Student comments for Jonathan Cazalas, jcazalas@knights.ucf.edu

In this report of student comments, each student's comments are presented together in order in response to the following questions. If a student left no comments then nothing appears in this report from them.

1)   The thing(s) I like the MOST about this course

2)   The thing(s) I like the LEAST about this course

3)   What is your reaction to the method of evaluating your mastery of the course (i.e., testing, grading, out of class assignments (term papers), instructor feedback, etc.)

4)   Additional comments and suggestions for improvement

Instructor Name: Jonathan Cazalas

Computer Science/College of Engr & Comp Sci	COP3502C0001	COMPUTER SCIENCE I
Department/School	**Course-Section Number**	**Course Name**

235	63	26.81
Number of Students Enrolled	**Number Responding**	**% of Response**

1) Those notes are awesome! I really enjoyed coming to class. I also really liked how detailed our program assignments/notes were. OCD can be good at times. :)

2) The programs are HARD !! I'm still mourning the loss of my sleep. Yet, you did warn us.

3) Good.

4)

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1) I enjoyed the labs

2) n/a

3) Fair

4)

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1) Dedicated instructor, detailed power point slides for later study, good use of humor to facilitate learning, great TA's, fair and effective testing.

2) Labs.

3) Excellent. All tests and programs were graded fairly and tested our knowledge effectively.

4) Professor's unique style of teaching is awesome! One of the best courses I've taken yet at UCF.

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1) The professor was awesome, he took the time to explain things really well and his slides were epic.

2) I liked the whole course, but the programs were semi-intense.

3) I believe it was a good class in terms of evaluation of learning. The programs tested your problem-solving skills and the exams were semi-easy in the terms that no extreme cleverness required to solve the problems.

4) Keep teaching.

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1) Professor's heavy involvement in online discussion, professor's enthusiasm in lectures, excellent notes provided in class and online

2) Turnaround time for grades on assignments and tests (to be expected)

3) Average -- slow, but to be expected for a class of 200+ students

4)

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1)   The slides are incredible, and the beard was too.

2)

3)

4)   Teach the rest of my courses for my degree.

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1)   It was interesting and obviously totally relevant to my major.

2)   The assignments took longer than the assigned time frame every now and then and its distracting when taking more
      than three classes at a time.

3)   I did fair, currently holding a B, but not without effort.

4)

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1)   The tests were completely appropriate in difficulty: the amount you studied and attended class was reflected in your
      grade.

2)   The difficulty of the homework assignments as compared to the tests was completely inappropriate. Homework
      assignments were convoluted for the sake of being so, and were not reflective of the level nor type of question that one
      could expect to see on the tests.

3)   As previously stated, the tests were very fair. The homework assignments were pointlessly time consuming and intricate.

4)   To make a homework assignment unnecessarily time consuming does not make it useful for a student. I would suggest
      quality over quantity (in terms of important information conveyed rather than time consumed) when making the
      homework assignments in the future.

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1)   Exams

2)   Very Long Programs (2, 4, 6)

3)

4)

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1)   Demotivationals!

2)

3)

4)

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1) You try to help every student by making lectures easy to understand. You present every student with the information and ways to get help if s/he needs it. You try to help everyone do really well, and you really care about the individual students.

2) Sarah Buchanan's lab quizzes. Those were rushed and mean.

3) Grading was fine.

4) You're doing a fantastic job and I love CS1, and I'm an engineer.

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1)

2) this was by far my most demanding course as i expected. the programs could stand to be easier.

3) fair grading

4)

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1) The instructor obviously cares very much about his students and this course. Many supplemental resources are provided, and he is active on the discussion boards. He gives great lectures, and the assignments and tests are fair. Overall, a great teacher.

2) I think he cares a bit TOO much. That is, he can be very overbearing when it comes to slight or even merely implied criticism of the course. This can make him somewhat unapproachable for fear of being shot down or lectured on how easy he's made this course for us (even though he has).

3) Tests are very fair. Assignments are harder, but practical/relevant.

4) Just...I don't know. Don't be so uptight? You don't want to scare people away! Also, give 2001: A Space Odyssey another chance. It's still a "weird" film all the way through, but there is actual dialogue eventually.

