Student Comments

Konstantin Zuev
California Institute of Technology
July 5, 2017

Abstract

“I can live for two months on a good compliment.” — Mark Twain. This text showcases a biased sample of student comments on my teaching.

Keywords: narcissism, self-admiration, egomania.

1 Introduction to Statistical Inference, Caltech

• Kostia is an absolutely fantastic professor. In fact, he is my favorite professor at Caltech to date. He demonstrates superior knowledge of the material, cares about the students, and is an entertaining lecturer. If all ACM professors at Caltech were like him, I might still be an ACM major.

• Best prof I’ve had. Lecture notes are extremely well written and comprehensible. Great lecturer who often uses real world examples to help concepts make sense.

• I wish that Kostia taught more classes because I would take all of them.

• Prof Zuev is one of the best teachers I had.

• Kostia is a great lecturer and is especially good at explaining the fundamentals of the concepts that you learn. He helps you build an intuition for the material rather than just having you blindly memorize equations and when to apply them.

• Very excellent in making potentially confusing concepts easier to understand. Professor Zuev seems to know well where students may get stuck or get confused. Lecture notes are extremely well organized and beautifully presented that makes reading lecture notes a pleasure.

• Professor can illustrate complicated concepts in a very straightforward and clear way. That’s really impressive!
• As a senior CS major interested in machine learning, this class was a solid refresher on statistics and taught me quite a few new things as well. Kostia’s lecture notes are extremely well written; he seems to have an almost intuitive understanding of what concepts will be harder for students to grasp and explains said concepts very clearly.

• Excellent course. Anyone interested in statistics should take it.

• Extremely useful course. Taught a bunch of statistics with a far more practical focus than Ma 3.

• It was fun to use everything I learnt to analyse real problems. In fact, in one project for another course, I’m using some of the things I learnt in this class to do some data analysis.

• Course was very well done, unlike most other ACM courses I’ve taken. Material was very relevant and homework had numerous practical applications, once again unlike most other ACM courses I’ve taken.

• Really great course to learn statistics!

2 Applied Linear Algebra, Caltech

• Zuev is a great/fantastic/encouraging lecturer. He is very friendly, interested in his lectures, very committed to the class. The homeworks were amazing! The application problems in the problem sets were amazing! Super interesting class. Zuev you ROCK!

• Kostia is a fantastic teacher who motivates the topics extremely well. He is also extremely organized and can answer any question thrown at him.

• Zuev is one of the best lecturer I have had in CALTECH so far. His way of teaching is fantastic, he explains very well and the application problems in the problem sets were amazing!

• Prof. Zuev is one of the top instructors I have encountered at Caltech. He shows deep understanding of the material and really cares about students’ learning experience. He presents complex topics in a simple way that is accessible to everyone.

• Prof. Zuev is one of the best lecturers I’ve had while at Caltech. I never left a lecture feeling confused about the concepts that were presented or questioning if what we had just learned was useful. He was also flexible and open toward student concerns.

• Fantastic teacher, one of the best I have had at Caltech. Really liked that the lectures were outlined at the beginning of class and throughout the lecture we naturally progressed through those topics.

• Dr. Zuev was an excellent Professor. I appreciated how organized the course was, start to finish. The lectures were interesting, well-paced, and clearly
well planned out, and the homework assignments allowed me to expand on the applications that were presented in class. The tests were fair, and at an appropriate level of difficulty. Dr. Zuev is an engaging lecturer, and clearly an expert in the field.

