MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

2262- Student Perceptions of Learning Survey Report SS26-EC-202-001 (LEC) Introduction to Macroeconomics (Sierra Smith)

Project Title: **SS26 Student Perceptions of Learning Survey**

Courses Audience: **595**
Responses Received: **199**
Response Ratio: **33.45 %**

Report Comments

Update Regarding Open-Ended Questions

Research on student perceptions surveys cautions against open-ended questions, in part, because they offer the greatest opportunity for bias. The SPLE Policy does not prevent colleges or departments from using open-ended questions. Those who choose to use them are strongly encouraged to also draft a protocol for managing rude responses and ensure that they understand what the literature says about open-ended questions. ***Responses to open-ended questions are included in instructor reports and, as of March 2025, they are also included in college and department reports and dashboards.***

Institution-Level Questions

Responses to 7 institution-level questions are presented in this report, which are gathered from all students in all courses every term. Responses to some or all of the first 6 questions can be used in conjunction with other instructional review data to support course improvement and to inform annual reviews and personnel decisions such as retention, promotion, salary, and tenure. Other forms of instructional review can include classroom visits, peer review, teaching portfolios, reflections, and course material. Importantly, responses to the institution-level questions represent students' perceptions of their experiences in a course, not "evaluations of teaching" or measures of student learning.

College and/or Department or School Questions

Responses to college and/or department or school questions are presented after the institution-level questions. Not all colleges and departments or schools have opted to include questions in the SPLS yet; some may administer an equivalent survey by other means (e.g., Qualtrics, FileMaker). Questions or concerns about college and/or department or school survey questions should be directed to the school, department, or college.

Variable Survey Periods

Variable survey periods were implemented starting in the spring 2024 term, which can contribute to higher response rates when paired with other strategies (e.g., reserve time in class, provide direct access via URL or QR code, describe how the instructor uses student feedback to improve the course).

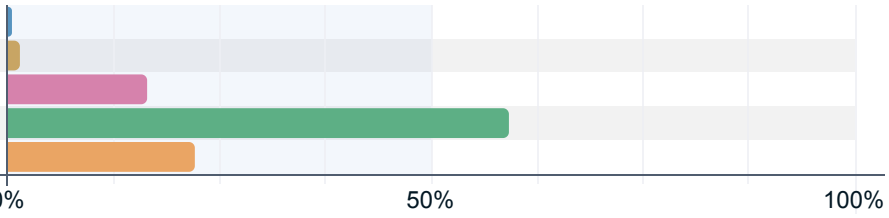
Course Duration	Survey Period
<6 weeks	5 calendar days
6 weeks to <11 weeks	7 calendar days
11 weeks or more	10 calendar days

Creation Date: **Thursday, August 13, 2026**

Expectations

I understood what was expected of me in this course:

1 Strongly disagree	1	0.50%
2 Disagree	3	1.51%
3 Neutral	33	16.58%
4 Agree	118	59.30%
5 Strongly agree	44	22.11%
Total	**199**	

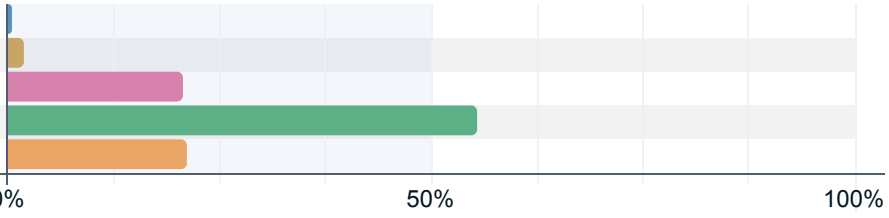


Statistics	Value
Mean	4.01
Standard Deviation	0.70
Standard Error (based on SD)	0.05

Organization

Overall, the course was well organized:

1 Strongly disagree	1	0.51%
2 Disagree	4	2.02%
3 Neutral	41	20.71%
4 Agree	110	55.56%
5 Strongly agree	42	21.21%
Total	**198**	

