

Database Design (Fall 2020 202110)

Instructor: **Derbinsky, Nathaniel**
 Section: **02**
 Course Title: **Database Design**
 Course ID: **13447**
 Subject: **CS**

Enrollment: **86**
 Responses Incl Declines: **37**
 Declines: **0**
 Department: **Computer Science**
 Number: **3200**

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Course Median
Online course materials were organized to help me navigate through the course week by week.	37	43%	4.6	5.0
Online interactions with my instructor created a sense of connection in the virtual classroom.	37	43%	4.6	5.0
Online course interactions created a sense of community and connection to my classmates.	36	41%	4.0	4.0
I had the necessary computer skills and technology to successfully complete the course.	37	43%	4.6	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	Course Median
The syllabus was accurate and helpful in delineating expectations and course outcomes.	37	43%	4.6	5.0
Required and additional course materials were helpful in achieving course outcomes.	37	43%	4.2	4.0

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

Learning Related Questions

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Course Median
In-class sessions were helpful for learning.	37	43%	4.4	5.0
Out-of-class assignments and/or fieldwork were helpful for learning.	37	43%	4.5	5.0
This course was intellectually challenging.	37	43%	4.4	5.0
I learned a lot in this course.	37	43%	4.6	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	Course Median
The instructor came to class prepared to teach.	37	43%	4.9	5.0
The instructor used class time effectively.	37	43%	4.8	5.0
The instructor clearly communicated ideas and information.	37	43%	4.7	5.0
The instructor provided sufficient feedback.	37	43%	4.5	5.0
The instructor fairly evaluated my performance.	37	43%	4.6	5.0
The instructor was available to assist students outside of class.	37	43%	4.7	5.0
The instructor facilitated a respectful and inclusive learning environment.	37	43%	4.7	5.0
The instructor displayed enthusiasm for the course.	37	43%	4.8	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	Course Median
What is your overall rating of this instructor's teaching effectiveness?	37	43%	4.8	5.0

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

Instructor Related Questions: Nathaniel Derbinsky (53 comments)

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

- 1 I think this class does exactly what it's supposed to in that I feel that I have a strong understand of many aspects of databases that will be useful later on. I like that the professor explains that there is not a one size fits all solution and shows the benefits and drawbacks of different technologies and approaches.
- 2 Derbinsky is extremely helpful and will help students out as much as possible. He is friendly and easily approachable. The homeworks for the course were really helpful for learning the material.
- 3 Professor Derbinsky is so nice and sweet and really knows a lot about databases. He was extremely helpful with homework and in class as well. Many of the slideshows and units were quite high-level, but Professor Derbinsky was able to make the information manageable.
- 4 Is an expert on the topic of database design
- 5 The instructor was very prepared during lectures and with uploading notes and course material.
- 6 His enthusiasm just makes the class enjoyable
- 7 Course material was interesting, assignments were fair and challenging, and the professor was very effective at conveying information during and outside of class
- 8 Great teacher and keeps class interesting
- 9 Professor Derbinsky was very good about keeping the class engaged, even if it was mostly remote.
- 10 Professor Derbinsky is a passionate and well-spoken computer scientist. His industry knowledge translates well into the course, and he knows how to convey real-world problems in a way that even an inexperienced database designer like myself could understand.
- 11 Professor Derbinsky was very clear about expectations so students did not feel confused. Exams were difficult but fair. Professor Derbinsky was also extremely understanding and helpful since I had an injury during this semester and was available to meet with me to teach me what I was missing in lectures so I did not fall behind and was able to keep up with course material, showing that he truly cares for all his students and their success. I could not recommend Professor Derbinsky more. Also having the milestone was super helpful to keep us in check and make sure that we were working on it throughout the semester.
- 12 The PPT is very useful.
- 13 Prof. Derbinsky knows how to command a room, and knows how to simplify challenging topics for students. He takes the time to answer questions, and allows time for relating the coursework to real-life scenarios.
- 14 I really like Prof Derbinsky. I think he was very enthusiastic and I learned a lot from the class. I came in with little background in databases and he helped create a strong foundation.

