

SUMMARY OF TEACHING EVALUATIONS

MAX KUTLER

In this document, I provide an overview of the student evaluations I have received throughout my teaching career.

At each institution where I have taught, students are asked to assess the course and instructor across a series of multiple-choice and free-response questions. While the questions differ slightly across universities, in each case there is one question in which students are asked to give an overall numerical rating of the instructor. The data for these questions are given below. Historically, I have almost always outperformed the average score among instructors in my departments.

I have also included a selection of written comments provided by students. Of course, I have tended to select positive comments which reflect well upon certain aspects of my teaching. However, I can truthfully say that these comments are representative of the responses I tend to receive, and I am happy to provide complete teaching evaluations upon request.

Certainly, there are limitations to student evaluations. The ability of a student to assess whether they or their peers have achieved the desired learning outcomes is imperfect at best. We should also be mindful that implicit biases often color student responses, and that I, as a white male, likely benefit from these biases to some degree.

Still, I firmly believe that there is value in listening to what my students have to say, because they are uniquely positioned to comment on the experience of taking a class with me. Even accounting for their limitations and biases, I believe that my students correctly characterize me as a highly competent teacher who cares about their success and works hard to help them achieve it.

1. THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Numerical evaluation: Students are prompted with *Overall, I would rate the instructor as ...*, with responses ranging from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). My scores are recorded in Table 1.

TABLE 1. OSU Teaching Evaluations

Term	Course	My Score	Department Average
Fall 2023	Math 4580	4.93	4.18
Spring 2023	Math 3345	5.00	4.18
	Math 3345	4.91	
Fall 2022	Math 3345	4.88	4.12
Spring 2022	Math 3345	4.62	4.20
	Math 3345	4.82	
Fall 2021	Math 3345	4.87	4.08
	Math 3345	4.75	

Course descriptions:

Math 4580: Abstract Algebra I. Groups and rings. Emphasis on mathematical reasoning and proof writing.

Math 3345: Foundations of Higher Mathematics. Introduction to proofs. Propositional logic, number theory, set theory, and cardinality.

Student comments:

“Max Kutler is one of the best professors I have ever had at Ohio State. He always has positive energy conducive to learning and creates a great environment for his students, yet maintaining rigorous standards. His lessons plans are clear and he is an understanding professor.”

—*Math 4580 Student, OSU, Fall 2023*

“This is absolutely the most stimulating and most well taught STEM course I have taken at any university thus far in my life. Professor Kutler’s lectures are probably the best of any professor I’ve had, and I felt that his office hours were very helpful as well.”

—*Math 4580 Student, OSU, Fall 2023*

“Max Kutler is a wonderful professor, he is genuinely interested in teaching and makes the class environment fun and interesting. This is one of the best classes I have taken at OSU, despite not being specifically required for my major. This class was hard but fair, and while I didn’t do perfect, I learned a whole lot in this class even beyond abstract algebra.”

—*Math 4580 Student, OSU, Fall 2023*

“I had an amazing time in your class. You explained the concepts really well and I appreciated that you would explain a concept in multiple different ways so everyone could understand. I liked having two small homeworks due every week and you were very flexible when I couldn’t make it to class to turn some in.”

—*Math 3345 Student, OSU, Spring 2023*

“Probably tied for the best or the best professor I’ve had at OSU. He is very intelligent but does not come off arrogant. He knows how to teach at the students level and not at a professors level which is not common at OSU. He is a very kind person who understands students struggles.”

—*Math 3345 Student, OSU, Spring 2023*

“One of the greatest instructors! Been to his office hours almost every week since second midterm and he always provided much help on the concepts we don’t understand and explained them thoroughly and clearly.”

—*Math 3345 Student, OSU, Spring 2023*

“Dr. Kutler is without a doubt the best lecturer I’ve encountered at this university. It’s genuinely impressive. Absolutely no details are glossed over or missed, but the content stays clear and well-paced. The organization of the course is very intuitive and shows a deep care and understanding of the course material. No complaints about this course at all.”

