

University of Michigan

Winter 2021 Instructor Report With Comments

LING 313-001: Sound Patterns

Charlie O'Hara

9 out of 34 students responded to this evaluation.

Responses to University-wide questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	Univ-wide Median	School/College Median
This course advanced my understanding of the subject matter. (Q1631)	5	4	0	0	0	0	4.6	4.6	4.7
My interest in the subject has increased because of this course. (Q1632)	3	4	2	0	0	0	4.1	4.3	4.6
I knew what was expected of me in this course.(Q1633)	7	1	0	1	0	0	4.9	4.6	4.7
Overall, this was an excellent course.(Q1)	6	2	1	0	0	0	4.8	4.4	4.7
I had a strong desire to take this course.(Q4)	2	2	2	3	0	0	3.3	4.1	4.4
As compared with other courses of equal credit, the workload for this course was (SA=Much Lighter, A=Lighter, N=Typical, D=Heavier, SD=Much Heavier). (Q891)	0	1	8	0	0	0	3.1	2.9	3.2
How did you participate in this course? (SA=Attended most synchronously, A=Attended most asynchronously, N=Attended most in person, D=Attended some in person and some online) (Q1854)	6	2	0	0	0	1	4.8	4.8	4.9

Responses to University-wide questions about the instructor:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	Univ-wide Median	School/College Median
Overall, Charlie O'Hara was an excellent teacher.(Q2)	6	3	0	0	0	0	4.8	4.7	4.8
Charlie O'Hara seemed well prepared for class meetings.(Q230)	7	2	0	0	0	0	4.9	4.8	4.9
Charlie O'Hara explained material clearly.(Q199)	7	1	1	0	0	0	4.9	4.7	4.8
Charlie O'Hara treated students with respect.(Q217)	7	2	0	0	0	0	4.9	4.9	4.9

Responses to questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	University-Wide Median
I gained a good understanding of concepts/principles in this field. (Q121)	6	3	0	0	0	0	4.8	4.5
Students felt comfortable asking questions. (Q892)	6	3	0	0	0	0	4.8	4.7
Graded assignments reflected the material covered. (Q893)	6	2	1	0	0	0	4.8	4.6
The grades in this course were fairly determined. (Q894)	6	2	1	0	0	0	4.8	4.6
Students' difficulty with the material was recognized. (Q895)	6	2	1	0	0	0	4.8	4.4
The course requirements were clearly defined. (Q897)	6	2	0	1	0	0	4.8	4.6
My expected grade in this course is (SA=A, A=B, N=C, D=D, SD=E).	7	1	0	0	0	1	4.9	4.8

The medians are calculated from Winter 2021 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 upper division with enrollment of 16 to 74 in Division of Humanities in the College of LS&A.

Written Comments

How did the teaching techniques (e.g., certain technologies used, specific approaches to testing and assignments, asynchronous or synchronous teaching methods, instructor flexibility, class interaction, small group work, other teaching methods) of this course serve the aims of this course/ or serve your learning in this course? (Q1872)

Comments
The skills-based grading technique clearly had a lot of thought and care put into it. It wasn't always entirely clear, but as prof. O'Hara refined the system (particularly in the Canvas grading system), it became a great way to judge personal strengths/weaknesses as well as grades and course material.
The grading methodology that was used this semester worked really well; I think it encouraged me to take an active and conscious interest in doing my schoolwork without being overly stressed about getting an 'A' on every assignment.
I appreciated the flexibility of the deadlines for graded coursework. The way this course was graded was unique from other courses I have taken and I thought it was actually more helpful for my learning to be able to approach the course content in terms of utilizing proficiencies to show comprehension of material. I also liked that the lectures were recorded because I could always go back to replay something I had not understood very well when it was discussed live in the lecture.
Synchronous sessions kept me alive this semester. I needed that schedule and accountability.
The teaching techniques in this course were fabulous. Charlie did a wonderful job using Zoom features to ease the online burden and promote learning (ex: annotation features, breakout rooms, Canvas, etc...). Additionally, the approach to grading was one of the best I have ever had in college. Especially for this course, the skill-based grading was amazing. It motivated me to WANT to learn the content rather than just achieve a grade, and it removed a lot of unnecessary stress that comes from typical grading schemes. It allowed us to utilize our strengths, identify our weaknesses, and actually display our knowledge/learning/skills in a variety of formats. Additionally, Charlie did a great job being flexible, accommodating, and pacing the course according to our learning and needs.
Recorded lectures allowed me to go reference to examine and augment my understanding. Making the course based on skills made me feel like I was focused on learning, despite it still having a very typical class framework. Small groupwork was nice in knowing my classmates as it made the big discussions more comfortable, although those were already open-ended in a somehow completely non-awkward way.
Mr. O'hara implemented a different grading structure which I really appreciated. It focused more on gaining skills rather than doing busy work, and I felt motivated to do well on the assignments so I could get points toward my final grade.

Given your experience in this course, what teaching techniques do you think the instructor should continue to use in the future (e.g., certain technologies used, specific approaches to testing and assignments, other testing methods, asynchronous or synchronous teaching methods, instructor flexibility, class interaction, small group work, other teaching methods)? (Q1873)

Comments
The skills-based format
I like the use of assignments that test proficiency in topics taught to build one's own grade. I had never encountered this style of teaching but found it effective and helpful to learn the material better.
Posting the slides before class and also after class (with annotations/whatever work we did in class) is useful.
I think the skills-based grading is a critical part of this course and should definitely be continued for testing/assignments. I know Charlie mentioned it in class once, but I like the idea of changing "exams" into something like "SPAs" (Skill Proficiency Assessment) or something that more accurately captures what it is in the name. Although I participated in this class asynchronously, I would have liked to be in it synchronously if possible. Either way, I think the flexibility there was important during this type of semester and should continue if needed during the pandemic.
The class feeling comfortable yet focused, the assignments being based on skills was genius, and the late policy was good.
I definitely think the skills-based grading was beneficial to me and that it should be put in place with more classes. That would be really good to keep in play.

