Final Evaluation (CTEF) for Pantano, Alessandra MATH 120A LEC A (45030), Winter Qtr 2012

Responses: 35/49 (71.43%)

A. Please comment on the following areas and be as specific as possible:

1. What are the instructor's teaching strengths?

- Clearly presents the material during lecture
- Engaging, clear, knowledgable, helpful
- Goes over a lot of examples and practice problems in class. Clear.
- Goes through concepts very thoroughly. It is very helpful when specific examples are accompanied with the theorems and concepts so we can see how they are used.
- Great at explaining basic concepts and theorems used in the course
- Great teacher Really strives to connect with the student Good hands on notes
- Her examples are very concrete. Very easy to understand.
- Her strengths are that she is that she really wants us to understand the concepts. She makes us work in groups and prepare for class in advance. All of this was helpful in understanding concepts.
- Her warms-ups keep me up-to-date on the material and make sure I do the reading ahead of time. I can also tell she puts a lot of work into preparing handouts and activities for the class to do. She explains materials clear and comprehensible.
- None!
- Professor is very nice and welcoming when it comes to help. She offers a lot of extra office hours and provide class/group discussion to help student understand the course material. She cares about how her students do and she feels responsible for every student's learning experience. She is a great lecturer and offers great insight to the course.
- Professor Pantano is very friendly and approachable. She obviously cares a great deal for her students and was very obviously doing everything she could to assist us. She is also quite talented at breaking down and explaining concept in a clear and understandable way.
- responsive and smart
- She definitely understands the material well and she is very enthusiastic about the class. She puts a lot of effort into getting students to participate and into the class overall. She is very open to questions and eager to help. In general, I really admire her hard work and her energy. She seems to really have the students' best interests at heart and she really wants us to thoroughly understand everything we cover.
- She explain everything very clearly. She can about students a lot. she is good.
- She is always prepared before lecture and she explains the material very well. She's also very enthusiastic about the material which I think engages her students.
- She is amazing at presenting topics that are not necessarily intuitive in ways that make them much easier to grasp. She is so accessible and makes learning the material as interesting as possible
- She is clear and enthusiastic about math and it is transmitted to her students. It makes the class enjoyable and understandable.
- She is one of the best professors I've had at explaining concepts. She makes 120A seem easy. also, in office hours, she has me work on problems with her guidance so I better understand it instead of just telling me what to do.
- She is very enthusiastic about teaching. She is very willing to help out any student with whatever they need help on.

- She is very enthusiastic about the material she is teaching and she cares about students understand concepts and ideas that help you for the entire quarter.
- She is very patient, and explains very well.
- She is very thorough in instructions and is very good at explaining concepts. She also makes these packets to reinforce knowledge and is great at communicating with students.
- She obviously loves math, and wants us to love it too. She is also extremely nice when I go to office hours, always willing to help me, having me go through the problems with her.
- She spoke clear and took questions when the students needed help with something that she explained. She stayed after class sometimes to help with students on questions about homework or what she lectured on.
- she takes care of students a lot to reach a goal
- The professor knows exactly what she is doing without having to look at the book or refer to any notes.
- very enthusiastic, caring for every students' learning
- Very helpful, makes sure the students completely gets the concept before moving on, can understand her really well, overall a really good teacher
- Very passionate about the topic and about teaching. For once I can tell my professor cares about how much I understand.
- willingness to help; patient and kind; you can tell she has a true desire to help students understand the material; if I had a teaching award named after me, she wins it. scratch that. there should be a teaching award named after her.
- 4 blank answer(s).