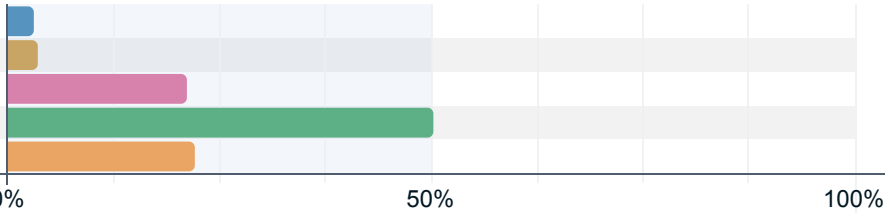


Statistics	Value
Mean	3.95
Standard Deviation	0.74
Standard Error (based on SD)	0.05

Atmosphere

The Faculty Member, Sierra Smith, created an atmosphere that supported my learning:

1 Strongly disagree	6	3.02%
2 Disagree	7	3.52%
3 Neutral	42	21.11%
4 Agree	100	50.25%
5 Strongly agree	44	22.11%
Total	**199**	

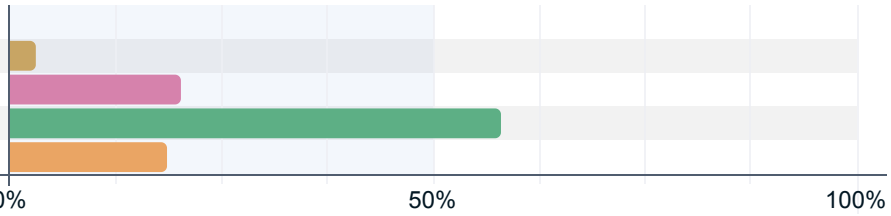


Statistics	Value
Mean	3.85
Standard Deviation	0.91
Standard Error (based on SD)	0.06

Expanded understanding

The course expanded my understanding of the subject matter:

1 Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
2 Disagree	6	3.03%
3 Neutral	40	20.20%
4 Agree	115	58.08%
5 Strongly agree	37	18.69%
Total	**198**	

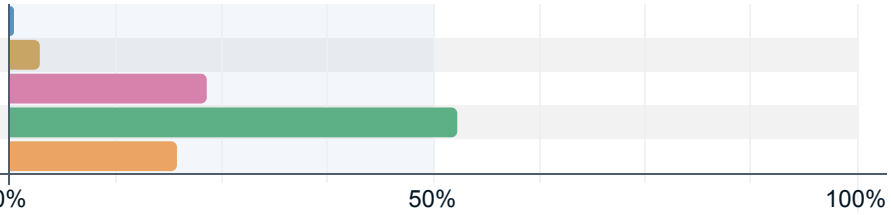


Statistics	Value
Mean	3.92
Standard Deviation	0.71
Standard Error (based on SD)	0.05

Demonstrate understanding

Course assignments and/or tests provided opportunities for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material:

1 Strongly disagree	1	0.51%
2 Disagree	7	3.54%
3 Neutral	46	23.23%
4 Agree	105	53.03%
5 Strongly agree	39	19.70%
Total	**198**	

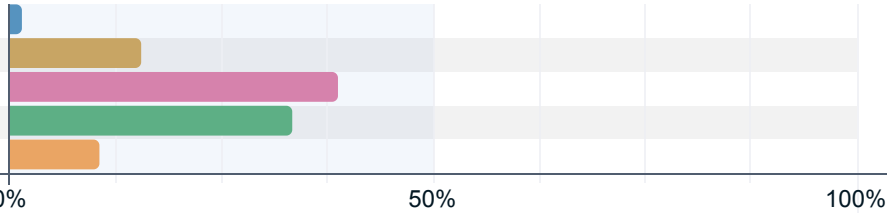


Statistics	Value
Mean	3.88
Standard Deviation	0.78
Standard Error (based on SD)	0.06

Interest increased

My interest in the subject has increased because of this course:

1 Strongly disagree	3	1.52%
2 Disagree	31	15.66%
3 Neutral	77	38.89%
4 Agree	66	33.33%
5 Strongly agree	21	10.61%
Total	**198**	

