USC University of
Southern California

Individual Report for Instructor Lototsky (39635-20151 : MATH-408 Mathematical Statistics (39635))

USC Student Course Evaluations - Spring 2015

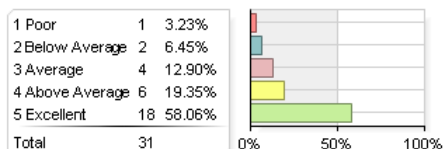Project Audience 39
Responses Received 31
Response Ratio 79.49%

Creation Date   Mon, May 25, 2015
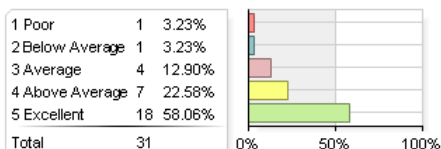
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How would you rate the instructor's effectiveness on the following items?
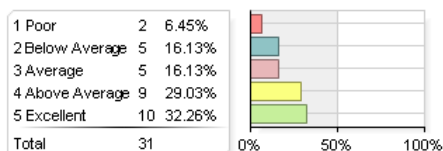
1. Clearly articulated course goals.

1 Poor	1	3.23%
2 Below Average	2	6.45%
3 Average	4	12.90%
4 Above Average	6	19.35%
5 Excellent	18	58.06%
Total	31	

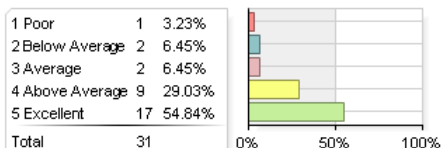| Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	4.23
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	+/-1.12
Population Standard Deviation	+/-1.10
Standard Error (base on SD)	+/-0.20
Standard Error (base on PSD)	+/-0.20

2. Organized course to achieve those goals.

1 Poor	1	3.23%
2 Below Average	1	3.23%
3 Average	4	12.90%
4 Above Average	7	22.58%
5 Excellent	18	58.06%
Total	31	

Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	4.29
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	+/-1.04
Population Standard Deviation	+/-1.02
Standard Error (base on SD)	+/-0.19
Standard Error (base on PSD)	+/-0.18

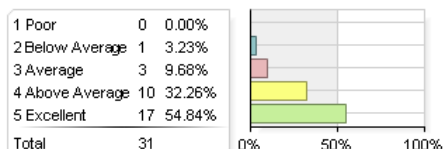3. Carefully explained difficult concepts, methods, and subject matter.

1 Poor	2	6.45%
2 Below Average	5	16.13%
3 Average	5	16.13%
4 Above Average	9	29.03%
5 Excellent	10	32.26%
Total	31	

Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	3.65
Median	4.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	+/-1.28
Population Standard Deviation	+/-1.26
Standard Error (base on SD)	+/-0.23
Standard Error (base on PSD)	+/-0.23

4. Encouraged students to participate in their learning (e.g., through discussion, projects, study groups and other appropriate activities).
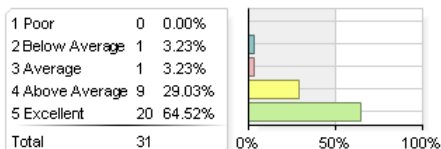
1 Poor	1	3.23%
2 Below Average	2	6.45%
3 Average	2	6.45%
4 Above Average	9	29.03%
5 Excellent	17	54.84%
Total	31	

Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	4.26
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	+/-1.06
Population Standard Deviation	+/-1.05
Standard Error (base on SD)	+/-0.19
Standard Error (base on PSD)	+/-0.19

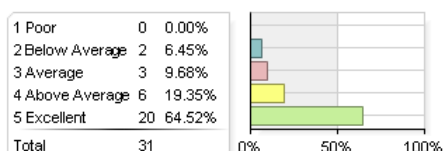5. Was accessible to students (e.g., during office hours, before and after class, etc.).

1 Poor	0	0.00%
2 Below Average	1	3.23%
3 Average	3	9.68%
4 Above Average	10	32.26%
5 Excellent	17	54.84%
Total	31	

Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	4.39
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	+/-0.80
Population Standard Deviation	+/-0.79
Standard Error (base on SD)	+/-0.14
Standard Error (base on PSD)	+/-0.14

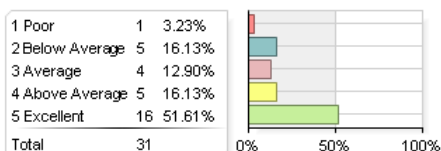6. Evaluated student work in fair and appropriate ways.

