Northeastern University

Fall 2025

TRACE report for CY3740-01 Systems Security (Kaan Onarlioglu)

Report prepared by **Danielle Lucas**
Created **Friday, January 9, 2026**

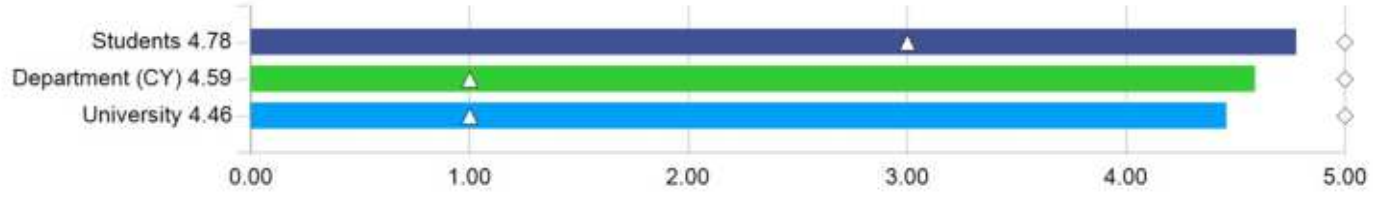
Courses Audience: **37**
Responses Received: **23**
Response Ratio: **62.16 %**
Opted out: **0**

Report Comments

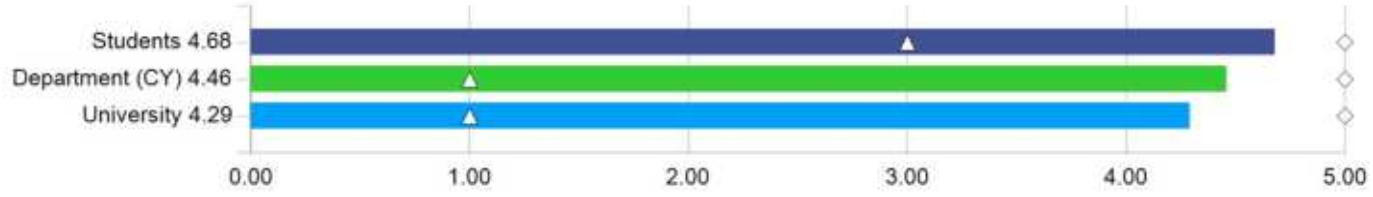
Rating Scale:
5: Strongly Agree
4: Agree
3: Neutral
2: Disagree
1: Strongly Disagree
N/A: Not Applicable

Questions to Assess Students' Online Experience

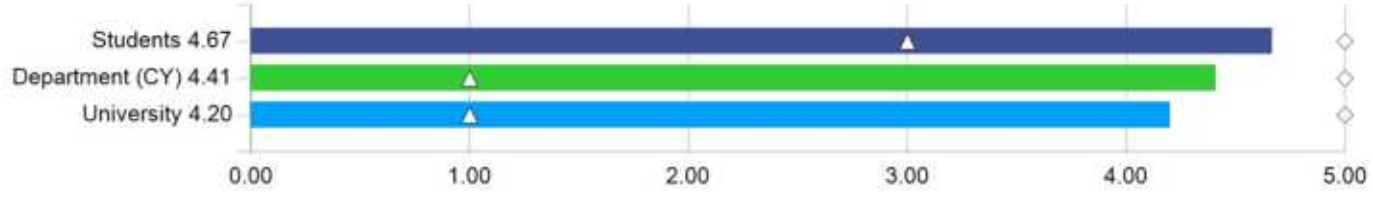
1. Online course materials were organized to help me navigate through the course week by week.



2. Online interactions with my instructor created a sense of connection in the virtual classroom.



3. Online course interactions created a sense of community and connection to my classmates.



4. I had the necessary computer skills and technology to successfully complete the course.

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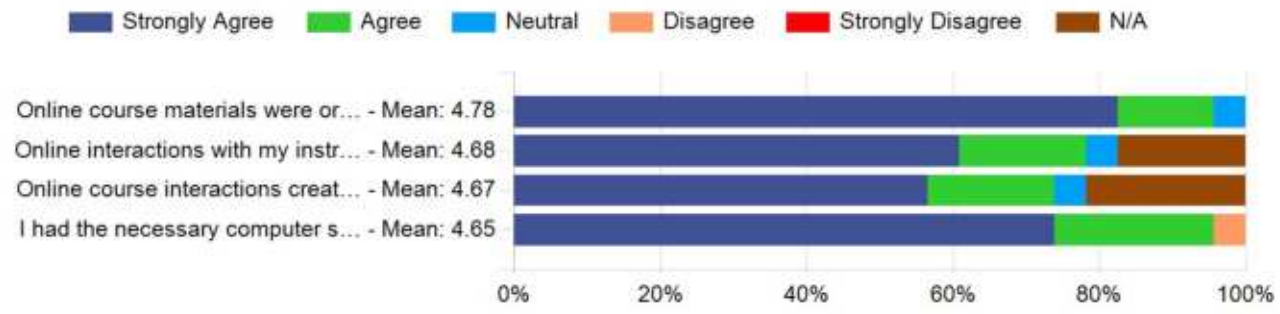
	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
Online course materials were organized to help me navigate through the course week by week.	23	62.16%	4.78	4.59	4.46	5.00	5.00	5.00
Online interactions with my instructor created a sense of connection in the virtual classroom.	19	51.35%	4.68	4.46	4.29	5.00	5.00	5.00
Online course interactions created a sense of community and connection to my classmates.	18	48.65%	4.67	4.41	4.20	5.00	5.00	5.00
I had the necessary computer skills and technology to successfully complete the course.	23	62.16%	4.65	4.64	4.66	5.00	5.00	5.00

