

Comments Report for Spring 2012, MATH 5010 Intro To Probability Section 1

Instructor: RASSOUL-AGHA, FIRAS (Primary)

Instructor	Student Disposition	Text Responses
		Question: List two things about the course content, materials or design that were effective for your learning, or make constructive suggestions for improvement.
		lecture notes and the homework
		I liked that the tests reflected the homework problems, but I actually prefer a class where homework is counted in the grade. It helps students to keep up on the class better and I also like when all of the hard work spent on the homework problems contributes toward the grade. The homework problems at the end of each lecture note section also did not always correspond to the material in the lecture section, which was confusing. That could be organized a little better.
		The lecture notes were great, because they broke up the content in a eady-to-study way. The exams were WAY too far apart. It was basically like having three finals. The first exam was over a month after the course started.
		The homework problems were effective in helping me prepare for exam. However, I think I would have learned the material better if the exam questions were not taken directly from the homework.
		I wish the exams had more than a handful of problems. I also felt like I had to study the homework problems instead of the actual material in order to pass the exams.
		The Ash textbook is truly atrocious. Just because it's free does not necessarily make it worthwhile. Furthermore, while the lecture notes were very useful (as in, they made it completely unnecessary to attend class), they weren't a sufficient replacement for a textbook - the lecture-by-lecture organization wasn't great for understanding the material, and section for definitions and etc. would be helpful.
		While working out of the lecture notes had many benefits, it was frustrating going between it and the book. Lose the book- lecture notes would be sufficient. Maybe HW could be turned in for credit.
		More emphasis could be placed on application and less on theory.
		Make the questions on the test less computational and make them more about proving things.
		I'm a statistics major who hates answering surveys. Give me my damn grades.
		The lecture were extremely well organized which was great in case you had to miss a day or two. But I feel as though the lecture notes were not quite enough to learn everything needed for the course.
		Test questions were hit or miss. I'd prefer easier test questions, but that were not on the homework (fair trade?). Students were allowed to walk in/out of room during final... Enough time to look up answers to the final test questions on the HW. I suggest to prevent that next time.
		The lecture notes were good, nearly always easier to understand than the optional textbook. Suggestion: Offer a homework/quiz contribution for grading. Only three tests can be a little stressful.
		Having the entire grade based on only 18 questions (Midterm 1 - 5 questions, Midterm 2 - 4 questions, Final - 9 questions) was a bit unfair. With so few questions I can't see how the professor could accurately judge our comprehension. Also, struggling through the homework didn't earn us any credit beyond preparing us for the final.
		Lecture notes are very helpful, might help more to see examples outside the notes.
		The lecture notes were so helpful, I really appreciated how organized and easy to access they were.
		The materials were being updated so you needed to get the most recent.
		Tests reflected homework very well. Too much material for each test. There should have been a third test to help split it all up
		First I just need to say that this was by far the most difficult math class I have ever taken. I have never had trouble understanding math concepts, but my mind had a difficult time wrapping around probability theory. I believe a large part of the trouble was the book that was chosen for the course. By this I mean the one written by Robert Ash. It was terrible!!! <= wow was that three

		exclamations? Indeed it was.
		Question: List two things about this instructor that were effective for your learning, or make constructive suggestions for improvement.
RASSOUL-AGHA		it is difficult to do well in a mathematics course when no homework is graded and only three tests comprise your grade.
RASSOUL-AGHA		I liked the environment that Firas created in class. He was a very humble instructor and encouraged questions. One thing I disliked was his unavailability to schedule office hours sometimes.
RASSOUL-AGHA		His knowledge is incredible. Most math teachers get a little confused at least once during the semester, but he never did. He is not as boring as some of the other teachers.
RASSOUL-AGHA		I really wish he was more forgiving grade-wise. I generated undue stress by worrying obsessively about the exams when I should have been worrying about the homework.
RASSOUL-AGHA		Class was a bit boring - the instructor just read off of the lecture notes, making it completely unnecessary to attend class. The monotone delivery made it hard to understand what was important. However, the teacher was very nice and excited. Because the tests came straight from homework problems, I managed to get an A or A- without actually learning anything. I felt as though the course was not designed for learning, but for getting an easy grade, thereby earning the professor good course reviews.
RASSOUL-AGHA		Firas is super smart so every question anyone had would be answered quickly and correctly which was pretty cool. My only problem with Firas is when he was writing on the board he'd sometimes write super small to finish of a line of an equation.
RASSOUL-AGHA		I'm a statistics major who hates answering surveys. Give me my damn grades.
RASSOUL-AGHA		Firas is a great lecturer I really enjoyed going to this class. I would recommend finding a different book to use as supplement for this course.
RASSOUL-AGHA		The teacher was enthusiastic with the material and treated students with respect. Students were able to ask any question about the lecture and receive an appropriate response.
RASSOUL-AGHA		Firas is a good teacher. Knowledgeable and non-intimidating.
RASSOUL-AGHA		Professor Rassoul was a competent and patient instructor. Although I did very poorly in the class I believe this had to do with the method of testing as mentioned above and not his teaching ability. He was very kind, patient and thorough. At times his lectures were hard to follow as he went back and changed variables or values in previously written equations on the board but this is not uncommon in mathematics courses. He is definitely one of the better professors in mathematics I have had.
RASSOUL-AGHA		Very smart and fun, creates a good learning environment
RASSOUL-AGHA		Very likeable and smart. I wish I was that smart. Good energy.
RASSOUL-AGHA		Firas is an excellent professor, easy to get in contact with and willing to help with anything I needed. He always promptly answered emails and made himself as available as possible. I really appreciated him.
RASSOUL-AGHA		Funny guy with lot's of knowledge Very helpful and available out of class
RASSOUL-AGHA		I understand that there was a lot of material that the instructor needed to get through. As such, my suggestions may not be feasible. However, there are two things that the instructor could have done that would have been more conducive to my learning style. First, I really need a period of time at the beginning of class where we can discuss homework questions and go over them in class. otherwise, I keep making the same mistakes and can never figure out what I am doing wrong. The second thing that would have really helped me be successful is if there would have been more tests to break up the amount of information. I think part of my trouble with the test is that there was way too much information to remember. I literally took 2 or more vacation days from work, for each test, and still froze. With this said, the professor was amazing at answering my questions via email. I could not believe the speed that he would reply. It was very impressive, although the answers did not always

make sense because I could not envision them.