



UNIVERSITY OF
MICHIGAN

Fall 2018 Instructor Report With Comments for POLSCI 599-002: Stat Meth Res (Samuel Baltz)

Project Title: **Central Campus Fall 2018 Evaluation**

Course Audience: **20**

Responses Received: **17**

Response Ratio: **85.0%**

Report Comments

This report is a summary that tabulates all quantitative ratings on a single page. Results from the open-ended questions appear at the end of the report. Ratings are from the Fall 2018 teaching evaluations of POLSCI 599-002: Stat Meth Res.

Prepared by: **Office of the Registrar**

Creation Date: **Sat, Jan 05, 2019**

Responses to the University-wide questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	University-Wide Median	School/College Median
This course advanced my understanding of the subject matter.	10	2	3	1	1	0	4.7	4.5	4.5
My interest in the subject has increased because of this course.	7	3	4	0	3	0	4.0	4.1	4.1
I knew what was expected of me in this course.	6	3	8	0	0	0	3.7	4.4	4.3
Overall, this was an excellent course.	8	4	2	1	2	0	4.4	4.2	4.1
I had a strong desire to take this course.	6	4	4	1	0	0	4.1	4.0	4.0
As compared with other courses of equal credit, the workload for this course was... (SA=Much Lighter to SD=Much Heavier)	1	2	6	3	5	0	2.6	3.0	2.9

Responses to the University-wide questions about the instructor:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	University-Wide Median	School/College Median
Overall, Samuel Baltz was an excellent teacher.	11	2	2	2	0	0	4.7	4.5	4.5
Samuel Baltz seemed well prepared for class meetings.	12	2	1	2	0	0	4.8	4.8	4.8
Samuel Baltz explained material clearly.	12	2	2	1	0	0	4.8	4.6	4.6
Samuel Baltz treated students with respect.	12	3	0	1	1	0	4.8	4.8	4.8

Responses to additional questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	University-Wide Median
Students felt comfortable asking questions. (Q892)	10	6	1	0	0	0	4.7	4.6
I gained a good understanding of concepts/principles in this field. (Q121)	6	5	3	1	2	0	4.0	4.3
I learned to identify main points and central issues in this field. (Q123)	4	9	1	2	1	0	4.0	4.4
Writing assignments were interesting and stimulating. (Q319)	2	2	2	0	3	7	3.3	4.0
Reading assignments seemed carefully chosen. (Q326)	3	1	2	0	1	9	4.0	4.1
My expected grade in this course is (SA=A, A=B, N=C, D=D, SD=E)	10	5	0	0	0	2	4.8	4.8
I developed ability to carry out original research in this area. (Q128)	3	6	5	2	1	0	3.6	3.9
I developed an ability to evaluate new work in this field. (Q129)	2	5	4	4	1	0	3.3	4.1

Responses to additional questions about the instructor:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	University-Wide Median
Samuel Baltz stressed important points in lectures/discussions. (Q203)	10	3	4	0	0	0	4.7	4.6
Samuel Baltz acknowledged all questions insofar as possible. (Q216)	11	4	2	0	0	0	4.7	4.7
Samuel Baltz was willing to meet and help students outside class. (Q219)	14	2	1	0	0	0	4.9	4.7

The medians are calculated from Fall 2018 data. University-wide medians are based on all UM classes in which an item was used. The school/college medians in this report are based on classes that are graduate level with enrollment of 16 to 74 in Division of Social Sciences in the College of LS&A.

Written Comments

Comment on the quality of instruction in this course. (Q900)