- Zuev is the best. I greatly enjoyed his lectures, from the content to his jokes.
- I really enjoyed Prof Zuev’s teaching style. It was engaging and informative. I will definitely take more courses with him.
- Kostia teaches valuable insights that I can almost guarantee you will use at some point in your career. In the last class, he gave an example of how singular value decomposition (SVD) and principal component analysis (PCA) could be applied even in political science.
- An all-around truly outstanding instructor. One of the best I have ever had.
- Prof. Zuev did a great job teaching this course, and I applaud him for keeping the class interesting despite teaching two classes back-to-back. He also did a great job at answering questions on Piazza very quickly.
- Prof. Zuev is very thorough and outstanding lecturer.
- Excellent instruction. Somehow was able to give fast-paced 90 minute lectures without ever referencing his own notes or having to rely on slides.
- Teaching skills are great! He really handles this huge class well.
- Loved the course material and homeworks.
- I really enjoyed going to lectures for this class, they were always interesting and useful.
- Your notes and teaching were fantastic! I wish I had the opportunity to be in a smaller class though because I feel like you really excel at direct student interactions.
- Great class. I took it as a CS major intending to get a better LA background for machine learning etc, and found it super useful. I think I learned way more from this class than Ma1b, and understood much more in depth. Zuev is a great lecturer. I skip lectures for most classes since I find most lectures are either too fast or slow-paced, but I attended almost all of Prof. Zuev’s lectures because they were legitimately a super-efficient way of absorbing information.
- Definitely take this class offered by Prof. Zuev. Your understanding of linear algebra will significantly improve, and you will have all the support you need.
- This class is much better than the linear algebra class offered in core. I actually know what an eigenvalue is now.
- I would like to recommend this course to anybody who is looking for some application kind of stuff in mathematics because of the way this course is
designed. It includes various cool applications of linear algebra along with basic understanding of the general concepts of linear algebra.

- This class was exactly the linear algebra course that I wanted: there was enough emphasis on theory and conceptual/mathematical understanding that the topics made sense, and enough focus on applications that I remained interested in the content (it linked directly to my other courses, and my research needs). Excellent overall.

- This was one of the best courses I’ve had at Caltech so far. The material was interesting and explained well and the MATLAB applications were very useful and interesting to include. Would highly recommend this course.

- If you use the PageRank algorithm, this is by far the most important course at Caltech.

- Really nice class, I liked the connections of concepts to real world applications.

- Great class!... Also, Kostia is awesome!!

3 Introduction to Probability Models, Caltech

- He is perfect because he has a high sense of humor and explains the concepts through basic and real application.

- This is quite possibly the most well-put-together courses I’ve taken at Caltech. Kostia’s organization is superb, with the lectures, homeworks, and exams all complementing one another very nicely. The lecture notes he posts online contain everything you need to know and then some (although you should still try to attend lectures because they’re good!). Overall I thought I got a lot out of this course and I’m really glad I took it!

- I am amazed at this man’s capability to deliver a 1.5 hr lecture without referencing any notes, and then repeat for ACM104.

- Professor Zuev was a clear, organized lecturer and welcomed questions as well as emphasized practical analogies and understanding rather than sinking into the depths of formal theory. Friendly and knowledgeable.

- Professor Zuev’s lectures are really really clear and helpful to learn. Also he provides motivations/explanations on some abstract concepts.

- I liked Kostia. He was very accommodating and knew and taught the subject very well. It was great he treated his classes very seriously, which inspired me to keep trying hard in the class, even though it was super hard.

- I enjoyed Konstantin’s lectures. They are concise but still cover all of the necessary material. He does a good job answering questions when they are relevant to the course and taking them offline when they are not.
• Zuev is a great teacher! Explains things very well. Also, this class was a very good class, and covered a lot of the material that an introductory probability and statistics class should. Overall, it’s kept practical enough that its very approachable for engineers and yet hints at the important theoretical foundation so that we get a good grounding in probability. Overall, awesome class.

• I came into this course as a grad student with very little probability background. I thought it is was challenging and rewarding. I learned a lot that will be applicable to my future research and work.

• The course was great. The lecture notes were clear and organized, and were easy to reference for the homework. The homework assignments taught me a lot, and solidified things we learned in lecture.

• I learned so much in this class. It was very, very helpful, and seems to be applicable to so many areas of research. Even if this class is not a requirement, you should definitely take it!

• This class was wonderful! It was incredibly well-organized and it’s clear that Kostia put a lot of time into making it as effective of a learning tool as possible. Thanks!

4 Introduction to MATLAB and Mathematica, Caltech

• I thought that this class was a great class for learning mathematica/matlab. As always, Zuev’s class was excellently prepared and was very applicable and useful.

• This class is amazing, even though the first MatLab project took a little bit longer than expected, the rest of the class was amazing. I’m so thankful I have taken the class as I now have the knowledge to apply to other classes.