

Winter Session 2014-2015 Summary

Overview

This year, for the first time, the University of Illinois offered a winter session between the fall and spring semester. Eight online courses were offered from December 22, 2014 to January 16, 2015. Registration for on-campus students opened November 22, 2014 and registration for non-degree students opened November 25. While there were no registration restrictions on the courses, registration was limited to one course. Of the 1,070 seats available across the eight courses, enrollment peaked at 980 the night of December 22 (92% of capacity), with enrollments declining slightly between the start of classes through the Self-Service drop deadline of January 2 at 11:59 p.m., when enrollment was at 773 (72% of capacity). All enrolled students did have the ability to petition their college office or contact CITL to drop after January 2, but there were no refunds of any tuition or fees for those dropping the course after the deadline. Using data gathered in mid-February, 2015, a total of 764 students were enrolled in the eight courses (71% of capacity). Appendix A has enrollment details by course.

Information for students, academic units, and technical support staff on Winter Session 2014-2015 was available on CITL's website, online.illinois.edu/winter; the Office of the Registrar's website, registrar.illinois.edu, and through five memos sent to various audiences from the Office of the Provost.

A course evaluation survey was administered to the students near the end of the course period to gauge their experiences. A total of 29 survey questions were asked covering a range of topics including motivation for taking the course, course difficulty, and other assessments (see Appendix B).

Frequently Asked Questions: Updated

The proposal to establish a formal Winter Session in the 2014-2015 was presented as EP.15.13 (see <http://senate.illinois.edu/ep/Props/1415/FINAL/EP15.13final.pdf>). The proposal was approved by the Senate Educational Policy Committee on September 15, 2014 and by the full Senate on September 22, 2014. The proposal included the following Frequently Asked Questions and answers. Updates based on implementation and debrief meetings to the answers given as part of the proposal are in *italics*.

Will faculty be required to teach during the Winter Session?

No, faculty will not be required to teach during winter session. Teaching a winter session course is voluntary and can be an opportunity to develop and teach in an innovative, short-format release.

Will all Winter Session courses be offered online?

Yes, the pilot will be limited to online offerings. *Based on the ATLAS Winter Session Survey, 89% of students who took a course in the Winter Session 2014-2015 were not in the local area (defined as Champaign, Urbana, or Savoy) during the time the course was offered. In addition, issues associated with opening and operating necessary facilities over the winter break limits the ability to offer face-to-face courses. It is likely Winter Session offerings will continue to be delivered online.*

When will students register for Winter Session courses?

While specific issues of implementation are to be determined, registration is likely to be available in November 2014, during the same time period as early registration for Spring 2015. *On-campus students began registration for Winter Session on November 22, 2014 at 9 a.m. with non-degree students registering through CITL on November 23, 2014 at 9 a.m. Due to a planned Banner upgrade in mid-November, the decision was made to separate Winter Session registration from pre-registration for Spring 2015; thus, registration activity began the Monday after priority registration for Spring ended. All students at all class levels were able to register at this same time. To allow continuing students a slight priority, non-degree students' registration did not open until November 25. Results from ATLAS' survey suggest that students would prefer to be able to register for Winter Session at the same time they are registering for Spring.*

How many hours can student take during the Winter Session?

Students will be restricted to one course of no more than 4 credit hours. This will allow students to fully engage with the rigorous schedule required during short-format courses. *Instructor and student feedback from Winter Session 2014-2015 suggests the one course limit is indeed best practice.*

Will students be able to use financial aid for Winter Session courses?

No, additional financial aid is not available for the winter session. Federal Financial Aid guidelines also require registration in at least six credit hours to be eligible for aid. During the 2014-2015 pilot students will be restricted to one course (no more than 4 hours). *Though this was generally the case for implementation in Winter Session 2014-2015, there were at least a couple of exceptions/nuances in that the Office of Student Financial Aid did work with students who are enrolled in College Illinois to apply funds to Winter Session enrollment, and there were questions about application of grants/scholarships for special populations such as the Illinois Veterans Grant and the Children of Veterans Tuition Waiver. The Office of Student Financial Aid has shared that upon further research, they would want clarification about other types of grants and aid in the Winter Session as well as about the policy of no refunds after the drop deadline to ensure the University is in compliance with all federal and state guidelines.*

Staff from that office are researching these issues, and should Winter Session be continued, the information gathered in this research would be shared with the Office of the Provost to make decisions about application of financial aid and about the policy of not allowing refunds after the drop deadline.

