CS 571: Spring 2020 informal course evaluation

Mason has canceled student evaluations this semester. I think that's unfortunate. If ever there was a semester where feedback on instruction is important, this is it. To that end, I am asking you on your opinions on how the course went. This is NOT the traditional GMU survey form, although I am borrowing questions. This is anonymous and not for credit.

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

Your lectures were good. They were easy to follow, the slides were good, you went over examples during class. Almost every aspect of the class went well in my opinion. I appreciate having test cases supplied for projects. I think supplying test cases for projects is a MUST. I do not think it benefits students to be deprived of test cases.

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

It often felt like the grading criteria for class projects was ambiguous or unclear. That is, it was not always clear how exactly we would be evaluated. Generally speaking, the project specs were good -- it's just the grading part could be improved in some cases. But creating a perfectly unambiguous project spec is a difficult task.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

Transition to online was fine. The YouTube lectures were excellent. It is honestly my preferred way to attend lectures. I think, generally speaking, the format of the class during the online portion is my preferred way of learning. Lectures in video format with weekly Q&A sessions for asking questions/going over problems is excellent structure for class imo.

Worksheets are helpful; it's very helpful to have some idea of what will be asked on the exam (like specifically the types of problems).

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

N/A

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

N/A

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

N/A

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

The class before Spring break was typical but having recordings of the lectures was a great step that made this class better

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

More in class worksheets and stepping through code a little slower.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

Having the lectures prerecorded was a excellent. To be able to digest the material at my own pace was awesome.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

Maybe a more interactive online collaboration tool, that allowed us to draw together instead of just talking

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

Not much went well in my other class

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

They could have adopted your method of prerecording the lectures and having a better repository of Storting them like you did

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

I like the way the course was designed, and that I learnt a lot not just from the coursework but through the projects as well.

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

Nothing I can think of.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

I liked the format of watching the lecture videos anytime before hand and attending a short Q&A session on the day of the class. It helped me watch the lecture at my leisure.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

I definitely did not focus in online classes as well as I do in a physical classroom, but I believe that was more of a general issue than an issue with this course.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

I believe the professors helped the transition for the students, by making courses slightly easier, in accordance with the tough times.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

Nothing other than what I've said in the above questions.

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

the demos at the end of lecture added additional clarity

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

slow to get grades back

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

being able to watch the videos at our own pace; being able to re-watch videos as needed

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

more time to review videos before class; again, slow to get grades back

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

i enjoyed that the "in class" time was optional

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

The immediate explanation in class, saying hi to peers

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

The projects were hectic sometimes and although the professor did his best to explain, my teammate had unworkable schedules.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

Projects

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

Live video but also recorded for later

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

Prof had meetings with students and gave out number to call for help or urgent matter

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

The PDF was a horrying experience for me. Please consider using a word format although we try and drag the answers. PDF were unchangeable and led to poor performance myself speaking

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

The in class worksheets were great. I really enjoyed walking through semaphores and condition variables with the class - thanks to my brave classmates who went up to the board to code.

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

In general, I think some of the project specifications were vague. If that was on purpose, it would have been helpful to clarify that questions are expected.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

I think you were quite fair with timeline, grading, and expectations in light of the pandemic.

I think your passion for CS came out a bit with RAID, and it makes the material more enjoyable to learn when it seems like you're enjoying it.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

I would have enjoyed more comparisons to real world applications - like with file systems what are the things that led Google to create things like GFS and COLUSSUS?

How could we expect to apply the principles that we've learned, given that we're likely not going to create the next GFS or an operating systems scheduler, but maybe we can apply them to other everyday tasks.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

Lecture was clear and the material was well motivated.

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

The lecture was a bit slow. I think some of the concepts that require computation (Gantt charts, disk scheduling, etc) had many examples to illustrate simple ideas. The lecture was clear because of the repetition, but I think that I would've rather covered more material and moved a little more quickly.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

Communication from the professor was always clear. The last project being shortened made everyone's life a little easier and I think that was necessary.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

I can't think of anything related to the transition to online that could be improved. It was very smooth.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

Virtual office hours and live communication sessions. They are super necessary.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

A lack of virtual office hours or time to speak verbally with the professor/students.

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

I believe working through the work sheet in the class went very well

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

It was good

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

The recorded Videos were helpful

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

It was good overall

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

I didn't take any other online class

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

I didn't take any other online class

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

In class lecture is always preferable in terms of practical & feasible communication and knowledge sharing. Also the structured course website was super helpful all the way.

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

not sure. It was great. but available class/lecture recording might be an option

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

available class recording

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

by weekly/weekly quiz might increase interactivity. Also in final exam, editing pdf was weird

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

flexible 2 week quiz taking timeframe

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

I find not many scope of improvements. It's more or less class recording and online exam. But yes, a structured one stop course website like cs571 would be helpful.