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1) lectures are nice

2) nothing

3) good

4)

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1) cazales and the funnies

2) programming- only in the class because it's required (and kind of irrelevant) to my major

3) meh, TA's make mistakes grading

4) more funnies

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1) This guy has the most LEGIT slides on the planet.

2) The tests are too easy, lets ramp it up so scrubs don't pass the class.

3)   I believe I have a lot to learn and that my high average only reflects my study habits.

4)

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1)   The slides are excellent and Prof. Cazalas energy really helped me stay focused during the lectures even though I was usually tired. Not having to memorise formulas for tests thanks to the 'cheat sheet' is also a nice change from other courses.

2)   Meeting time, 9:30 is far to early for any class that requires critical thinking

3)   I feel that the tests and assignments were effective assessments

4)

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1)   You were enthusiastic and fun. Loved the fails

2)

3)

4)

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1)   Great organization, very thorough. OCD-ness pays off.

2)

3)   Lots of opportunities to bring up my grade. Fairness of exam questions were appreciated. I always felt that the resources given to us prepared us properly for every assignment or test.

4)

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1)   The notes were very helpful

2)   the programs were very stressful and lead to people failing the class

3)

4)

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1)   I liked the material covered and how it gave insight into different algorithms and their running time. I also thought the teacher was very interested in the students' learning, and it showed in his slides and teaching methods in class. He offers several different teaching materials, including his own and Guha's. I also thought grading was very fair. I also liked the software used by Sarah Buchanan in the labs for visualizing the code; I only wish we had access to this to practice with.

2) I think the instructor was a great teacher overall, but I do not agree that TAs and the instructor should not assist students with coding. Some people are good programmers when they come into college due to previous experience, but others (like myself) only have intro to C and object oriented programming for my experience (which I received A's in). The programs were very difficult for me because I did not know how to arrange the algorithms at times. I understood the concepts very well and how they worked, but I needed assistance with the coding. When I asked the TAs for assistance, I had a few frustrating instances; (1) The TA told me what I knew already for a seg fault issue and could not help me any further, (2) I was told two opposite answers by two different TAs for one concept in a program, and (3) the TA came to me after 2 hours of attempting to get his attention and could not assist me. Not only did the second instance confuse me, but I honestly could not figure out how to start the algorthim and felt as if I had no assistance. Thus, I could not finish any of the programs except the first, and felt as if I could not come to anyone for help with what I needed assistance with.

3) The tests, homework, quizzes, and labs were all graded fairly in my opinion. I only wish I would have had more assistance with coding.

4) There was one instance where the lab instructor, Sarah, knew that she taught finding the height of a binary tree differently than the instructor. She then stated she will just teach it her way. I think that to avoid confusion, material should be consistenly taught the same way, but if there are other methods, to teach them after the primary method.

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1) The professor had all information he taught in class available quickly for students to view online.

2) My major in IT is because I'm not a programmer, I'm horrible at it. This is one of my problems with this. In the real world, we, as IT students, will not be expected to perform any programming jobs.

3) I did the best I could with the course, but the fact that a huge portion of the class is programming, and in a class full of gurus, I'm expected to keep up. I can't, with everything I tried to do. Grading was fair, though, once again, based around the knowledge of what people knew, not for those that are not comfortable with programming.

4)

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1) The instructor was energetic and prepared. He kept the class awake. He presented complex material in a way that made it learnable and rememberable.

2)

3) IF all my previous instructors had been as through on testing I may have only been a C student but I would have earned the C and I would been better prepared in my after school life.

4)

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1) The daily demotivates and bike fails. the slides are awesome!

2) the lights in the classroom didn't work right

3)

4)

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1) he is good public speaker. makes the materials easy to follow even though the material is not easy if you don't have strong programming background. the class is hard but he has good grading system. and lenient

2)   before this class i think they should be a debugging class. or lecture because that is one thing i struggled the most which i think it an important skill to have.... the TA's can be a bit helpful. in the sense they should lead person in the right direction

3)   assignments are hard and long.. but he has good grading system

4)

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1)   With all the sleep-less, stress inducing nights I have had with this course, I feel I had learned some things from this course. - Your slides were very detailed, and had cool animations.

2)   The program assignments are WAAAYYYYY too hard. The amount of time spent on just one of them is just immense. I needed more sample code to learn from. What is taught in class is mostly theory of how to do these things, bu when you actually get down to do it, its not the same.

