

Clemson University Student Evaluation of Teaching

Evaluation Report for James L Brown teaching MTHSC 453 001 during Spring Semester 2012
 Respondents = 16; Enrolled = 33; Response rate = 48%

University Questions(3686)

G1. The instructor clearly communicated what I was expected to learn.

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (18.75%)	7 (43.75%)	6 (37.50%)	0 (0.00%)	
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.188	0.750	4	16		
Same Level	4.265	0.978	5	151		
Same Discipline	4.324	0.920	5	3003		

G2. The instructor made the relevance of the course material clear.

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (18.75%)	7 (43.75%)	6 (37.50%)	0 (0.00%)	
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.188	0.750	4	16		
Same Level	4.238	1.018	5	151		
Same Discipline	4.186	1.005	4	3007		

G3. The course was well organized.

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (18.75%)	13 (81.25%)	0 (0.00%)	
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.813	0.403	5	16		
Same Level	4.258	0.955	5	151		
Same Discipline	4.358	0.923	5	2995		

G4. There was a positive interaction between the class and the instructor.

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (18.75%)	13 (81.25%)	0 (0.00%)	
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.813	0.403	5	16		
Same Level	4.360	0.929	5	150		
Same Discipline	4.234	1.005	5	2992		

G5. The instructor's teaching methods helped me understand the course material.

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (18.75%)	9 (56.25%)	4 (25.00%)		0 (0.00%)
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.063	0.680	4	16		
Same Level	4.027	1.226	4	150		
Same Discipline	3.995	1.184	4	2989		

G6. The instructor's verbal communication skills helped me understand the course material.

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	9 (56.25%)	7 (43.75%)		0 (0.00%)
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.438	0.512	4	16		
Same Level	4.014	1.223	4	148		
Same Discipline	3.992	1.167	4	2988		

G7. The instructor clearly explained what was expected on assignments and tests

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	5 (31.25%)	3 (18.75%)	8 (50.00%)		0 (0.00%)
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.188	0.911	4.5	16		
Same Level	4.173	1.015	4.5	150		
Same Discipline	4.278	0.981	5	2987		

G8. The instructor kept me informed about my progress in the course.

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (18.75%)	2 (12.50%)	11 (68.75%)		0 (0.00%)
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.500	0.816	5	16		
Same Level	4.285	0.982	5	151		
Same Discipline	4.129	1.062	4	2994		

G9. The feedback I received on assignments and tests gave me the opportunity to improve my performance.

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	1 (6.25%)	2 (12.50%)	3 (18.75%)	10 (62.50%)		0 (0.00%)
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.375	0.957	5	16		
Same Level	4.133	1.103	5	150		
Same Discipline	4.087	1.062	4	2993		

G10. Overall, the instructor is an effective teacher.

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (12.50%)	3 (18.75%)	11 (68.75%)	0 (0.00%)	
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.563	0.727	5	16		
Same Level	4.242	1.082	5	149		
Same Discipline	4.188	1.074	5	2985		

G11. The instructor's grading procedures gave a fair evaluation of my understanding of the material.

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	5 (31.25%)	3 (18.75%)	8 (50.00%)	0 (0.00%)	
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.188	0.911	4.5	16		
Same Level	4.227	0.963	5	150		
Same Discipline	4.228	0.994	5	2982		

G12. How much work did you put into this course relative to your other courses?

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	14 (87.50%)	0 (0.00%)	
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.813	0.544	5	16		
Same Level	4.106	0.896	4	151		
Same Discipline	4.084	0.920	4	2978		

G13. How difficult was this course for you relative to your other courses?

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	16 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)	
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	5.000	0.000	5	16		
Same Level	4.086	0.938	4	151		
Same Discipline	3.941	1.028	4	2987		

G14. To what extent was this course a requirement for you?

Type: How much

Not at all					Very much	NR
1	2	3	4	5		
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (6.25%)	0 (0.00%)	15 (93.75%)	0 (0.00%)	
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations		
Class	4.875	0.500	5	16		
Same Level	4.247	1.152	5	150		
Same Discipline	4.593	0.835	5	2983		

G15. Was this course in your major?

Type: Yes - No

Yes	No	NR
14 (87.50%)	2 (12.50%)	0 (0.00%)

G16. Was this course team-taught?

Type: Yes - No

Yes	No	NR
2 (12.50%)	14 (87.50%)	0 (0.00%)

G17. Please indicate your satisfaction with the availability of the instructor outside the classroom by choosing one response from the scale. In selecting your rating, consider the instructor's availability via established office hours, appointments, and other opportunities for face-to-face interaction as well as via telephone, email, fax and other means.