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

Comments

There was a great amount of energy and care that was brought to this last-minute substitute position, and I'm sure the class style continue to get better and better as O'Hara teaches!

Charlie O'Hara is a phenomenal teacher; he works really well with students and is unmatched in his patience and passion. Charlie should be given every opportunity to continue teaching college courses.

Charlie approaches his teaching confidently and honestly. He makes an effort to make each student who talks/types in the chat feel heard. He stayed open to comments/new ideas all semester and was easily adaptable as time or students' progress dictated. The skills-based grading system for LING 313 was innovative; it took away the pressure of having to get a "perfect" on every homework and exam.

Charlie put in a lot of effort to make individual comments on every single assignment (If you ever need to make cuts somewhere, I'd say you can just do a "common mistakes" announcement, and let people come to you for individual questions).

Charlie was one of the best instructors I have had at UM, and by far one of the best I have encountered in the linguistics department. He is extremely knowledgeable, engaging, and motivating in class. He does a fantastic job presenting the material in interesting and different ways to really get us captivated in the topic, and his integration of different examples (both manageable and beyond our scope to promote further interest in the field) was really effective. I feel like I learned so much in this class and it definitely sparked my interest in phonology/phonetics (coming from somebody who did NOT want to take this specific course to begin with!) Although I know Charlie is only here for a semester, UM is extremely lucky to have him and they should consider keeping him around for teaching in the future. Losing him would be a very tough loss! I genuinely found Charlie to be an extremely effective teacher, and UM students can learn and benefit so much from his classes. He is understanding and compassionate but is still able to challenge his students (I felt like I was pushed to do more, better, and harder work as the semester went on but always felt comfortable, engaged, and excited to do so). He structured class well, was very aware of feedback we would provide (and that he would receive indirectly through our performance on different assignments throughout the term) and adjusted the course, content, and timeline as needed to ensure we were learning what we needed to and learning it very well. When he first took over for the previous instructor, I was a bit nervous just because he was new and without much teaching experience, but I was pleasantly blown away by the quality of instruction he offered. I wish I could take more courses from Charlie in the future!

Unmatched, legit better than any other instructor in terms of course design with such enthusiastic and interested teaching that maintained professionalism all the while. 10/10.

Charlie was always ready to answer any questions that any of the students had. He made sure that we knew how our grades were being calculated. He's very knowledgeable and very approachable, and I hope that he can continue teaching at U of M.

University of Michigan
 Winter 2021 Instructor Report With Comments
 LING 192-002: Humanities Tpcs-Ling
 Charlie O'Hara

9 out of 16 students responded to this evaluation.

Responses to University-wide questions about the course:

	SA	A	N	D	SD	N/A	Your Median	Univ-wide Median	School/College Median
This course advanced my understanding of the subject matter. (Q1631)	2	6	0	0	0	0	4.2	4.6	4.7
My interest in the subject has increased because of this course. (Q1632)	3	4	2	0	0	0	4.1	4.3	4.3
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Overall, this was an excellent course.(Q1)	5	3	1	0	0	0	4.6	4.4	4.6
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How did you participate in this course? (SA=Attended most synchronously, A=Attended most asynchronously, N=Attended most in person, D=Attended some in person and some online) (Q1854)	8	1	0	0	0	0	4.9	4.8	5.0

Responses to University-wide questions about the instructor:

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Comments
good
N/A
The class was very student involved and engaging which is something a found to be a benefit, especially in our remote environment.
I loved the presentations we had to do about real-world things.
The technology usage was great! Slide decks helped me understand material and the teacher was great with zoom.
I really liked how the instructor tried to make each class a conversation . There was no one answer and the concepts we discussed were very interesting. In terms of assignments i liked how he went over each assignment and showed us how to approach them
I liked how most of the assignments were project-based.
class interaction was very beneficial for my learning

Given your experience in this course, what teaching techniques do you think the instructor should continue to use in the future (e.g., certain technologies used, specific approaches to testing and assignments, other testing methods, asynchronous or synchronous teaching methods, instructor flexibility, class interaction, small group work, other teaching methods)? (Q1873)

Comments
none
Maybe provide more readings that enhance the information discussed during lectures.
I would continue to use material and lectures that are applicable to the students day-to-day because it makes the topics a lot more engaging and interesting.
I liked the instructors flexibility.
Nothing else needed!
The class should keep encouraging participation .The loose format was a good way to lead to fun discussion
Charlie did a great job of explaining and was very easy to talk to/ask questions to.
continue to have a safe and welcoming class environment. students felt they could be open and participate

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

Comments

great

The quality of the instruction of this course were high, lectures were interesting and engaging.

Great teacher!

CHarlie did a great job in teaching all of us students.

One of the best teachers I had in college so far. Excellent teacher who knows his material and also knows how to teach a group of aspiring students.

Great quality of instruction. We went over some really interesting topics

I cannot say better things about Charlie. He took over this class from another professor, and really did a great job of taking over. He is one of the best professors I have had at this university. He is so easy to talk to and is amazing at explaining things. He makes sure that each student understands and is following what is going on. I hated this class until he came along and I am so happy he did. I cannot express how amazing of a professor and person he is. Overall fantastic.

charlie was an amazing teacher