How will tuition be assessed for Winter Session courses?

Tuition will be assessed on a per-credit hour basis and will be based on the Summer 2015 rates. *In the event Winter Session is continued, this tuition model would be followed with additional research and modification, if needed, on the refund policy (see above).*

How will the Winter Session impact the calculation of the campus' mean terms to degree?

The calculation is the average number of terms of enrollment for students graduating in a given year. A student is considered enrolled for a term if the student's registration is "registered" or "late registered" by the end of the term. If a student does not enroll in Winter term, then Winter term is not included in the calculation for that student. The Winter term is counted as ¼ term (same as Summer 1).

How will colleges manage issues associated with academic standing for the Winter Session?

The Office of the Provost will work with the Student Academic Affairs Office in each college to determine a common approach to addressing academic standing. It is likely that the colleges will treat the winter session as they do for the summer session. *Communication with academic units after the Winter Session suggests this was indeed best practice.*

How many courses will be offered during the Winter Session?

The pilot will likely focus on 7 to 10 popular online courses. The current list of proposed courses includes:

ATMS 120 – Severe and Hazardous Weather

BADM 310 – Mgmt and Organizational Beh

BADM 320 – Principles of Marketing

ECON 102 – Microeconomic Principles

ECON 203 – Economic Statistics II

SOC 100 – Introduction to Sociology

Eight courses—those listed above plus BADM 350, IT for Networked Organizations, and BADM 380, International Business, were offered in Winter Session 2014-2015. Appendix A has information on available seats and actual enrollment in each of these courses. Many departments have expressed an interest in offering courses for future Winter Sessions. A balance will need to be struck between demand, both from departments wanting to offer and students wanting to take courses. Though units are not required to work with CITL, those that offered courses in Winter Session 2014-2015 did, and the instructional design and implementation support was certainly a factor in the success of the slate of 2014-2015 courses. If a decision is made to continue with a Winter Session, CITL will be available to consult on the reality and challenges of offering courses in this format.

Who will determine which courses will be offered during the Winter Session?

Similar to summer session, the academic units will decide which courses they would like to offer during this term.

Are courses available for undergraduates and graduates?

The pilot will focus on undergraduate courses. However, an academic unit would not be precluded from offering a graduate course. *The eight courses offered in Winter Session 2014-2015 were all undergraduate courses. If courses are offered for graduates in future iterations of Winter Session, the impact on graduate tuition waivers will need to be carefully considered.*

Are peer institutions holding online winter sessions?

Yes, quite a few, and the list is growing. For example, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the University of Connecticut, Cornell University, the University of Maryland, the University of Iowa, and Rutgers University. *The ATLAS survey showed that over half of survey respondents indicated they were “slightly likely” to “extremely likely” to take a course in the winter session at another institution if the opportunity had not been available at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.*

If the Winter Session continues in future years, will courses be offered in years when the time between semesters is only three weeks?

At this point in the planning, the courses have been structured for a four week term. With this in mind, a Winter Session likely would not be offered in years when the time between semesters is only three weeks.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Feedback from students, instructors, academic advisors, and academic unit offices regarding Winter Session 2014-2015 has been moderately to strongly positive. Students in the survey did express concerns about the cost, and some indicated they struggled with the compressed format. Issues around financial aid availability for Winter Session and careful consideration to the courses offered along with clear communication to academic units about enrollment, advising, and other administrative procedures is necessary for any future iterations of the Winter Session. Winter Session 2014-2015 proved to be a generally positive undertaking for the campus.

Appendix A: Courses offered during Winter Session 2014-2015

Course	Title	Credit hours	Available Seats	Actual Enrollment
BADM 300	The Legal Environment of Business	3	60	45
BADM 310	Management and Organizational Behavior	3	60	56
BADM 350	IT for Networked Organizations	3	60	28
BADM 380	International Business	3	60	43
ATMS 120	Severe and Hazardous Weather	3	500	361
ECON 102	Microeconomic Principles	3	150	104
ECON 203	Economic Statistics II	3	100	59
SOC 100	Introduction to Sociology	4	80	68
		<i>Totals:</i>	<i>1,070</i>	<i>764</i>

Appendix B: Illinois Online Courses Survey – Winter 2015

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Executive Summary

This year, for the first time, the University of Illinois offered a winter session of online courses. Eight courses were offered during the four weeks from December 22, 2014 to January 16, 2015. A total of 764 students were enrolled in the eight courses from the Colleges of Business and Liberal Arts & Sciences.