1 Poor	0	0.00%
2 Below Average	1	3.23%
3 Average	1	3.23%
4 Above Average	9	29.03%
5 Excellent	20	64.52%
Total	31	

Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	4.55
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	+/-0.72
Population Standard Deviation	+/-0.71
Standard Error (base on SD)	+/-0.13
Standard Error (base on PSD)	+/-0.13

7. Was enthusiastic about communicating the subject matter.

1 Poor	0	0.00%
2 Below Average	2	6.45%
3 Average	3	9.68%
4 Above Average	6	19.35%
5 Excellent	20	64.52%
Total	31	

Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	4.42

8. Stimulated student interest in the subject matter.

1 Poor	1	3.23%
2 Below Average	5	16.13%
3 Average	4	12.90%
4 Above Average	5	16.13%
5 Excellent	16	51.61%
Total	31	

Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	3.97
Median	5.00

Median	5.00	Mode		5
Mode	5	Standard Deviation		+/-1.28
Standard Deviation	+/-0.92	Population Standard Deviation		+/-1.26
Population Standard Deviation	+/-0.91	Standard Error (base on SD)		+/-0.23
Standard Error (base on SD)	+/-0.17	Standard Error (base on PSD)		+/-0.23
Standard Error (base on PSD)	+/-0.16			

How would you rate the instructor's effectiveness on the following items? (continued)

9. Presented subject matter in ways that were academically challenging.

1 Poor	0	0.00%
2 Below Average	2	6.45%
3 Average	3	9.68%
4 Above Average	10	32.26%
5 Excellent	16	51.61%
Total	31	

Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	4.29
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	+/-0.90
Population Standard Deviation	+/-0.89
Standard Error (base on SD)	+/-0.16
Standard Error (base on PSD)	+/-0.16
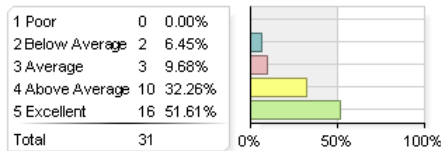
10. Provided students a valuable learning experience.

1 Poor	0	0.00%
2 Below Average	4	12.90%
3 Average	5	16.13%
4 Above Average	7	22.58%
5 Excellent	15	48.39%
Total	31	

Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	4.06
Median	4.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	+/-1.09
Population Standard Deviation	+/-1.08
Standard Error (base on SD)	+/-0.20
Standard Error (base on PSD)	+/-0.19

Overall, how would you rate this instructor?

Overall, how would you rate this course?

1 Poor	0	0.00%
2 Below Average	2	6.45%
3 Average	6	19.35%
4 Above Average	9	29.03%
5 Excellent	14	45.16%
Total	31	
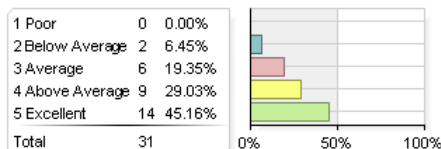
Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	4.13
Median	4.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	+/-0.96
Population Standard Deviation	+/-0.94
Standard Error (base on SD)	+/-0.17
Standard Error (base on PSD)	+/-0.17

What were this instructor's main strengths?

Comment

Knowledgeable, presented interesting ideas related to subject (even if not straight out of book), fair examinations, a variety of assessments (projects, midterms, homeworks, quizzes)

He is very knowledgable and passionate about his subject. In addition, he clearly communicates what he expects from his students

Made the class interesting. He didn't just explain the concepts from the books but he also explained why they are important

Exams and projects were straight forward and relevant to the course material. Easy to comprehend what was expected for exams and projects.

He was able to spark the interest of many students about statistics. He brought he passion into the classroom and it really showed in the way he spoke about the subject.

Extremely knowledgable about statistics

very helpful

He is very knowledgeable about the topic and understands that it is difficult to students to grasps at times and thus adjusts the difficulty. We were well ahead of the other course, which although made the class more difficult, made it worth taking. He constantly commented on how he would go on tangents, however I believe that it was a great mixture into the class. Especially when it would take time to process the other information presented.
I very much enjoyed this course. Significantly more than I enjoyed any other math course at USC.

I do not know if another evaluation section opens up for Gene, so I will comment here for him as well:
He was a great TA. I am very glad that his English is clear, he is my first TA that speaks English well. His humor mixes well with learning difficult material and created a great learning environment. I really wish more professor would add a bit of humor to their lectures. Most have random math jokes that most students do not understand.

passion for statistics

Professor Lototsky is very enthusiastic about the subject which made it easier for student to understand him and he also has an extensive knowledge in math including statistics. He was very consistent with the class schedule he made and so students can expect what topics will be covered each week. He also make his exams based on homework problems and quizzes so there are not any suprises. Fair grader.

Good knowledge of topic
Nice attitude
Really friendly
Liked he had he own website

He's very punctual and takes full advantage of the 50 minutes we have in class.

Professor Lototsky was very smart and would teach many things not in the book, which provided some variety.

Professor Lototsky has a lot of experience with teaching and statistics research. He is honest about his expectations for the class, and he encourages students who want to learn more to put more effort into the class.

