Systems Security (Spring 2023)

Instructor: **Onarlioglu, Kaan**
Subject: **CY**
Catalog & Section: **3740 02**
Course ID: **34839**
Objectives:

Enrollment: **57**
Responses Incl Declines: **40**
Declines: **1**

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.	38	66%	4.7	4.4	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
Online interactions with my instructor created a sense of connection in the virtual classroom.	38	66%	4.4	4.3	4.2	5.0	5.0	5.0
Online course interactions created a sense of community and connection to my classmates.	38	66%	4.4	4.2	4.1	5.0	4.0	4.0
I had the necessary computer skills and technology to successfully complete the course.	38	66%	4.6	4.4	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.0

Note: 5:Strongly Agree; 4:Agree; 3:Neutral; 2:Disagree; 1:Strongly Disagree; -1: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.	38	66%	4.6	4.3	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0
Required and additional course materials were helpful in achieving course outcomes.	37	64%	4.6	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.	38	66%	4.8	4.3	4.3	5.0	5.0	5.0
Out-of-class assignments and/or fieldwork were helpful for learning.	38	66%	4.9	4.4	4.3	5.0	5.0	5.0
This course was intellectually challenging.	38	66%	4.9	4.2	4.3	5.0	4.0	5.0
I learned a lot in this course.	38	66%	4.9	4.4	4.4	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.	38	66%	4.9	4.6	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor used class time effectively.	38	66%	4.8	4.4	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor clearly communicated ideas and information.	38	66%	4.7	4.4	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor provided sufficient feedback.	38	66%	4.4	4.3	4.3	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor fairly evaluated my performance.	38	66%	4.8	4.5	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor was available to assist students outside of class.	38	66%	4.7	4.5	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor facilitated a respectful and inclusive learning environment.	38	66%	4.7	4.6	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.0
The instructor displayed enthusiasm for the course.	38	66%	4.9	4.7	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?	39	68%	4.9	4.6	4.5	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 (61 comments)

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

1 Instructor is extremely knowledgeable in the field and is great at explaining concepts clearly. Extremely engaging and informative lecturer. Excellent slides and challenges.

2 Don't take Kaan for granted: he is a great lecturer and is one of the most proactive instructors I've witnessed (he grades like a madman).

3 Very knowledgeable on all topics

4 Kaan is an amazing professor and incredibly knowledgeable and passionate about cybersecurity. This class was extremely challenging, but also incredibly rewarding. I learned so much from him and from his assignments and also had the most fun ever!

5 He's super knowledgeable, having authored many papers in the area. He also knows how to transmit knowledge to people. This is the first time in my life I've actually learned something from an exam, for instance.

6 CY3740 was an indispensable course that gave me a well-structured and fundamental understanding of system security. He is funny and entertaining in class and always ready to answer questions for his students. He always finds a way to hold the student's attention. In other classes, I would be distracted, but never in kaan's class.

7 Kaan is very passionate about all things security and it shows in his enthusiasm for the course. He is a great lecturer and makes the 3-hour class time bearable. Also the infrastructure he built out for the challenges is crazy and it makes them so fun and realistic.

8 Kaan is a really cool teacher to have. He clearly has abundant experience in this field and it shows in his demos in class and his general composure. Classes always had a goal and rarely was that goal not achieved.

9 This course is one of the best courses I've taken at Northeastern. The challenges are difficult, but the great TAs and frequent office hours prevent them from becoming overwhelming. Grading is insanely fast. It's clear Kaan really cares about the material and the students. I also appreciated his honest commentary on the world of academia vs. industry

10 Professor is really good at explaining things and focusing on the most important concepts.

11 Kaan was regularly engaged and had a good balance of content reflective of assignments and general, theoretical applications

12 This course quickly became my favorite from my time at NEU. It teaches practical skills through challenges, the concepts behind them through lecture, and a security-oriented mindset. The instructor is also knowledgeable, cares about the students' learning, lectures well, and is helpful outside of class. I learned a lot of skills that I'd been feeling like I was missing after my first co-op as part of a security team. The professor also dropped some opinions about the state of the current security industry that explained some of the things I saw in my first co-op.

13 Really interesting assignments, encouraged learning while also generating a sense of accomplishment

14 Very good lecturer. The only professor I've have that made reading off of slides engaging.

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

15 Kaan is very enthusiastic about this course and always used our time efficiently. Even though our class was long, I always paid full attention.

