

Teaching Evaluation 2: COGS300: Understanding and Designing Cognitive Systems, University of British Columbia, 2017-2018

Response Rate: 43 out of 72 (60%)

Note. the departmental mean provided as a way of comparison below is calculated as the average of ratings over the past 6 terms that the course was taught by a different instructor. It is worth noting that the response rate for those terms ranged between 10-40% compared to the 60% in the present course.

	My Score	Department's
<i>1: "Strongly disagree" to 5: "Strongly Agree"</i>		
The instructor helped inspire interest in learning the subject matter	4.7	4.1
The instructor communicated the subject matter effectively	4.3	3.4
The instructor made it clear what students were expected to learn.	4.3	3.6
Overall, evaluation of student learning (through exams, essays, presentations, etc.) was fair.	4.3	3.8
The instructor showed concern for student learning	4.6	4
Overall, the instructor was an effective teacher.	4.5	3.6
In classes where the size of the class and content of the course were appropriate, student participation in class was encouraged by the instructor.	4.8	N/A
High standards of achievement were set.	4.4	N/A
The instructor was generally well prepared for class	4.7	N/A
The instructor was readily available to students outside of class (e.g., through email, office hours, or by appointment)	4.7	N/A
The instructor treated students with respect.	4.7	N/A
<i>1: "Very Poor" to 5: "Very Good"</i>		
Considering everything how would you rate this course?	4.4	N/A

Comments from COGS300 (Winter 2018) Students in response to the following prompt provided by the cognitive systems program: Please comment on any aspects, positive or negative, of your instructor's teaching, attitudes to students, class atmosphere, or any other matters affecting the quality of instruction that you consider worthy of note.

- Sina is perhaps the best professor I have had to date. He is truly passionate about the material he teaches and has a strong understanding of a variety of topics. Every class he is prepared and delivers lectures in an energetic and enthusiastic way. Simply put, Sina is a modern day renaissance man and a gift to UBC.
- Sina might be one of my favourite profs that I've had so far. For me his teaching style is well-paced and easy to follow. He fosters a great supportive and thought-provoking learning environment, especially in the way his lectures are structured. He is very easy to talk to and understanding and flexible with the needs of his students. Overall I had really positive experiences in this course, and Sina is a big reason why.
- Sina was a wonderful professor, and made this class so much more bearable for me. It was definitely a challenging class, however his lectures were very straightforward and he was able to communicate complex topics in a simple manner. He was also very readily available outside of class, and I've had

several interesting conversations with him during office hours that peaked my interest in the class even more. He made every class really fun, and kept a very great balance between teaching us, and allowing us to discuss the ideas with our peers. Definitely one of the best classes I've taken at UBC!

- Sina showed a lot of concern for student learning. Not only did he hold extra office hours on multiple occasions in order to help his students, he was always happy to answer questions after class. He was very understanding of students and offered extensions when necessary. This really helped me to care more about the material and gave me the time to fully learn the content. Sina was definitely my favourite instructor for this term and in COGS in general. Thank you for effectively teaching us and inspiring us to learn the content!
- Sina did an excellent job at engaging students with the course material throughout the term. His passion for the material resonates with students as he always put in extra effort to ensure lectures were interesting. He also gave students the freedom and flexibility with regards to assignments. For example, students were able to choose their own topic for a term project and were given multiple options to choose from for bi-weekly assignments. He gave well-detailed feedback on all assignments and was open to answering questions over email and during office hours. He also brought in multiple guest lectures to further expand on concepts discussed in class which connected them to real life applications. It was an absolute pleasure having him as a professor!
- Sina was great, this is how every cogs class should be taught. It was well organized and had clear learning objectives and structure. I understood what I was learning and why I was learning it, and most importantly how to learn more about each thing, and how to take it forward to future classes and ultimately my career. He made me want to show up to every class which at this point in my academic career is a miracle. He was funny, made the lectures engaging, really took the time to learn about each student, and encouraged discussion!
- Sina has the right amount of chillness and passion. He's chill enough where we can approach him easily and ask questions, but also passionate about the course where he can really give us well thought-out and informative answers.
- Sina is an excellent instructor – he puts in a commendable effort to make course material engaging and relevant. He provides us detailed feedback our assignments and is very approachable and always willing to help. Not only has he guided us through this course, but has also offered valuable advice in professional development. Grateful for his genuine desire for us to succeed - Sina, you're awesome!
- Really great professor, clearly cares about student well-being, communicates course material well, and is generally just a pleasant dude to be around. He really keeps it real and I appreciate that a lot.
- Sina was a great instructor for COGS300 who made lectures very interesting and thought provoking. He is a wonderfully understanding person and it is clear that he has high expectations for his students. This translated into a very effective learning environment.
- Really good teaching style, I liked that you played music in the beginning. One thing I think you can improve on is improving the lecture style, sometimes it felt as though you were talking to no one in particular and not 100% getting the students learning. That only happened a bit though, maybe on some of those tired mornings.
- Sina was a very engaging instructor. While the subject matter at times seemed unconnected and boring, he was always able to inspire interest among students and form connections between disparate material. The class was very calm, and a good time to connect with other cogs students and share ideas from

