Summary of Student Reviews
IS635 Distributed Information Systems
Spring 2001

Total Collected: 22 evaluations

Statistical Summary	Total Agree	Total Disagree
I – The Course		
The objectives of this course were clear.	20 (90%)	0
The course has satisfied the objectives.	18 (81%)	0
I would recommend this course to other students.	15 (68%)	2 (9%)
II – The Instructor		
The instructor was well-prepared and organized.	21 (95%)	0
The instructor explained material clearly and thoroughly.	18 (81%)	0
The classes were interesting and informative.	17 (77%)	0
The instructor encouraged questions, comments, and discussion.	21 (95%)	0
The instructor seems knowledgeable in the subject area.	20 (90%)	0
The instructor made effective use of class time.	21 (95%)	0
The course requirements and grading system were made clear from the beginning.	21 (95%)	0
Assignments were educational.	21 (95%)	0
Exams were fair and reflected course content.	20 (90%)	0
Office hours were made known and the instructor was available at those hours.	21 (95%)	0
The instructor displayed respect for each student.	22 (100%)	0
The instructor seems to know if the class understands.	21 (95%)	0
III – The Text		
The text was useful.	16 (72%)	3(13%)
IV - The Academic Computing Facilities		
Computer facilities were adequate for class work.	7 (31%)	0
Lab consultants' support was adequate.	6 (27%)	0
V – The Classroom Lab		
If the class instruction was held in a computer classroom, the computer facilities were adequate.	5 (22%)	0

Positive student comments:

1) This was one of the best classes/instructors I have had at Pace.
2) [What did you find most valuable about this course?] The Professor
3) The text and discussions about client/server technology. The text was very useful in gaining an understanding of course material.
4) It explained a lot of the C/S terms that I had heard about but never fully understood what they meant. However, it was a very technical class for someone like me that does not come from a technical background.
5) Outstanding course. One of my 5 best profs ever (including undergrad). Excellent learning experience w/o the pedantic nature of many other instructors. This guy should be groomed for dept. chair.
6) The most valuable part is it is informative and instructor encouraged questions and comments.

Comments concerning areas for improvement:

1) Do not do student presentations. There were too many students in the class. They did not contain their presentations to 5-10 minutes so too much valuable lecture time was taken up.
2) Maybe 1 or 2 more exams to balance grading. Otherwise the course gets an "A" from my perspective.
3) To improve the course – nothing really. The Professor was pretty good with the course. Maybe you could pick a text that can explain better than the text book that was recommended for this course. I thought the text was pretty much useful for people who were already in the field of C/S, not very useful for someone who is just learning!!!
4) The course could be more technical.
5) Different text - less technical.

Analysis of Evaluations

Coursework

The student's comment about the presentations was fairly accurate. I could have done a better job managing the presentation schedules and setting expectations. When teaching in the future, consider group presentations for a class of this size.

Textbook

Many students do not like the textbook. Unfortunately, I do not know of a better text that covers the same breadth of material. In the future, consider providing supplemental material from websites and other sources. There are excellent books on middleware but they don't cover enough background for novices. Texbook – sticky wicket.

<u>Assessment</u>

I tend to prefer more graded events rather than less. I would love to assign a quiz at the beginning of each class period, but this is perhaps unfair to our largely commuter student body. Consider this in other contexts.

<u>How Technical?</u>

The class is very technical from a novice's perspective requiring a leap of faith from those with little hands-on technical experience. On the other hand, the contrary point of view is also accurate. In terms of practical exposure to the topics, the course is not technical.

How can I make the course both more technical and less technical at the same time?

Several students asked for more supplemental materials to augment coursework in online course assessments and in face to face meetings. These were thoughtful suggestions.

In the future, consider providing tutorials for those struggling with fundamentals, in particular: TCP/IP, Networking, Database Fundamentals, Transactions, OS. This list could be much longer. If students are lacking the proper background, this course could be a very frustrating experience.

Also, consider writing "Explore this further" modules for those who wish to pursue topics in more depth. This could include some advanced tutorials on emerging technologies or business cases. Examine the role that freeware can play in this process. It is possible for students to turn a home computer into a fairly sophisticated server with freeware: apache, mysql, php. Perhaps, build your own three-tier system. Think about this more.