Comments
<p>the instructor was excellent in all aspects. i almost always felt like falling behind during the main instructor session, only to catch up with the material in this session every week. the best part was that the instructor acknowledge the variation in students' levels of understanding and tried to set the minimum requirement – which helped setting the baseline and identifying what is really essential about the material.</p>
<p>The quality of this section was very poor. The instructor did not seem to accept feedback, even though he asked for it. The instructor often either lectured in discussion, which I would have preferred he did not do, or he talked about things only marginally—if at all—related to the class. While individualized feedback on assignments was indeed nice, it was sometimes/often pretty passive aggressive and I know I am not the only individual who felt this way. Did not enjoy going to section. Would not recommend this instructor again for methods courses.</p>
<p>I really appreciate that Samuel let us know the most important concepts of this class, and the feedback of problem sets.</p>
<p>Samuel was the one good thing about this class. I learned very little from Yuki, whom I find especially difficult and unresponsive to student needs. God knows where I'd be without Samuel's section. I definitely found it to be the only helpful thing about PS599.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Very timely and extensive feedback on every problem set. That was great.– Generally a nice guy and a good teacher.– I wish Samuel had taught the lectures too. <p>Some criticism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– I felt some of the words chosen in some problem set comments were a bit inappropriate.– When Samuel asked students for anonymous feedback after the first few weeks, he received one negative comment and was visibly upset about it, fifteen minutes at the beginning of next section he was in a self-defense mode.
<p>I appreciated the willingness to answer questions and the availability of the instructor to do so. Samuel is a great teacher. There were, however, some classes that I preferred to others. For example, when we spent a lot of time on a particular proof, I did not find that as useful as when Samuel took a concept we were learning in lecture and broke it down to the basics. His moment generating lecture was excellent, easily the best lecture he gave all year and extremely useful! I didn't realize until that particular lecture that I had completely misunderstood what a moment generating function was. More lectures like that (though I know he doesn't always have control over what material is covered) would be helpful.</p>
<p>I thought that a GSI's job was to help us address doubts and questions pertaining to the problem sets. Samuel's sections, however, turned out to be additional lectures. He ended up teaching us new content that was not covered in Yuki's lectures, leaving no time for us to ask questions about the problem sets or revisit materials covered by Yuki in detail. This is a very poorly thought out approach to teaching Stats and amounted to information overload virtually every week. Since much of Samuel's teaching material never showed up in problem sets, many students chose to skip his sections regularly. It became an unnecessary hassle that did not help one succeed in the course. Additionally, Samuel's grading technique is simply awful. He grants people who submit absolutely anything a B. That said, if you have answered 80–90% of the questions right, you still get a B. The only people who secure an A are those that answer all the questions correctly. This discouraged a lot of us who struggled with one or two concepts. There was no incentive to struggle with tough questions and write something down, as we would be given a B in any case. The net result was that I received a B on many problem sets wherein I answered 90% of the questions perfectly, but left one unanswered, while others received Bs for leaving several questions unanswered. I feel deeply upset as I invested a lot of time on the questions I answered. Grades may not matter, but when you are a first year struggling to find your place, they can encourage you to stay the course. Samuel simply doesn't understand this.</p>
<p>Samuel did an excellent job with his session. Particularly in light of the fact that Yuki ran a difficult and sometimes hard to follow main course, the burden on Samuel to help us synthesize and reach understanding was quite heavy. I think he rose to the occasion. His lectures were clear, his practice of including a syllabus before he began detailing what we would cover that week was very helpful (something Yuki might want to adopt, come to think of it). I appreciated his availability outside of office hours, and his knack for helping us understand concepts and problem set problems without either lapsing into platitudes or simply giving us the answer. I also deeply appreciated his empathy with us as first year students, a quality that helped our adjustment to the program in general immensely. Two small suggestions that I think might be helpful for Samuel to incorporate in the future. About halfway through the course he offered an ungraded quiz that contained the concepts that he felt that we absolutely had to know once we completed the course. Something that he might consider doing in the future is giving us that list right at the beginning of the course. That way, we can be on the lookout for those concepts in lectures, and on problem sets, and organize our notes accordingly and be sure we pay extra attention to those concepts. Lastly, in general this class would have been improved had we done more practice problems aside from the problem sets as a way to practice the mechanics of applying the concepts we learned to math problems. Devoting some time in session to this (and I am conscious of how squeezed for time everyone is) could be a useful use of section time under certain circumstances.</p>
<p>Samuel is a really good teacher and I really really appreciate how much time he took out of section to talk to us about non-class things and give us words of encouragement. But we also really struggled in this class and his section often times helped. So in this case, I wish he had spent more time clarifying concepts.</p>

Comments

Samuel is a really excellent instructor. He explained concepts very clearly and answered questions well. We were often confused by material presented in lecture, and he did a great job clearing up the confusion and providing concrete examples of abstract topics. He was also very available to meet with and help students. My only suggestion would be to make the grading of the problem sets more transparent.

Samuel was a fantastic GSI, and was very helpful.

I appreciated Samuel's use of examples in section meetings as well as his thorough feedback on problem sets. Samuel also did a great job of stressing the most important concepts in the course and making sure we understood them.

Samuel did an amazing job at gleaning the important parts of Yuki's lectures and communicating all of them to us in a concise and clear manner. He was incredibly respectful of where students were at with material, and made sure all of us were confident and aware of what was expected of us. He's an excellent instructor.

Samuel's explanation in class, section materials, and problem set solutions are extremely clear.

Easy-to-understand teaching, and detailed feedback on the problem sets really helped me keep up with the class.

Given the time constraints, I believe he organized the discussion section in the manner that would benefit everyone. I think the class can be even better if he touches upon advanced questions and explain how to deal with, or how to make step-wise arguments to solve seemingly complex problems.

N/A

Samuel is an excellent instructor; any low rating for the course itself is simply due to how disorganized the overall course felt. For the most part, Samuel clarified any issues that I had with the lecture material, and I felt that I learned more from his sections than I did from the corresponding lectures. It was very clear that Samuel cares for his students and he makes it a point to help us. I appreciated how accessible he was to students, and that he went above & beyond to make sure that we knew how much progress we had made.