



PPHA 30535 1 - Data and Programming for Public Policy I - R Programming - Instructor(s) Peter Ganong

Project Title: **Graduate Course Feedback - Spring 2023**

Number Enrolled: **21**

Number of Responses: **15**

Report Comments

Opinions expressed in these evaluations are those of students enrolled in the specific course and do not represent the University.

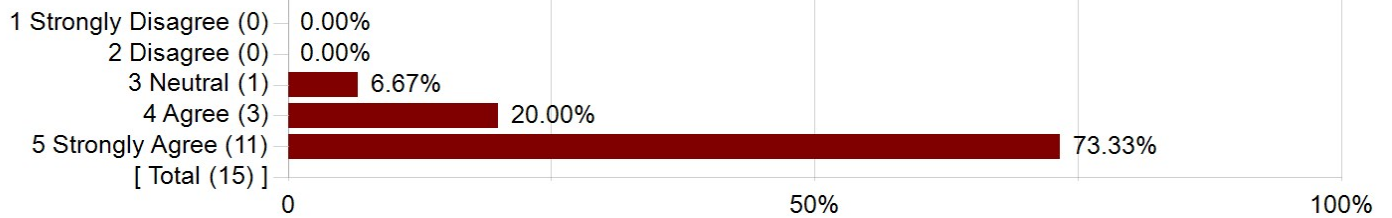
Creation Date: **Wednesday, June 14, 2023**

Please review and evaluate your work in this course overall.

Comments
Overall, I think my work has stayed at the class average. The problem sets have been challenging in terms of the time it takes to complete them. Being a student who has hefty commitments outside class, it has been challenging to complete them on time or in the time to working through them. However, being able to complete the problem sets to the best of my ability has been rewarding .
Overall this course was great for improving my coding skills in R. The assignments were challenging (if maybe a little more so than I was expecting) and the lectures tied to the online textbook well. But at times the disorganization of the course took away from my personal ability to do the work in accordance with my schedule and other commitments like volunteering and being a TA – Gradescope wouldn't be available to submit assignments, data download issues that took 4+ days to get a resolution for, as examples. Totally understand the teaching staff can't work nonstop and through the weekends, but sometimes the students have to in order to stay on top of assignments!
Didn't do well
This is by far the best class I have taken at Harris, hands down, you get your monies worth and you will leave feeling like you have an intermediate to advance knowledge in R, data cleaning, data manipulation, Viz, and reports production. I promise you that you will look back on your coding in Stats I and II and think, yikes what was I thinking, yikes I was coding like a caveman/women/x. Yikes, my Stats TA had no idea that tidy verse already loads 80% of what I need to code for my assignments. Yikes, program evaluation is just a continuation of the same bad coding practices.
Yeah, you walk out of this class feeling like a champ, like you can wrangling the sh out of that dirty survey data, you'll be the cool coding kid everyone goes for help, catch you like "oh yeah you need a bar plot? I got you, *type* *type* type* , here you go no biggie look I even made it colorblind friendly."
Take DP I in python off your class list, don't look any further this class will prepare you to be an analyst, forget python, they need work, I promise you as a dual learner (I took DP 1 in python) that this class ,right here, has been refined by a tenured professor who genuinely wants to improve, literally this manz will mid lecture stop and take notes to fix his slides for the later class. If we had more Peter Gs at Harris no-one would ever feel crushed by the core. I am not throwing shade at the profs in python, I'm just being real, the python class needs a revision.
Peter runs a tight ship, he sets high expectations for his TAs and the rest of the quarter and this dude does not stop, he carries it into every....single....class.... You will feel heard, welcomed and valued in this class, and you will not be belittled.
This class flirts with perfection, there is only very little room left to improve. That said, be prepared to code, you will code in the morning, code in the afternoon, code in the evenings, code in the bathrooms, the cafeteria, the library, your gonna code so much you will likely get tired of it but you will master it. The problem sets do require time and attention, I'm talking 8–12 hours a week but you get time in lab to work on it with your friends and the TAs who have a system in place to record questions and service you like your at chase private client services or Goldman Sachs. Oh and don't copy code from other people, I can personally attest you will get flagged for similarities, mine was a false positive, but positive enough for me to write in this survey that you should not do it. Seriously don't you're gonna get caught and it's not a good time chief.
AI During this class, yeah you can use chatGPT but chat is not very good and doesn't code well in R, its better at explaining concepts more than anything else so don't rely on chat, besides, grade scoop has an AI origin code detector now.
Extra Credit YOOOOOOO there's extra credit points left and right in this class so if you tryna get all the points because you got crushed in the core and your GPA is hella sad, this right here is also it for you.
In a more serious tone, this truly is an exceptional class. I took both R and Python because I wanted to speak them both really well and close the loop on R plus the labor market is signaling a shift to python. While maybe python is sexier or programming is more important or whatever, the matter of fact is that at the Harris School DP1 in R with Peter G is the way to go right now. I hope that the Python course matches the style and level of performance of DPI in R. Maybe consider a MACS course to learn python instead.
This course was a full-time job for the spring quarter. Despite being the last course I enrolled in and probably the furthest from my interest, I spent the majority of my time doing it and despite my initial resentment of that fact I came away from the experience with a great toolkit of skills that I started using to aid in my other courses. I definitely learn and developed an actual skill set during this course, so I would say that I walked away satisfied with my work and the time I invested in the course.
This class was kind of chaotic, but I definitely learned a lot. I had more background in R than the average Harris student, but still found this class really helpful. It also still took me a lot of time to do problem sets.
I feel proud of my overall work in this course. I feel as though I learned a great deal about coding, how to troubleshoot, and how to learn on my own.

