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Course Evaluations

Portland State University

I began teaching at Portland State University in the fall of 2000. Since then I have taught 28 course sections, and I have also led nearly 200 Transportation Seminars through the Center for Transportation Studies. The PSU Teacher and Course Evaluation questionnaire asks 14 questions on a scale of 1-5:

1 = Excellent; 2 = Good; 3 = Satisfactory; 4 = Marginal; 5 = Poor

Class mean results for question 11 (was question 12 prior to Spring 2005), which asks students for the **overall teaching effectiveness of the instructor**, are shown below. Written comments from students are summarized by staff in the department office and are also included (verbatim) below. This information is also available on my faculty website.

Term	Course	Title	Students	Evaluations	Q11 Score	Q11 Dept. Average
Fall 2000	CE	Advanced Transportation	6	0	--	
Winter	CE	Intelligent Transportation	11	11	1.55	
Spring	CE	Public Transportation	12	9	1.56	
Fall 2001	CE	Intelligent Transportation	7	6	1.83	
Fall 2001	CE	Transportation Operations	11	10	1.30	
Winter	CE 454	Urban Transportation	25	16	2.31	
Spring	CE	Public Transportation	8	6	1.50	
Spring	CE	Transportation Data	8	7	1.14	
Fall 2002	CE	Intelligent Transportation	10	10	1.10	
Fall 2002	CE	Transportation Operations	5	6	1.16	
Winter	CE	Urban Transportation	37	32	1.65	
Spring	CE	Public Transportation	18	12	1.52	1.81
Fall 2003	CE	Intelligent Transportation	13	10	1.50	
Fall 2003	CE	Transportation Operations	6	6	1.50	
Winter	CE 454	Urban Transportation	30	23	1.43	
Spring	CE	Public Transportation	9	9	1.56	

Spring	CE	Freight Transportation and	4	3	1.33	
Fall 2004	CE 454	Urban Transportation	37	24	1.63	
Fall 2004	CE	Intelligent Transportation	9	9	1.11	
Spring	CE	Public Transportation	13	11	1.55	
Spring	CE	Transportation Operations	6	6	1.50	
Winter	CE	Intelligent Transportation	9	9	1.33	
Spring	CE	Public Transportation	7	5	1.60	
Spring	CE	Transportation Operations	6	3	1.67	
Fall 2006	CE	Intelligent Transportation	10	1	1.00	
Winter	CE	Transportation Operations	9	8	1.63	
Spring	CE	Public Transportation	11	9	1.22	
Fall 2007	CE	Intelligent Transportation	6	6	1.16	
Winter	CE	Transportation Operations	15	14	1.65	1.81
Fall 2008	CE	Intelligent Transportation	14	13	1.38	1.89
Winter	CE	Transportation Operations	25	25	1.40	1.81
Weighted Average					1.51	

¹ Co-taught with Paul Ryus

² Co-taught with Christopher Monsere

Below are verbatim written comments provided by students in my courses:

Fall 2000: Advanced Transportation Technology

- ◆ None

Winter 2001: Intelligent Transportation Systems

- ◆ Lot of repetitiveness of the information
- ◆ Get a book
- ◆ I really like the course-however-I could not see the screen-the instructor often used web page modules on the screen from laptop-and even with my glasses the print was too small and faint to read on the screen (made it harder to follow).
- ◆ Lots of good ideas. Will look forward to taking other classes from him. Thought stimulating.

Spring 2001: Public Transportation Systems

- ◆ A few more assignments would be preferred over a couple of longer assignments.
- ◆ Great instructor-replace a few of the PhD teachers with one more Bertini.
- ◆ The class was very good as well as the teacher.

- ◆ Very reasonable and fair. Very understanding when problems arise. Always willing to help. I hope to take other classes from him.
- ◆ It would be nice to get feedback on homework assignments.
- ◆ The course seemed to lack structure/organization.
- ◆ We need feedback. There were no tests and the homework was not returned. I would like some indication of how well I'm doing in the class.

Fall 2001: Transportation Operations

- ◆ Very helpful in explaining ideas and theories.
- ◆ Would like to have more instruction on how to use the technology, have a book that relates more to the class.
- ◆ Enjoyed the class, I hope to get a chance to take another class from Dr. Bertini.
- ◆ Instructor did an excellent job of helping me to understand the concepts and what was wanted in the homework. Talking with him inside and outside the class was very useful.