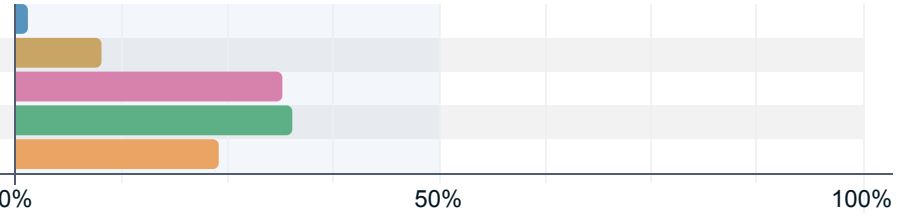


Statistics	Value
Mean	3.36
Standard Deviation	0.92
Standard Error (based on SD)	0.07

Dept/College Question (TQ73I)

(TQ) Overall, the quality of instruction provided by the Faculty Member, Sierra Smith, in this course was:

1 Poor	3	1.53%
2 Fair	20	10.20%
3 Good	62	31.63%
4 Very good	64	32.65%
5 Excellent	47	23.98%
Total	**196**	

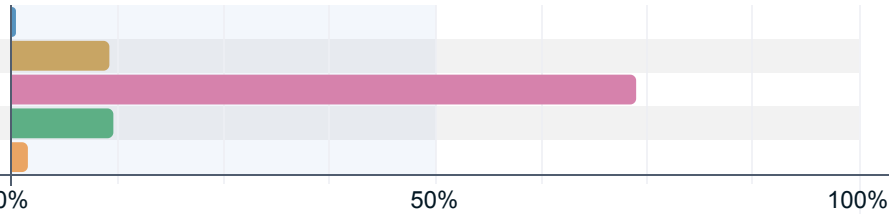


Statistics	Value
Mean	3.67
Standard Deviation	1.00
Standard Error (based on SD)	0.07

Workload

Compared to other courses of equal credit, the workload for this course was:

1 Much heavier	1	0.51%
2 Heavier	23	11.62%
3 Similar	146	73.74%
4 Lighter	24	12.12%
5 Much lighter	4	2.02%
Total	**198**	



Statistics	Value
Mean	3.04
Standard Deviation	0.58
Standard Error (based on SD)	0.04

Dept/College Question (TQ48C)

(TQ) What specific things about the course helped support your learning?

Comments
Having the slides available to me to look back on helped me to create good notes. The examples provided in the lecture allowed me to better engage with real world situations presented in the material.
They provided several help opportunities and communicated very well
The teacher going through the slides and the extra help on the side with other students helped.
The help desks
Professors concept break down
Problem sets
She was very good at teaching
I liked Smith's teaching style. She sets up the class well so her students can succeed in the class.
The lectures and slides along with it were very descriptive and helped my knowledge of the material expand. Professor Sierra Smith did a great job explaining the material.
The amount of time given for problem sets.
I liked the online homework assignments.
access to the slides
The learning curve extra credit assignments and the homework.
Professor Sierra Smith did a great job lecturing this course. She is a great professor and has a great way of teaching.
The achieve course
lots of opportunities for extra help
The homework was challenging and similar to the exams so they helped a lot.
Not achieve
nothing
I liked the abundance of office hours. It helped me prepare for the midterms I felt unprepared for, and I plan on going again before my final as it was easy and approachable.
One thing that really helped me was the slides and the practice quiz options.
The review problems, homework assignments, and engagement exercises.
Very accessible.
The lectures and home work
flexibility
PowerPoint slides on D2L helped me learn a lot more.
the achieve problem sets and the practice exams
the practice test are very helpful
Weekly check–ins, home work assignments
econ help room, TAs and ULAs were very helpful
The achieve problem sets helped a lot.
Having practice tests for each unit was very helpful.
I think that there was a more objective approach to learning it and it really helped me lay down a solid base for Econ in general.
The lecture slides and homework.
n/a
the practice exams helped a lot
the tutoring offered
the homework
Clear lecture explanations and notes
The opportunity to do practice exams on achieve
lots of ways to meet with the TAs and many times for office hours
The problem sets helped me to apply what I learned in class, and study for tests.