Type: Satisfaction

Very Dissatisfied				Very Satisfied
1	2	3	4	NR
0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (18.75%)	13 (81.25%)	0 (0.00%)
Focus	Mean	Stdev	Median	Observations
Class	3.813	0.403	4	16
Same Level	3.649	0.544	4	151
Same Discipline	3.502	0.693	4	3004

G18. Please comment on the strengths of the instructor and the course.

Type: Essay

Student Comments

- #1 - Dr. Brown did an excellent job teaching this course. The material was very difficult, but he clearly explained the definitions, theorems, and proofs done in class. He also provided examples and connections of the material to help us understand it. Dr. Brown was always available to help in his office and through email. He answered all my questions which helped clarify the material for me especially when I was confused about the content. The homework of the course was challenging, but it helped me understand the material better by using what we learned in a section to write the proofs.
- #2 - Dr. Brown is a phenomenal teacher, but this class was just difficult to say the least. He know it would be, and adjusted his grading to reflect that, and it was much appreciated. His lecture notes that he posts online for students are very helpful: I can listen to Dr. Brown's lecture and understand him instead of just writing down his notes as quick as I can without any comprehension at all.
- #3 - He's extremely gifted with proofs and was able to immediately answer questions as clearly as possible. Kept his notes and lectures really organized.
- #4 - Dr. Brown clearly knew what he was talking about and it showed in how he taught the course.
- #5 - Dr. Brown was very good at explaining the difficult material in this course.
- #6 - Dr. Brown is easily one of the best teachers I have ever had. He knows the material extremely well, is extremely passionate about it, and has extremely good communication skills. I can't stress to you the communication skills enough; after having many math professors who are smart, but can't coherently form a sentence, Dr. Brown's ability to speak and communicate effectively was very refreshing. He makes himself available outside of class, and if a student cares about the class he is willing to help and to teach them as much as they need. I actually enjoyed going to class each morning (though I didn't enjoy the waking up part).
- #7 - Highly organized and knowledgeable.
- #8 - Dr. Brown is really, really smart. He's a great professor for Clemson to have and teaches pretty effectively. The course is somewhat poorly formatted, it just didn't seem that people were learning the way the material was meant to be taught.
- #9 - great teacher
- #10 - Very well organized course. Personable instructor. Seems to really care about his students.
- #11 - he explained proof examples in class and replied to emails quickly and very helpful when needed.
- #12 - Dr. Brown is knowledgeable on the subject he teaches and obviously knows what he is talking about. He is always capable of answering questions or providing extra examples. The course is well structured and it is well known what is expected from the student.
- #13 - I could tell that he is a very bright professor. He knows his material really well and I really believe he loves doing what he does in math.

- #14 - you are obviously a very smart professor and were easy to ask questions to and were willing to help
- #15 - The instructor knew the material very well. He had a great interaction with his students. He was very willing to help with any problems we had. He also has a great sense of humor.
- #16 - Jim is very willing to help you out if you don't understand something.

G19. Please comment on the weaknesses of the instructor and the course.

Type: Essay

Student Comments

- #2 - I do wish there were more examples worked in class, as writing proofs is not an easy thing to do. Also, more than 2 tests in the semester would be nice, so my grade is so heavily dependent on just those 2 nights. Overall, Dr. Brown doesn't have many weaknesses as a professor.
- #3 - Sometimes I felt that he didn't understand when a concept was especially difficult for the students. I realize the course has a lot to cover, but sometimes he would continue even when it was clear that the students didn't really understand something.
- #4 - none
- #5 - I feel like we skipped over some of the basics when writing the proofs in class. It was hard because I was not as well prepared from Mthsc 119. It would have helped if I had a better teacher for that course.
- #6 - Only weakness of note is that he had multiple conferences and thus missed 2ish weeks of the class. His grad students were good, but not as effective as him as teachers. He also made the class difficult with the idea of curving the grades at the end, which was and is disconcerting for students, however, I have learned much more this way.
- #7 - With such a large curve expected, it makes it difficult to know where I stand in the course. This expected curve makes the course hard for me mentally. I don't know if I will pass or fail, and don't feel good about not knowing. The grading scale (unknown at this point) makes me feel like I am not learning what I should be learning.
- #8 - Obviously Dr. Brown can be too smart sometimes, thus it can be kind of hard to keep up and follow his train of thought.
- #9 - more test needed than just one
- #10 - There was a large amount of homework given for the course, however, it was usually very helpful.
- #11 - grading policy was a little unclear, everything was graded really harshly but then he was lenient on the final grade.
- #12 - The course material is just difficult in itself, the poor grades and challenging work are not a reflection on Dr. Brown.
- #13 - I think it's difficult for him to teach the class to those of us who don't understand it very easily, basically dumb it down so someone not inclined in math like this can understand it.
- #14 - thought at first the homework was just too much work but it got easier as semester went on
- #15 - Some of the things that he did try to explain was not 100% clear (stupid metric spaces). Also, the tests and homework can be extremely difficult (especially the tests), however, as time goes on, one understands the material a little better and the homework gets slightly easier as well.
- #16 - This course is ridiculously difficult, by no fault of Jim's.