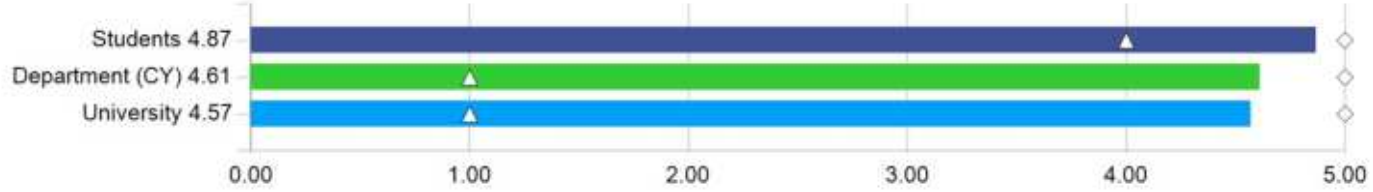


Please comment on your experience of the online course environment in the open-ended text box.

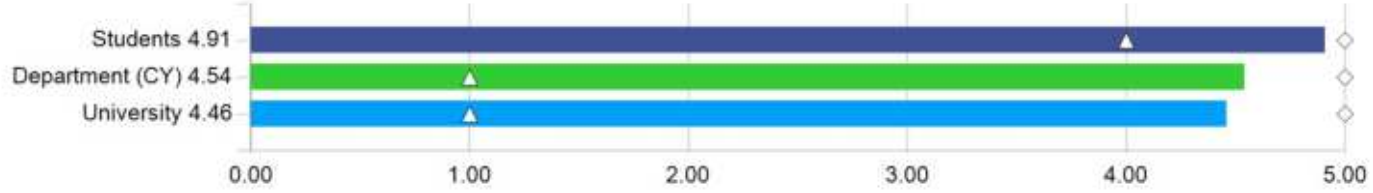
Comment
Kaan posted all lecture recordings which was super helpful. Online office hours were consistently available but I would recommend attending in–person office hours.
Online course environment was there if needed
I enjoyed the online environment in the course! It was really unique, entertaining, and engaging.
Amazing online environment experience, very timely and engaging.
It was fantastic, the course was mostly in–person though.
Updates were frequently sent on Piazza, I never felt confused about any course material!
The online content itself was all consolidated on Piazza which was a little bit clunky. There were also a few other sites, but I feel like it would've been better if all the info on assignments, due dates, and other resources were consolidated on a course website.
The online environment was very different than any class I was used to, but after learning how to navigate it became very useful and good for the class
Not an online class.
Very available outside of class, ready to help us learn.
Great
It was perfect
Kaan did a great job in providing the necessary resources required to complete the coursework, on Piazza. The minimalism also made finding what I needed to find incredibly intuitive.

Course Related Questions

1. The syllabus was accurate and helpful in delineating expectations and course outcomes.



2. Required and additional course materials were helpful in achieving course outcomes.



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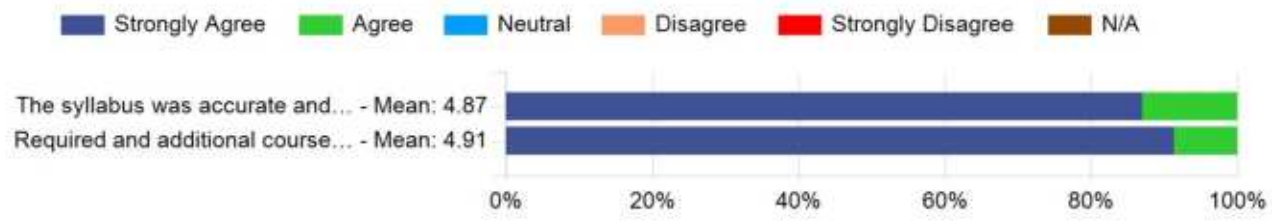
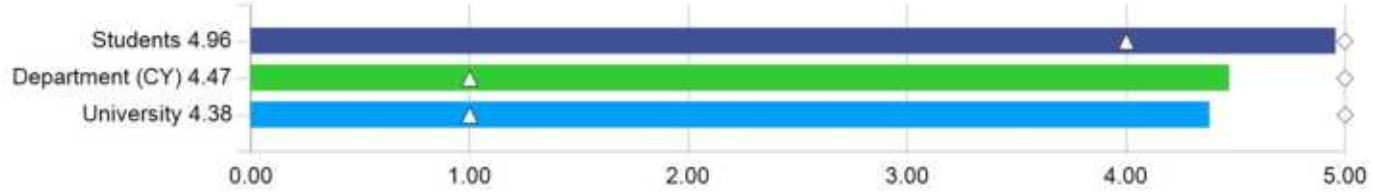
	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
The syllabus was accurate and helpful in delineating expectations and course outcomes.	23	62.16%	4.87	4.61	4.57	5.00	5.00	5.00
Required and additional course materials were helpful in achieving course outcomes.	23	62.16%	4.91	4.54	4.46	5.00	5.00	5.00