Fall 2001: Intelligent Transportation Systems

- ◆ Instructor was very helpful in responding to our questions or putting us in touch with sources to get information.
- ◆ Course would benefit from early set up of laptop/in-focus so presentation could start on time.

Winter 2002: Urban Transportation Systems

- ◆ We need a CE computer lab.
- ◆ Enjoyed lectures for a better understanding of book material.
- ◆ He should improve his teaching skills about subject.
- ◆ Overhead projector writing is a little hard to read because it's covered up while instructor is writing. I have seen other professors use two overheads – one to write on and the other to display the previous page. Then students have plenty of time to write and the instructor doesn't have to wait between pages.

Spring 2002: Public Transportation Systems

- ◆ None

Spring 2002: Transportation Data Analysis

- ◆ Very good course. Incorporating real problems was very useful.

Fall 2002: Transportation Operations

- ◆ Class load was very large. No differentiation between 510 and 410—thought there should be.

Fall 2002: Intelligent Transportation Systems

- ◆ Good job Dr. Bertini, I had a much better understanding of the subject now and it also stimulated my interest in the field of transportation.

Winter 2003: Urban Transportation Systems

- ◆ The class uses the poorest textbook I have experienced in college. The figures are rarely on the same page as corresponding text. The examples are not fully complete. It would be helpful if lectures were always presented prior to related homework.

- ◆ Some of the homework questions assigned was explained in class; others were only assigned and the information we learned wasn't discussed in class or included on the exam. I was a little surprised about the material content of this class and would have liked an explanation of how some of the concepts relate to real projects and/or design.
- ◆ It was difficult to do the homework before we discussed material in class. This was very frustrating to struggle with concepts we hadn't yet talked about. In addition, the book is very confusing and poorly written.
- ◆ The course flows better if the lectures on the topic precede assignments. Otherwise the lectures are on topic I already understand.
- ◆ Lectures were good. Instructor is excellent! But the book is a little disjointed.
- ◆ This form is pitiful! I can not read the boxes. The homework was ahead of the lecture – should have been the other way around.
- ◆ It is difficult to find words to describe how bad the text for this course is. No development of formulas or system logy is presented, many examples are done incorrectly. Variables are named and used in a haphazard manner, and there are typos on almost every page. Utterly worthless.
- ◆ Lall's book is horrible! The overhead was not very effective. May try standing on other side?
- ◆ The book is the worst text book I have ever used. I appreciate Dr. Bertini's passion and his true caring about students and willingness to help.
- ◆ Dr. Bertini is one of the best professors in the department. He stimulates interest and gives assistance to students whenever possible. (Both academic and professional help.) He has a genuine interest in students progressing and often relates information in class to the professional world. The book is severely lacking. Much of the text seems simply duplicated from AASHTO or other books. The politics of this (having to use the book) stinks.
- ◆ The book is awful.
- ◆ Teacher was great, but the book and content are not very effective. This is a collective thought that the transportation sequence turns student away from transportation.

Spring 2003: Public Transportation Systems

- ◆ Positive – The class is really interesting and has given me good experience in transit planning and development. Dr. Bertini is always clear, informative, and helpful, and always has time for students. Guest speakers and field trips were excellent. Improvement – The assignments were not based on material covered in class. The assignments were good, but I found that I lacked a reference or direction if I did not know what to do. Some coverage of assignment material in class would have been very helpful.
- ◆ Dr. Bertini is the best professor I have had the pleasure of taking classes from. He works hard to make the subject interesting, and is always helpful with assignments. He is also very supportive of the students in terms of work experience and other civil engineering issues. I like the class subject. A cheap book might have been a good option.
- ◆ It's amazing the difference between this class and the other one – Urban Transportation. Or maybe the course content is just better. I really enjoyed the guest speakers and individual project presentations.

Fall 2003: Transportation Operations

- ◆ Chalkboard needs repair. If the instructor wrote on one half, the other half of the class could not see the board. Lighting in the room needs evaluation, difficult to light the students and see the projectors.
- ◆ Overall the course was good. A few suggestions for some improvement: 1) spread homework assignments out over the quarter instead of having them all due at the same time. 2) look into a different textbook that is more appropriate for the material.
- ◆ You made us spend \$98 on the text, and we only used it once or twice.