Comments
practice problems on achieve
Almost nothing, as the PAL sessions did. not line up with my schedule.
I would say the way the professor approached the topics and the engagement activity
many practice problems
There is always office hours available to go to, which helps.
learning about macro economics and the business world
Engagement assignments, homework, and extra credit work.
The availability of office hours.
Weekly check ins
The problem sets and lectures were very helpful.
idk
The homework helped me understand the topics better.
Achieve problem sets
Having the slides uploaded
I like how the achieve learning problem sets were given weeks in advance and were all due before each exam, rather than being due like every week, similar to my previous classes. This way I am able to take my time on them and actually focus on comprehending the material.
All
The clear lessons and assignments
I think the practice problems online on Achieve were very helpful in learning the material of the class
The homeworks
Class slides, extra credit, practice quizzes
I thought the slides were very helpful and went into detail about the subjects.
The tests were very accurate in what was learned in class.
The content on provided through Achieve was very helpful for studying and tests
I liked the achieve sets that were easy and simple each around 1 or so a week and then all due by exam is a simple format.
She posted the lecture slides on D2L so that helped.
I liked the Achieve problem sets because that gave me extra practice on certain chapters.
Having access to the lecture slides. Not knowing when the attendance was being taken
The practice exams before the midterms and final were very helpful.
nothing
Sometimes even though she reads off of the slides most of the lecture, she will occasionally give examples for what she is talking about that makes it easier to understand the concepts of the course.
the engagement activities
I thought the in–class lectures were better set up and explained than most of the other classes I have had.
The Practice exams.
practice problems
Learned about the environment.
Professor Smith is a good Econ professor.
Studying for the exams was the only thing that contributed to my learning
Achieve, TA/UAL, Office Hours, Practice Exams, Learning Curve
The practice exams before each exam.
engagement activities
Sierra taught the material very good in class, and gave examples that made a lot of sense. I also attended her office hours a couple times and that helped as well, especially when reviewing the exam I did not do too well in.
Assignments
the in depth lectures
Applying economics to the business world to learn how money flows in business cycles to check the health of them.

Comments
The homework sets were good practice for exams. Exams were well structured with good material to use for studying.
Sierra was incredibly accessible to students. She answered questions before, during, and after class, during office hours, and via email. She provided extra credit opportunities and interacted with students often. I really liked her as a professor and I would absolutely take more classes with her.
The work was fair and well communicated.
I liked the use of achieve, since it was a good way to understand the material. On top of that, I liked how she also had practice exams for each of the lectures, which helped me understand the material
The help room
Having an instructor that was very communicative and understanding.
I really liked the practice sets to practice before an exam because they were similar to each other.
The practice exercises later added in Achieve were helpful.
Lecture and lecture slides
Having great homework
The practice exams were extremely helpful for my understanding of the material for this course.
Professor Smith was very helpful if you had any questions and supported all of the class very well.
The practice exams
Being able to have the engagement sheets once a week to expand my knowledge and allow me to get a better understanding of the course was helpful.
The learning activities help me better understand what I was taught in lecture.
homework
I liked the mood of the instructor, and I also liked the practice problem sets.
The lectures and the slides helped support my learning.
The practice problems on achieve helped greatly.
All skills and knowledge
The homework online was very helpful and having the ta available to message and ask for help
All class materials were provided.
Some of the practice quizzes helped support my learning.
I liked how lectures were done and the problem sets were super helpful. I also liked that we have review sets to work on for exams, those really helped.
Homework
The practice exams helped me study a lot and learn the material from class.
homework not due until the week of exams and good practice exams to study
having the achieve problems sets were helpful and were similar to the tests.
Good help room
The student tutoring help me to understand things a bit better, and looking at the lecture slides.
Doing the problem sets
Practice sets
Overall the course was pretty well organized.
The engagement activities helped me understand the concepts better as they were taught.
The practice sets and homework, as well as the Unique features on Achieve in order to increase learning have helped tremendously throughout the course.
The lecture slides were very easy to follow along to and take notes from.
What helped me learn the best was the attendance slips because it helped me gage if I know what is happening.
The problem sets were super beneficial.
Achieve problem sets helped my learning
slides and other helpful materials were posted
This course helped me understand and develop problem solving skills
The homework assignments helped me understand the units better on Archives and the AI tutor helped me know what I got wrong.