16 Very knowledgeable, fun assignments, fun class atmosphere, has a vast array of relevant stories and examples of what's taught in class, clearly passionate about the subject, offers help but makes sure that you are sufficiently independent

17 Very passionate about the material and it was clear that he cared about the students actually learning, not just passing. Very very smart and experienced. Can tell not only does he know what he is talking about but he has done it and experienced it in the real world.

18 Kaan is a truly awesome professor who is passionate about security and has the qualifications to boot. The course covers interesting concepts that will make you think and research actively. Some of these concepts are difficult to execute in practice, but if you need help, it's readily available.

19 fun in class and pretty engaging

20 - Touches different aspects of security and gives us a broad view
    - Professor is very knowledgeable and you can tell that he really is passionate
    - Piazza and TA's were super useful resources

21 Very smart.
    Listens to feedback.
    Funny.

22 kaan is VERY knowledgeable

23 Kaan really knows his stuff and gives you his real world take on a lot of the topics. He also exposes you to a lot of different tools and features of linux with the challenges

24 The instructor is very funny, sincere, and straightforward. When I didn't understand something (a concept or something about the challenges) and asked him about it, he wouldn't give up until he thought I understood it. I felt like he believed in me, which was very encouraging.

25 He definitely knows a lot

26 Kaan is a great proffesor. Real enthusiasm for the course and his students. You can tell that he genuinely enjoys teaching and wants everyone to learn.

    the course and the way it is structured with the challenges is great. I loved that we had a challenge corresponding to each part of the material taught to enforce the concepts we learned.

27 Extremely enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and responsive. Responds within an hour most days on piazza, and when he isn't available he forecasts it.

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

1 Challenge 5 was a bit annoying because the relevant slides about request smuggling gave a different impression about how to do request smuggling than what was needed on challenge 5.

2 Sometimes certain lectures drag on, but maybe I just have particular interests

3 Maybe more TAs and office hours if the class is large again. The TAs did their best, but I felt bad that they were always staying an hour or two after office hours were supposed to end. It was great that the instruction team created the two extra office hours slots in the beginning of the course, and they were very helpful, but it would have been more helpful to have more TAs.

4 Nothing it was good

5 More office hours. Perhaps not all TAs at the same time, but have each TA hold their own 2 hour office hour block twice a week. TAs will work the same amount of time and office hour availability will greatly increase.

6 I think more optional challenges would be cool. I know he mentioned something regarding return oriented programming which would be a cool challenge.

7 More in class demos would be helpful

8 Kaan's experience and intense wisdom makes him a bit unapproachable. My one regret from our class time was being unable to work up the courage to talk to him and ask questions during office hours, which is upsetting as I think it would have improved my ability to learn.

9 Nothing, course was great.

10 Adding more anime pictures.

11 Nothing, loved it!

12 Challenges could be made a little less open-ended. The lectures are definitely helpful for solving them, but sometimes I felt unprepared going into a challenge with the theory I had. Perhaps more in-class examples could help. Additionally, I found the bonus challenges a little awkwardly situated. They're described as being a good way to earn back points if you missed some elsewhere, but because they're generally harder to complete than the challenges themselves (namely, no hints), they might not help you.

13 the challenges are way too difficult. not sure if the prof knows this but the only reason 98% of students get the challenges done is because 1. they literally live in office hours or 2. they get the help from someone else. It's almost impossible to actually fully complete the challenges otherwise

14 Nothing the class is perfect. Some time spent on regexes though could've been beneficial

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

15 Give a better study plan. I waisted a lot of time studying things that were not on the test.
    Also - don't trick the class. It's mean.

16 I think one would be to better align the course material and the challenges. I feel that at times it becomes to easy to get hyperfocused on the challenges that you forget the material since they can take extensive periods of time.

17 not much. I loved every second of this class. The exams are hard to study for but that just seems to be from the course really covering every part of systems security

18 Nothing, really

19 More clear hints for certain homework. Hints are structured to sort-of sidestep the correct answer, and to properly use them we needed to analyze what they don't say, rather than what they do say.

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

1 Keep up the good work. Lectures were all informative and helpful. Challenges were fun.

2 You're good

3 The instructor is experienced in the security field so his lectures are informative. He's not a dry lecturer, has a sense of humor, and also cares about students. I found him kind of intimidating in the beginning but it was probably my anxiety talking, he was very helpful to me when I had questions.

   Regarding inclusive learning, the instructor was aware that the teaching staff had no non-cis male representation and encouraged TA applications from everyone at the end of the course. I never felt that being female or LGBT affected my learning in this course.

4 Very good teacher, explained everything well, could fully answer all questions

5 As someone very challenged in the facial hair department, I felt excluded by the constant, luscious reminder of my failures hanging from Kaan's face. Shave the beard.

