

Systems Security (Fall 2021)

Instructor: **Onarlioglu, Kaan**
 Subject: **CY**
 Catalog & Section: **3740 01**
 Course ID: **14687**
 Objectives:

Enrollment: **9**
 Responses Incl Declines: **8**
 Declines: **0**

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
Online course materials were organized to help me navigate through the course week by week.	8	88%	4.3	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	5.0
Online interactions with my instructor created a sense of connection in the virtual classroom.	8	88%	3.0	3.1	3.0	4.5	4.0	4.0
Online course interactions created a sense of community and connection to my classmates.	8	88%	3.1	3.1	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
I had the necessary computer skills and technology to successfully complete the course.	8	88%	4.1	3.9	4.1	5.0	4.0	5.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree; 0:N/A;

Course Related Questions

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
The syllabus was accurate and helpful in delineating expectations and course outcomes.	8	88%	4.9	4.3	4.4	5.0	4.0	5.0
Required and additional course materials were helpful in achieving course outcomes.	8	88%	4.8	4.2	4.3	5.0	4.0	5.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree;

Learning Related Questions

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
In-class sessions were helpful for learning.	8	88%	5.0	4.1	4.3	5.0	4.0	5.0
Out-of-class assignments and/or fieldwork were helpful for learning.	8	88%	5.0	4.3	4.2	5.0	4.5	4.0
This course was intellectually challenging.	8	88%	5.0	4.2	4.2	5.0	4.0	4.0
I learned a lot in this course.	8	88%	5.0	4.4	4.3	5.0	5.0	5.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree;

Instructor Related Questions: Kaan Onarlioglu

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
The instructor came to class prepared to teach.	8	88%	5.0	4.5	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor used class time effectively.	8	88%	5.0	4.3	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor clearly communicated ideas and information.	8	88%	5.0	4.2	4.3	5.0	4.0	5.0
The instructor provided sufficient feedback.	8	88%	4.6	4.2	4.2	5.0	4.0	5.0
The instructor fairly evaluated my performance.	7	77%	4.7	4.5	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor was available to assist students outside of class.	8	88%	4.9	4.4	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor facilitated a respectful and inclusive learning environment.	8	88%	5.0	4.6	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor displayed enthusiasm for the course.	8	88%	5.0	4.6	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree;

Instructor Effectiveness: Kaan Onarlioglu

Question	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
What is your overall rating of this instructor's teaching effectiveness?	8	88%	5.0	4.4	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0

Note: 5:Almost Always Effective; 4:Usually Effective; 3:Sometimes Effective; 2:Rarely Effective; 1:Never Effective;

Instructor Related Questions: Kaan Onarlioglu (20 comments)

Q: What were the strengths of this course and/or this instructor?

- 1 This is the best instructor and best course I have taken at any learning institution. I have never had such an active Professor that cared about students' learning this much. Every day he came to class ready to teach and would stay overtime at the end of class to help students complete the out-of-class challenge assignments: he stays with students for several minutes and helps students go through their code; something that is incredibly valuable but rare among other professors. The instructor is incredibly knowledgeable on the subject and very willing to help students, especially when students struggle. The out-of-class challenge assignments are the most updated and cover the most bleeding-edge security concepts; they are incredibly interesting and create a great sense of accomplishment when done. Expectations throughout the course were always very clear. This is a rigorous course and it is absolutely worth it for students that actually want to understand cybersecurity. Kaan is the best.
- 2 Kaan made my first foray into a cybersecurity course (besides Foundations) a truly positive experience. His slide decks were extremely verbose for our benefit, and was able to bring in real-world experience and relatability to each subject we covered. The challenges were intellectually-stimulating, and really made you think outside of the box. And while the classes were very long, his charisma and humor made going to class each night a great experience. The learning outside of the classroom for the challenges can be largely self-led, but again Kaan is there to answer any questions you may have. Overall, a highly recommended course with an even more highly recommended professor!
- 3 Best professor I ever had.
- 4 Deep knowledge and well-run class. I'm also a big fan of the challenges - I've never done anything like them and it was a great experience.
- 5 Gives great hints on Piazza when you are stuck on a challenge. Has the ability to guide students in the right direction without giving anything away about the solution. You only learn by asking questions!
- 6 Challenges are the real hallmark of this class. They were difficult enough to require some significant amount of thinking and not easy enough were you could mindlessly complete them. A lot of the learning happens when going through challenges, and they were extremely satisfying to complete. It can be frustrating struggling through the challenges at times, but the high when you figure it out it worth it.