Comments
I really liked the achieve problem sets that we did, as they were related to what we learned in class, but helped expand that into applications
Lectures
The homework assignments and practice exams given to us before our exams.
I liked how the exams were formatted, along with how they tested my learning. I also liked how the extra credit helped me prepare for the exams and homework assignments.
interactive enviroment
slides were easy to understand
The extra practice tests before the exams
She explained her power points very well
The extra credit practice exams were very helpful.
She provided study material that was meant to help us prepare for the midterm/exam
Tons of practice questions, tests, etc.
Great instructions
The homeworks in achieve
Posted slideshows ahead of time
The homework assignments that gave you feedback for every question if you get it incorrect.
The problem sets and extra credit sets
There was a TA who hosted regular office hours and communicated the hours and topics very clearly through email
Homework questions
Office hours helped.
n/a
The assignments that we did before the exams were very useful and I believe they helped me perform well on the exams.
The deep step by step detail in the presentations helped me learn what things meant as it showed structure.
The homework and extra practice problems helped support my learning by being able to further understand the material.
Lecture Notes.

Dept/College Question (TQ49C)

(TQ) What specific things about the course could be improved to better support student learning?

Comments
I think having a more interactive experience would improve or support student learning.
nothing
In class reviews before the exam.
Im not sure
Use another website besides MacMillan
n/a
Lecture slides
I would suggest the class before an exam be for review, as there were none.
The problem sets were graded off of accuracy, which sometimes made it hard to get a good grade on them. Then a 93% is a 4.0 which is hard but do–able.
The problem sets often hid questions and took points off for simply not knowing extra questions were even there.
Maybe spread out when each homework assignment was due, instead of making four due at a time.
using different slides for actual lecture
I feel like the lectures could have been more engaging. I know it was a huge class however I feel like I could've learned more.
N?A
Less reading directly off slides in lecture
different interface for homework assignments
There should be attendence taken every class instead of 1/3 classes in a week because it is easy to skip classes.
Not having achieve and lower the 4 gpa a 93 is really hard
nothing
Some questions on the exams / quizzes I felt were just there to trip you up. I understand switching up how you give a question to make sure the student really knows the material. For example, adding a variable in the question that you don't actually use in the equation you're supposed to use. However, though I can't recall any specific questions, I do remember it'd always be a little overboard. I'd go back through my questions where I'd find I put a wrong answer where, in reality, I knew the stuff and understood the material. However, because of wording or other "tricks" (to me it felt like tricks) I've almost certainly lost points because of it (again, despite me knowing and understanding the material taught)
In my opinion I think peer review would help.
For the homework assignments, I recommend making them completion–based. They are difficult questions and the deduction on the overall grade is substantial for each question missed.
Nothing comes to mind.
wording the mid terms in a way that is easier to understand because I get 90% on homework yet when I do the exam I feel as if I don't know the topic at hand.
for this class, the homework assignment grading felt harder than it should be. For me, I feel like economics homework best helps me understand subjects, but if you got the first attempt wrong, half of your grade is already gone for that question. I felt like it was harder than it should of been.
have attendance be something different
nothing
Nothing
smaller classes
I think better time management of the material compared to the test could be beneficial. This way students are not learning future content before the exam on past content. I also think that the slides could be summarized a bit better so it's not just speaking word for word from the slides.
Nothing
Possibly doing more practice problems in class where we can learn the thought process to take.
allowing more attempts on problem sets and allowing to ask the chat bot within the sets questions before solving the questions. additionally, making the lectures more similar to the problems sets or vice versa