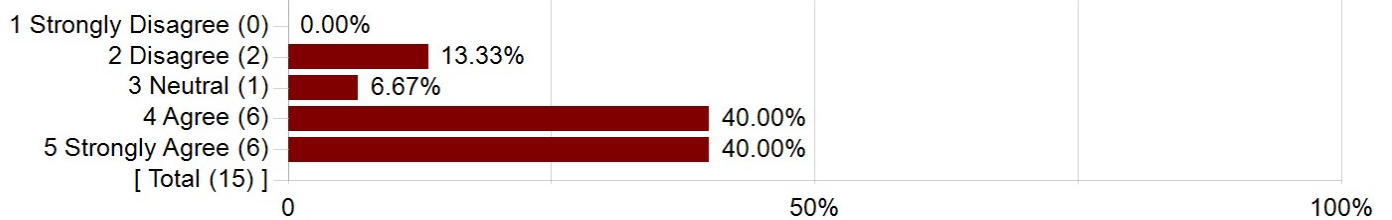
Please review and evaluate the course on the following:

1. I took away useful tools, concepts, knowledge, or insights from this course.



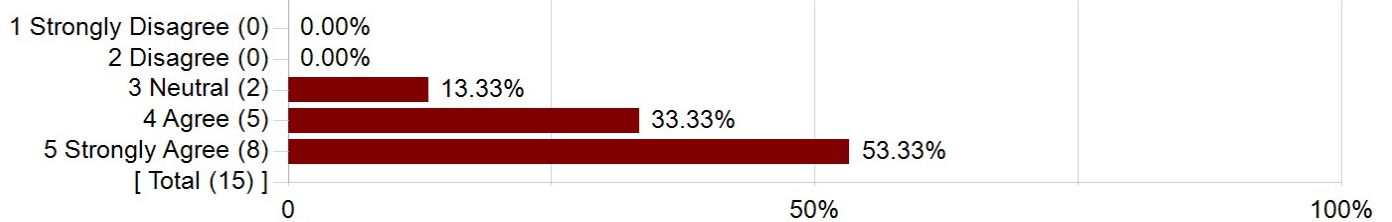
Statistics	Value
Response Count	15
Mean	4.67
Standard Deviation	0.62
Standard Error (base on SD)	0.16

2. I received regular, effective feedback to help me understand where I was in the learning process.



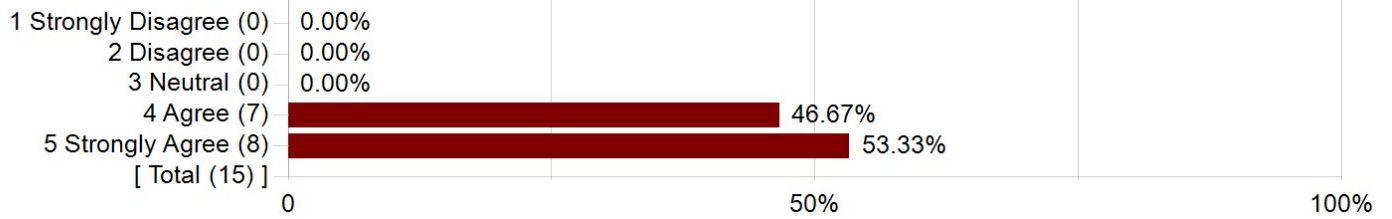
Statistics	Value
Response Count	15
Mean	4.07
Standard Deviation	1.03
Standard Error (base on SD)	0.27