different areas of study. Sina encouraged collaboration between students and further understanding of the material. Overall, he was a very effective instructor.

- Great instructor. Lectures were engaging and questions and discussions were often encouraged. Sina was also respectful of all students. Also receptive to feedback.
- Sina was a great prof, he definitely knows his stuff and teaches it with excitement. He has a good balance between casual and formal in his teaching approach. At times, his analogies are not clear, which makes concepts a little more vague for me. I think that if he used a mic or spoke a little louder, his intended message would come a lot clearer. Overall, I liked Sina and the structure of the course!
- Really great professor, clearly cares about student well-being, communicates course material well, and is generally just a pleasant dude to be around. He really keeps it real and I appreciate that a lot.
- Great, friendly attitude, likeable by all students, and always encouraged out of the box thinking and discussion
- Great instructor who obviously cares a lot about the students and their understanding of the material (not just their ability to regurgitate it)
- I loved the relaxed, communal style of the lectures, I appreciated focus on real world examples of concepts so that it wasn't purely theoretical
- Would help if he repeated questions asked by students, especially the softer spoken ones. Also occasionally would present some information then immediately ask a question about the information and appear to be slightly frustrated when there was not an immediate response from the students. It would be less frustrating for him if he either allowed more time for the students to assimilate the information before expecting them to respond by either pausing for a time or asking the question a few times in a few different ways also basically giving the students a bit more time to digest the information and respond. There were a few times in the term where he mumbled or spoke too softly although the majority of the time he spoke very clearly.
- I really appreciated Sina's effort to engage the class, through small group discussions, direct questions and varied content in lectures.
- Sina was very engaging in class. I liked how he gave us time to discuss with each other about topics before discussing as a class.
- Very effective at teaching, and cared for student learning by being readily available through email and office hours
- Sina's enthusiasm and passion for the subjects mentioned in class was really inspiring and it encouraged me to look deeper and think more critically about the topics we had.
- Sina was a good lecturer and teacher.
- I appreciate your use of real life examples in explaining concepts. The videos you chose to show were always useful. Great teacher
- Sina is super passionate about the course material and seems to know a lot about the field. By the end of the term, it was easy to tell he was visibly frustrated with the commitment, or lack thereof that some students had put forward. I can understand that it would be frustrating if you feel like you are being taken advantage of students that are not putting in the work or effort that they should be, however, some

other students who do put in the work, found that he could misplace his frustration onto them (only in emails) which made several of us feel uncomfortable to approach him after that, but in person he is very friendly and approachable. I think this could have been prevented very easily if Sina had set very clear rules with little room for exceptions, however, as a new professor, I understand it is hard to strike a balance between being accommodating and being approachable.

- Sina is a great prof who genuinely cares about his students, with an easygoing and approachable disposition from day 1 of the course.
- Overall the instructor did well to engage the students in the course topics and was available for additional help. He also provided sufficient feedback on assignments which was very helpful. Further elaboration on some of the course content during lecture would have been beneficial as some of the content was quickly brushed over at times.
- Instructor was very elaborate in explanation of material
- He was very enthusiastic about every class and, I especially enjoyed the fact that he would elaborate and extend explanations to better grasp concepts and ideas
- I feel at the beginning of the term, Sina attempted to start class discussion with questions that were too broad. He would show a single slide, speak for twenty minutes or so, then ask questions like “what do you think?”. This made it hard to and something specific to ask it talk about. By the end, however, he had much improved
- He’s quite funny, encourages a positive learning environment, and is engaging.
- Great attitude. Loves course material. Inspiring helpful life stories.