2. How can this instructor improve as a teacher?

- Explain portfolio a bit more
- I'd like to know how I am doing in the class. We don't get our grades back for a test or homework for weeks, and I'd like to be able to keep an eye on my grades. It'd be nice if we could get our grades back right away, and if she could put them up on EEE asap.
- I'm not sure, I think sometimes her notes are all over the board and have been hard to follow once or twice but overall these were trivial issues.
- I feel like she gives too much homework; it was difficult to manage along with all the other classes. Also, I wished she'd return homework earlier, I know she spends extra time grading rigorously though.
- I think some of the homework problems are exceedingly harder than what is covered in lecture, I would have liked to see some of these more difficult problems worked through.
- Keep up the good work!
- less work load
- Lighten the workload. I understand with math it's all about practice and repetition, however the workload was unnecessary and took away from my other math classes.
- More worksheets would help me understand the lessons more.
- None!
- Not much, really. Wouldn't mind having her again.
- Not much.
- Please explain materials a bit clearer. Sometimes it's a bit confused.

- Professor Pantano is an amazing instructor and it is honestly quite hard for me to think of criticisms. There were times she could have presented proofs a bit more formally, that is, written things on the board exactly as it would appear in a textbook or on a well written homework assignment. It would probably be helpful for some students to have a very formal presentation of some proofs in their notes so that they could have a template for doing proofs later, especially since this is one of the first classes most students will do proofs.

- She can perhaps slow down sometimes and lift the board up after she is done with it.

- She can post warm up questions two days before instead of the night before.

- She can slow down a bit when the material gets a bit harder to understand.

- She focuses too much on proofs and gives difficult problems on the midterm and quizzes that are confusing.

- She is a great professor at UCI.

- She is pretty good, I don't really have any complaints.

- slow down the speed of the course.

- Sometimes it seemed like things were posted online later than they could have been. For example some assignments were posted at the end of the weekend but it would have been nice to have been given them at the beginning so I could have worked on the assignment during the days off from school.

- Sometimes spends a little bit too long on an example. After writing on the bottom white board you should switch it with the top one cause it's hard to see from the back. Just whichever board you use last should be on top so people can write down everything. I really liked the warm-up questions but you stopped doing them halfway through the course.

- spending most of time for students

- The pacing of this class was completely distorted. She spent a lot of time going over the same things at the beginning of the course over and over again. I understand that it's important to be able to prove that a set is a group or a subset is a subgroup or a function is an isomorphism, but it isn't necessary to beat an idea to death to get students to understand it. Between lectures, homework assignments, discussions, and quizzes, we had a lot of practice with the basics. However, by the end of the quarter, she was moving through material too quickly for me, and I often found myself lost in lecture and ready to give up on trying to understand the later sections. In future courses, she should try to stick to a more evenly spread schedule. Although it may seem like students don't understand what's happening early on, they could just be unwilling to speak up in class (it seems most of us are). Students that really don't understand what's happening will probably seek help from the professor or TA outside of class, especially because both the professor and TA this quarter were incredibly helpful, good at explaining things, and very approachable. In general, the course could benefit from better time management. For instance, at the very start of the course, we cut out shapes to learn about symmetries on squares, rectangles, etc. Although this is an important and maybe difficult concept to grasp at first, having us cut out pieces of paper is definitely a waste of lecture time. In general, time to work alone is usually wasted, as far as I can tell, because 1. students probably get distracted and start talking about non-math things during this individual work time, 2. some students finish very quickly so they're bored, and 3. some students have no idea what's happening, and rather than asking questions, they just sit there confused until we go over the worksheets as a class anyway. So although I think worksheets and individual work time might seem like a good idea in theory, I don't think they work well in practice. I think if worksheets are going to be handed out, they should be covered as a class from the beginning (instead of having everyone work on them individually and then going over them as a class afterwards anyway). Certainly encourage participation still, but keep the whole class involved (for example, maybe go over the worksheets as a class but call on students to give answers).

- this question isn't even applicable to professor pantano

- 9 blank answer(s).

3. Any other comments about this course?

- Awesome!

- I don't really like proofs, but now that I have been going to see Prof. for help, I am starting to understand how to do them a little better. I don't feel quite as lost.