3. I would recommend this course to other students.



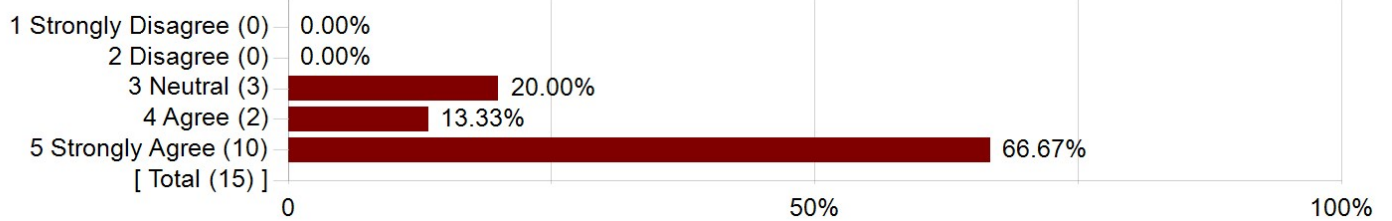
Statistics	Value
Response Count	15
Mean	4.40
Standard Deviation	0.74
Standard Error (base on SD)	0.19

4. The material in this course was constructively challenging.



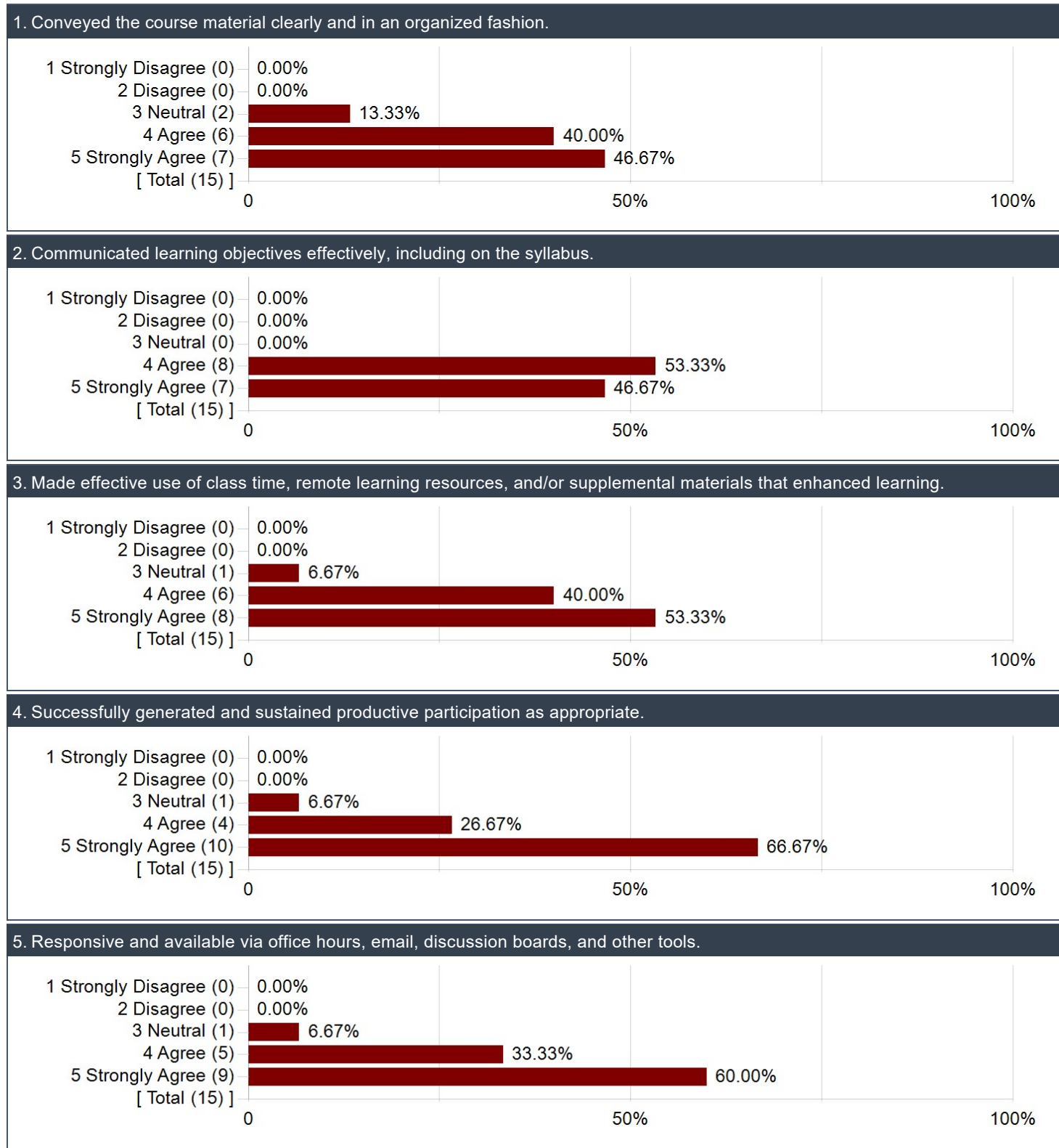
Statistics	Value
Response Count	15
Mean	4.53
Standard Deviation	0.52
Standard Error (base on SD)	0.13