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

i love the way to give lectures with the iPad

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

i wish there was a way you could have recorded your lectures, i think the TA could be more responsive on piazza. i think you should spend more time in class going over the worksheet problems.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

i love that you recorded your lectures, i also like that you spent the time in online classes to go over worksheet problems instead of giving lecture (i actually think that's more productive).

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

it was often difficult to get responses to my questions on piazza. the final exam was way too long.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

i wish my professor in my other class went over homework problems in lecture. i wish there was piazza in my other class.

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

You explained the topics very well

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

Maybe more interactive activities to make everyone engaged

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

Putting youtube videos, and webex meetings helped

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

I thought it was perfect

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

The professors were really helpful, and provided help for students

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

Maybe give more time for assignments, as online can be a bit tough

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

The class gave a very good introduction to Operating systems. The class interaction was good. Teaching was very good as well.

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

Putting up lectures in YouTube and following up with discussion session was really effective. The professor handled the transformation really well to ensure the smooth transformation online! Breaking the lectures into parts was a masterstroke.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

The exam could have been given in a word document and asked us to upload it as pdf. Being not familiar with pdf editors it was hard for me.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

The professors ensured smooth transition to online.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

There were network issues while delivering lecture during 3 hours due to heavy bandwidth. Blackboard ultra was the safest bet to giving lectures online (for long classes) without much issues.

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

I particularly liked the live exercises in-class (e.g. have someone go up to the podium and protect critical sections with locks where appropriate, or place sem_wait() and sem_post() calls as required to satisfy an objective). I also thought your notes on the powerpoints (handwritten on tablet) were very helpful.

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

I honestly can't think of anything- I quite liked your lecture style, especially how you did not simply create a rehashing of the reading in your slides but delved into specific examples and asked questions of the class as you went. I don't think you ever just read a slide verbatim and moved on, which I really appreciated. You elaborated and provided context and examples.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

This also applies to the class before spring break, but your tutorials/introduction videos for the programming assignments were INVALUABLE. It was so incredibly helpful to see you walk through the logic of the problems we were trying to solve and especially where to look in the code, how to properly invoke make and modify makefiles, etc. I suspect that required significant effort on your part beyond the required curriculum, but the payoff for students (at least me) was huge.

Also, I really liked the way you handled online lectures. Rather than keeping the 3-hour live format and filling it with slides, the pre-made videos allowed me to learn at my own pace, and the hour-long sessions for worksheet reviews and questions helped keep me on-track by ensuring that I really did understand the problems I was working on in the homeworks/worksheets. Of all my classes, your solution to the online lectures was unique and, in my opinion, the best way to handle the changing circumstances. I continued learning just as effectively as I had pre-spring break, in large part due to your adjustment to the lecture component's structure.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

As stated above, I think you did very well handling the unforeseen circumstances. Video lectures were particularly beneficial and were a great way to learn in chunks (rather than all being crammed into one 3-hour lecture) and your use of the online sessions was efficient and helpful, especially combined with watching your recorded lectures beforehand and working through the worksheet problems on my own in advance.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

As someone drawn to book-learning, I found reading assignments in other classes continued to be informative and useful, and I was able to complete most homework assignments simply by applying skills learned from reading the textbook.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

In other classes, lectures became difficult. When a class was taught in the same manner as it would be in-person, but simply in front of a webcam, things did not transition smoothly to the online medium and lectures became difficult to follow. Questions were difficult to ask because, unlike in office hours for some classes, I could not simply explain my reasoning on a whiteboard and collaborate with the professor in real time. Some things are better explained with math/figures than with words.

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

the class was interactive and engaging

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

It allowed us some flexibility in terms of the lecture attendance

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

not much really

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

Class felt pretty engaging, lectures were great, live examples during lecture were helpful. Talking to professor after class, asking questions during class, etc. All great!

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

The time of the class (our of your control, but still mentioning). 7:20 - 10:00PM is dreadful.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

Engagement via Piazza, lecture slides & recording uploaded well in advance. The class times were then shortened, (flipped classroom style) which was actually great.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

This was actually still pretty good all things considered. Maybe just some more example problems to work through. I felt like I was seeing less.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

Structure of the course pretty much stayed the same, content was the same.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

More engagement. Difficult to just listen for 2.5 hours.

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Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What went well?

Everything

Consider the class BEFORE spring break: What could be improved?

Nothing. Everything was good.

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What went well?

Everything

Consider the class AFTER spring break: What could be improved?

Nothing. Everything was good.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What went well?

Nothing.

Consider the transition to online in your OTHER classes: What could be improved?

Everything.

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