G20. Please comment on any teaching methods you found particularly helpful, and suggest alternative methods that you feel would improve the course.

Type: Essay

Student Comments

- #1 - I like Dr. Brown's lecture method of writing the notes on the board while he explained them. He presented the notes in a clear and organized way while also explaining the concepts. Dr. Brown always asks if anyone has any questions. The homework was very helpful to me even though it was challenging because I was able to practice with the material I had learned in class. The comments on the graded homework were also very helpful because it allowed me to improve my proof writing techniques on future homework assignments.
- #2 - The weekly homework was most helpful as it forced me to stay up to date on the material, and I could not slack off and try to catch up just before test day. Again, the course notes online were extremely helpful.

- #3 - The diagrams on the board made the concepts easier to follow. Perhaps chapter or section outlines/goals would be handy. Discussions like "Why was last section important to this section?" would also be nice.
- #4 - I feel like it would have been helpful to have more examples worked in class similar to the ones that we had on the homework assignments.
- #5 - I feel like have more tests would have helped improve the course and I also feel like the midterm was a lot harder than tests generally give in this course from other professors. Which is not necessarily a bad thing but I feel like teachers teaching 119 should better prepare students for this level of difficulty.
- #6 - I appreciate the notes online in addition to notes in class.
- #7 - The uploaded notes are helpful, especially to double check my own notes or on the occasion that I was absent.
- #8 - Having notes online was helpful, I think an overview and generalization of the course might be helpful to know what our goals are.
- #9 - less homework
- #10 - Gave good examples.
- #12 - I found it most helpful when we worked examples on the board, but I felt there were not enough of them. Most of the class is spent proving theorems, which are important, but I need more examples similar to homework problems. It would make the homework seem less impossible to complete.
- #13 - I think moving through the material a little slower and taking more time on the more difficult sections to make sure everyone completely understood it would have been great. But overall, I think his method was good.
- #14 - liked the mixture of examples with the concepts
- #15 - The willingness to help students. He is willing to help you if you are willing to put forth the effort. He will go back and explain things in class if one does not understand it the first time.
- #16 - Lots of examples. Covering less material would improve the course overall.

G21. I would recommend this instructor to a friend. Yes or no? Why?

Type: Essay

Student Comments

- #1 - Yes, I would definitely recommend Dr. Brown to a friend. He really knows the material he is teaching, so he is able to clearly explain it. He teaches the material of the course really well and students will definitely learn in his class. Dr. Brown is one of the best math professors I have had. I have taken two courses with Dr. Brown, and I feel that I have really learned the material in both classes and actually understand the proofs and concepts behind the math. He likes to challenge his students which I think really helps them learn better. He is fair with his grading and is always available to help.
- #2 - Yes, but only if they were prepared to work hard and study. Dr. Brown is not an easy teacher, but he is more than fair while being very demanding of his students. He expects us to learn, and he wants us to learn. There are not many professors like Dr. Brown, and I would highly recommend anyone to take him.
- #3 - Yes. His class is challenging (but fair), and he really wants his students to know the material.
- #4 - Yes because he really prepares for the classes he teaches.
- #5 - Yes, as long as they were prepared for a hard course. He really is great at explaining things and helping the students.
- #6 - If my friend was a pure math student, absolutely. As I said earlier, he is one of the best math teachers I have ever had. If they were math education or from some other discipline, I'm not sure. Because Dr. Brown is a very intense in grading and teaching, I would be fearful that some of my friends couldn't effectively succeed in MATH453 with him.
- #8 - Yes, the class is definitely hard but Dr. Brown is a great guy and has a good sense of humor.
- #9 - yes
- #10 - Yes. Good instructor who cares about class both in education and in life.
- #11 - yes but super hard class.

- #12 - Yes, and I did. Dr. Brown is the most intelligent professor I have had, and I learned a lot from him. He is helpful in office hours, relatable to his students, and obviously loves mathematics. It is always better to have a teacher who enjoys what he does.
- #13 - He is probably the smartest professor I have ever had. So yes and no. For someone who is really committed, yes, someone who this isn't their strong-point and they don't really need the class, than no.
- #14 - yes, he knows what he is talking about and is willing to help a student if the student puts in effort
- #15 - Absolutely. While the material he teaches is difficult, he manages to explain the material as best as possible.
- #16 - Depending on what they want out of the course, yes. If they just want an easy grade, I wouldn't.