A course evaluation survey was administered to the students near the end of the course period to gauge their experiences. A total of 29 survey questions were asked covering a range of topics including motivation for taking the course, course difficulty, and other assessments. Here are some highlights:

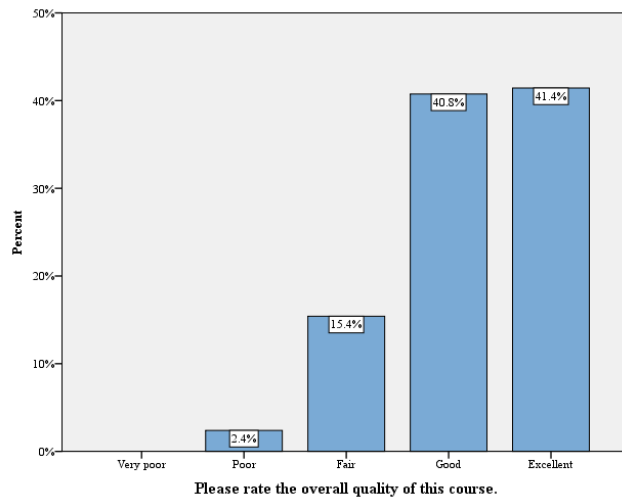
- Most students rated the overall quality of the course as good or excellent (82%) and also rated their overall experience in the course as good or excellent (80%).
- Popular motivations for taking a course during the winter session included lightening the course load for future semesters (19%) and to save time or work ahead (16%).
- Almost half of the students (48%) had taken an online course from Illinois before this one.
- Around 40% of the students were at least moderately likely to have taken a similar course at another institution if it had not been offered during the winter term at Illinois.
- Most students were living in Illinois, but outside Champaign-Urbana, during the course period (71%)
- On average, students spent 14 hours per week on coursework, but this varied quite a bit by course.
- The most common ways students heard about these winter session course offerings were via email from an unspecified source (40%) and from a U of I website (39%).
- A majority of students (63%) who took winter session courses are either very likely to or will definitely enroll in a future 4-week online course.
- Courses that satisfy the general education requirements (18%) are the most popular type of course that students would like to see offered in future winter sessions.
- The overall response rate for the survey was 39%.

Supporting Tables & Graphs

Table 1. Illinois courses offered during Winter Session 2015

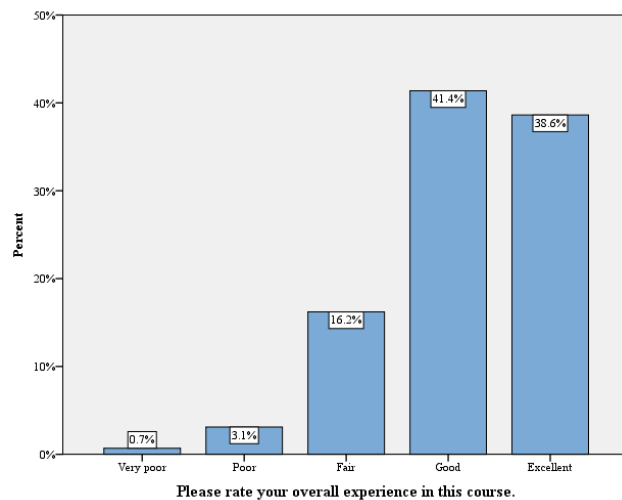
Course	Credit Hours	Enrollment
<i>College of Business</i>		
BADM 300 The Legal Environment of Business	3	45
BADM 310 Management and Organizational Behavior	3	56
BADM 350 IT for Networked Organizations	3	28
BADM 380 International Business	3	43
<i>College of LAS</i>		
ATMS 120 Severe and Hazardous Weather	3	361
ECON 102 Microeconomic Principles	3	104
ECON 203 Economic Statistics II	3	59
SOC 100 Introduction to Sociology	4	68
		<i>Total = 764</i>

Figure 1. Perceived course quality



N = 292

Figure 2. Course experience



N = 290

Table 2. Why did you decide to take this course during the winter session?
(open-ended responses)