- If an applied algebra course can't be provided (given the wonderful budget cuts and what not), then I feel it would be very beneficial to students to see some of these applications. I don't mean to say pure math is not enjoyable, but providing applications or taking lecture and assigning hw on the applied aspect of the course could help motivate and encourage students even more. questions are rarely ever answered in any math class i've ever taken: How can this be applied? Where does this come from? the course was a bit slow in the beginning. I would have really enjoyed reaching the advanced group theory sections of the book. Nonetheless, I understand the professor's intention - it's better to build a strong foundation. my one complaint was that there was a bit too much work in the course. I think it was to the point where it may have had slowed down the course. oh, the book is... terrible.

- I found it very interesting and so I have signed up for 120B.

- I thought the midterm was too long and also I think some of the homeworks are too long. I know practice is important but that many problems wasn't necessary for the homework. Maybe 3/4 of the length would be enough practice but not too time consuming. The midterm was very hard to finish even though I knew how to do everything which I think shouldn't be the case. The workload for the course in general is pretty heavy, although not at all too dificult. Towards the end the homework wasn't too long I think. Also for the quizzes toward the end, I didn't like how the quizzes didn't line up with the week's homework. I had to do two sections of hw towards the end so I could do the hw and be ready for the quiz, and then I had to redo the quiz hw for the next week which was annoying.

- Made the course a lot easier, even though the subject was really hard.

- n/a

- NA

- None

- She is one of the best math professors I've ever had. I usually don't go to office hours that much, but she urged us to go to her if we had issues, and I have a grasp on the material that I wouldn't have had otherwise. She is so friendly, and assures us that she is happy to help us at any time. She seems to really go out of her way to make sure we truly understand the material. I wish I could take more classes from her! I wish I could have adequately thanked her before this class was over.

- There were two main things about the workload of the class that bothered me: volume and the (what I sometimes perceived to be) untimely manner in which it was presented. I don't agree with the idea of having warmups due at the start of every lecture. Although these didn't continue throughout the entire quarter, it was still frustrating that we had them at all. If the instructor really thinks warmups are beneficial, she should at the very least 1. have a set schedule as to when warmups will be assigned (there were several times where I was freaking out because I was waiting for warmups to be posted), and 2. assign them at least two days in advance (as opposed to, say, the night before). Although this was an afternoon class, my schedule was literally filled from the time I woke up each morning until the time I walked into class (this isn't an exaggeration – I rarely had time to eat on a daily basis unless I skipped classes). If I didn't see a warmup the night before, I didn't have time to do it before getting to lecture. I'm not trying to make a case for myself here, but in general, students have widely varied schedules, and not everyone can accommodate such frequent work when it's assigned so irregularly and sometimes unexpectedly. At the very least, if warmups are still used in future courses, they should be posted at least twenty-four hours in advance, if not forty-eight. And,