Comments
The homework could be on D2L as it would be a lot easier and more simple than the achieve problem sets and students wouldn't have to pay 75 dollars to access it.
I didn’t like that she read off of the slides. it was hard to follow
the homework being inconsistant wasnt super helpful but it was nice to have it set up like that so i could go bakc and look at it
nothing
N/A
Better Attendance System
Nothing at all, if you put the time in you will get good results
N/A
for the homework giving us two times to try and get 100% on the question instead of losing points right away
Interactive questions during class time. Engagement activities announcement posted so not everyone gets up at the same time.
making the 3 exams have an equal load of credit instead of the final having 6 chapters while the other 2 have 4
Lectures need to have a stronger attendance policy, as almost 3 weeks of class can be missed. Lectures also need to be more engaging instead of just professor lead, as this doesn't harbor learning. Assignments shouldn't be 50% off on the second attempt, and should invite learning instead of creating a harsh policy. Professor needs to take the time to hold classes that review materials before tests instead of just stating that they cannot do so. Slides look like they are created by AI, instead of actually teaching the material. Professor needs to make sure that the test policy of no remakes and stating that "they will ignore emails" should be changed or looked at.
I would say add an optional cumulative exam at the end to replace the lowest grade
na
I would say maybe do an interactive system like I–clicker.
nothing it was good
Do engagement at end of class, most kids left after beginning when submitted.
Maybe more review posted before the final.
Ta
n/a
idk
Instead of making all the homework's due on one night, spread them out week by week so students can focus better on each topic.
Interactivity
The exams, specifically our first one, was not very organized at all. The whole 500 person lecture was full and there were only two TAs in addition to our main instructor, professor smith. When it was time to start the exam, there were many people without a scantron sheet or without a test, so there was a lot of noise and distractions for the beginning of the exam. Towards the end, there were people lining up in huge lines talking while other people were still taking the exam. The second exam was slightly better. This is the only thing I didn't particularly like about the class.
Not much
Having two attempts for full percent on homework to allow for learning from mistakes instead of stressing about getting the correct answer and a good score
Give practice exams
I think that if the grading weight of the achieve problems could be less because we are given no practice problems yet we cant get any wrong to get a good grade.
I think we should have at least two attempts on the homework before we are deducted
Not much
There seemed to be people that would do the attendance and leave diminishing the point of attendance.
None, it was a very efficient class.
The grading system seems unreasonably strict for a 200 level freshman requirement
I think give maybe some simple extra credit to the people who stay all class every day and don't just leave early like everyone else.
She could use a better form of attendance. Instead of paper based she could use an online platform and save time in class and also do attendance each day to get more out of the students.
The problem sets itself would sometimes glitch and it would cause me to get a lower grade on that set.
Nothing!

Comments
I felt like the problem sets on Achieve don't give you enough attempts before they start taking off points. It was hard to get good grades on homework.
everything
She only teaches off of the slides which is not helpful at all. It is extremely hard to stay engaged. Plus, when doing the Achieve homework, the grading is very difficult on it, and she doesn't give all the information necessary to answer the questions especially later in the course so it makes the HW difficult all the while it being graded hard.
making attendenve mandatory
I think the homework was a little challenging and punished small mistakes a little too much.
How the homework was set up was horrible. If you got a question wrong its automatically 50% off for that question. for a 20 question homework i once got one question wrong on the first try out of all of them and i got a 95% i just think its way too harsh.
more examples in the slides
Less quizzes
Yeah, MSU Econ really seems to like to go out of their way to make one of the easier pseudoscience disciplines unnecessarily hard. Overall, my main grip with this course is the horrid AI slop Achieve problem sets/program. 25% of my grade riding on trick question ridden assignments that could have been easily done much better and at no cost to the student through D2L sets was honestly quite infuriating. What should be the most forgiving part of the class that allows students to actually put what they have learned into practice through application is simply way too unforgiving and nonconstructive to justify paying for the outside program. Overall micro and macro at MSU were fine, probably no better than my local community college though where I should have taken Econ at.
I feel like the lecture was not engaging enough (no offense). I saw the idea of the material taught, but the execution was terrible. I did not learn much and that might partly be on me, but I just do not think it is that helpful to sit in the lectures. That is not a way I can really learn. I need to APPLY my learning. I cannot just hear it from a professor.
More direct learning opportunities, smaller classes, more practice
the information on the slide deck. more examples and explanation is needed
problem sets
I think that the course is structured well enough now, so no changes.
more leeway on the homeworks
None
N/A
I don't know. It's so hard to cater to everyone in a classroom of 1000, especially one as disrespectful as Sierra faced.
Nothing I can think of.
n/a
N/A
That all the material was posted so you can go back and review, and the achieve sets prepared you for the exams.
I think making achieve problem sets due each week would be better because a lot of students, including myself, procrastinate until the week they are all due.
The way of delivering the content itself. All content covered in the lecture was written on the slides word–for–word and didn't encourage learning of the topics or their understanding. Then the homework felt completely high stakes because of the lack of a deep understanding of the concepts and application.
online videos
If there were smaller classes.
I think that the class size being so large makes it easy to for students to be off–task or get distracted, so I would say adding a recitation or reducing class size could really better the learning environment.
Nothing, all resources needed for support are given and can be used whenever.
Not just reading off of the slides
Nothing!
NA
better study guides
The grading in this course is pretty hard, I would have liked another extra credit opportunity and/or for the extra credit to be worth more.
I don't like how you only get one attempt for full credit on the homework. This leads many to use AI when we should be focused on trying to learn it instead of trying to answer it first try.
Some of the achieve questions were overly difficult for no reason at all. Also some of them like the matching ones would tank the grade on the assignment if you did not get it 100% right the first time. If you had to put 5 things into categories and you got only 4 right then