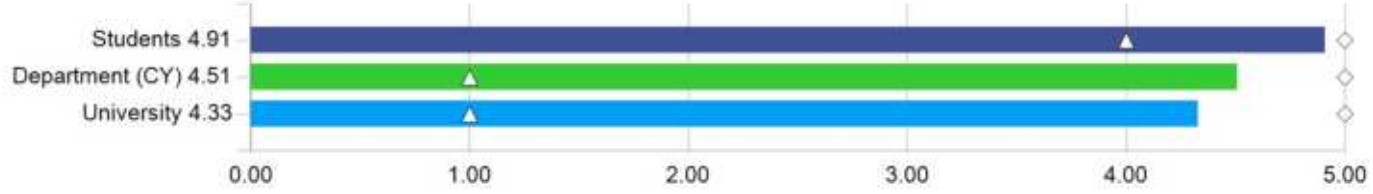


Learning Related Questions

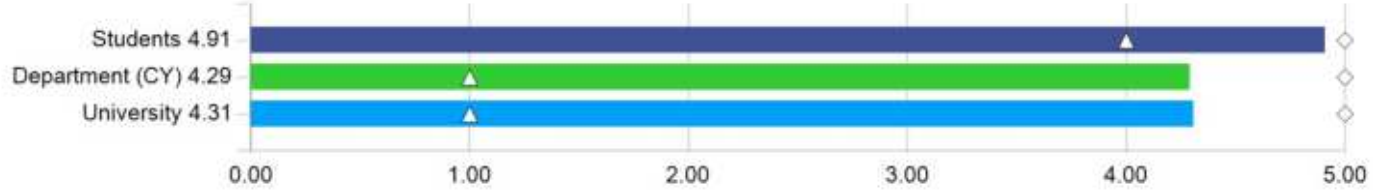
1. In-class sessions were helpful for learning.



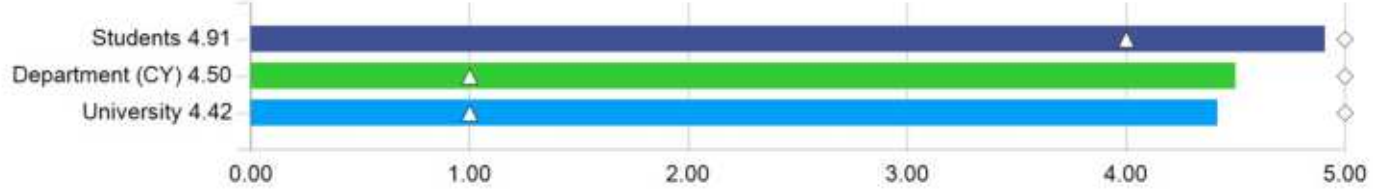
2. Out-of-class assignments and/or fieldwork were helpful for learning.



3. This course was intellectually challenging.



4. I learned a lot in this course.



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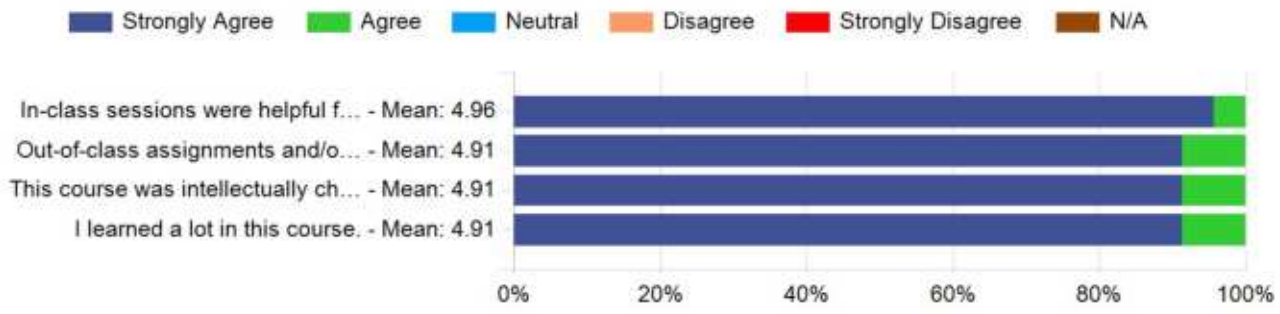
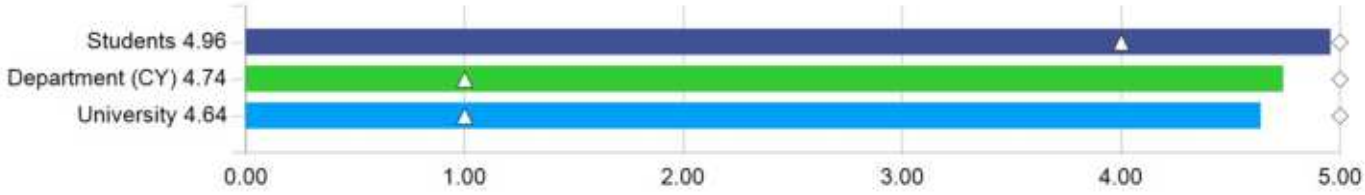
	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
In-class sessions were helpful for learning.	23	62.16%	4.96	4.47	4.38	5.00	5.00	5.00
Out-of-class assignments and/or fieldwork were helpful for learning.	23	62.16%	4.91	4.51	4.33	5.00	5.00	5.00
This course was intellectually challenging.	23	62.16%	4.91	4.29	4.31	5.00	5.00	5.00
I learned a lot in this course.	23	62.16%	4.91	4.50	4.42	5.00	5.00	5.00