3)   Tests were very fair, programs were impossibly hard.

4)   Additional learning materials. ONE BIG THING: My learning process in the course was that I basically made every mistake possible and had learn what was causing it. Most of the time, it was memory mismanagement, pointer errors, indexing out of arrays, etc. What you should do in the beginning of the course is show the students what mistakes are possible to have and tell the how to fix them. I know that might be hard to predict every mistake, but its worth a shot.

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1)   Good instructor.

2)

3)

4)

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1)   Professor was amazing. Made me really understand the course through his power points

2)   Programs were too hard. Took the concepts we learned in class but put them to an extreme case. Easy to do in a two week period if this was my only class, but since I'm a full time student I rarely had enough time to spend on them.

3)   Grading on tests is fair, programs is not

4)   provide CS Tutor to students

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1)   I learned alot. It was kind of hard at first, but i just realized i had to put more effort in. So, i was forced to learn everything, which is obviously a good thing.

2)   nothing.

3)   grading was fair

4)

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1)   Powerpoints and labs were very helpful and very detailed

2)   The in tenseness of the programs

3)   Everything was great

4)   Cazalas was a great professor, even if I have to retake the class, im glad i stuck through the course. I think Jonathan Cazalas would be the best professor that ive had so far.

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1)   He conveyed the material and kept the students interested. Also if we missed a day he posted all his notes so you would not fail behind

2)   Only one lecture was offered

3)   Graded tests justly

4)   Room for improvement is virtual nonexistent. Only thiing would be requiring no book. Buying the book was a waste of money his notes more than supplemented for the learing of the material.

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1)   The Professor was excellent and always willing to help the students understand the material better. I really enjoyed the course even though I thought it was very difficult to understand.

2)   How difficult the programs are.

3)   The programs are very difficult and worth a lot of the coursework. I did not like that.

4)

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1)   Detailed powerpoint slides are posted, the examples are clear.

2)   The biweekly assignments take as much as 40 hours to complete.

3)   The tests and quizzes were fair, the grading by TAs of the assignments was incredibly inconsistent though.

4)

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1)   n/a

2)   n/a

3)   n/a

4)   n/a

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1)   Cazalas is the fucking MAN. His slides were amazing, his enthusiasm was amazing. This guy is soley responsible for my new found love of programming. I learned more in just one class meeting with this guy then I did in a whole semester of intro to C.

2)   The programs were brutal, and the new ones tended to come out while I was still scrambling to finish the previous ones. I ended up not finishing most of them on time.

3)   While I didn't finish most of the programs, I can't argue that that they served their purpose. The tests were nothing compared to the programs, and the programs ensured that I was able to conquer the tests. Also, despite not being able to finish the programs, the grading was so incredibly fair, that it didn't hurt my grade that much at all.

4)   Keep doing what you are doing. You are great.

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1)   The EXCELLENT slides, great way of helping me understand concepts.

2)   The INCREDIBLY hard assignments.

3)   The tests and quizzes are completely fair way of evaluating the students performances. The assignments on the other hand could become extremely difficult and required CONSTANT work to complete on time. Ultimately my other classes suffered because of the difficulty of assignments 4 - 6.

4)   Seriously, add more assignments to be turned in but LOWER the difficulty. when you teach someone to make a linked list, why not have them program a SMALL assignment? do this so that they can understand not only the concepts that your great slides helped teach, but also the syntax. Demonstrating to them how to swim, then pushing them into the middle of an ocean does NOT help.

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1)   n/a

2)   n/a

3)   n/a

4)

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1)   NA

2)   NA

3)   NA

4)   NA

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1)   Assignments ensure mastery of the concepts.

2)

3)   No complaints.

4)   Quizzes should be open over the weekend, not just a day.

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1)   i now understand pointers, and how to not lock up my bike

2)

3)

4)

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1)   The instructor was really involved and broke down everything for better understanding

2)   The assignments were tough

3)   The tests were simple but if you knew the stuff, the assignments were tough

4)

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1)

2)   the programs

3)

4)

---

1)   the knowledge the teacher had of this subject

2)   nothing

3)   good

4)

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1)   The comprehensive slides

2)   Nothing of note

3)   No complaints

4)   This was a terrific class! The only suggestion for improvement I could make is more time for Dynamic Memory Allocation early on. Sadly, I had more frustration getting that to work then probably anything else in the entire class. It's just a very different concept for most and not having a practice program to demonstrate it early on made it more difficult.