as previously mentioned, they should also follow a schedule so that students know exactly when to expect a warmup. Otherwise, I think it is unfair to expect students to be able to complete every warmup on time (assuming we're aiming for good quality work here, of course). In the same spirit, I think homework assignments should be posted well before the weekend. Many students have very busy weekday schedules and rely on weekends to get the bulk of their homework done. This can't happen if we don't know what our assignments are. Additionally, when homework assignments are posted, the entire assignment should be posted all at once. I don't remember this being a problem in this class very frequently this quarter (although I do remember it happening at least once or twice), but it's a terrible feeling to finish an assignment and put it away for a few days, thinking you don't have to worry about that class for the rest of the week, only to find that you've only actually completed half the assignment and the other half is now online. Finally, as far as timeliness goes, the course syllabus/website said that we would be given a list of projects halfway through the quarter. We received the projects two weeks before finals. Additionally, although the instructions for the problems portfolio were posted all quarter long on the website, those instructions were incomplete. I'm glad I didn't have the time to start the portfolio early, because I probably wouldn't have picked the right problems to cover the right topics, and then I would have had to redo the entire project. If the instructor chooses to assign the portfolio and the final project again in a future class, she should send out complete instructions earlier, and again, she should not send out incomplete instructions before sending out complete instructions, unless she specifically indicates that they are incomplete instructions. Otherwise, we have a similar situation as with the incomplete homework, where we work on it early to help alleviate our personal workloads later on, only to find out later (when we're overloaded with other things/classes) that we aren't actually done or that we did it wrong and have to finish or redo it completely. However, I think that a lot of the work assigned in this course was unnecessary anyway. In my experience, individual homework assignments, quizzes, and exams are enough to get students to understand the material (at least for me personally). I don't agree with participation/attendance points, group homework, or projects (at least in a math class). Participation: Students can't always attend class, or sometimes it's more beneficial for them to not attend. Not all students learn best through lecture, and that hour or two might be better spent reading the book on their own. They shouldn't be punished for having their own learning style. Moreover, sometimes things come up and students can't make it to class. I understand that participation was only worth 2% of our grade, so missing one or two warmups will have a minimal impact on our final grades, but still, I don't think that students should be punished by missing points for being unable to attend some classes. Individual homework: I definitely think homework is necessary, and I don't want to imply that I think this should be taken away. However, I would like to comment on the content of our individual homework assignments. I think some of them (but not necessarily all of them) were too lengthy. I don't say this because I want to be lazy and work less, but after proving that twenty different sets are or aren't groups, I really don't have the energy or the patience to do some actual theoretical proofs. My point is that homework assignments should help us understand and reinforce the material, not make us go over it so much that we start to hate it. Computational examples are important, but there shouldn't be so many of them in the homework that we don't have time to do theoretical problems too – especially when we do plenty of computational examples in lecture. In all honesty, even though I thought individual homework assignments were long, they probably weren't actually that bad by themselves. However, given the amount of other work we had to do, Tuesday nights were really frustrating and tiring at the start of the quarter, because we had to finish individual assignments, group assignments, and warmups, plus study for quizzes. And while it's true that avoiding procrastination will help alleviate some of the strain, I just don't think that much work is necessary. It discourages students rather than helping us learn. Group homework: I really don't think group homework works as well in practice as it does in theory. Students have very different schedules, and if you have a group of four to six students, it's not very likely they'll find a good amount of time to set aside when they can all meet to do math together. Aside from their own personal schedule constraints, group meetings often had to

be the night before the homework was due – otherwise, not enough material would have been covered yet and we wouldn't know enough to finish the assignment effectively. I think if the instructor wants to give us more challenging problems, she should just make them a part of normal (individual) homework assignments. If students need help, they'll seek the appropriate help, either from the professor, the TA, or other students. Students can form study groups on their own, but they shouldn't be forced to by the instructor. Not everyone is flexible enough for it. And in general, groups often devolve into one or two people doing all the work and the rest of the group doing nothing. Not that this was necessarily the case in this class, but it's just another thing to consider when thinking about giving regular group work. Quizzes: Like individual homework assignments, I think quizzes can be beneficial. I don't think it's so bad to have homework due on the same day a quiz is administered, either. However, I do think it sucks to have homework, group homework, and warmups due on the same day a quiz is administered. Take-home midterm: I'm not entirely opposed to take-home midterms. However, I think it is very naive to believe students really won't consult each other or outside sources for help. If the instructor wants to assign a take-home midterm, she should make it much more challenging than the average homework assignment or the average in-class exam, expecting that students will be resourceful and seek help and maybe even work together. Even if they aren't supposed to, there's very strong incentive to do it anyway. What bothered me about the take-home midterm was that it was considerably easier than our regular homework assignments, but three problems on the take-home midterm were worth 10% of our grade while all our lengthy homework assignments combined were worth 12%. So in my opinion, the instructor should either make the take-home midterm a lot harder so that it deserves that 10%, or she should just eliminate it altogether (and maybe have two in-class midterms instead if she wishes). Problems portfolio: As previously mentioned, if instructions for this are going to be given from the beginning of class, they should be complete instructions so as to not mislead students. However, I don't think a problems portfolio should be assigned at all. If the purpose of the portfolio was to review all the material we've covered this quarter, then maybe a review assignment could be given instead. But I don't see the benefit in picking problems on our own, and I definitely don't see the benefit in writing a cover letter. I gained absolutely nothing by writing a letter about the problems I did (except maybe additional stress). It did not help my understanding of the class or the material and it did not help me study for the final. Again, I'm not saying this because I want to be lazy. But I believe that whatever work we're assigned for credit should benefit us and help us understand the material better. I think the problems portfolio should be eliminated altogether, and if the instructor still wants some sort of review project, it should take the form of a normal homework assignment (and she can either make it mandatory or optional). Final project: I also don't think the final project should be assigned. I did like that these problems were much more difficult than our typical homework problems, but I didn't like that it was worth so much of our grade (relatively, considering it's a two-problem project), especially when you consider that we only had two weeks to do it (as opposed to five weeks promised in the syllabus). As with the problems portfolio, I think that anything that was hoped to be achieved with this project could have also been achieved in a regular assignment. To summarize, because this was anything but concise: I felt a lot of work in this course was unnecessary busy-work. At some point, it stops reinforcing understanding and starts becoming mundane muscle-memory type work. I would suggest keeping the individual homework, the quizzes, and maybe the take-home midterm (plus the in-class exams, of course). I would not keep the warmups, the group homework, or any of the projects. If the instructor believes that the projects are valuable, I would argue that more regular homework assignments, mandatory or optional, can achieve the same things. I think points should be distributed more evenly; I don't think it's fair that dozens and dozens of homework problems count for about the same proportion of our grade as three take-home-midterm problems or seven project-related problems, especially when it's hard to argue that the quality or difficulty of all these problems differ (except maybe the final project problems). I don't think attendance or group work should be mandatory. Assignments should be given before weekends so students have sufficient time in their weekly schedules to do what they