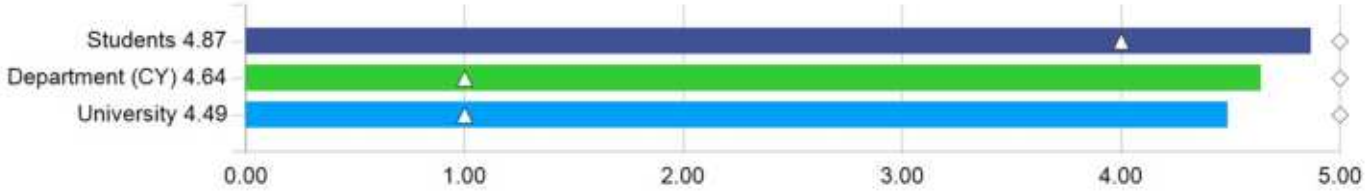


Instructor Related Questions: Kaan Onarlioglu

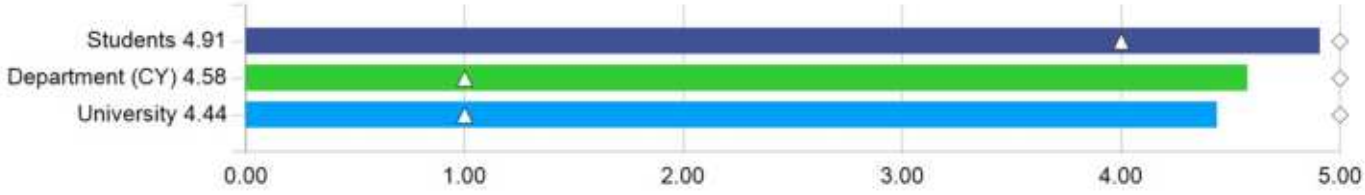
1. The instructor came to class prepared to teach.



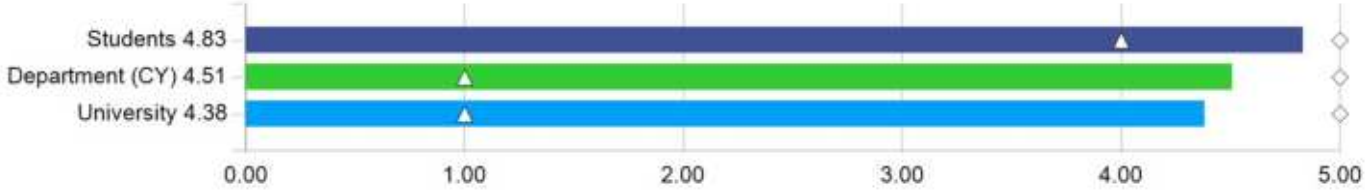
2. The instructor used class time effectively.



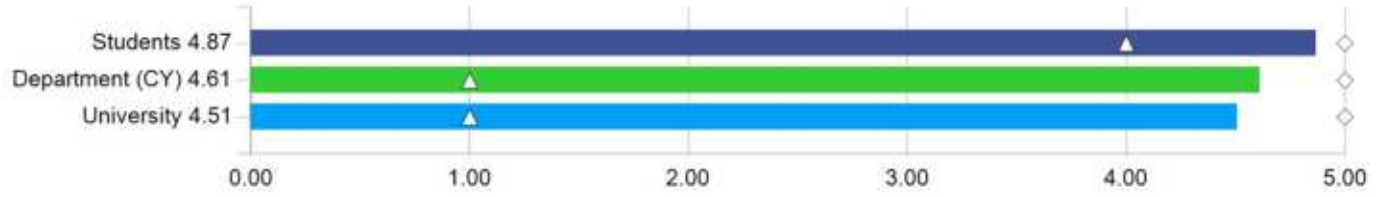
3. The instructor clearly communicated ideas and information.