Fall 2003: Intelligent Transportation Systems

- ◆ Dr. Bertini is consistently helpful and responsive.
- ◆ Use of blackboard is helpful addition to powerpoint presentation. Keeps us involved in lecture by doing examples on board and asking/answer questions.
- ◆ Thank you.
- ◆ I always complain when forced to purchase a book I don't "need" as much as I should, especially when they are expensive. It was nice to know that this book was only \$60.
- ◆ Great course. Need to get more planning students to take it. Professor was very open to student comments, recommendations and questions. He took lots of time outside of class to help students. He's very accessible.
- ◆ Please give Professor Bertini a room with computer technology for his presentations.

Winter 2004: Urban Transportation Systems

- ◆ He is a very positive guy! Effective!
- ◆ I thought the text would have been better if it was a hard back.
- ◆ Dr. Bertini is a great teacher. He shares his interest in the subject and is very helpful inside and outside of class.
- ◆ A textbook with more graphical features (i.e., tables, figures) to break the monotony would be helpful.
- ◆ Textbook was good. It could be better, answers to some questions would be helpful.
- ◆ Textbook is superb—easier to read, good examples/answers, paperback! Lectures were good in terms of providing "bigger picture," but technical examples seemed rushed.
- ◆ Format of textbook was excellent. Project assignments at beginning of class were unclear.
- ◆ This textbook was much, much better than the text used for Intro to Transportation.
- ◆ The text was very good.
- ◆ The book was good overall but it needed better explanations for queuing.
- ◆ I liked the book used in this class (small book) a lot better than the book used in the previous required transportation engineering class. It was more concise and had much better examples.

Spring 2004: Public Transportation Systems

- ◆ The coordination of homework b/w instructor could be done more effectively. I also think that while real world data and problems are interesting, if you spend too much time trying to figure out the data and situation, the point of the homework is lost.
- ◆ Good class. It got a little confusing because at times the lectures did not flow Paul (Tuesday) and Rob (Thursday). It would have been easier to see connections between lectures if an

explicit connection had been made. At times some redundancy. Inspired me to do my best work. All professors need white board markers!

- ◆ Both instructors are very effective. Good job.
- ◆ I enjoyed this course but next time, try not to have it so late in the afternoon.

Spring 2004: Freight Transportation and Logistics

- ◆ Little more focus on CVO, how freight shipped from one another (technology involved). Homework needs to reflect the class materials and topics. Explore more on ITS apps.
- ◆ More homework problems that have cost estimate, number estimate and statistics.
- ◆ Comments: some graphics could be improved—too small to read. Greater use of homework should be encouraged and course should contain more analytical approaches rather than being descriptive. Freight data homework was useful but far too long. Too much busy work rather than being descriptive. Port field trip a definite benefit. Good to see more freight in action field trips in subsequent offerings. Need more focus on logistics and less description.
- ◆ I would recommend this course to anyone interested in issues related to freight transportation. Good balance of lectures and guest speakers/field trips. Class size was nice and small, allowed for good dialogue and instructor interaction. Lectures were very well timed and covered a good amount of material for each of the major modes.

Fall 2004: Urban Transportation Systems

- ◆ Excellent instructor and the text was okay. I really like the project in this class.
- ◆ Definitely one of the best instructors I've had.
- ◆ This book was easier to understand than the alternative.
- ◆ The instructor often missed class while traveling abroad. Lectures concerning the HW assignment often came after the assignment was due. I do, however, feel that instructor was very helpful to students.
- ◆ The text was pretty good. A little more explanation in some areas would have helped. Also, a lot of this class seemed like a repeat of Dr. Lall's Traffic Engineering class.
- ◆ Dr. Bertini is a good professor. Book was okay.
- ◆ Dr. Bertini is very helpful by e-mail—although he maybe not be in class as much as other teachers (which was a little frustrating), he always answered e-mails quickly. I really liked the textbook—it was easy to read and short.

Fall 2004: Intelligent Transportation Systems

- ◆ I think that this class is very interesting and I learned a lot of new concepts, but 2 hours is a very long time because it's very intense.
- ◆ I really enjoyed the course and I feel I benefited a lot from it. The opportunity to work with real data is good and look at real problems and occurrences. The structure of the course being open ended allowed for a comfortable setting.