need to do, and if warmups do persist, then they should be given at least twenty-four hours in advance, if not two or more days in advance. If project instructions are promised at a certain time, they should be delivered at said time. If instructions for homework or projects are given, they should be complete instructions from the beginning. In short, we should be given a clear and accurate idea of what to expect. A lot of us gauge at the start of the quarter or at the start of each week or whatever how much work we will need to do for this class and then try to plan accordingly.

- The speed of progression of the course was inconsistent. We started off painfully slow and now we are going at an extremely fast pace to the point where it's difficult to understand the topics at hand.

- Very good professor/class. I had Professor Pantano for Math 2J so I already had high expectations when coming into Math 120A.

- Workload is a little hard... I'm a little worried about the final, but overall I'm doing okay in the class.

- 21 blank answer(s).

B. Please choose the appropriate rating on the letter grade scale A to F:

'A' indicating an excellent and 'F' indicating a wholly inadequate performance. If you have no opinion on the question asked or if it does not apply, please select NA.

4. The course instructor shows enthusiasm for and is interested in the subject.

A	A-	B+	B	B-
30	3	0	1	0
Value: 4	Value: 3.7	Value: 3.3	Value: 3	Value: 2.7
C+	**C**	**C-**	**D**	**F**	**NA**
0	0	0	0	0	0
Value: 2.3	Value: 2	Value: 1.7	Value: 1	Value: 0	No Value

Mean	Median	Std Dev
3.94	4.00	0.19

5. The course instructor stimulates your interest in the subject.

A	A-	B+	B	B-
18	11	3	1	1
Value: 4	Value: 3.7	Value: 3.3	Value: 3	Value: 2.7
C+	**C**	**C-**	**D**	**F**	**NA**
0	0	0	0	0	0
Value: 2.3	Value: 2	Value: 1.7	Value: 1	Value: 0	No Value

Mean	Median	Std Dev
3.77	4.00	0.32

6. The course instructor meets stated objectives of the course.

A	A-	B+	B	B-
26	6	0	1	0
Value: 4	Value: 3.7	Value: 3.3	Value: 3	Value: 2.7
C+	**C**	**C-**	**D**	**F**	**NA**
0	0	0	0	0	0
Value: 2.3	Value: 2	Value: 1.7	Value: 1	Value: 0	No Value