6 I can't think of any improvements, I just really enjoyed the class

7 I'd love to take this course again/ TA.

8 I don't know what inclusive learning is. If you cared any amount about the class you are 100% going to learn very real and practical things about the feild.

9 Inclusive class that won't make you feel incapable when asking questions

10 either provide easier challenges or prepare the students better for challenges. It's not useful if people resort to just copying or getting the answers from someone else anyways. challenge 3 especially was an absolute nightmare and would be impossible if I didn't get help for nearly every problem from office hours and slaving over the questions for hours. just doesnt make sense

11 He gave breaks.

12 Again, Kaan is very smart and also very responsive on Piazza. He also gets grades back within a couple days to a week max, which is really helpful to know where you fall in the class grade wise.

13 I appreciate how Kaan is trying to encourage women to apply to be SySec TAs! I think that that is a great step towards being more inclusive.

14 I found it very comforting that Kaan made it clear from the beginning that if we ever had an issue with how the class was structured or had any concerns about things like inclusivity we could send him a private message. While I never had to do this myself I helped me feel comfortable and supported in the classroom. He always seemed very open for feedback to make the class better.

15 He good.

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience (17 comments)

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

1 warhead was kinda cool

2 The recorded lecture videos were extremely helpful for reviewing concepts/studying/completing challenges.

3 Lectures and OH were all in person. We were given access to any necessary resources at an appropriate time

4 The course materials were organized in the server that held all of the information for the course, and that the professor built himself. The server handled our grades, challenge homeworks, etc. very efficiently and I had no problems with it. It's also pretty cool.

   Lectures were recorded, and the slides were also numbered in order that we went through them in class.

   The professor, TAs, and other students were also incredibly responsive and funny on Piazza.

5 Get good (read: competent) at the command line and a few Linux tools.

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

6	Work was organized very well
7	piazza was helpful but not used by many people compared to other cs classes, course server is cool
8	Kaan was very active on piazza and would answer any questions quickly. Piazza was pretty active with students posting news articles or asking questions about current events that might relate to our class.
9	The course was in-person, but Kaan is happy to stream the lecture on zoom if you can't come to class.
10	Kaan is very active on piazza, answering questions day and night.
11	There was no online aspect to this course except for the challenges which were auto-graded.
12	Very active Piazza
13	not much online environment to comment on
14	Warhead was so well organized and was really easy to use. Also made the class more fun
15	Kaan makes it very clear that this is an in-person class. Therefore, the hybrid/online setting for classes isn't really invested in.
16	We used Piazza and warhead mainly to communicate. I wish that the piazza page was where all course material was stored just because it would be easier to the recorded lectures, slides, and challenge info to be in one spot.
17	Online option was available, but was clearly advertised to be less effective than the in-person experience

Student Self-Assessment of their Effort to Achieve Course Outcomes (25 comments)

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

1	Complete one challenge per week.
2	Go to the lectures. As they happen.
3	Start my assignments earlier
4	Spend more time on it
5	Talk to Kaan and start challenges earlier.
6	I should have done all the bonuses.
7	Doing research on google about everything that you don't understand.
8	Start the assignments earlier. Do an assignment every week instead of waiting until the last weekend before the final deadline.
9	Prepared more for the quizzes and exams
10	nothing
11	Nothing
12	I wish I got to spend more time on the challenges outside of class, and reading the professor's optional recommendations from class. It wasn't really possible for me this semester, but that would have been helpful for me to learn more. I also felt that maybe studying more for the exams could have helped.
13	I think this class went pretty well for me, and I finished all the work I had to do. There was some extra challenges I could've completed, but I couldn't get to it.
14	Go to office hours more often
15	Start challenges early! Also, ask questions if you're stuck. Often there will come a point where you've exhausted resources online and need a pointer in the right direction.
16	go to more office hours
17	I should've realized that looking stuff up is a pretty big part of figuring challenges out
18	Been smarter? I don't know, not much.
19	gone to office hours earlier in the course, started challenges earlier
20	One thing I could have done was go through notes after class and rewatch the lecture on the weekend before attempting the assignments. A lot of times there were things mentioned in the slides that we would be using in the challenge but they were never obvious in class.
21	Eat dinner before going to lecture. Learning is hard when you are hungry
22	start challenges earlier
23	started assignments outside of class/office hours, payed attention more in lecture

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

24 Go to all of the office hours from the very beginning.
    Seriously, office hour usage will halve the time you spend on this course.

25 Gone to class in person, even though side effects of medical treatment made it difficult to do so