

## Fundamentals of Computer Sci 1 (Fall 2019 202010)

Instructor: **Derbinsky, Nathaniel**  
 Section: **02**  
 Course Title: **Fundamentals of Computer Sci 1**  
 Course ID: **10460**  
 Subject: **CS**

Enrollment: **109**  
 Responses Incl Declines: **55**  
 Declines: **6**  
 Department: **Computer Science**  
 Number: **2500**

### Course Related Questions

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Course Median
The syllabus helped me to learn.	49	44%	4.1	4.0
The textbook(s) helped me to learn.	49	44%	3.8	4.0
The materials posted online, including Blackboard, helped me to learn.	49	44%	4.1	4.0
The out-of-class assignments and fieldwork helped me to learn.	49	44%	4.5	5.0
The lectures helped me to learn.	49	44%	4.4	5.0
The in-class discussions and activities helped me to learn.	49	44%	4.3	4.0
The classroom technology helped me to learn.	49	44%	4.4	5.0
The required textbook(s) were important for my success in this course.	49	44%	3.8	4.0
I would recommend that the instructor continue requiring the textbook(s).	49	44%	4.0	4.0
The required digital and/or other supplemental materials were important for my success in this course.	49	44%	4.1	4.0
I would recommend the instructor continue requiring the digital and/or supplemental materials.	49	44%	4.2	4.0
I found this course intellectually challenging.	46	42%	4.6	5.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree; -1:Not applicable;

### Learning Related Questions

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Course Median
I learned a lot in this course.	49	44%	4.5	5.0
I learned to apply course concepts and principles.	49	44%	4.6	5.0
I developed additional skills in expressing myself orally and in writing.	49	44%	4.1	4.0
I learned to analyze and evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.	49	44%	4.3	4.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree; -1:Not applicable;

Instructor Related Questions: Nathaniel Derbinsky

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Course Median
The instructor possessed the basic communication skills necessary to teach the course.	49	44%	4.7	5.0
The instructor clearly communicated ideas and information.	49	44%	4.7	5.0
The instructor clearly stated the objectives of the course.	49	44%	4.6	5.0
The instructor covered what was stated in the course objectives and syllabus.	49	44%	4.6	5.0
The instructor came to class prepared to teach.	49	44%	4.7	5.0
The instructor used class time effectively.	49	44%	4.7	5.0
The instructor provided sufficient feedback.	49	44%	4.4	5.0
The instructor fairly evaluated my performance.	49	44%	4.4	5.0
The instructor is someone I would recommend to other students.	49	44%	4.6	5.0
The instructor treated students with respect.	49	44%	4.7	5.0
The instructor acknowledged and took effective action when students did not understand the material.	49	44%	4.5	5.0
The instructor was available to assist students outside of class.	49	44%	4.4	5.0
The instructor displayed enthusiasm for the course.	49	44%	4.7	5.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree; -1:Not applicable;

## Instructor Effectiveness: Nathaniel Derbinsky

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Course Median
What is your overall rating of this instructor's teaching effectiveness?	49	44%	4.7	5.0

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

## Course Related Questions (20 comments)

### Q: Please comment on the strength and/or weakness of the required textbook/course materials.

- 1 Materials overall were necessary but could be improved to more strongly and clearly reflect what we're actually learning in the course. It was hard to find the specific topics we were learning in the material given to us at times.
- 2 The textbook was provided freely and consisted of thoroughly explained topics and following practice problems. However, it was difficult to find solutions to the examples if you did not have time to review your work with TAs during office hours.
- 3 textbook could use more explanation
- 4 Textbook covered concepts very thoroughly. However, it could often be overwhelming in how much there was to read, leading to me very quickly skimm and not really doing many of the examples.
- 5 It was helpful in the beginning for understanding the intro concepts, but in the latter half of the semester, the more difficult concepts were not taught well in the book.
- 6 textbook was useful but readings were too long and verbose resulting in myself and most of my peers neglecting to read the textbook after the first few weeks
- 7 The textbook was only useful in providing some tables.
- 8 Textbook sometimes not super helpful.
- 9 The textbook reading was always nice as it was always nice to have a reading quiz to boost our grade. However, I often felt that it was confusing to read the textbook ahead of time and it often did not explain clearly what we learned in class and it sometimes covered things that we did not do in class (for example, batch-io was in the second/third week of reading but we did not learn about it in class until a few weeks ago near the end of the semester).
- 10 The textbook was very hard for me to understand. It didn't seem to complement the course well and many simple concepts that were

covered in class seemed over complicated by the textbook.