- 15 Prof. Derbinsky is extremely kind and cheerful in class. I think the lessons and assignments were on par with what we learned in class.
- 16 Professor Derbinsky clearly enjoys teaching database. He always showed up to class with high energy and enthusiasm for teaching. He made the class interesting and enjoyable.
- 17 very good
- 18 Nate clearly wants his students to succeed. He was super easy to reach if I had any questions via both Piazza and office hours.
- 19 Nate is a great professor. Professional, knowledgeable, and genuinely loves teaching.
- 20 The professor is clearly excited by the material and passionate about teaching.
- 21 Nate is one of my favorite professors at Northeastern. Quick response time on piazza is appreciated as in the few times instructions are unclear its nice having clarification within an hour.
- 22 Prof Derbinsky made learning topics interactive and easily digestible. The responses on Piazza were quick and informative (and friendly!). I really enjoyed his teaching style

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

- 1 I think that the grading can be tough. It is very easy to lose points on hws for little things and difficult to achieve 95 for an A even if you understand all the material.
- 2 nothing :)
- 3 The lectures should have been recorded—some of the slides were confusing on their own and it would've helped tremendously to hear Professor Derbinsky talk about the information on each slide.
- 4 Can't think of anything
- 5 The instructor can record lectures for students to rewatch later in case they do not understand some concepts well.
- 6 I didn't like having an assignment due the day after Thanksgiving
- 7 Teach/discuss everything needed to complete assignments and projects
- 8 I thought it was taught perfectly, perhaps in the future create 2-3 scenarios in various fields (i.e a biology related track, a manufacturing/business related track, an aerospace data related track) for potential final projects.
- 9 Not a whole lot, but maybe the lecture slides could be more "whole" so that students who miss lectures could understand almost everything. Then again, he was able to meet outside of class so if lectures were missed, I could keep up and I understand the slides are supposed to be general and not include everything - so I guess Professor Derbinsky really could not do anything to make the course better since it was the best it could be given the COVID circumstances.
- 10 Provide recorded lecture video.
- 11 Nothing, this course was great!
- 12 Provide a practice exam for the midterms because although the review sides were great, more practice would have helped me on the exams especially with the stress of the online format.
- 13 I think that many of the lectures were rushed through, especially when it came to assignments towards the end including Assignments when we switched from SQL to java and the Final project. Although Fundies 2 is a prereq, many of us have taken this semesters before and not all of us have a background in programming. All the TAs had very different answers and approaches and a lot of the time did not have answers to questions because they were not familiar with the assignment/expectation or just did not understand the questions in the assignment. I also think the exam time given was less due to the fact that everyone is remote, some of us are international and live in areas where power cuts are very regular. We had ten extra minutes in the second exam but I still did not feel this was enough. It would make sense to devote the entire class time, rather than just an hour when drawing, other software, and testing queries is required.
- 14 I wish that the lectures were recorded so that I could go back and watch to clarify concepts I didn't completely understand from the slides or during class time.
- 15 not much
- 16 It would have been beneficial to spend more time walking through the interaction of Java and SQL. As someone who is not as familiar with Java, I found it a bit difficult to follow the code.
- 17 More practical examples than theory.
- 18 My only issue was the lack of recording the lectures. If we couldn't come to a session, it would have been nice to have a recording, but the powerpoints were helpful nonetheless. Other than that, I think this course was taught very well.
- 19 Tough question, I really enjoyed this course and felt it was done really well. Perhaps, having slides AND beeper open to explain SQL concept. The slides were good but I think showing how small changes could change the result could explain how queries work better. Or a student can question how it works and professor could type it out and explain it as he goes.