Motivation	N	Percent
Lighten course load in future semesters	54	19.5%
Save time/Finish degree quickly/Work ahead	45	16.2%
Convenient timing/Good fit for schedule/To focus on one class	40	14.4%
Need hours to graduate/Stay on track for graduation	30	10.8%
Acquire more credit hours	28	10.1%
General education requirement	27	9.7%
Fill up free time/Stay busy during break	22	7.9%
Easy class/GPA boost	21	7.6%
Required class (unspecified)	20	7.2%
Required class for major or minor	18	6.5%
Personal interest/Curiosity	14	5.1%
Free up time for other classes	11	4.0%
Course is a prerequisite	11	4.0%
Will help with future academic or work endeavors	11	4.0%
Other reasons	10	3.6%
Convenience of online courses	4	1.4%
To graduate early	4	1.4%
Grade replacement/Re-taking class	2	0.7%
Self-improvement	2	0.7%

N = 277

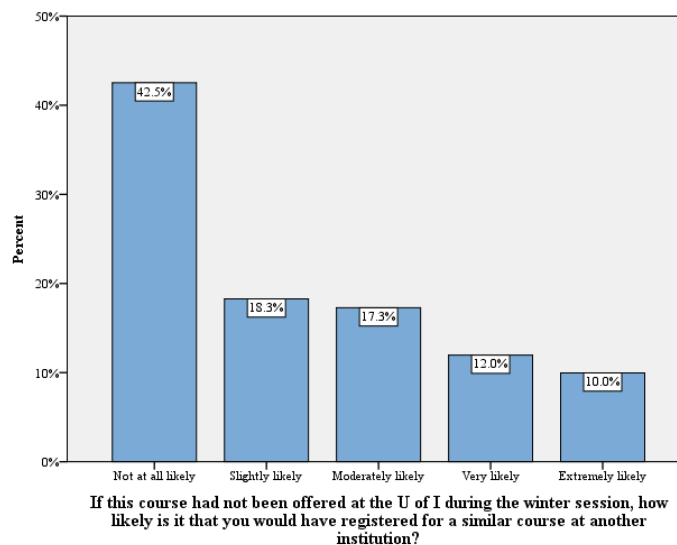
Respondents may have indicated more than one motivation, so percentages add to more than 100%.

Table 3. How many fully online, for-credit courses have you taken before this one? At...

	University of Illinois	Another college or university	In high school
Percentage of students who <u>had</u> taken such a course before	48.2%	44.1%	5.6%
<i>If student had taken such a course in the past,</i> Median number of courses taken	1	2	1

N = 288

Figure 3. Likelihood of taking the course elsewhere



N=301

Table 4. Where were you mainly living while you took this winter session course?

Area	N	Percent
Champaign, Urbana, or Savoy	33	11.3%
In Illinois, but outside Champaign-Urbana-Savoy	206	70.8%
In the U.S. but outside Illinois	28	9.6%
Outside the U.S.	24	9.3%
<i>N = 291</i>		<i>100%</i>

Table 5. On average, how many hours per week did you spend invested in this course, including lectures, readings, activities, studying, and quizzes?

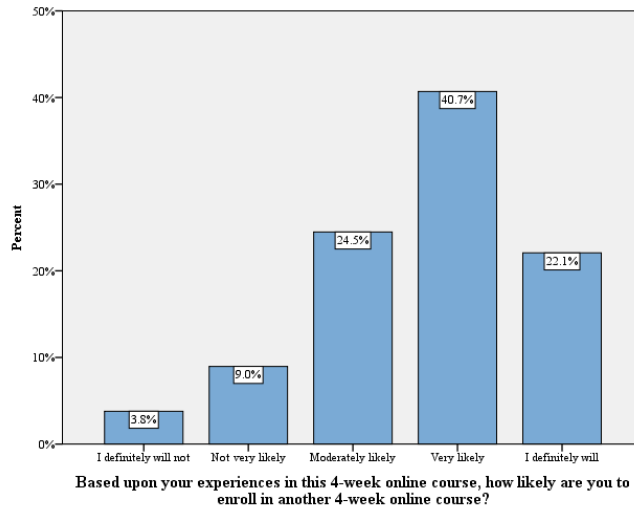
Course	N	Mean	Median	Std. dev.	Minimum	Maximum
BADM 300	37	12.1	10	7.6	4	40
BADM 310	17	11.4	10	6.1	4	28
BADM 350	20	18.7	15	11.6	5	60
BADM 380	19	7.0	5	5.9	2	30
ATMS 120	61	10.1	10	4.7	3	25
ECON 102	43	15.8	15	8.6	2	32
ECON 203	26	27.6	30	12.2	7	60
SOC 100	62	14.6	12	8.0	3	35
Overall	285	14.3	12	9.5	2	60

Table 6. What are all the ways you heard about the winter session offerings at Illinois?