—*Math 3345 Student, OSU, Fall 2022*

“I loved to see how truly passionate and knowledgeable he was about what he was teaching and about mathematical theory in general, because he would frequently smile after finishing a proof and say something like ‘isn’t that so cool?’ ‘isn’t that so fun?’ or ‘this is one of my favorite theorems.’ ”

—*Math 3345 Student, OSU, Fall 2022*

“You are a fantastic teacher! I can say without a doubt this is my favorite math class I’ve ever taken, and while some of that may be because I finally get to escape calculus-based courses, you just also teach the material very well! I understand the purpose in making sure students get lots of practice writing proofs but my only real comment is all the homework does get a little overwhelming, but again, totally understand why!”

—*Math 3345 Student, OSU, Fall 2021*

2. UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Numerical evaluation: Students are asked to evaluate the statement *The instructor provided quality teaching.*, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). My scores are recorded in Table 2.

Course descriptions:

Math 764: The Geometry of Matroids. Graduate topics course designed by me. A first course in matroid theory with the goal of understanding the celebrated recent work of Adiprasito-Huh-Katz.

Math 361/362: Elementary Modern Algebra I/II. Undergraduate abstract algebra sequence. Groups, rings, fields, and Galois theory.

Math 261: Introduction to Number Theory. Inquiry-based introduction to proofs. Mathematical induction, divisibility, prime numbers, modular arithmetic.

Math 137: Calculus I for the Life Sciences. Coordinated, large lecture format. Limits, difference equations, derivatives, integrals, applications.

Math 113/114: Calculus I/II. Coordinated, large lecture format. Limits, derivatives, integrals, sequences, series.

TABLE 2. UK Teaching Evaluations

Term	Course	My Score	Department Average
Spring 2021	Math 261	4.2	4.2
	Math 764	5.0	
Fall 2020	Math 114	4.6	4.2
Spring 2020	Math 113	4.6	4.1
	Math 362	5.0	
Fall 2019	Math 361	4.9	4.1
Spring 2019	Math 114	4.3	4.1
	Math 261	4.8	
Fall 2018	Math 137	3.5	4.1

Student comments:

“It was easy to talk to the instructor and ask questions. He knew how to clearly explain concepts and make connections to people’s research when they asked. We had a lot of interested conversations about the material and related topics.”

—*Math 764 Student, UK, Spring 2021*

“The instructor was very thorough in teaching the material. Previous knowledge on the topic was not assumed, so reviewing past learned information was very helpful. The instructor was also very approachable and warm, so it was not intimidating to ask for help.”

—*Math 114 Student, UK, Fall 2020*

“His drawings (even though he claims he’s not great at drawing!) really helped me visualize and understand the topics. He was also very good at explaining topics in general.”

—*Math 114 Student, UK, Fall 2020*

“This was the best planned course I have ever seen. Every problem was challenging but taught deep skills and required understanding in the subject. The homework blended BEAUTIFULLY with lectures especially.”

—*Math 362 Student, UK, Spring 2020*

“He was always willing to answer all questions. His answers were exactly at the level they needed to be. If someone needed a slight push to get the trick to a hard problem, he did that. If someone needed a big idea sledgehammered into their brains, then he did that. He did his job as a teacher, and he expected a lot of his students. This definitely motivated my growth as a mathematician.”

—*Math 362 Student, UK, Spring 2020*

“Dr. Kutler (we call him Max) deserves all of the credit in the world. He is incredibly understanding of the fact that the course is difficult, and hard to grasp for many of his students, and is very respectful of that struggle and very responsive to our concerns. He never made us feel dumb or ignored, and was incredibly reasonable overall. His explanations are clear and he is seemingly very aware of the fact that there are a variety of different learners in his class, and adapts appropriately. I would recommend everyone who has the opportunity to take a class with Max, as he is a one-in-a-million instructor.”