Mean	Median	Std Dev
3.92	4.00	0.20

7. The course instructor is accessible and responsive.

A	A-	B+	B	B-
30	3	0	0	0
Value: 4	Value: 3.7	Value: 3.3	Value: 3	Value: 2.7

C+	C	C-	D	F	NA
0	0	0	0	0	0
Value: 2.3	Value: 2	Value: 1.7	Value: 1	Value: 0	No Value

Mean	Median	Std Dev
3.97	4.00	0.09

8. The course instructor creates an open and fair learning environment.

A	A-	B+	B	B-
26	5	2	0	0
Value: 4	Value: 3.7	Value: 3.3	Value: 3	Value: 2.7

C+	C	C-	D	F	NA
0	0	0	0	0	0
Value: 2.3	Value: 2	Value: 1.7	Value: 1	Value: 0	No Value

Mean	Median	Std Dev
3.91	4.00	0.19

9. The course instructor encourages students to think in this course.

A	A-	B+	B	B-
26	6	2	0	0
Value: 4	Value: 3.7	Value: 3.3	Value: 3	Value: 2.7

C+	C	C-	D	F	NA
0	0	0	0	0	0
Value: 2.3	Value: 2	Value: 1.7	Value: 1	Value: 0	No Value

Mean	Median	Std Dev
3.91	4.00	0.19

10. The course instructor's presentations and explanations of concepts were clear.

A	A-	B+	B	B-
20	10	3	0	1
Value: 4	Value: 3.7	Value: 3.3	Value: 3	Value: 2.7

C+	C	C-	D	F	NA
0	0	0	0	0	0
Value: 2.3	Value: 2	Value: 1.7	Value: 1	Value: 0	No Value

Mean	Median	Std Dev
3.81	4.00	0.29

11. Assignments and exams covered important aspects of the course.

A	A-	B+	B	B-
23	4	5	2	0
Value: 4	Value: 3.7	Value: 3.3	Value: 3	Value: 2.7

C+	C	C-	D	F	NA
0	0	0	0	0	0
Value: 2.3	Value: 2	Value: 1.7	Value: 1	Value: 0	No Value

Mean	Median	Std Dev
3.80	4.00	0.32

12. What overall grade would you give this instructor?

A	A-	B+	B	B-
25	8	0	1	0
Value: 4	Value: 3.7	Value: 3.3	Value: 3	Value: 2.7

C+	C	C-	D	F	NA
0	0	0	0	0	0
Value: 2.3	Value: 2	Value: 1.7	Value: 1	Value: 0	No Value

Mean	Median	Std Dev
3.90	4.00	0.20

13. What overall grade would you give this course?

A	A-	B+	B	B-
13	8	7	4	1
Value: 4	Value: 3.7	Value: 3.3	Value: 3	Value: 2.7

C+	C	C-	D	F	NA
0	0	0	0	0	1
Value: 2.3	Value: 2	Value: 1.7	Value: 1	Value: 0	No Value

Mean	Median	Std Dev
3.62	3.70	0.39

C. Please answer:

14. Based on completed assignments thus far, what is your current course grade or approximate standing?

A	B	C	D	F	NA
6	13	8	1	0	2
Value: 4	Value: 3	Value: 2	Value: 1	Value: 0	No Value

Mean	Median	Std Dev
2.86	3.00	0.79

15. How much academic dishonesty seemed to occur in this course? If applicable, please describe the type of academic dishonesty that occurred (not the particular students involved).

    1.

A lot	Some	A little	None I could discern
0	1	3	30

    2. Examples:
       - I am pretty sure there was a lot of cheating going on with those take-home midterms. We were specifically told to not work together or to go online and find solutions, but I definitely know some students did exactly that anyway.
       - same stuff in every course
       - 33 blank answer(s).

16. How helpful were the textbooks and/or readings to your overall learning experience?

Very	Adequately	Somewhat	Not at all
16	10	7	1

17. How challenging was this course?

Very	Adequately	Somewhat	Not at all
11	18	3	1