

# Student Comments

David Kane

Below are a selection of the *positive* student comments I have received. There are negative comments as well, all available in the original student evaluation forms, archived at <https://www.davidkane.info>.

## Introductory Course (Gov 50/1005)

THIS IS MY FAVORITE CLASS AT HARVARD AND WILL BE YOURS AS WELL. TRUST ME AND TAKE IT. I truly cannot recommend this class enough. If you have any interest in data science, this is the intro course to take. As a humanities concentrator, I came with ZERO programming background and I now not only feel comfortable processing large data sets and creating beautiful graphics from them, I also have a portfolio of work to prove it. The teaching staff (Preceptor, Albert and Jacob) do an AMAZING job at helping you learn the material. There are no lectures; rather classes are collaborative and projector-oriented. You come in, sit with someone new, and work with preceptor and the rest of the class to try and recreate a graphic from a professional source. It's so much fun that class time usually flies by. Preceptor also brings snacks (not just any snacks -HOMEMADE SNACKS. Think cookies, brownies, sorbet, etc) and makes you work with someone new every time, so you meet lots of other students and leave the class with new friends. There are guest speakers too (really cool data science people). Outside of class, there are an insane number of opportunities to get individualized support. From office hours to study halls to piazza (online forum), there was never a moment when I felt lost or alone in the class. This isn't an easy class and I spent about 10-12 hours on it every week, but it never felt burdensome or undoable because of how collaborative and supportive the class was. What I love most about the class though is how much Preceptor cares about the students. He takes all of our feedback into consideration and implements them when enough people think it's a good/reasonable idea/request. He makes a conscious effort to get student's opinions on ways to improve the class. He makes random powerpoint and uses class time to teach us mini life lessons like how to send networking emails and how to be more thankful. To top all of that off, he is hilarious. I have truly never met a teacher who is so invested and cares so much in my three years at Harvard. Even if you have zero interest in data (though you should given how important data is), you should take the class. It's truly life-changing and nothing short of amazing.

David Kane is one of the best teachers I have ever had. Period. I have honestly never encountered a teacher more dedicated to his students' success inside and outside of the classroom. Accessible outside of class is an understatement for Kane. If you want to have dinner with him along with your peers, you can. If you want to meet with him outside of class or

even outside of his office hours, you can. If you want a response to your email, you'll get one ASAP. He is extremely kind, generous, supportive, honest, funny, engaging, helpful, receptive to feedback (seriously, he cares SO MUCH about the student experience), and more. He cares so much about each and every one of his students, wanting them not only to learn, but also to become a community. This class is one in which you will learn every single person's name--not one in which you will participate individually and leave. Take this class because it will teach you SO MUCH about coding and data science and even life and professionalism--seriously, you won't believe how much you will improve your data visualization skills in one semester--and because you will get to be taught and mentored by David Kane. If it sounds snake-y to you just from the syllabus, TAKE IT ANYWAY. I'm a humanities kid, and I will always remember this class as one of my absolute favorites at Harvard. Trust me: you won't regret it. (P.S. If you're nervous about cold calling, don't be!! It's literally the smallest deal!!)

I thought this course was one of the best I've taken at Harvard. Before coming into this course, I had some interest in Data Science but didn't know anything regarding how to handle data, present data, etc. After this course, I think I could handle most data thrown my way and build some really, really cool things with it. I learned so much in this class!

David Kane's ambition to get his students proficient in R. He didn't waste a second, study halls and office hours were best I've had in terms of amount of offerings and quality of the instruction. Additionally, he fostered individual relationships with all of us and I will always have immense amounts of respect for this man, even if I wasn't the smartest or most gifted kid in the course.

This class is AMAZING!! But a lot of work! Preceptor Kane is amazing! The best teacher I have had.

Preceptor Kane is such a character and cares about getting to know each of his students, and I would say he is the best faculty member I have learned from at Harvard thus far.

This class was, by far, one of the best I've taken at Harvard.

Preceptor Kane is one of the best teachers I've had at Harvard, if not the best. He genuinely cares about every student and gives everyone every possible chance to succeed. He wants you to do well, and it's evident. He cold calls, but if you don't know the answer it's not a big deal and he just moves on with class. Going to class is genuinely enjoyable.

David Kane pushed me harder than any Harvard professor has, aside from maybe one. He's a great guy and makes himself and his staff available all the time. He cares, he knows his stuff, he facilitates a community unlike any I've ever had in a class at Harvard. The curriculum is great and gets you where you want to be and then some. He is funny and a great teacher. He has a quirky, dad-like sense of humor but that is appreciated by most all of us. He's just really involved and I hope you all continue to take his courses.

This is without a doubt my favorite course at Harvard thus far.