—*Math 362 Student, UK, Spring 2020*

“Dr. Kutler was always willing to answer questions and presented the material clearly and in a way that was easy to understand. I always came out of the class understanding the concepts he presented.”

—*Math 113 Student, UK, Spring 2020*

“Rather than a boring lecture about what is true, he phrased many theorems like journey that we all got to come along on. He not only taught us the material, but also how to think about the field and proofs in general. He led by example, which is extremely hard to do in mathematics as things always look so easy in retrospect. Furthermore, he was very approachable. He was kind in his office hours and genuinely wants the best for his students.”

—*Math 361 Student, UK, Fall 2019*

“The inquiry based method was so great, adding to both the culture of the class itself and my learning of the material.”

—*Math 261 Student, UK, Spring 2019*

“The collaborative aspect helped with proofs that I had difficulty proving and the presentations with critiquing allowed for me to develop more intuition and better proof-writing skills.”

—*Math 261 Student, UK, Spring 2019*

“I like that my professor goes through and motivates why something works instead of just stating it to be true. It helps me learn the content.”

—*Math 114 Student, UK, Spring 2019*

“Max is really laid-back and such a nice person to be around. His enthusiasm for the course material shows, and it is amusing to see him get excited about various topics as he presents them to the class. This, combined with his deep understanding of math, make for a really informative and thoughtful lecture that sets students up for success”

—*Math 137 Student, UK, Fall 2018*

3. YALE UNIVERSITY

Numerical evaluation: Students are asked *What is your overall assessment of this course?* Answers are given on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). My scores on this question are recorded in Table 3.

Students are asked explicitly to comment on the instructor in the free-responses questions. Selected responses follow.

Course descriptions:

Math 657: Matroid Theory. Graduate topics course designed by me. A first course in matroid theory, with emphasis on connections to graph theory and tropical geometry.

Math 112: Calculus I. Coordinated, small lecture format. Limits, derivatives, integrals.

TABLE 3. Yale Teaching Evaluations

Term	Course	My Score	Department Average
Spring 2018	Math 657	4.3	4.3
Fall 2017	Math 112	3.0	3.2
	Math 112	3.0	

Student comments:

“This course is probably a one-off, but if it is ever offered again, I would recommend matroids. Subject matter leans mostly towards combinatorics and linear algebra, so if you like those, take this one. Max obviously put good work into designing the class, lectures, and problem sets.”

—*Math 657 Student, Yale, Spring 2018*

“Matroids are a very interesting subject. Max is a great lecturer and you’ll learn a lot.”

—*Math 657 Student, Yale, Spring 2018*

“I think Professor Kutler did a fantastic job. He is very kind, patient, and helpful. He really knows the material and the history of mathematics. It is obvious that he is passionate about the subject which helped keep me engaged. I highly recommend him.”

—*Math 112 Student, Yale, Fall 2017*

“Professor Kutler was an excellent professor. I felt like he went above and beyond in terms of the way he described his lectures and how he engaged with students.”

—*Math 112 Student, Yale, Fall 2017*

4. UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Numerical evaluation: Students are asked *What was the quality of the instructor's teaching?* Answers are given on a scale of 1 (unsatisfactory) to 5 (excellent). My performance on this question is summarized in Table 4. Mathematics Department average on this question was first made available in Winter 2013, and I regret that I do not have any student evaluation data from my Math 106 course in Summer 2012.

With the exception of Math 241, where I was as a TA, I served as instructor of record for each course I taught in graduate school.

Course descriptions:

Math 315: Elementary Analysis. Undergraduate analysis. Limits, sequences, series, continuity. Emphasis on proof-writing.

Math 251/2: Calculus I/II. Limits, derivatives, integrals.

Math 241: Calculus for Business and the Social Sciences I (TA). Limits, derivatives, applications.

Math 111/112: College Algebra/Elementary Functions. Pre-calculus sequence. Polynomials, rational functions, exponents and logarithms, trigonometry.