5. I felt that the classroom was an inclusive learning environment for me.



Statistics	Value
Response Count	15
Mean	4.47
Standard Deviation	0.83
Standard Error (base on SD)	0.22

Please review and evaluate the faculty on the following:



Please elaborate on any of your responses above.

Comments
Class time was used effectively but supplemental materials were not offered with great frequency. I think offering would be help ful to see the different ways that code was used and how it can be used for that weeks content. Seeing in multiple ways would help us to have a better grasp of course material but encourage us to practice the material more often as opposed to approach it for the first time via the homework.
The course did feel a bit disorganized. But I thought the guest lecturers were amazing, relevant, and timely to the material we were covering in class.
This course was extremely challenging but I learned a lot! It could be helpful to include the learning objectives on each problem set to help us think about how to tackle different questions or what new skills we would learn as part of the the applied problem sets. A SWBAT (students will be able to) at the top of the p set with the key skills of the p set or something of that nature would have been helpful. This course definitely felt like drinking from a fire hose at times and a clear SWBAT would help me better understand the skills I was mastering to then market them on my resume/in interviews/etc.
Peter teaches out of a book and it reads like a magazine, it's really useful and tells you how to approach/solve certain problem sets. a big miss in the python course if you ask me.
Professor Ganong accurately portrayed the course objectives and sought to teach us those concepts during class time.

What aspects of the instructor's teaching contributed most and least to your learning?

Comments
Enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject contributed to generate interest in the methodologies
Encouraging questions via mud cards and in class was really helpful because it helped me to not shy away from participating or asking for clarification when confused.
Challenging and relevant assignments that seemed pertinent to future professional outcomes
I always felt welcome to ask questions and never felt that my questions were "dumb" questions. I really loved the guest lectures, as well, and that they were often former Harris students. It would have been great to have time to ask those lecturers how they got their first data job outside of Harris or how they pivoted into a data job through Harris (if they were working full-time before going to school).
His desire to improve and own up to his mistakes or misfires
Dr. Ganong's flexibility in terms of the course schedule aided the learning process by ensuring that students had enough time and focus to grasp the concepts we were learning. An unfortunate by-product of a new edition of the textbook being released is that a comprehensive adjustment of course materials to account for textbook changes was completed and did create some significant challenges for students during the quarter.
This class covers a lot of material. Sometimes the lectures felt like he was just clicking through slides to make it through everything. During those classes it was hard to follow and I would get frustrated and just kind of tune out the rest because I didn't know what was going on lol. He responded really well to feedback though, and if we told him he was going too fast he'd dedicate more time later to the topics.
Peter was extremely adaptive when it came to how he approached his teaching, and that is something I really appreciated. I do wish the formatting of the slide decks were more similar to what was presented in Stats II. A combination of code as well as explanatory information would have helped when first being introduced to new concepts.
Professor Ganong's teaching style was definitively aligned with the structure of the course as outlined in the syllabus

Please suggest any changes that could improve this course (e.g., class material, class structure, assignments, inclusive pedagogy).