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1)   Very entertaining professor. Class was rarely boring and he always kept the students engaged by asking questions and pushing us to answer them.

2)   I felt like too much time was spent on trivial material. For example: recurrence relations and summations. While I thought that the classes devoted to doing examples were helpful, I felt that an entire class was too much time spent devoted to those materials.

3)

4)

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1)   Fail pics and demotivators.

2)   The instructor had trouble teaching the material. Often times I'd walk out of class more confused then when I entered. The course uses C which is an outdated language but I understand it's used to show principles. The professor always asks questions like "who follows that" and even if only two people raise their hand he continues just the same as if every single student had raised their hands. Quizzes were only open for a 15 hour window starting AFTER the class concluded for the day. The instructor was very rigid in these timings. I missed two quizzes because of other obligations (3 classes after his and then going directly to work where I work until 11PM). I was more than willing to take the quizzes during his class time or before his class but those were not options and my pleas fell on deaf ears.

3) Some of the programs were a bit challenging but that's alright. Tests accurately assessed learning. The random attendance grades were silly.

4) Revise course slides as they can be confusing. Consider wearing something other than football jerseys, it's not professional.

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1) The power points that are used are amazing, and the fact that they're posted online is even better. If I forget anything said in class, I can always refer back to them and learn the material easily. the explanations that are given are perfectly clear and simple. the brief interludes in the power points that keep me from losing my attention span actually work pretty well. I genuinely feel like I'm learning CS1 and becoming a much better programmer because of this course.

2) the class starts at 9:30 am and I'm someone who typically goes to sleep sometime after 3am. Other then that, there's nothing I can complain about.

3) the programming assignments are the best evaluation of my mastery, much more than the tests or quizzes or anything else. the fact that it adds up to 30% of the final grade seems pretty fair.

4) no suggestions for improvement, I feel like this course was taught in the best possible way.

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1) While most of the time I understood everything right away, the professor did make sure that as many students as possible understood a concept before continuing on to the next one. So those one or two times when I was confused, he took the time to explain, clearing up any confusion. Also, his tests were more than fair. Everything on the tests were covered in class, and he even gave a few hints here and there to help out the students that did attend class. So come test time, there is no reason why anyone should have gotten below an A based on how well the professor prepared us for the exams.

2) There is probably not much that can be done about this, but I did not like how the programming assignments were graded. Some of the graders just checked to see if the output file the program made matched the answer key. In some cases, the output is very dependent on what goes on in the program and the graders did not always take the time to actually see where in the output the students went wrong. Therefore, more points were taken off than necessary.

3) If something was not tested for on an exam, there was usually a lab question about it, so overall the ideas and concepts of the class were well covered and there was always practice available.

4)

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1) Ma

2) Na

3) Na

4) Na

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1) The delivery of the course material has been unmatched by any other course I've taken. The instructor is extremely detail-oriented and has a genuine concern for the students' understanding of the material. The class slides are so in-depth and informative that taking notes in class is unnecessary leaving students with all their attention focused on the moment at hand. The instructor is animated and humorous and has developed a great method for breaking up each class with a moment of humor to give the brain a rest as well as leaving each class with a chuckle.

2) The large class size makes it less comfortable to actively participate.

3) The tests were well thought out and accurately assessed the students' understanding of the course material. The labs hammered home important points and allowed practice outside of the programming assignments. The online quizzes let you know clearly where any areas of opportunity in the learning process lied. Overall, the instructor has put together a well-designed and executed course.

4) My only suggestion is to have more detailed feedback on the homework assignments. To be fair, this was available if a student visited the grading TA during their office hours.

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1) Very motivated instructor, explained things very well.

2) I hope I never have to deal with another access violation program crash again in my life.

3) Exams and programs, as expected. There's really no other way to gauge understanding.

4) Great job!