- 11 Manual seemed a bit vague. Would be easier to understand if there were proper examples of codes.
- 12 N/A
- 13 The course textbook is very information dense, but the reading quizzes help students extract the important information for every topic.
- 14 The racket reference site is very helpful for syntax, the textbook is also helpful as a supplemental source to lecture and labs.
- 15 Maybe it's because I came in with prior experience, but I didn't feel like the labs were necessary for me to improve my understanding of course materials. However, they are a good resource for those that need it.
- 16 textbook was helpful but sometimes a little confusing
- 17 The notes posted on piazza, lab solutions, and past HW solutions were all very helpful to do the homework and study for the exams.
- 18 I enjoy having the textbook so accessibly. Additionally, all of the course materials given are super helpful - use them to your advantage!
- 19 The textbook was very useful for looking up quick things in dr. racket so it was very useful while doing the homework.
- 20 The text book needs to have more examples of the given functions/aspects of Dr. Racket.

### Learning Related Questions (18 comments)

#### **Q: Please comment on the strengths of this course and/or ways to improve this course.**

- 1 The course is very challenging and thoroughly planned to teach students of varying experiences in cs. The course is very "hands-on" experiential instead of straight lecture of concepts such as what the textbook explains reinforces, covering all angles of teaching experiences.
- 2 Do it in Python instead of Racket
- 3 Very useful in terms of teaching computer science basics. Homework assignments were challenging and required a lot of time and thought, but were 100% doable. I liked coming up with solutions and learning to reason through problems.
- 4 lighter weight assignments would be greatly appreciated. partner programming is great only if your partner is good, this concept should be taught before it is implemented. many people just rely on their partners and then fail everything they do solo
- 5 It is a very good course in introducing the fundamentals of computer science.
- 6 Office hours were sometimes over crowded and chaotic.
- 7 I didn't really like learning a new language in DrRacket that I wasn't ever explained how it would be useful in the future. In addition, I often felt as though the lectures went too fast and did not cover nearly what we needed to do on the homework. The homework problems were way too difficult and a lot of the time the partner pairings made the work even more difficult. I feel as though the homework should be given more time, or at least be made less difficult.
- 8 Course material was engaging and enjoyable, while also challenging.
- 9 Office hours were great only when one was able to get a TA's help. Understandable by the limitations of helping everyone.
- 10 N/A
- 11 The course could be improved by making the homework assignments shorter, particularly problems involving world programs. Practicing world programs did not help to prepare for exams, and there was little crossover to the other skills we learned.  
  
The two exams should be worth less than 60% of the grade, given that the labs and most classes focused on being able to solve homework problems.
- 12 The homeworks required you not only to apply what you learned in lecture but think for yourself and problem solve.
- 13 Awesome class! The one thing I would change is the it was always confusing whether the professor wanted people to call out answers or raise their hands for specific questions, which made it a little difficult sometimes. Other than that I absolutely loved the class,
- 14 Don't use Racket
- 15 Exams should not be given on paper, we did not code on paper once during the semester so why would our most important tests not be on a computer? You guys are too stubborn to make any changes and don't actually listen to feedback, as evidenced by students pleading with you to give answers for practice exams on Piazza and your refusal. But hey, maybe you'll actually listen this time.
- 16 This course has taught me a lot. Even just in partner work, I learned a lot more. I do wish the partnering utilized a better system, but I understand that is extremely hard to do.
- 17 This course was difficult but I enjoyed it. The workload was sometimes a little too much but it was something we had to learn to get used to.
- 18 This course could be improved by having more group work in lecture.

