- 19 n/a

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- 20 Try harder to study the material, though I absorbed it well enough to do all of the work needed for the class.

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- 21 Have more one on one with the teacher in OH

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- 22 nothing

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- 23 Be more active in catching up when I missed class

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- 24 go to office hours early on,  
review lectures online

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- 25 I could have watched more videos about the topics I didn't quite understand.

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- 26 Ask more questions in class

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- 27 Read the textbook

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- 28 started earlier and started videos and reading earlier.

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- 29 Review class material through the online lectures

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- 30 Study up more

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- 31 I could have put in more effort in understanding each step of the homework and lab problems, every single time and encouraged my partner to slow down and explain his thought processes to help me understand the content better for exams.