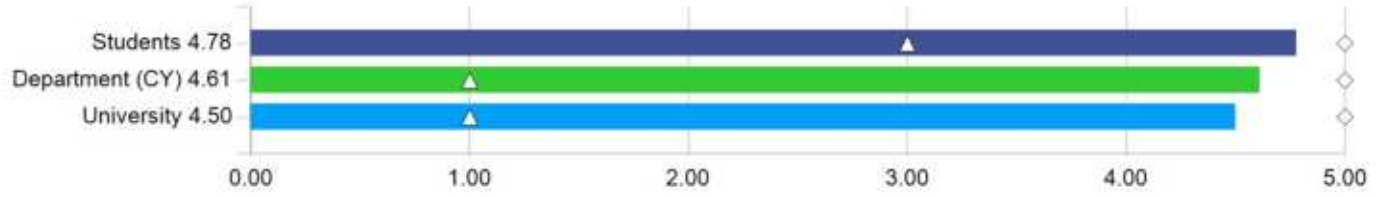
4. The instructor provided sufficient feedback.



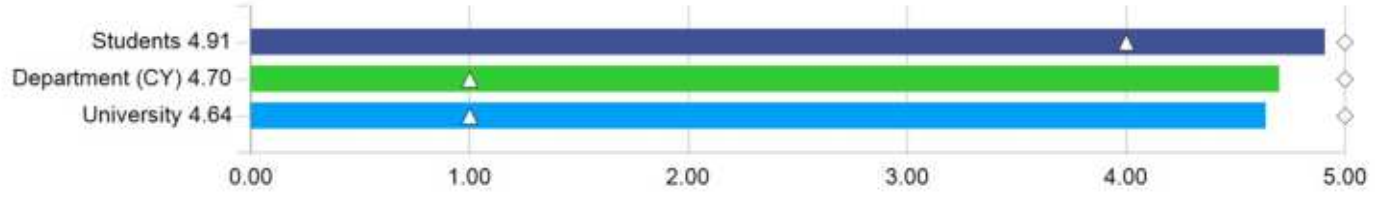
5. The instructor fairly evaluated my performance.



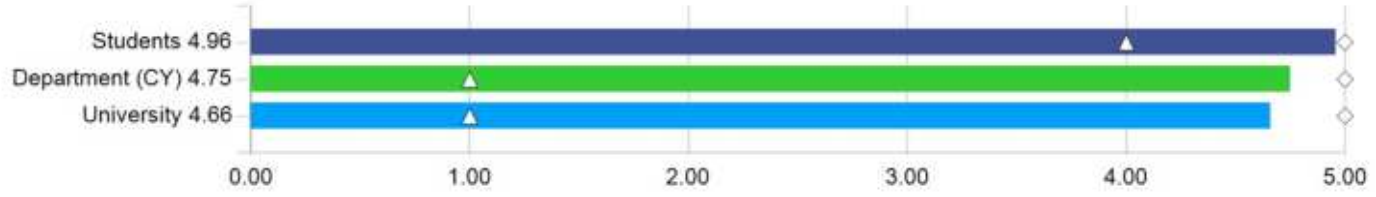
6. The instructor was available to assist students outside of class.