Math 106: University Math II. Part of a sequence on mathematical literacy for non-STEM majors. Geometry, exponential growth and decay, annuities and personal finance.

TABLE 4. UO Teaching Evaluations

Term	Course	My Score	Department Average
Spring 2017	Math 315	4.6	4.2
Fall 2016	Math 251	4.6	3.8
Winter 2016	Math 252	4.4	4.0
Fall 2015	Math 251	4.1	3.9
Spring 2015	Math 315	4.48	4.16
Fall 2014	Math 241	4.32	3.90
Spring 2014	Math 251	4.50	4.17
	Math 251	4.08	
Fall 2013	Math 252	4.26	3.91
Spring 2013	Math 251	4.83	4.10
Winter 2013	Math 241	4.54	4.10
Fall 2012	Math 112	3.88	—
Summer 2012	Math 106	—	—
Spring 2012	Math 111	4.44	—
Winter 2012	Math 111	4.42	—
Fall 2011	Math 111	4.11	—

Student comments:

“I really enjoyed Max’s teaching style on how he presented and explained the material throughout the course. He made analysis very approachable and was very helpful during every office hour visit and was always willing to help.”

—*Math 315 Student, UO, Spring 2017*

“Mr. Kutler helped take very complicated and hard to grasp concepts and used specific examples and explanations that make the process of working through problems much more understandable. He always utilizes the whole class time and holds very understandable and generous office hours for an even more in depth explanation of class and homework problems.”

—*Math 251 Student, UO, Fall 2016*

“Max is a great calculus teacher. Calculus is a very difficult subject for me and Max has helped me to learn. He is always available for extra office hours and is very accommodating. He is also very passionate about math and it shows in his teaching.”

—*Math 252 Student, UO, Winter 2016*

“Kutler is an all around great teacher. He explained everything very well and gave lots of examples. I was able to learn a lot from his class despite having a very bad attention span. I wouldn’t change anything about his teaching and I hope to take Math 252 with him next term.”

—*Math 251 Student, UO, Fall 2015*

“Max’s re-write policy has helped me to become a better proof writer, because I get a chance to analyze what I did wrong, address the issue, and produce a more logical argument. I wouldn’t hesitate to take more courses with Max in the future. He really goes above and beyond to make sure his students have a clear understanding of the content and are in a good position to succeed.”

—*Math 315 Student, UO, Spring 2015*

“I really enjoyed taking this class with Max. It was very challenging and even difficult at times but I felt that Max really emphasized the learning process. I felt that my success in the course was important to him. He had very clear guidelines from day one and he wants to see his students succeed.”

—*Math 315 Student, UO, Spring 2015*

“Max was always very enthusiastic and down to earth with all the subject matter. He has a great grasp on the subject and has a knack for making a difficult subject understandable for those who lack math skills.”

—*Math 241 Student, UO, Fall 2014*

“Wonderful teacher. Always there to help. Gives clear examples and explains everything really well. Max is just an amazing teacher! He is really nice and he cares about his students. He wants everyone to do well.”

—*Math 251 Student, UO, Spring 2013*

“Max was incredible. He was one of the most helpful people on the UO campus. I typically have a hard time grasping complex math concepts and Max was there to help me whenever I needed it. He is very passionate and extremely knowledgeable of his subject. An exemplary discussion leader.”

—*Math 241 Student, UO, Winter 2013*

“Max is a great teacher. He explains everything thoroughly and makes it clear as to how he got to the answer. He is always there to help you and wants you to do well.”

—*Math 112 Student, UO, Fall 2012*

“I think a great teacher makes difficult/confusing material easy to understand, and Max does just this. His clarity and enthusiasm about math is awesome. I’ve always been a horrid math student but now I love math!”

—*Math 111 Student, UO, Spring 2012*

“Max Kutler is a great instructor. His feedback is positive, encouraging and clear. He knows how to manage his classroom, build and maintain a warm, successful learning environment.”

—*Math 111 Student, UO, Winter 2012*