Accessible, passionate, knows the material like the back of his hand.

Gave the bigger picture of math beyond exams.

Professor Lototsky's clear enthusiasm for the subject and for teaching it encourage students to go beyond the course material to pursue a deep and nuanced understanding of statistics and mathematics. While these efforts are potentially wasted on many students, I admire his resolve to inspire as many students as will hear him out.

He knows a lot about the class content, and he is enthusiastic about teaching. He is approachable to students and is willing to help. He really want student to learn.

Great course, learned a lot about statistics!

How might this instructor improve his or her teaching effectiveness?

Comment

although its a mathematical stats class, sometimes in focusing so much on the math/theory, one can lose perspective on how the ideas apply in statistical problems

I would recommend him to go over general concepts a little more.

write neater or darker

Lecture was not straightforward, attempted to delve into theoretical concepts before thoroughly explaining the basics.

Break down the topics of the course in a more structured form. One of my struggles in the course was not understanding prerequisite topics needed for a chapter.

Professor Lototsky often teaches at a very technical and theoretical level that is better suited for graduate students studying mathematics. For undergraduates who might not be math majors, perhaps an approach with more explanation and practical examples would be more effective.

I would approach all your future classes the same way you approached this one. I have no complaints, only good memories. Thank you for helping me get through this difficult topic.

post homework solutions since most of his homework are about derivation and indeed, my interest in knowing the truth was piqued. But some problems are so difficult and calculation-intensive and I would be willing to see that he could post his derivation to find an inspiration.

Too man times, Professor Lototsky goes off on digressions. He talks about material that is not related to the course and sometimes beyond what students have learn in undergrad. It would not be problem if he saved those digressions towards the end of lecture after going over relevant material. In other words, he should teach important material and then talk about interesting off-topic material in mathematics. There were matlab assignments and I wish some ideas on a handout on how to start the assignment.

He very frequently talks about how he gets bad ratings but will do nothing to change his teaching methods at all. Even things like "Students say that I do not respond to questions well in class. But that's fine" and then he continues on with class after barely attempting to answer any questions. For example, he will just laugh at you if you ask a question and scoff, as if how could you be so foolish not to know.
Which is actually surprising, considering he spends classtime lecturing about graduate level things, and by the end of the class lecture he mentions how we will never need this unless we go to graduate school for math. He actually polled the class and asked us about our intentions with pursuing math in the future, to which maybe 2 students out of the entire class said they were going to grad school. So first, he does not teach well, and second, he does not teach relevant course material. How can he expect us to understand and engage in graduate level statistics if we do not even understand undergraduate, upper division statistics?
I also wasted $200 buying our math book that we never actually opened.
It's actually pathetic that we have to spend so much money as USC students to take classes with such horrible professors who 1. don't teach well and 2. don't care that they don't teach well.

He needs to actually teach what this course is aimed for - NOT PhD level material just because he thinks it's fun. Over half of our classes were spent going over topics that very few people in the class even understood. Then he would spend the day before each exam just giving the answers to the test. Although this made the exams easy, it didn't help the students learn. There is a middle ground between material that is too advanced for the level of course and giving answers to the midterm. He did not find this middle ground.

Professor Lototsky could improve effectiveness by taking more time to explain basic concepts. It seemed like he assumed we all had a working knowledge of statistics before entering this class when many of us had never been introduced to statistics at all. Also, he spent a lot of time teaching advanced statistics concepts that very few (maybe 1 or 2) students could understand or follow. The rest of the class was lost during these lectures. I personally learned the most in this class while studying for the midterm exams.

In each topic, there was some fairly advanced material presented. Even though that material rarely makes it onto a test or HW, maybe slow down and really explain it so that even the non-stats experts can get it.

I felt that some homework problems were too difficult. Sometimes the TA did not know how to solve them and I would often result to googling and copying the answer off of the internet.

408 is a really hard class, and the first two weeks we did not do too much review of 407. I think many students were hard to catch up at first.
Also it would be better if we can use more examples in lectures.

Additional comments?

Comment

Enjoyed the class!

USC should create a clear curriculum on what topics are covered in math 407 and what topics are covered in math 408. In this way there will be no gaps in the transition from math 407 to math 408.

Thank you for you understanding and being so patient to me. Enjoy your summer.

make hws easier if possible

very good professor

Keep the hard work! Good luck in your next races.

He should not be an instructor at USC unless he changes something (which I doubt he will).

Not everyone in an undergraduate math class wants to get a PhD in math! He shouldn't cater to these students (of which there was only one in the 40 person class).

The computer projects were interesting, and I'm glad that you gave us so much freedom with the final experimental project.

I liked the use of computers in this class. I'd add even more, if it were up to me

I am very inspired by your marathon medals in your office. I decided to practice for marathon too :)