7. The instructor facilitated a respectful and inclusive learning environment.



8. The instructor displayed enthusiasm for the course.



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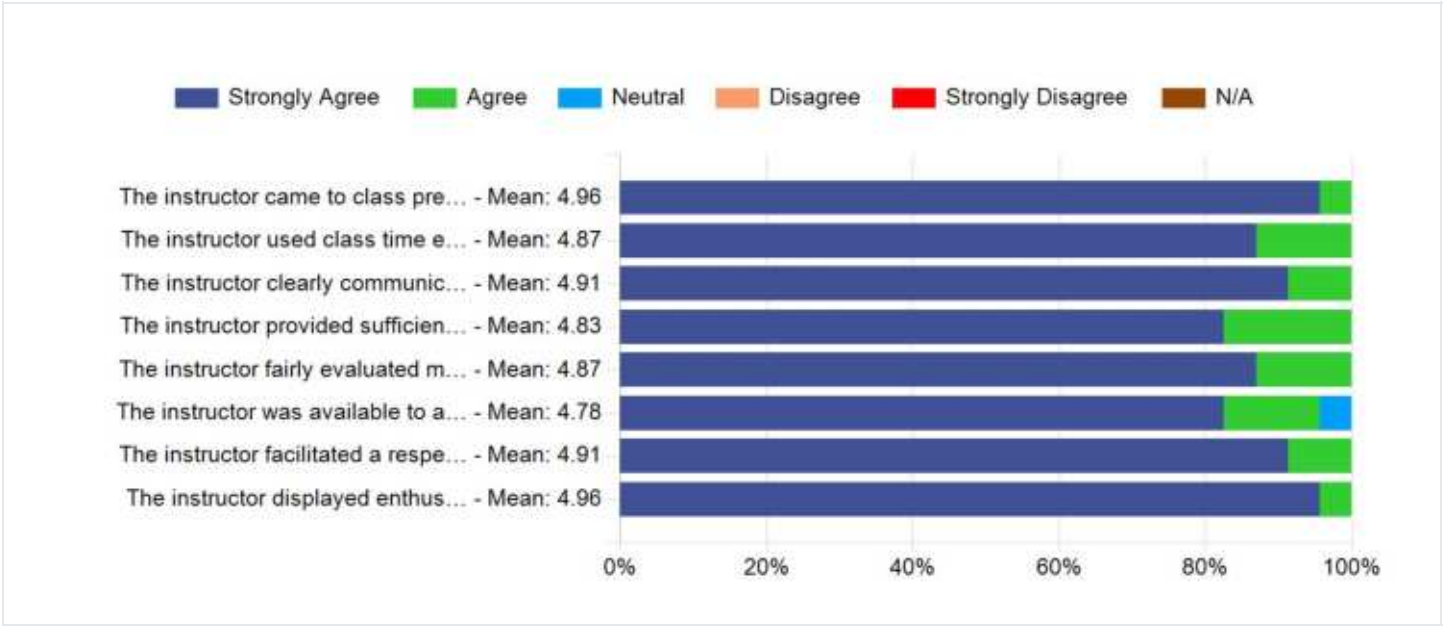
The instructor came to class prepared to teach.	23	62.16%	4.96	4.74	4.64	5.00	5.00	5.00
The instructor used class time effectively.	23	62.16%	4.87	4.64	4.49	5.00	5.00	5.00
The instructor clearly communicated ideas and information.	23	62.16%	4.91	4.58	4.44	5.00	5.00	5.00
The instructor provided sufficient feedback.	23	62.16%	4.83	4.51	4.38	5.00	5.00	5.00
The instructor fairly evaluated my performance.	23	62.16%	4.87	4.61	4.51	5.00	5.00	5.00
The instructor was available to assist students outside of class.	23	62.16%	4.78	4.61	4.50	5.00	5.00	5.00
The instructor facilitated a respectful and inclusive learning environment.	23	62.16%	4.91	4.70	4.64	5.00	5.00	5.00
The instructor displayed enthusiasm for the course.	23	62.16%	4.96	4.75	4.66	5.00	5.00	5.00


Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
N/A
The instructor came to class pre... - Mean: 4.96
The instructor used class time e... - Mean: 4.87
The instructor clearly communic... - Mean: 4.91
The instructor provided sufficien... - Mean: 4.83
The instructor fairly evaluated m... - Mean: 4.87
The instructor was available to a... - Mean: 4.78
The instructor facilitated a respe... - Mean: 4.91
The instructor displayed enthus... - Mean: 4.96
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%

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

Comment
The strengths of this course was the interactive CTFs made which made the assigment a lot more fun and challenging at the same time.
Kaan is extremely knowledgeable about the subject matter and has given me more practical insights into this field than any other professor I have had at Northeastern. A lot of students get intimidated by him but as long as he can tell you are genuinely putting in effort (and especially if you go to office hours), he will have your back and want you to succeed in his course. He did an especially good job of making the course requirements clear from the beginning and encouraging students to be realistic about whether they wanted to drop the course and retake it another semester without sounding like he was trying to fearmonger. With that being said he doesn't go easy on anyone but keeps the class very engaging and provides real–time feedback on in–class answers. He actually made the 6–9:20 lecture slot bearable! The course assignments and challenges themselves can feel overwhelming, but as long as you start early you'll learn a ton and have a fun time doing it. I looked forward to the challenges each week and I feel that I am leaving the course as a better programmer with a renewed interest in cybersecurity. The hands–on style was excellent for my learning style and I would be eager to take any other class Kaan taught. I really believe he is an incredible asset to Khoury and the cybersecurity program wouldn't be the same without him. I enjoyed the layout of the course. A few of my peers thought it would have made more sense to cover security architecture closer to the beginning of the course (before memory exploitation), but I disagree. It was more interesting to see the implications of design decisions before discussing them.
Very knowledgeable on the topic at hand and capable of making it interactive and enjoyable to do.
Kaan is an amazing instructor and very knowledgeable and can explain technical and complex concepts simply through abstractions.
I enjoyed his teaching style and his explanations/responses/lectures were very helpful, understandable, and captivating. He came very prepared — it felt like every lecture was very carefully designed.
Fantastic instructor clearly well equipped to instruct this class in all regards.
He is extremely engaging. Top professor I've had during my Bachelor's program. He explains everything so well and makes me want to learn more.
I think Kaan has the unique talent of making you face your shortcomings in a way that doesn't make you feel bad about yourself He's AMAZING at giving advice without spoiling solutions— truly a unique and incredible instructor
Instructor very knowledgeable on the topic and the interactive demos in class were good to see concepts in practice. The course is definitely challenging and gives experience to more not only the concepts of security, but how exactly attacks could be formulated and how you yourself could form them.
Kaan is one of the better profs at northeastern. He took very very in depth topics and taught them in a way that was learnable. While this was by far the most difficult class I have taken in college I also feel as if I learned the most. Kaan leads a very rigorous class, but it provides more learning than any other class offered at this school.
Best class I've taken at NU so far. Kaan is the best teacher and so engaging. He teaches during a pretty terrible time slot, but it never mattered. He is so passionate and a phenomenal lecturer. The assignments he gave us were so detailed, engaging, worthwhile, and effective, and they taught me a lot. They were perfectly challenging, and I was consistently impressed with our homework assignments. He was very clear on his expectations for us and gave us many opportunities to succeed.
Incredibly knowledgeable of the field and very willing to dive deeper into concepts he finds important.
You will learn so much
Everything
Lectures worked really well as preparation for the assignments, which were challenging but definitely within reach. There was also a ton of extra credit assignments, which were(for the most part) fun to work on. The entire structure of the class made it really satisfying when you finally finished any assignment. Kaan is extremely knowledgeable, and lectures were always engaging.
Extremely effective through both fun teaching style and rigorous homework assignments.
Kaan is, without a doubt, one of the best professors I have ever had at Northeastern University. He is a clear subject matter expert and is able to easily convey complex security topics. This course is challenging but incredibly rewarding and without Kaan, this course would have been hell.
Kaan is a master of his craft. It was because HE was teaching it, that I went to lecture every week. He's personable, yet really sharp which I appreciate. This is the only course I can justify paying for and feel like I didn't pay enough.

