

CS 558 (A1): Computer Networks Security

Spring21 | Gabriel Kaptchuk

50 | Students Enrolled

25 | Students Responded

50% | Response Rate

Quantitative

	(1) Low	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) High	N	DNA	SD	M
Relevance of assigned readings	0% (0)	0% (0)	4% (1)	8% (2)	88% (22)	25	0	0.46	4.84

	Easy	Moderately Easy	Neither Easy nor Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Difficult	N	DNA	SD	M
Difficulty of course	4% (1)	4% (1)	28% (7)	64% (16)	0% (0)	25	0	0.75	3.52

	Light	Moderately Light	Neither Light nor Heavy	Moderately Heavy	Heavy	N	DNA	SD	M
Workload in course	4% (1)	4% (1)	60% (15)	32% (8)	0% (0)	25	0	0.69	3.2

<i>Course Evaluation</i>	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	N/A	N	DNA	SD	M
Overall rating of discussion instructor (if applicable)	4.17% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	8.33% (2)	87.5% (21)	0% (0)	24	0	0.83	4.75
Overall rating of lab instructor (if applicable)	4.17% (1)	4.17% (1)	8.33% (2)	0% (0)	62.5% (15)	20.83% (5)	24	0	1.18	4.42
Usefulness of assignments and papers	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	32% (8)	68% (17)	0% (0)	25	0	0.47	4.68
Overall course rating	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	16% (4)	84% (21)	0% (0)	25	0	0.37	4.84

<i>Faculty Evaluation</i>	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	N	DNA	SD	M
Effectiveness in explaining concepts	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	24% (6)	76% (19)	25	0	0.43	4.76
Ability to stimulate interest in subject	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	16% (4)	84% (21)	25	0	0.37	4.84
Encouragement of class participation	0% (0)	0% (0)	8% (2)	32% (8)	60% (15)	25	0	0.64	4.52
Fairness in grading	0% (0)	0% (0)	20% (5)	24% (6)	56% (14)	25	0	0.79	4.36
Promptness in returning assignments	16% (4)	0% (0)	36% (9)	20% (5)	28% (7)	25	0	1.33	3.44
Quality of feedback to students	0% (0)	4% (1)	12% (3)	20% (5)	64% (16)	25	0	0.85	4.44
Availability outside of class	0% (0)	0% (0)	16% (4)	20% (5)	64% (16)	25	0	0.75	4.48
Overall rating of instructor	0% (0)	0% (0)	4% (1)	4% (1)	92% (23)	25	0	0.43	4.88

Qualitative

Strengths of the course and of the instructor: -

- This instructor was very willing to take the time to make sure everyone was comfortable with the topics. He modified the schedule to best help everyone learn
- I really liked this class, it was extremely informative, modern, and honestly just fascinating. The Professor was great about explaining the concepts and then reviewing them, and was very responsive to student concerns/questions. This class is a really great class for understanding the current issues ongoing with networks and crypto.
- Professor Kaptchuk was a great professor throughout this entire semester. He was able to explain concepts thoroughly and was always open to answering questions. He made sure to go through confusing/difficult questions multiple times, as well as spending time to go over things that most students expressed confusion in. He was an engaging professor throughout the course, which made going to the class enjoyable. I genuinely enjoyed the class and would recommend it to others.
- Gabe is hands down one of the best instructors I have had. He was so helpful not only with course material but also as a mentor for internships, career, etc. I really enjoyed this class and his passionate nature about what he is teaching makes the class really valuable.
- - Always willing to help students and foster their interest in cryptography - Designs lectures in relevant, interesting manner - Went the extra mile to be readily available to help students outside of class by holding office hours at both morning and night for those in different timezones - Patient while explaining concepts - Always open to (and genuinely cares about) student feedback - Gives engaging and meaningful assignments that foster students' understanding in the material - Encourages creative and open-ended thinking when solving problems - Holds generous amounts of office hours and review sessions for students who have trouble understanding the material
- very real and relatable while teaching the course material in an interesting way while being very accommodating to students
- Has a good understanding, or an intuition of what things students may be confused about. Is very good at capturing student attentions and drawing interests to the topic.
- Although the problem sets were long a lot of the time, I felt like I gained more practical knowledge about how things work. Lectures were explained really well.
- Gabe is really interesting, knowledgeable, and interesting. I mean, what more would you want in an instructor? Class ran smoothly, he was always very prepared, and he took the time to go over things whenever people asked. He also did a great job with the learn from anywhere situation, certainly much better than many professors.
- Always takes students' feedback into consideration, great at stimulating interest in subject, provides lots of resources to help students understand the material
- Overall I found the structure and content of the course engaging throughout the whole semester. I found the lectures really interesting even in the online format and I feel like everything was well-explained.
- Logical material ordering and presentation. Diagrams drawn during class and saved as notes are helpful. Interesting assignments and readings.
- really good instructor, he likes to give homework dl extensions which is very helpful.
- Professor Kaptchuk is a passionate professor who pushes us to think not only how to solve problems, but also why we should even care about this subject.
- Gabe understands material insanely well and has a great personality
- Gabe is an incredible lecturer and great at explaining the large variety of concepts that we covered in this course. Even though we covered a lot of different things, I never felt overwhelmed by the number of new topics because they flowed well into each other and were given a lot of context that helped me understand them. Gabe is clearly very passionate about what he's teaching and it's incredibly infectious. While we covered a lot of things at a very high level, I was very happy to get hands on experience with most of the things we discussed as well. A lot of courses at BU suffer from not providing enough opportunity for application of what we learned, but the assignments in this (especially later in the semester) class helped not only to solidify what I learned in lecture, but also gave me a solid idea of how to apply the things I learned going forward. Gabe is great at taking feedback from his students and was not afraid to admit shortcomings and improve the course when needed. The first few assignments were often hard to follow when it came to programming portions and felt more like fights with libraries we were supposed to be working with than using what we learned in class. However after students gave their feedback, assignments later in the course were improved drastically and really helped to make 558 as great of an experience as it was.
- Very interesting topics with great explanations and visual aids. Gabe created a course with a healthy mix of technical details and the real-world effects of those details. Ethics are a huge concept in crypto/cybersecurity and I was glad to see Gabe make the effort to incorporate ethics and even some political concepts into the lectures. I also thought the course flowed very well from topic to topic. It's possible we spent a little too long on certain topics but it's hard to make that a bad thing, especially when Gabe was actively re-evaluating the amount of material we'd be able to get through and be expected to know by the end.
- Explained topics very well and adapted to a difficult timeframe. Always supplied ample time for people to understand the topics rather than forcing us to finish things based on estimates.
- Professor Kaptchuk is one of my favorite professors I have had. His lectures are great and he goes into detail explaining the various protocols and details diagrammatically, while also adding text that describes it. It's great for taking notes and following along, and his color coded slides are awesome for being able to parse through. He touches on current practices and current research and links it to what we learn in class. This is one of my favorite classes I've taken at BU and I have learned so much. I usually hate assignments and homeworks and find them to be busywork just distracting me from studying the material, but professor has found a great balance between high workload and meaningful assignments that reinforce what's taught in class. The HWs were a great balance between theory and coding. He clearly wants everyone to learn and understand the material, and be awarded for doing so. I would find it hard to do poorly in this class all said and done. He reviews previous weeks lecture material in a clear and concise way that helps recall some details. He is casual and direct and knows his stuff, and is able to effectively explain concepts. He has made good use of the remote learning environment. I would recommend all CS majors take this class as it covers so many important concepts and is a great review of networking and understanding how security over the internet works, while covering extremely relevant concepts like encrypted messaging. The flow of the class is great.
- Very understanding professor, also very considerate of us students and what we thought -- I really appreciated how he tailored the class to our benefit and actively sought our feedback weekly