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

- 1 I found the learning environment inclusive.
- 2 The teacher is full of passion and energy.
- 3 He is really understanding of students. For the first midterm he allowed students who did poorly to get extra credit even after giving a big bonus to our grades. Really understanding, not condescending at all.
- 4 He was extremely helpful, provided great feedback, and all assignments were key on what we discussed in class.
- 5 More resources for students that need more help rather than just OH since the TAs were not onboard with the assignments and OH were so limited compared to the many hours all day long for Fundies.
- 6 The professor is very knowledgeable. He could maybe encourage more group work.
- 7 Expanded above
- 8 good at engaging in person and remote students
- 9 I'm guessing some people have not done any Java course yet which may make the final project and programming assignments hard.
- 10 Very good teacher but it felt like the material covered in class was very broad and not all knowledge needed for the projects was covered
- 11 Just an amazing guy. You can tell he really wants his students to learn and do well in the class. I don't think there is much room for improvement here.
- 12 Prof. Derbinsky made sure remote folks and people in class could participate, I felt like he did an excellent job

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience (17 comments)

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

- 1 The online zoom lectures were sometimes fast paces, but overall good. One problem was that if you miss a live lecture it can be hard to get everything you need from the slides.
- 2 Professor Derbinsky had probably the best remote transition course I had since the pandemic. The coursework is really organized and the homework helps a lot.
- 3 Professor Derbinsky did not record videos, so we just tuned into live, online lectures. He was pretty good about keeping a balance between in-person students and online students, especially since most of the class would be online.
- 4 There wasn't a noticeable difference between in regards to other cs classes I've had in person
- 5 This class worked well enough with the online environment. The professor did a very good job making the class interactive and interesting while over zoom.
- 6 No comments, it was satisfactory and professor did a good job being available for us all.
- 7 Syllabus was very helpful with keeping expectations organized and Piazza responses were prompt which was also extremely useful. As for the classroom, being able to see Professor Derbinsky and the board made it feel more like a classroom environment and helped me pay attention more.
- 8 I feel tired because of the time difference.
- 9 Prof. Derbinsky provides materials for class, and keeps them organized on Canvas, which allows for easy review.
- 10 The online course environment was good with the format of the class. I would have liked using break-out rooms for in class exercises with classmates instead of just going through the slides. It would have let me tie information together and communicate with others. However, given how large the class was it makes sense that this wasn't done.
- 11 Very engaging professor so when classes were completely remote it wasn't boring/dry!
- 12 I liked how Professor Derbinsky engaged both students within the classroom and online. He was very good at encouraging participation online and responding to questions over Zoom.
- 13 not bad
- 14 Nate did a great job teaching in the hybrid format!
- 15 it was really good, i wish lectures could have been recorded since its hard to catch everything the professor says in class
- 16 He made the online learning very seamless and I enjoyed coming to class when I was assigned to.
- 17 The professor did a good job of reading the Zoom chat. I really liked participation and really appreciated that Prof. Derbinsky would look to chat and in the room. Sometimes, I feel in other classes if I type it might be passed over, but Derbinsky likes to ask the room and the

chat to include everyone.

Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (13 comments)

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

- 1 I wish I either read more of the textbook or didn't spend money on the textbook.
- 2 n/a
- 3 Plan workload better
- 4 attend class
- 5 Stop by office hours more frequently.
- 6 It is relatively difficult to pay attention through Zoom so I could have gone to more classes in person.
- 7 Preview the course.
- 8 I could have done more practice leading up to exams and reviewed past homeworks more. The first exam was challenging to get into the swing of classes online.
- 9 I could participate more in class to understand the content better.
- 10 nothing
- 11 Some of the lectures I was zoning out as it was all theory so I didn't grasp the concepts as well as I could have. I could've taken notes or paid more attention.
- 12 N/A
- 13 I missed one or two classes because I slept late the night before. I could've been more punctual and overall participate, engaging with my microphone instead of chat.