



**Graduate Course Evaluation for Pengtao Xie  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering**

ECE 285 - Spec Topic/Signal&Imag/Robotic  
Section ID 32439  
Section Number A00  
Winter 2021

**Number of Evaluations Submitted: 34  
Number of Students Enrolled: 64**

1. What is your reason for taking this class?

2 (6.3%): Core Course Requirement  
5 (15.6%): Subject Area Requirement  
14 (43.8%): Elective  
11 (34.4%): Interest  
2: [No Response]

2. The Instructor was clear about course expectations.

20 (62.5%): Strongly Agree  
8 (25.0%): Agree  
3 (9.4%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree  
1 (3.1%): Disagree  
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree  
2: [No Response]

3. The Instructor was well-prepared for class.

21 (63.6%): Strongly Agree  
8 (24.2%): Agree  
3 (9.1%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree  
1 (3.0%): Disagree  
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree  
1: [No Response]

4. The Instructor organized class activities in a way that promoted learning.

17 (51.5%): Strongly Agree  
8 (24.2%): Agree  
3 (9.1%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree  
4 (12.1%): Disagree  
1 (3.0%): Strongly Disagree  
1: [No Response]

5. The Instructor promoted and encouraged questions and discussion.

24 (72.7%): Strongly Agree  
7 (21.2%): Agree  
2 (6.1%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree  
0 (0.0%): Disagree  
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree  
1: [No Response]

6. The Instructor provided feedback (written/oral) in a way that promoted learning.

19 (57.6%): Strongly Agree  
8 (24.2%): Agree  
4 (12.1%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree  
2 (6.1%): Disagree  
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree  
1: [No Response]

7. The Instructor was accessible to students outside of class (office hours, e-mail, etc.).

24 (72.7%): Strongly Agree  
5 (15.2%): Agree  
4 (12.1%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree  
0 (0.0%): Disagree  
0 (0.0%): Strongly Disagree  
1: [No Response]

8. I would recommend this instructor overall.

20 (60.6%): Strongly Agree  
7 (21.2%): Agree  
3 (9.1%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree  
1 (3.0%): Disagree  
2 (6.1%): Strongly Disagree  
1: [No Response]

9. What is your overall rating of the Instructor?

21 (63.6%): Excellent  
7 (21.2%): Above Average  
3 (9.1%): Average  
0 (0.0%): Below Average  
2 (6.1%): Poor  
1: [No Response]

10. General comments about the Instructor's performance

*Please keep your comments constructive and professional, abiding by the Principles of Community*

- Course is interesting and covered broad topics, the instructor is really nice. But sometimes new concepts in the class could be confusing or hard to follow.
- Good graduate class.
- Great professor who really cares about students!
- He explained the course material very clearly, and answer all of the students questions very well during the lecture.
- I like the way lectures were organized. It was really informative.
- I think the instructor is very familiar with the generative models and suitable for this course.
- instructor was good
- It would be much nicer if the professor didn't prerecord parts of the lecture. The recordings are almost impossible to understand and he ends up repeating exactly what's in the recordings almost word for word. Also, the pace of lectures is much too slow and the material is too high-level. For example, I don't think it's necessary to ask for questions after every slide and then wait 10-15 seconds after each question!
- Perfunctory overall. He didn't seem to care much about teaching. Course project is not relevant to the course, but seems to be his own lab's research.
- Really appreciate the focus on learning rather than testing. It's honestly how classes should be, but few classes do it well like this one.

11. I would recommend this course overall.

17 (51.5%): Strongly Agree  
9 (27.3%): Agree  
4 (12.1%): Neither Agree Nor Disagree  
1 (3.0%): Disagree  
2 (6.1%): Strongly Disagree  
1: [No Response]

## 12. What is your overall rating of this course?

17 (51.5%): Excellent  
9 (27.3%): Above Average  
5 (15.2%): Average  
0 (0.0%): Below Average  
2 (6.1%): Poor  
1: [No Response]

## 13. What were the particular strengths of this course?

- good lectures
- Graph Neural network
- It covers both fundamental generative models as well as the more sophisticated ones.
- It gavs you a really great background about deep generative models.
- Project was a plus.
- The course contents are interesting.
- The material. I don't understand why a course with this material isn't a staple in the UCSD curriculum given the ubiquity of the subjects covered!
- Well-organized lectures.

## 14. What suggestions do you have for making this course more effective?

- - Very good content. Informative slides and clear explanation.
  - This course is kind of unguided. Would be helpful if there are homework / programming assignments related to topics covered in the class. I feel like students are just left on their own.
  - Would be helpful is there is a schedule page like this <https://natanaso.github.io/ece276a/schedule.html> with lecture slides and reference materials side by side.

- Can provide more project ideas from different areas.
- For students newer to the field, encouraging simpler more introductory projects would likely be helpful.

Additional mini-projects or coding homework assignments would likely enhance the class.

- I think it may have been helpful to have a mini project or something with more constraints that would require us to apply material learned from course. I still enjoyed the large project with less constraints so students can follow their interests.
- more guidance. there shouldn't be just one project. make smaller projects like PAs or projects. This way, we can actually apply what we learned in lecture. there is too much freedom
- Rather than explaining a variety of models, I would prefer to focus on introducing some specific models and have some related homework to them, so we can have some experience with them.

- Some homework assignments would have been nice, to help build understanding of some of the most important topics we covered.

Also, I know it's a different department, but CSE 251A would be an excellent pre-requisite for this course. That course is an in-depth study of Bayesian networks.

- The final project expectation can be made clear since it is not possible to finish a research project in 2 months.
- This course needs homework! I feel like I only gained a very broad and high-level understanding. It would be much more useful to have homework and reduce the emphasis on projects (especially during covid where projects are much more difficult and less helpful).

#### 15. What one concept did you take from this class that will shape your future?

- how to write a strong report
- NAS
- The generative models. It was really interesting and the professor made it really easy to understand.
- Variational autoencoder. I used it directly in my own research after the course and my model got an improvement.

#### 16. Do you have any other comments to add to your evaluation?

*Please keep your comments constructive and professional, abiding by the Principles of Community*

- As mentioned above, the expectations from the final project can be made clearer since it helps in reducing the stress of making the entire research project work to perfection.
- Underlining and circling things most of the time makes everything way too messy. Please consider using the laser pointer to direct attention to formulas.

Please note that any responses or comments submitted by evaluators do not necessarily reflect the opinions of instructors, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Academic Affairs, or UC San Diego. Responses and comments are made available without auditing or editing, and they may not be modified or deleted, to ensure that each evaluator has an opportunity to express his or her opinion.