Weaknesses of the course and of the instructor: -**General Comments -**

- This was an extremely interesting course, and I really enjoyed the topics presented, especially the relevant real world example
- I really liked this class, and the Professor was great!
- This was one of the most enjoyable courses I have taken at BU. Cryptography/Network security is a challenging subject, but Dr. Kaptchuk made it meaningful and engaging. I learned a lot from this class and it made me think of network security as a very interesting potential career path. I would like to thank Dr. Kaptchuk for always being patient with his students and going the extra mile to ensure everyone understands the material.
- 10/10 course would definitely recommend to other CS students to take
- Love the class. Definitely one of the funnest I've had at BU. Love how a lot of the topics are introduced (story, background, reasoning). Class focuses a lot more on the "why", instead of just "how" like many other classes.
- All in all a great course and I'm really glad I took it. Gabe is really interesting and funny so I'm glad I took a class with him. Now, this is for BU, not Gabe specifically: I think the security courses should have more well defined boundaries. Reyzin's crypto course is incredible so it should stay as is. Crypto 2 was also pretty well done (at least in scope). Varia taught applied crypto really well but honestly it was like half Reyzin's class and half Gabe's class. I don't know, it just feels like these four 578 classes had too much overlap. Just my 2 cents.
- This was definitely one of the classes I've enjoyed the most and got me thinking the most in my undergrad years at BU. I think it was especially engaging since the material we were learning was so applicable to the current state of the world - something I feel like very few other CS courses touch on.
- This class was awesome! One of my favorite CS classes at BU. I learned so much and had a lot of fun with the problem sets.
- Overall enjoyable course.
- Really good instructor, He is awesome!
- The best course in my 4 years of college.
- I sat in on the first few weeks of 558 a couple semesters ago. Professor Goldberg is an amazing lecturer and her design of the course was really exciting and interesting to me. Obviously she left very large shoes to fill, but I think Professor Kaptchuk really rose to the occasion. At first I was a little disappointed when I heard the course was going to be structured differently than when Prof. Goldberg was teaching it, but I can gladly say my disappointment was misplaced. From beginning to end this course and its instructor exceeded expectations
- Great class with a lot of useful content.
- General comments to the department - I may be graduating, but I sincerely hope that we have all learned from the remote learning experience and can translate the positives back into our in-person environment. Particularly, having lectures recorded / notes published is so helpful because during lecture you can focus on listening and absorbing the material because you know that you can go over the video again to take notes or delve deeper into a topic. Remote office hours should also be here to stay since they allow for late night hours (in addition to regular in person ones of course). Also, asynchronous learning is a brilliant strategy and should be looked into with an open mind.