Comments
Class material should be more concise to go through everything during class. We often didn't complete the slides
Some suggestions that I think could improve the course is in the problem sets. I understand the point of having vague questions and questions without too much detail. However, I think it would be helpful that the problem sets were broken down into more steps on how to apply the concepts we learned in class. I think a good example of this was the first weeks problem set where we the questions are broken down so that we can see the ways a particular function works and all its uses. Then perhaps including challenging questions. I think also shortening the problem sets would be helpful too because considering their difficulty level they take up more that the recommended time to spend on coding as outlined in the syllabus.
I would just suggest better organization and reaction to systemic course-wide problems. I often felt like I would raise an issue and it wouldn't be taken seriously until many other people reported the same issue, days later.
The assignments were taxing. I found this class took on average 20–30 hours a week every week between assignments and class time. At times I felt I was rushing through questions to get them done without having the time to make a graph look perfect or find the most effective way to answer a question with the most concise code. I wish the skills problem sets were 20% shorter to allow more time to breath. This class make it difficult to focus on my other classes during busy assignment weeks outside of this class.
I think you could leverage your TAs to record mini lectures at home that dive deeper in a topic or subject matter. Recorded lectures would only be good if you unpack dense material not covered in depth during regular lecture
The course does a lot to accommodate students in their learning process, but could benefit from putting a bit more attention on the creation of the problem sets. These assignments are often very interesting and challenging, but there were many times where questions were unclearly or unnecessarily vaguely written. The concepts we are tackling are already complicated enough as it is, so ensuring readability on these assignments could go a long way in improving the learning process of the courses students.
I get that coding is very dynamic but some things about problem sets and expectations weren't clear. It felt like Peter/TA's hadn't always read through the problem sets collectively before hand and that led to material being taught out of order sometimes. Also with the WAZE data how we were told we had to delete it but then we needed it for the next problem set. Just making sure everything makes sense and has continuity would be an imporvement.
I enjoyed the thoughtfulness of having guest speakers. However, I did find that because they were during class at times throughout the quarter we felt rushed. I think adding these guest speakers in outside of class time would be more beneficial for the learning environment.
Admittedly, the problem sets were difficult. While I understand that difficulty in the problem sets is a necessary component of the work, it just seemed like much of the time was being spent on things that were not related to the course concepts. When several classmates are spending over 15 hours a week trying to bludgeon through a problem set, I think that may be a sign that the material is not effectively connecting to the homework.

Please comment on how respected, valued, and included you felt as a participant in the course.

Comments
I felt respected, valued, and included in the course as a participant.
I did feel respected valued and included.
I always felt welcome to ask questions and felt respected by the professor and TAs.
Peter is great, he even tells you to introduce yourself to the guest speakers when you ask a question, he tries really hard to remember your name and actively practices in class
Very.
Felt encouraged to participate and like any question was valid.
I appreciated the responsiveness to questions of both our instructor and TA's. As someone who is new to writing code, I always felt comfortable asking a question that to others may seem basic.
I felt incredibly respected and valued throughout the course.

Please include the name of the TA you are evaluating. What aspects of the TA's teaching contributed most to your learning? What could the TA modify to help you learn more? Please include any additional feedback for the TA.

Comments
There were multiple TAs with very different levels of teaching quality. Mostly preferred to go through the materials by myself and attend office hours with the instructor
The course had multiple TAs. All where extremely helpful during lab and responsive in Ed. They where able to walk through with us step by step any conflict we might have encountered. However, the head TA Shushant was very dismissive when asked a questions and was not very receptive when given feedback by students. This made it very challenging to approach him with any questions. When I would ask a question he would respond as if the answer was very obvious.
Nothing to contribute.
There were many TA's but Natalie was the best.
All of the TAs in the coding lab were very helpful. I think the biggest issue was that some questions on assignments were unclear. Oftentimes the clarifying answers were in ed discussion and not posted more broadly on canvas for everyone to see.
Natalie is a real one. All the TAs march at the same pace as Peter, they care about you. Don't take advantage though, they need to have space for themselves and boundaries too
Rachel Tucker. Phenomenal help throughout the course, was very grateful to have her as a TA.