Communication source	N	Percent
From an e-mail	121	40.1%
U of I Website	117	38.7%
From a friend/Word-of-mouth	90	29.8%
Academic advisor	89	29.5%
From a billboard	56	18.5%
From an MTD bus ad	55	18.2%
Student Self-service/Illinois Enterprise	53	17.5%
Course Explorer	45	14.9%
From a postcard	42	13.9%
Moodle (<i>volunteered response</i>)	3	6.5%
University faculty or staff (<i>volunteered response</i>)	3	5.1%
Reddit or Facebook (<i>volunteered response</i>)	2	4.0%
Newspaper (<i>volunteered response</i>)	1	4.0%
<i>N = 302</i>		

Over half the respondents heard about winter session courses from more than one source, so percentages add to more than 100%.

Figure 4. Likelihood of taking a future 4-week online course



N = 290

**Table 7. What other courses would you like to see offered during the winter session?
(open-ended responses)**

Course	N	Percent
General education courses <i>Gen Ed courses (unspecified), Gen Ed courses in the humanities, Gen Ed courses in sciences</i>	50	19.5%
Psychology courses <i>Psychology courses (unspecified), PSYCH 200-level courses, PSYCH 201, PSYCH 224, PSYCH 238, PSYCH 248, PSYCH 250, PSYCH 361, PSYCH 410</i>	30	10.8%
Business courses <i>Business courses (unspecified), Business core courses, BADM 449, BADM 400-level courses, BADM 380, BADM 320, BADM 312, BADM 310, BADM 311, BADM 300-level courses</i>	29	10.4%
Economics courses <i>Economics courses (unspecified), ECON 102, ECON 103, ECON 202, ECON 203, ECON 302, ECON 303</i>	21	7.5%
Math courses <i>Math courses (unspecified), Math 100-level courses, MATH 220, MATH 221, NetMath courses</i>	12	4.3%
Other ungrouped courses		
<i>Introductory courses</i>	5	1.8%
<i>Philosophy courses</i>	5	1.8%
<i>Advanced Comp courses</i>	4	1.4%
<i>Engineering courses</i>	4	1.4%
<i>Language courses</i>	4	1.4%
<i>Science courses</i>	4	1.4%
<i>Anthropology courses</i>	3	1.1%
<i>Biology courses</i>	3	1.1%
<i>Computer Science courses</i>	3	1.1%
<i>Elective courses</i>	3	1.1%
<i>FIN 221</i>	3	1.1%
<i>Political Science courses</i>	3	1.1%
<i>Spanish courses</i>	3	1.1%
<i>STAT 100</i>	3	1.1%
<i>Statistics Courses</i>	3	1.1%
<i>100-level courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>400-level courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>Accountancy courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>ACCY 200</i>	2	<1%

Table 7. (cont'd) What other courses would you like to see offered during the winter session?

(open-ended responses)

Course	N	Percent
Other ungrouped courses		
<i>ACE 100</i>	2	<1%
<i>ACES courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>Animal Science courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>BTW 250</i>	2	<1%
<i>CMN 101</i>	2	<1%
<i>Communication courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>FIN 300</i>	2	<1%
<i>Finance courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>Informatics courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>MCB courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>Non-STEM courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>Physics courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>Sociology courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>STEM courses</i>	2	<1%
<i>> 4 credit hour courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>1-2 credit hour courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>4 credit hour courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>ACCY 303</i>	1	<1%
<i>ACCY 304</i>	1	<1%
<i>Afro-American Studies courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>Agriculture courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>ANTH 100</i>	1	<1%
<i>ANTH 103</i>	1	<1%
<i>Art History courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>ASTR 100</i>	1	<1%
<i>CLCH 100</i>	1	<1%
<i>CLCH 206</i>	1	<1%
<i>CLCH 243</i>	1	<1%
<i>CLCV 115</i>	1	<1%
<i>Courses for minors</i>	1	<1%
<i>Crop Sciences courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>CS 101</i>	1	<1%
<i>CS 105</i>	1	<1%
<i>CS 173</i>	1	<1%
<i>CS 183</i>	1	<1%
<i>FIN 321</i>	1	<1%
<i>FSHN 120</i>	1	<1%
<i>Gender & Women's Studies courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>GEOG 100</i>	1	<1%
<i>History courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>Humanities courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>IB 150</i>	1	<1%
<i>Integrative Biology courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>Journalism courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>Kinesiology courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>Literature courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>PHIL 100</i>	1	<1%
<i>PHIL 105</i>	1	<1%
<i>Physics 100-level courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>Religious Studies courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>Scandinavian courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>SOC 100</i>	1	<1%
<i>SOC 200</i>	1	<1%
<i>SOC 202</i>	1	<1%
<i>SOC 310</i>	1	<1%
<i>SOC 351</i>	1	<1%
<i>SPED 117</i>	1	<1%