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THIS IS MY FAVORITE CLASS AT HARVARD AND WILL BE YOURS AS WELL. TRUST ME AND TAKE IT. I truly cannot recommend this class enough. If you have any interest in data science, this is the intro course to take. As a humanities concentrator, I came with ZERO programming background and I now not only feel comfortable processing large data sets and creating beautiful graphics from them, I also have a portfolio of work to prove it.

Professor Kane is by far my favorite professor I've ever encountered at Harvard. No matter your skill level or technical background, he is more than happy to stick with students and catch them up to speed to succeed in the class. Moreover, he genuinely cares about the happiness of his students, fostering a sense of community and ensuring that all students meet each other throughout the semester. Finally, he LOVES what he teaches, which has a contagious effect on its students for generating interest in the subject matter.

This course was one of if not the best course I've ever taken at Harvard. Preceptor was incredibly knowledgeable and did not accept laziness one bit. This extremely motivated me to want to do well and learn in the class. As a result, I walked away with many useful tools for data cleaning and visualization that I can 100% see myself using in my professional field.

This is the BEST class I will probably ever take at Harvard. Preceptor is an incredibly smart and engaging teacher and the topic of data science is super relevant and interesting. This class actually creates a community — you will literally get to know all your classmates — and it's a fun way to meet people while learning.

WOW where to start. Easily the BEST CLASS you will take at Harvard. I could go on and on about how great this class is, but I honestly don't think I have enough space, so I'll try to keep it relatively short. Preceptor is truly amazing and really prioritizes making sure you learn, have fun, and meet other people, which is such a rare mindset for a professor to have. Yes, this class is a significant time commitment and there are a fair amount of assignments, but this is a class where you are actually taught how to code and all the assignments actually reflect things you do in class or on assignments (and if you don't understand, study halls are your best friend and will truly help you get where you need to be). You truly will not regret taking this class—it'll teach you more than your typical Harvard class. You learn to code, you learn life skills, you make friends, you get SNACKS from the lovely Dr. Kane (Preceptor's supercool wife), and the list goes on. Take this class. I truly cannot emphasize how this is the best class you will take at this school.

PLEASE TAKE THIS CLASS BEFORE YOU GRADUATE. I am an economics concentrator and had no reason to take this class other than the fact that it seemed relevant and interesting. On day 1, Preceptor will make it very clear to all the students what this class entails. If you doesn't sound appealing to you then, it probably won't 2 months later. I will say, this was by far the best class I've taken at Harvard. Not only do you gain legitimate technical skills (we were basically on par with the Celtics' head data scientist when he came in to speak), but you also meet a ton of people and the class was always one that I looked forward to going to.

I loved this course. David Kane is really engaging and a great teacher, and this class has provided me with the most real-worldskills of any class here at Harvard. I love the snacks, I love the teacher and I love the TFs. I would recommend this class with enthusiasm. That being said, it is NOT a gem. You will do work. Engaging work, but work nonetheless. This was one of my favorite classes at Harvard and if you enjoy data analysis or are even remotely interested in analytics and are prepared to work,you should take this class.

This class is AMAZING!! But a lot of work! Preceptor Kane is amazing! The best teacher I have had. You just have to ask questions if you don't understand, don't dwell and things. Such a valuable class and it has taught me so much.

Preceptor Kane is such a character and cares about getting to know each of his students, and I would say he is the best faculty member I have learned from at Harvard thus far.

This class was, by far, one of the best I've taken at Harvard. Going into the class, I had an interest in Data Science but wasn't sure where to start in terms of learning what to do with data or how to learn what a data scientist does on the job. I thought this class did a great job of answering those questions and teaching me a ton!

This class is awesome. Would highly recommend to anyone. Don't let the cold calling and workload scare you, it's very manageable.The class is enjoyable and Preceptor fosters a collaborative/not intimidating environment so it's very easy to learn. One of the best classes I've taken at Harvard by far.

Preceptor Kane is one of the best people at teaching I've ever met. He is also extremely interesting and takes students out to lunch.He responds to questions very rapidly and is always trying to make the class better. Very highly recommend.

Preceptor Kane is one of the best teachers I've had at Harvard, if not the best. He genuinely cares about every student and gives everyone every possible chance to succeed. He wants you to do well, and it's evident. He cold calls, but if you don't know the answer it's not a big deal and he just moves on with class. Going to class is genuinely enjoyable.

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facilitates a community unlike any I've ever had in a class at Harvard. The curriculum is great and gets you where you want to be and then some. He is funny and a great teacher. He has a quirky, dad-like sense of humor but that is appreciated by most all of us.

Take this class! It's a lot of work but you get used to it, and you end up making a super cool project. I really am thankful I took it, now I want to take more data science classes.