What could the instructor do to make this course better?

Comment
I believe the 6–9:20 time is not preferred, especially for students who feel a lot more tired at night and less focused when learning the materials. A suggestion would be separating the times, one in the morning/afternoon and the other half in the evening.
I would have liked the chance to go over the answers to the final so I could understand my grade better. Otherwise I wouldn't change anything about the course.
Nothing
Challenge the students more! I enjoyed the tough challenges, and wished every challenge was tough. I wish some of the tough challenges did not have a deadline, as a for a few challenges I really wanted to solve it (I was really close at the time the deadline closed), but the challenge was closed.
Already the best course Ive ever taken so I would say no improvement necessary.
Maybe be slightly less intimidating, or at least try.
It's really hard to think of anything, but I do think office hours spread throughout the week would be nice. We had them only at the beginning of the week, so last–minute questions before deadlines were difficult to get addressed apart from Piazza (on which him and his TA's are very active on, he did a wonderful job hiring! TA's were especially qualified and helpful)
Better in person office hour times. The in person hours were a bit inconvenient since they were after a 3 hour class and late at night. Maybe some more guidance on the homeworks since even though the point is to try it on your own, a lot of it felt very challenging even with the examples of simplified versions in classes.
I feel like some of the examples could have been extended slightly. I feel as though the jump between in class examples and the challenges was a bit too big of a jump.
Nothing. it was perfect.
Nothing, I wish he taught more courses.
N/A
Nothing
Nothing, it's truly the prime course of Northeastern.
The bonus assignments are incredibly difficult, but not much he can do about that. Maybe a hint about what kind of vulnerability the bonuses are would be helpful.
Not much comes to mind immediately. I'm sure Kaan receives this feedback often, but my favorite parts of lecture was when we did live demos together. Whether that be on the command line, or on the last day talking about threat modeling. That type of engagement and lecture style really made me feel confident in my abilities after lectures ended.

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

Comment
Very interactive class and funny instructor. Cool way to grade assignment/challenges.
I think a participation grade might have made sense because I would have liked to hear input from more of my classmates during lectures, but I also understand that this might not necessarily lead to meaningful discussion. Either way he was willing to call on everyone and I don't think he ever played favorites with his students. The course was very inclusive to people without a cybersecurity background but did require some basic knowledge of programming. He did a good job of introducing everyone to assembly language in case anyone hadn't had a class that covers that topic without spending too long on it.
The course is structured quite well and allows for very steady learning that is based on how willing you are to experiment with the topic at hand.
Kaan is really good at explaining the concepts and at designing challenges that force the student to practically apply their knowledge.
He came to class very prepared, and made lectures very interesting, captivating, and applicable to my experiences in co–op. I wish some of the easy challenges were a bit tougher, but overall the course was awesome!!
The whole class experience, especially the design of the assignments was very effective and engaging.
Nothing really to improve on in terms of an "inclusive" learning environment. It's inclusive already. It is so nice to have a professor who has a full–time job outside of teaching since he has so much *current* real–world experience to share. Super knowledgeable about today's workplace expectations and culture.
Amazing lecturer, very fast grade turnaround, zero ambiguity on grades/course policy. Helpful and genuinely strives for the success of his students. A course I feel sad about finishing.
I think this course would benefit from being split into a course that means two times a week. The one time a week sometimes leads to lectures feeling stretched and a lot of filler parts.
Kaan has a great passion for what he teaches. It is clear he is very knowledgeable in everything he speaks on and he teaches in a way that's engaging. Again he makes the class very difficult but it is because the class is difficult that it is such a good class. It forces you to understand the concepts he teaches and it is a very valuable class that I would recommend a lot of students take.
It is extremely evident that he was loads of industry experience. Learning from him was a pleasure. So organized and technically challenging. I couldn't speak more highly of this class.
He finds ways to make concepts engaging, its the only class ive had here where everyone is paying attention, which says soemthing considering our section is later at night and 3 1/2 hours long.
Very great
Nothing to expand on
I'll put it like this, if I hadn't taken this course I would be unsure of the purpose of my degree.
Kaan's confidence and background in the field made it really easy to trust his word. He makes it very clear that he cares about his students and wants them to succeed. Most importantly however, he doesn't spoon feed anything. The challenges are a practical application and reflection of what we learn and class, and they're hands down the best assignments I've had at Northeastern. The leaderboard and warhead made this course enjoyable and practical, and all of that is created through Kaan's efforts.