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1) Great teacher, good content

2) weight of assignments versus tests

3) great

4)

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1) Professor Cazalas was hands down the best professor I have had in my college career. His lectures are dynamic and interesting, which is no small feat when the material to be covered is algorithm analysis. Unlike some other professors, who often tend to be more aloof, professor Cazalas seems genuinely concerned with the success of his students in his class and in the world at large. He would often point out that he was an undergrad not long ago, and he took great pains to help his students avoid some of the pitfalls of his own career. The materials in this class were painstakingly prepared, comprehensive, and free. Professor Cazalas implemented a sort of informal poll to assess whether the students were able to follow the concepts in the lecture. He would simply ask students to raise their hands if they understood a concept. When he was met with insufficient response or blank stares, he would explain the topic a second or even a third way until he felt that he was understood. This is a rare ability among college professors today. I feel fortunate to have had professor Cazalas for CS1, and I am certain that I would not have been as successful as I was in this course with another professor.

2) The programs.

3) I really had a problem with the grading of our programs. I consistently spent 30-50 hours working on each of them, and had very little success. I also saw students who deleted whole sections of code get much higher scores even though they didn't even attempt to get full functionality in their program. I feel that the TA's in this course were woefully inadequate when it came to these programs as well. On several occasions, I spent whole days (8-9 hours) working with TA's to try to fix my program, only to leave empty handed. This was really frustrating, as I feel I could have learned much more if the TA's were able to tell me where I made a mistake so I could learn from it.

4)

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1) The breakdown of ideas was simple to understand, and it helped me write the programs much easier.

2)

3)

4)

_____

1)   Teaching style, material covered, and the way professor Cazalas made sure the majority of the class was following. Also, the bike fails and demotivators were amazing

2)

3)

4)   limit the number of questions Alex can answer per a class

_____

1)   the slides!

2)   the homework... way too long!

3)   homework way too long

4)   none

_____

1)   Made the class very interesting and coming to lectures did not feel like a bad thing.

2)   I wish this course did not assume the students are C experts and was expecting us to write programs in C as if we were taking C lasses before. I took C back in 2006 so it was very hard trying to remember all the needed material.

3)   It was great

4)

_____

1)   Funny fails

2)   N/A

3)   Good job

4)   Look into teaching with a tablet to illustrate linked list, queue, stack, and tree movement.

_____

1)   Very interesting subject and the instructor was interesting

2)   The programming assignments are HARD! Like, over-the-top. Some of them I spent over 20 hours exclusively on this class, meaning my grade in other classes suffered.

3)   Testing was fair to easy, though comprehensive. Programming assignments took an absolutely massive amount of time.

4)

_____

1)   Obviously, Prof Cazalas is a phenomenal instructor. While the material can be horrendously boring, he makes it bearable.

2)   Im absolutely horrible at programming, and i somehow made it through.

3)   I'm a FAR better programming now. Not to say Dr. Lobo is a bad prof...because he's the shit as well.

4)   Nothing. Stay and teach all my classes?

_____

1)   The beard and the bike fails

2)

3)

4)

_____

1)   The way the professor kept the class interested by asking for volunteers and putting up commical pics on his slides. The way the professor presented the material made it easy to understand and get a good grasp on the concepts.

2)   The programs were prety hard, but I guess that they were fair and it is what showed who the excelent students really were.

3)   I believe that everything was fair and that the grades given were what was deserved by each student depending on the efforts they put into the class.

4)   Keep up the great work professor!!! definetly enjoyed the class and I can honestly say that you have been one of my best professors in UCF so far! Thanks

_____

1)   Programs and the lectures. Jonathan is an amazing lecturer and really seems to go along with how the class seems to be handling the lecture. He clearly does put a lot of work into his slides to ensure that even if something is missed in class that a student could go back and easily find what they might have missed. On top of this I felt he kept a well organized and very relevant group of lab sessions, and for those that weren't of his planning he still posted the material that would have been taught and reminded us to cover it on our own so we don't miss the practice. He made full use of the web courses announcements for these as well as in class announcements which I think helped keep my course work more organized. Most importantly of all, he's lectures actually managed to keep me up so early in the day as well as still understand the material.

2)   While sounding very encouraging and motivated in his lectures, as well as explaining things thoroughly, I found him to come off a bit rude when I asked a question one on one. It could have just been that day in the first week of class, but it still put me off from approaching him again for the rest of the semester. It didn't hinder my performance though as the questions were outside the scope of the class, they were still related to the material however.

3)   All in all thought the grading was balanced and fair.

4)   Nothing else, this was definitely a good class and was taught well. He certainly presented the material well and clearly as well as giving us an abundance of resources to review what was covered in class. I would take another class with him again.