Spring 2005: Public Transportation Systems

- ◆ I enjoyed this course and am glad that such a course is offered. The mode public transportation is usually overlooked and not studied in depth. After this course I have a different perspective of public transportation. And know its value and the various impacts it has on its surroundings
- ◆ Instructors were very helpful and responsive to students!

- ◆ Bertini homework and Ryus homework were poorly coordinated with each other. Lectures also did not “cross paths.” Course reader was not much discussed after the first day of class.

Spring 2005: Transportation Operations

- ◆ This course really helped me understand topics that weren’t explained thoroughly in other courses. I wish that the course was available in either Fall or Winter.

Winter 2006: Intelligent Transportation Systems

- ◆ Interesting class. Enjoyed class project. Instructor is extremely knowledgeable. Exam was very difficult and unexpectedly so.
- ◆ Very interesting class but very late at night. Maybe split it into two days a week or start earlier.

Spring 2006: Public Transportation Systems

- ◆ I like your and Paul’s teaching a lot. I will admit I wasn’t expecting this class to be as in depth as it was. Kind of took me by surprise. But it’s a good class.
- ◆ This class is very difficult to rate because it was taught by separate professors. The whole term felt disjointed, not cohesive! Overall, the course was not structured well and the variability was frustrating! Homework was laborious, with little feedback—several were not returned in a timely fashion. The final paper was interesting but I felt as though it was not worthy of the effort.

Winter 2007: Transportation Operations

- ◆ Would have been interesting to explore how concepts applied to non-auto travel. Pace was unfortunately slow.

Spring 2007: Public Transportation Systems

- ◆ None.

Fall 2007: Intelligent Transportation Systems

- ◆ Class discussions and presentations were very conceptual while assignments and tests were more technical. Overall, great course and great instruction.
- ◆ The guest speakers that I enjoyed the most and learned from are Jon Makler and Peter Koonce.
- ◆ Instructor is helpful.

Winter 2008: Transportation Operations

- ◆ The start of the term was a little too relaxed. I would rather have been marginally busy throughout than be overworked at end. HW's are very time consuming.
- ◆ Don't spend so much time waiting for people to answer questions.
- ◆ Faster pace at the start of the course.
- ◆ The lectures were entertaining and informative. The test(s) reflected the course content. The level and complexity of math in the homework, however, detracted joy from my spiritual well-being. You cannot tell who this is from the content of my comments.

- ◆ I never used the book except when I needed to give my presentation. Other than not seeing the value of spending money in a book I don't really use, the class was kind of fun. I actually learned something. Keep up the good work.
- ◆ Course text was not very useful- it helped to fill in some gaps, but it is not a user-friendly resource to use outside the class. This course is fundamental to transportation engineers of this field. The exercises were very applicable, the homework a good variety, and the distribution of information was in a nice format - a good mix of guests, powerpoint, student presenters, etc.
- ◆ Homework was effective in emphasising key issues, but they were just too much.
- ◆ Homework was more expansive than just introducing idea. Repetitive work for same ideas.
- ◆ The shockwave phenomenon discussion was one of the interesting parts of the class.
- ◆ The course built upon the fundamental traffic flow theory. May be better taught @ the beginning of the year instead of the winter term. The book wasn't too helpful, the lectures covered the material sufficiently.
- ◆ Course needs more real world examples.
- ◆ Dr. Bertini is very well organized and willing to explain things several different times for students having trouble. He is a very effective teacher.

Fall 2008: Intelligent Transportation Systems

- ◆ I found the chapter presentations very useful, both as a presenter and listening. Consider expanding these to 10 minutes and use power points. Start the problem sets on the first day, use 4 shorter sets.
- ◆ The text had a lot of repetition since each chapter had a different outline. I think they weren't sure what was already included in other chapters. It would be nice if a text with better organization could be found.
- ◆ Excellent course! I would take this one again just to continue learning about the topic! The student-topic presentations were wonderful! This is exactly the type of course that expands the education & learning abilities of both understand & graduate students. Thank you!
- ◆ This course had many interesting topics. It seems like the U.S. is far behind other developed countries. Therefore, I would have liked to have seen more of a focus on international examples. The 3 homework assignments could have been broken up into 5 or 6 homework instead. I liked the freedom to choose the ITS project topics. Excellent idea bringing in guest speakers to talk about real world situations. We should have visited PDX city Transportation Office.
- ◆ The student performed chapter reviews were somewhat useful, but I feel these took up too much of the class time. I really enjoyed the class project.