Instructor Related Questions: Nathaniel Derbinsky (25 comments)

**Q: Describe instructor's strengths, areas for improvement, and any additional comments.**

- 1 pretty oool dude
- 2 Enthusiastic professor. He was very good at explaining concepts for a class that is guaranteed to have students coming from a variety of coding experiences. His explanations and reasoning were clear and usually easy to follow. Very respectful to students and easy to talk to.
- 3 Super enthusiastic about Fundies and also the way he taught was very clear and interesting and easy to understand
- 4 would benefit from reduced emphasis on individually working through problems in class, the section was too large to get my questions answered often
- 5 Sometimes went over material a bit too fast.
- 6 Professor Derbinsky is a wonderful professor! I wish I could have him again in the future.
- 7 Prof Derbinsky is a really good guy. Definitely thankful I had him as my professor. Very patient and kind. A lot of times in lab people in other classes hadn't learned stuff yet that we were doing in homeworks. Nate always kept up with the material and homework schedule which I appreciated. He didn't get tired or seem to put in less effort later in the semester as some teachers seem to do... he brought his enthusiasm all the way until the end. One of the best teachers I've had in a math/science type class ever. Can't say anything bad about him.
- 8 Overall I enjoyed the class and thought it was great. One thing that stuck out that was challenging was rushing to finish the code nearing the end of class. Maybe recording class could also be a big plus.
- 9 N/A
- 10 Nate Derbinsky is a great professor
- 11 Professor Derbinsky has been one of the best instructors I've ever had. He knows how to keep the class engaged and makes concepts very simple to understand. He encourages students to participate in the lecture instead of just talking at us and answering his own questions, which promotes active learning rather than passive learning, and definitely helped me to learn.
- 12 Professor Derbinsky was an overall good professor, however when I met with him during his office hours expressing my own concern and frustrations with the class he explained to me that this is a "weed" out class which was extremely disheartening for me.
- 13 Professor Derbinsky was engaging and taught the class in a way everyone could keep up with and learn from. I really enjoyed his lectures and found him very helpful during office hours as well. He thoroughly explained concepts I was confused on in office hours. He cares about the students and what they learn and I feel that he possessed the right energy to keep everyone engaged during lectures.
- 14 Nate was great!
- 15 Professor Derbinsky is very enthusiastic about programming, and it shows in the way he teaches. He shows up well-prepared to teach. Often times, I found myself with a question and he would answer it without even asking. He is a very good teacher.
- 16 He is very enthusiastic towards the course and his students. He brightens the classroom atmosphere with making fun and creative exercises when teaching the material and posted the notes on each lesson for reference. He is very knowledgeable about the course material and open to accepting other answers students may venture and explaining why they are incorrect or if they could also be used.
- 17 He is a very good professor who is helpful to students and can teach very effectively.
- 18 Very strong communicator, he made the course material easier to understand and is very engaging.
- 19 The instructor has a good understanding of the course material, and occasionally comes up with exciting real-world applications. He could improve by being more transparent about grading for homeworks and tests. He could also answer clearly on Piazza, rather than appeal to his assertion that "the CS department sometimes leaves questions intentionally vague/ambiguous so that students have to find the best interpretation".
- 20 Did a good job breaking down material into basic questions that can be used to solve most of the problems you encounter when coding.
- 21 Professor Derbinsky cares a lot about students and making sure they understand the material. He's very approachable and is a great lecturer.
- 22 Often purposefully condescending to students. very well qualified and not a bad lecturer, but a good example of a arrogant CS professor
- 23 Great teacher. I would normally lose focus in a class like this but he was good at keeping students attention. I also like the abundance of practice problems in class.
- 24 Prof. Derbinsky is one of my favorite professors - he's enthusiastic and keeps me listening, but he also effectively teaches above and beyond.
- 25 Very engaging and helpful!

