

University of Michigan  
Winter 2021 Individual Response Report  
POLSCI 514-001: Soc Sci Comput  
Fabricio Vasselai

8 out of 8 students responded to this evaluation.

**Course Name: POLSCI 514-001: Soc Sci Comput**

**Instructor Name: Fabricio Vasselai**

1. **This course advanced my understanding of the subject matter.(Q1631)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
2. **My interest in the subject has increased because of this course.(Q1632)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
3. **I knew what was expected of me in this course.(Q1633)**
  - ◊ Almost Always
4. **Overall, this was an excellent course.(Q1)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
5. **I had a strong desire to take this course.(Q4)**
  - ◊ Agree
6. **As compared with other courses of equal credit, the workload for this course was...(Q891)**
  - ◊ Typical
7. **How did you participate in this course? (Q1854)**
  - ◊ Attended most sessions synchronously online (e.g., in a zoom meeting)
8. **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)**
  - ◊ Having this as a zoom class ended up being nice because we could watch the code on our computers and that was very helpful to see.
9. **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)**
  - ◊ I think this class could continue being remote and would still be very beneficial.
10. **Overall, Fabricio Vasselai was an excellent teacher.(Q2)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
11. **Fabricio Vasselai seemed well prepared for class meetings.(Q230)**
  - ◊ Almost Always
12. **Fabricio Vasselai explained material clearly.(Q199)**
  - ◊ Almost Always
13. **Fabricio Vasselai treated students with respect.(Q217)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
14. **I gained a good understanding of concepts/principles in this field. (Q121)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree

15. **I learned to identify main points and central issues in this field. (Q123)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
16. **I developed ability to carry out original research in this area. (Q128)**
  - ◊ Neutral
17. **I developed an ability to evaluate new work in this field. (Q129)**
  - ◊ Agree
18. **Writing assignments were interesting and stimulating. (Q319)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
19. **Reading assignments seemed carefully chosen. (Q326)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
20. **Students felt comfortable asking questions. (Q892)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
21. **Fabricio Vasselai stressed important points in lectures/discussions. (Q203)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
22. **Fabricio Vasselai acknowledged all questions insofar as possible. (Q216)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
23. **Fabricio Vasselai was willing to meet and help students outside class. (Q219)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
24. **My expected grade in this course is... (Q896)**
  - ◊ A
25. **Comment on the quality of instruction in this course. (Q900)**
  - ◊ This course was wonderful. By far one of the most practical and helpful courses I've ever taken. Taught me so much about R and thinking logically. Fabricio was so helpful and thorough and in office hours he went above and beyond to make sure I understood and answered any questions I had. Highly recommend.

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  - ◊ I like the samplers of each topic in classes on Fridays and then we would use DataCamp to do a much deeper dive. The homework assignments really helped solidify concepts for me (and how much left there is to learn!)
9. **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)**
  - ◊ All of it!
10. **Overall, Fabricio Vasselai was an excellent teacher.(Q2)**
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23. **Fabricio Vasselai was willing to meet and help students outside class. (Q219)**
  - ◊ Strongly Agree
24. **My expected grade in this course is... (Q896)**
  - ◊ B
25. **Comment on the quality of instruction in this course. (Q900)**
  - ◊ Fabricio clearly has a passion for this subject, and it's contagious. He has a very entertaining style of lecturing that really keeps (potentially dry) subjects interesting!

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  - ◊ The datacamp courses are long but they are really helpful in practicing the things learned in class.
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**22. My expected grade in this course is... (Q896)**

- ◊ B

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

- ◊ Fabricio is very passionate about the subject material and it shows in his lectures and his assignments. R was something that I feared before taking his class. Although I still find it challenging, Fabricio's passion for the material helped me develop an interest and a drive to learn R. He is also super helpful during office hours! He goes beyond just answering my questions and describes the basic mechanisms and logic of the concept.

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- ◊ It was a great class! I enjoyed learning a variety of themes and skills. I feel much more confident in using R than before.

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  - ◊ The use of data camp to consolidate and expand other topics that may not be covered during lectures. Also, problem sets motivate you to struggle with programming issues that may be useful in the future. Finally, having the code Fabricio shares with so many comments helped to remember things that may be hard when one is practicing
9. **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)**
  - ◊ Annotated code and data camp I think should be kept for the future. Perhaps data camp should include less topics but better to go deeper into the topics covered in lecture. Otherwise, sometimes it is felt as if many of what we see in data camp gets lost over time.
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24. **My expected grade in this course is... (Q896)**

- ◊ B

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

- ◊ Fabricio is a great instructor and could actually count as a faculty member. Plus, he is very generous in the time he devotes in office hours to explain things—perhaps he sometimes extends too much, though. It is very clear that he is interested in students learning given that he prepares his lectures very much. The number of details, examples, and different explanations he provides, it is evidence of the huge amount of time he invests in his teaching preparations.

I would just add 2 suggestions.

1. There is always a trade-off between learning a lot of things and learning others more deeply. Fabricio tried in this version of the course to cover more material than going very deeply into a given topic. I would suggest to balance this much better; it would just be a matter of reducing a bit the number of topics but to master them over the course of the semester.

2. Giving students slots of time during the class to apply what we learn in a given lecture, would be a great tool for us to learn better. I think this is an very natural opportunity for this type of class because it is rather practical.

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  - ◊ Very well. I think given the nature of R, being virtual worked better than it would have in person.
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  - ◊ Zoom, datacamp
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  - ◊ Screen share worked well. Some issues with the mic.
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  - ◊ On the fly coding
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25. **Comment on the quality of instruction in this course. (Q900)**

- ◊ Fabricio is a great teacher who can explain complicated things very well (but not in a way that is too kindergarten style – you still feel you can use his explanation in academic contexts). My favorite part was the CPUs in the kitchen. Overall, maybe a little too much introduction rather than explaining the code or more substantive material (but one hour of time is just tough!). Personally, I wouldn't have needed the regression lectures (overlapping with 699), but something like the material we'll cover in the extra lecture on other fancy kinds of regressions. Wow, Fabricio is making time for having an extra lecture, I really appreciate his enthusiasm about the class and our learning experience!

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  - ◊ I think the synchronous zoom lectures worked very well and ran smoothly. I think the assignments were a little long for the credit hours that we get for the course, and there were so many Datacamp exercises that I started to lose track of what I was learning at times. Parsing those back just a bit would probably actually do more for understanding each concept (depth vs. breadth tradeoff).
9. **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)**
  - ◊ I generally liked the synchronous online method and it might be preferable even in non–pandemic times.
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- ◊ Overall, I think this was a good class that added to my understanding of using R. I think there were some days that were more useful than others. For example, learning the basics of web scraping, text analysis, and network analysis was awesome because even though we didn't necessarily get into any of them deeply, knowing the basics of different tools allows you to identify when they would be useful for a project. From there, if you need one of those methods, you know where to start to learn them more fully. However, I think the content on how computers work and parallel was less useful for most of us who will rarely be doing large data projects that would require those techniques. Also, I would have put the OLS stuff earlier in the semester to better prepare us to run regression in 699 for those who take the classes simultaneously. Anyone who took 599 or an equivalent course prior to 699 gets enough exposure to regressions to learn how to code basic OLS without you needing to supplement too much instruction on the theory before it is covered in 699.

In general, the instructor was kind and helpful and the class definitely helped me learn a lot.