Comments
you would get 50% on the question.
More in class checks to see if everyone understands.
Good
Doing clickers
NA
I think that more resources could be used to help support students for the exams, like better study guides or more study groups, etc.
I wish the problem sets didn't mark down as much more wrong answers, but that's just a personal thing.
More to the point lectures, very dragged out.
I think there should be a review session held during the class before an exam.
nothing really, it was a good class
I think the problem sets could have due dates that weren't the same and were after the lesson was taught in class, so students don't fall behind. Also not just reading off the slides.
nothing
I wish the study guides were sent out a bit earlier so I would have extra time to study the course a bit.
Smaller classes, reduce class size (population).
nothing
I think more attempts on the homework would give students a better opportunity to master the material before being penalized.
More attendance taken.
The one thing I had a slight issue with was the exam days, felt poorly executed in terms of exam distribution and level of noise/focus among the students.
Potentially add a recitation and or more class involved things in lectures.
I think there could be bonus problems that aren't graded but are open for while, nit just when an exam is near.
The engagements and problem sets overall.
none
Making instructions for assignment due dates more clear
It could have provided some iClicker questions to help students keep up with each topic.
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing, I think this course was done extremely well.
I think if the homework was due each week it would make it a lot easier to keep up with that.
Need more lectures on applying Econ vs just lecturing the text and we have to learn how to apply on our own.
I thought it was well and manageable
More practice assignments.
Not her fault, but the class is just too big
honestly nothing I thought it was structured extremely well
I did not like the format of the homework.
I understand this is teacher–specific, but in a gen ed course, many students who take macro econ have little background and might not understand the material as well, so I feel it might be unrealistic to set your 4.0 minimum at 93.
Nothing.
Better exam review days
Providing exam practices or other material to study for exams
I struggle with multiple choice questions as I have ADHD and it has always been the hardest thing for me to understand in my learning and unfortunatly we had 3 exams comprised of 33 mcq each and worth a total of 60% of our course grade which really did not benefit me at all. I am very good at explaining it and application based stuff but not this exam style another way to demonstrate understanding like short anwer would have better supported me. I relied a lot on my dad who is a econ teacher himself and he told me I understood it but would then do poorly on exams.
Have more frequent homework assignments to keep consistent engagement.
More review options in class and out of class
I would have liked more review material for exams

Comments
Idk
She can't really improve anything, it was a normal class atmosphere and was enjoyable.
n/a
I feel like more consistent assignments throughout the semester would be helpful for students instead of just having them due the week of the exam.
Maybe more engagement with the class.
Sometimes the homework had questions on topics that were not covered.
Should be more incentive for kids to actually come to class