Winter 2009: Transportation Operations

- ◆ The student performed chapter reviews were somewhat useful, but I feel these took up too much of the class time. I really enjoyed the class project.
- ◆ Please hold students to the time limit on chapter presentations - i.e. a buzzer!
- ◆ Better textbook.
- ◆ Because a significant piece of the course is comprised of the simulation project, it would be great to hear the most popular tools (VISSIM, Synchro) available outside the ITS lab. Those of us who are not lab assistant can be intimidated or put off from using what appears to be other students' workstations.

- ◆ Thank you for no quizzes. Good hints throughout term about what would be on final. Simulation project was rather enjoyable.
- ◆ I was thankful for the “stretch break” part way through our midterm. Never say that you’ll run through our break and just let us out early. We never get out early and lose our break as well. Thank you for your helpful attitude.
- ◆ I enjoyed the class very much and will definitely be taking more transportation courses in the future. The class times were well organized. The confusion over the required text book was a source of frustration since it was only available for purchases from a couple online vendors. The book however, was straight forward and useful.
- ◆ Student chapter reading is not so useful as I think.
- ◆ Thank you! I really learned a lot & enjoyed the course. You made it easy to learn fundamentals intuitively (visualizing) and not rely on equations.
- ◆ Great teaching ability by the professor.
- ◆ Great class - absolutely great Professor.
- ◆ Students should be kept to strict time limits if short presentations or textbook continue to be required. Use of board is more effective in comprehension than pre-written presentation (i.e. PowerPoint)
- ◆ Slides could use more interactive aspects to engage class, when not presentation on research. Mixed feelings on chapter presentations by classmates, some chapters could be weeded out. Text book was good but outdated. Needs to be filtered.
- ◆ For the student chapter summary presentations put a hard time limit and stick to it. Get a timer w/ a buzzer! Grade the homework and exams harder, deduct a point or two for minor mistakes.
- ◆ Very valuable class. Bertini is great Professor and fair. Bertini is one of the reasons I chose to come to Portland. Class was a little tough on a planning student, but once again Bertini is fair and helpful.
- ◆ Two communal books would save a lot of money. Some instruction on simulation should be included. Homework could be pushed closer to the beginning of the term.
- ◆ I felt proportionally more time should have been spent on the past midterm material and less time on the premidterm - it felt rushed during the final 2 weeks.
- ◆ The instructor was frequently absent by school requests and the guest lecturers were not particularly informative.

San Jose State University

I taught as a lecturer at San Jose State University (SJSU) from 1993-1995. The SJSU Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness asked 14 questions on a scale of 5-1 (note that this is the opposite of the PSU rating scheme where 1 is Excellent):

5 = Excellent; 4 = Good; 3 = Satisfactory; 2 = Marginal; 1 = Poor.

Class mean results for question 14, which asked students for the **overall effectiveness of the instructor**, are shown below. The table also shows the mean responses for the Department of Civil Engineering and Applied Mechanics, the College of Engineering (525 classes) and the overall University (4536 classes). The college and university norms are also shown. The line of dashes represents the range of the middle 60 percent of class means within the college or

university. Thus the line of dashes represents the range of most typical scores and the asterisk indicates the class mean (each dash represents 0.1). SJSU did not distribute specific written comments from students.

Term	Course	Students	Bertini Score	Dept. Mean	College Mean & Norms	Univ. Mean & Norms
Spring 1993	CE 130	47	4.6	4.1	4.1 ----- *	4.2 -----*
Fall 1993	CE 222	19	4.4	4.1	4.1 -----*-	4.2 -----*--
Spring 1994	CE 130	62	4.2	4.1	4.1 -----*--	4.2 -----*--
Fall 1994	CE 296A	23	4.5	4.1	4.1 -----*	4.2 -----*--
Spring 1995	CE 130	20	4.5	4.1	4.1 -----*	4.2 -----*--
Spring 1995	CE 222	15	4.6	4.1	4.1 -----*	4.2 -----*-
		Average	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.2