The learning of a hard, practical skill. Engaging preceptor, skilled course staff, incredible instruction flow (coding actively in class), a final project to apply coursework into the real world, development of network. An instructor who dared think independently.

Incredible class — take this as early as possible during your time at Harvard. Learning R will be invaluable for any research position, internship, or job you will want to pursue across every discipline.

This class is amazing. It will teach you so many essential skills that you didn't even know you needed but will probably start using so much once you have them. I thought I would never do anything STEM again and I was a lost cause, but this course gave me the confidence I needed to apply to a data scientist job, and actually get it.

The course is very well structured. It keeps students engaged every day, either with class or homework, it's constantly challenging but not overwhelming. By the end of the semester, I already used the material learnt in gov 50 for another class — I gathered some raw data, cleaned it, modeled it and used it for the final paper for my other class. I think each assignment was useful and well done. The parts were harder than class work but easier than exams, and at the end I was so satisfied to have completed them. In a few words, one of the best, most useful classes I took at Harvard. I realized how much I love statistics after this class, and will most likely look for a spring internship to use the skills I gathered in this class.

This course was the perfect introduction to data science. As a freshman, with no computer science experience, I was incredibly intimidated by the coding portion of this class. This course gave me an incredible amount of individualized attention, from having course staff in breakout rooms every lecture to near daily study halls to even individual weekly conferences with my TF. If I ever needed help, it was always there for me. This made me really feel secure in the way I was learning the material and made me passionate about data science going forward.

I think the final project is a huge attraction and the one on one sessions with my TF were invaluable. I feel like I am walking away with tangible skills and I'm really excited about the self-directed work I was able to do. Course staff are exceptional, the best I've interacted with in my Harvard career. Study halls are amazing! I learned a lot about Github, R, and feel confident I will retain this knowledge.

I think the materials for this course are absolutely outstanding. The tutorials, primer, and problem sets are all perfectly paced to help you learn the material. Additionally, the amount of

one-on-one attention we received through tutorials was incredible and really helped me improve on concepts that I was struggling with.

I think the amount of practice you get coding in this course is a huge strength. While some things were repetitive, I felt very comfortable by the end of the course doing almost everything we had talked about in class since we had so much class time to practice on top of the psets. The second strength I would isolate is the freedom of the course when it comes to the Final Project. It's very liberating and productive to be given the chance to really do WHATEVER you want for the final project, and it's a really good base for future research/work that is personally interesting to you.

Take this class. You will learn so much. It's a ton of work, but the work is not actually hard. As long as you put in the time, you will have no problem doing well. This is coming from someone with zero coding/statistics experience.

Overall excellent. A refreshing style of teaching that needs to be replicated across disciplines and classes at Harvard. Clear expectations, consistent philosophy, articulated vision — a somewhat rare set of assets in any teacher, let alone any individual. Most of all, an undervalued independent thinker who embraces a free market of ideas, intellectual conflict, and ultimately growth against the grain of sometimes suffocating groupthink and a culture of intolerance.

I thought Preceptor was a great teacher, and I especially liked the small group setting that comes with the class when working through problems. I especially enjoyed his style of teaching without lecture—despite this, he took the time to explain important concepts as we worked through the problems.

Preceptor has set the pedagogical bar at Harvard.

## Second Course (Gov 1006)

I really enjoyed looking at academic papers. It has completely changed the way I understand an engage with material in other classes. I.e. when they bring up academic papers I now am able to quickly analyze the claim and think about how the study was done / what techniques and data they could have used. 2) atmosphere - a product of good leadership, this is one of the few (possibly the only one) classes that I became friends with my classmates and got to know them very well. Also generally looked forward to coming to class and hanging out with the group. This definitely led to more interest and effort being put into the class.

Does by far the best job of creating a positive classroom environment of all of the teachers I've had. Very accessible outside of class. Teaches applicable, real world skills (even when they don't relate to the subject matter). Has a thorough understanding of the material he teaches. Would highly recommend.

One of the most dedicated and enthusiastic instructors I've ever had. Lots of fun and always trying to push his students to do their best work. Thank you!

Preceptor is one of the best teachers I've had at Harvard. He makes students participate without making them feel awkward about it. He ties everything you learn in class into real-world lessons. The work is not easy but it's worth it; he genuinely cares and wants everyone to do well.

Take this class! You'll be able to fully replicate published papers and understand the models within them.

Kane is very dedicated and will be one of those people you meet at Harvard and don't forget for a long time.

TAKE THIS COURSE AFTER GOV 1005! Preceptor absolutely killed it with another fantastic data science course. Taking this right after Gov 1005 made my first-year at Harvard so fulfilling. Hands down, David Kane is the most self-motivating teacher you will meet. This course alongside with gov 1005 provides an amazing R-based intro to data science and you will 100% learn how to apply your skills to the real-world.