Table 7. (cont'd) What other courses would you like to see offered during the winter session?
(open-ended responses)

Course	N	Percent
Other ungrouped courses		
<i>STAT 200</i>	1	<1%
<i>STAT 235</i>	1	<1%
<i>THEA 101</i>	1	<1%
<i>THEA 110</i>	1	<1%
<i>Upper level courses</i>	1	<1%
<i>N = 279</i>		

Many respondents gave more than one response, so percentages add to more than 100%.

Table 8. Survey Response rates

Course	Response rate
BADM 300	18.5
BADM 310	86.7
BADM 350	30.4
BADM 380	71.4
ATMS 120	50.0
ECON 102	44.2
ECON 203	49.2
SOC 100	91.2
Overall	39.4

Selection of Student Comments

ECON 203: This was probably the best experience I've had in college. The course made me focus on time management and really pushed me and showed me what I could do when I put my mind to it on such a strict schedule.

SOC 100: This course is actually reading and discussion heavy. I would just warn those students that to have success in a course like this, they must be prepared to read and dedicate time to the class in order to be successful. I loved this class.

BADM 310: The communication wasn't great. With such a short course taking 24 hours to respond to a student issue really hinders progress.

BADM 300: Second half of the course feels rushed, since the first exam overlapped with the third week of course material.

SOC 100: Provide the syllabus sooner, grade things more quickly (in a four week course, it's important to me to know how I'm doing since it goes by so fast)

BADM 310 Offer more that more people can find useful. I would totally take another one if granted the opportunity.

SOC 100: Offer more online winter classes.

ATMS 120: I really liked how this course had a discussion board where we could ask questions because that helped me out a lot. I think that all online courses should have discussion boards.

ATMS 120: Have more online course options! Language courses would also be wonderful.

SOC 100: Wasn't really much time to really learn the material fully.

ECON 102: Was a bit pricey for an online class. Also why should we pay for ProctorU when the class is already so expensive?

ECON 203: This class was outstandingly well put together. The instructor and students were very engaged and helpful. No question went unanswered and the homework and practice exams made this class completely possible and quite enjoyable. The fact that the class was so compact made it easier to remember what we learned. As long as I stayed focused there was no problem learning the material. I was so proud at the end of the term after accomplishing a 16 week class in just 4 and it was so nice to get 3 hours of credit under my belt and lighten my load.

BADM300: The tuition for taking a winter course is pretty high. If there would be a way to loop the costs into fall or spring tuition that could be a huge boon for this semester of courses.

ECON 102: The online setup was MUCH better than a traditional classroom setting, because I could pace myself the way it was most efficient for me, and in turn I got more done earlier and more done at a time - which is a huge plus, in my opinion.

SOC 100: The instructors were always good with replying and I thought the amount of material was fair for a 4 week course.

BADM 310: Thanks for having this winter class session! I have always wanted to take a business course and found it unfair that I was unable to because of restrictions.

BADM 350: I understand that this is a 4-week course, but I did feel overwhelmed with the number of assignments that were required. It seemed like I was writing essays every day for discussions and assignments.

ECON 102: I loved the fact that the student is able to focus 100% attention on what the lecturer is saying without any distractions when watching lectures online.

BADM 350: I found this course to be better than other online courses I've taken. I enjoyed the peerwise questions and answers over traditional quizzes because it made me try harder and I had questions to study from.

BADM 380: I feel like a refund would be proper since I received no teaching. I could have just bought the book and read it without taking the class.

ATMS 120: I am glad I signed up for this class; it was easy and a quick way to take a general education class. Even though I took it over winter break, I did not feel overwhelmed with work, projects, or tests.

BADM 310: Found this course to be the perfect amount of work for a 4 week 3 hour course. I was working full time and with the holidays I did not feel overwhelmed at any point with the course. The material was interesting and useful. I hope more online courses are developed in my time here.

ATMS 120: EXCELLENT FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH AN ONLINE CLASS. WISH MORE GEN EDS WERE OFFERED LIKE THIS

ECON 203: Enjoyed the experience. Glad I made this choice.