Kaan was also great in the classroom. He was great at explaining the topics at a high level, and left the details for us to figure out for ourselves. He was also extremely helpful on Piazza which is a rarity among professors I've found. He responded quickly and with answers

that gave use a good direction on what to try / look at next.

7 Very knowledgeable, very available to help students.

Q: What could the instructor do to make this course better?

1 N/A

2 Kaan made the transition from teaching grad courses to undergrad courses very well. Potentially having more in-class examples (on top of the ones we already had) would be good opportunities for further learning, but it's understandable to keep things how they are if the learning is largely meant to be student discovery.

3 N/A

4 I love every aspect of this class except for the quizzes and exams. I do think it's worth having some form of tests, as there is a lot of important information we might otherwise forget since they're not exercised in the challenges. But something about the format/frequency of the tests and quizzes doesn't sit well with me. Getting an 80 on every exam causes a lot of anxiety, and while it's been communicated that we're not expected to get some answers, I think it would be helpful to get a better idea of how grading will play out when we get back our exam scores.

5 I really enjoyed Challenge 3, it would be interesting to cover some more material here about Linux security if possible. Challenge 5 and 9 were also fantastic (especially the side-channel one, which was very cool).

I think it would be helpful to have an example of a Python alternative in the slides/or a demo (or some other scripting language) as an approach to solving buffer overflows in Challenges 6 and 7. I found this method a bit more approachable and faster. It might help other students in the future as well.

6 Content wise I think the course is set up well. I knew Bash pretty well before I came into the class which helped tremendously navigating around the challenges, I'd imagine for someone who doesn't these challenges would be a lot harder. Maybe some help there would be good.

I think regarding challenges its the right amount of work. I think that I would have been a lot more stressed if I didn't self impose 1-week deadlines for myself on the challenges. If I had multiple challenges to work on in 1 week I easily imagine that I'd get pretty stressed and get behind easily. 1 week strict deadlines on the server though seems a bit too harsh. I liked the flexibility of the 3 week deadlines. I think another huge factor was not having new challenges during some weeks that helped settle down on challenges.

7 Allow for partial credit of challenges.

Q: Please expand on the instructor's strengths and/or areas for improvement in facilitating inclusive learning.

1 No recommendations, already very inclusive learning.

2 Starting each lecture with seeing how the different kinds of attacks we learned how to perform and mitigate were still major headlines was a great chance to see that what we were covering still had an impact today. Kaan was very personable, and would go out of his way to help you when you were stuck. Can't recommend this guy enough.

3 He was always available to answer questions and provide feedback/support. Additionally had question slides interspersed throughout the presentation to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to ask questions.

4 Make sure to keep the break in the middle of the lecture--around 10 minutes is useful. Or, maybe even two 5-minute breaks would be great. 3 hours is a long time!

Also, keep making sure to encourage and emphasize the importance of asking questions on Piazza. That's the way I was able to learn best in class especially since we only met once a week! Thanks for a great semester Kaan--I really enjoyed the course! :)

5 I thinks Kaan has an interesting perspective of industry and academia work which plays well into his lectures. He's definitely very interested in security and it shows. Kaan's also pretty nice and open to help you regardless so I think he's inclusive in that way.

If some upper level management is reading this you definitely want to keep this guy at Northeastern.

6 N/A.

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience (6 comments)

Q: Please comment on your experience of the online course environment in the open-ended text box.

1 The instructor is very active and responsive on Piazza.

2 Kaan was always quick to respond on Piazza, and he would go above and beyond in his responses in an effort to guide you to the solutions without giving you too many hints.

3 The instructor was always available on Piazza, almost alarmingly so.

4 Piazza is used for online discussion.

5 All online content was delivered flawlessly. All the slides, challenges and bonuses were in the same place and could be accessed at all times. Kaan was always responsive on Piazza on a quick turn around as well. He rode the line well between giving up the answer and giving actionable responses to questions.

6 N/A

Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (7 comments)

Q: What I could have done to make this course better for myself.

1 Ask more questions.

2 This was a very challenging course, if I had taken more time to do the independent research asked of us on each individual challenge, I would have had less of a hard time.

3 Started challenges earlier.

4 Nothing, I enjoyed the course very much

5 Not much--I had a great time and felt that I was on top of the workload for this class. The course was organized and paced really well.

6 Honestly not much, I enjoyed my time in this course starting all the challenges early and self setting a 1-week deadline on challenges for myself so I wouldn't have to deal with 2 challenges in one week worked wonders for me. I think I could have used office hours better to get more specific feedback early on, but I think I did well regardless.

7 Ask more questions.