Instructor Effectiveness: Kaan Onarlioglu

What is your overall rating of this instructor's teaching effectiveness?

Go to top

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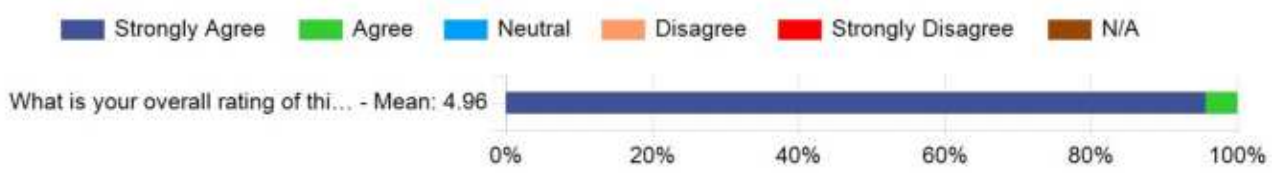
Number of Responses	Response Rate	Course Mean	Dept. Mean	Univ. Mean	Course Median	Dept. Median	Univ. Median
23	62.16%	4.96	4.58	4.48	5.00	5.00	5.00

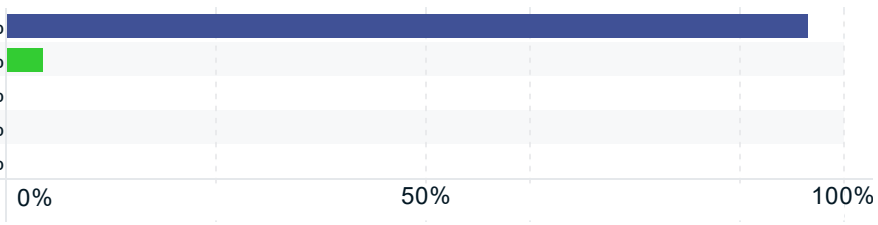
What is your overall rating of this instructor's teaching effectiveness?



Demographics

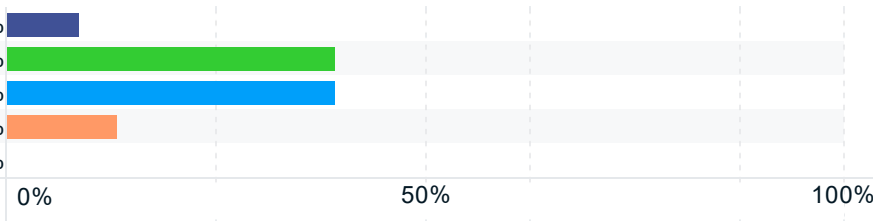
How often did you attend this class both in-person and remotely?

80-100%	22	95.65%
60-80%	1	4.35%
40-60%	0	0.00%
20-40%	0	0.00%
1-20%	0	0.00%
Total	**23**	



The number of hours per week I devoted to this course outside scheduled class meeting times.

More than 10	2	8.70%
8-10	9	39.13%
5-7	9	39.13%
3-4	3	13.04%
0-2	0	0.00%
Total	**23**	



Student Self-Assessment of their Eff ort to Achieve Course Outcomes

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

Comment
I believe making study guides, as well as practice exams/quizzes that can help students understand which concepts are important to learn and get a better grasp of them.
I could have started more of the bonus challenges sooner so that I could've gotten help from the instructors. They were a great learning opportunity.
Started on challenge 7 earlier
Stayed in office hours more and asked more questions at the beginning of the semester.
Starting assignment earlier.
Do stuff earlier.
Start challenges earlier!
Start assignments earlier, try to find more time to go to office hours.
I could have done more learning outside of what he taught us in class. Alot of the challenges were very difficult and I felt that some challenges required knowledge he did not give in class.
Nothing!
I did my best
Started challenges earlier, scoped out
Nothing, it was perfect
A better systems background going into this course would've been useful.
The once a week schedule made it tough for me to continuously be thinking about the course work throughout the rest of the week. As challenges became more rigorous I was forced to split my devoted hours outside of lecture to multiple days of the week, which in retrospect I think would have been better for me to do in general. With the earlier challenges, I felt that I can complete them in between lecture and the few days before the due date.