

## **CIS-278 Database Systems, Bergen Community College, Anita Verno - Review**

Please read all of this if you are considering taking this professor (Anita Verno). This information I am typing is coming from me personally, along with 5 other students who I took the course with. I want to urge a majority of the students to reconsider taking this woman. If you are a strictly dedicated student who can afford to see her classes as a major deal (ex: You put 3-4 hours each 1-2 DAYS per week), then you MIGHT be able to pass with a grade you prefer. If you are someone who values your time please **continue reading...**

### **---SYNOPSIS---**

Anita Verno is an unnecessarily strict and demanding teacher. The way she teaches makes it seem as though you are in a high school class. Out of the entire class I was in, less than half is still taking her. 18 PEOPLE DROPPED HER CLASS (as of mid October FALL 2017) because of her harsh grading policies and poor teaching style. Even students who are tutors or others do well in other courses were failing assignments due to how she grades. She expects everyone to give her polished "professional work" that follows the principles and standards set by "businesses" and Oracle. If your work is not on a professional level or doesn't meet her standards, she will thoroughly deduct many points. In order to get perfect scores on her assignments, you have to study your ass off. Even people who had prior knowledge to database systems are still struggling. Me and my friends are predicting that the drop count is going to increase over the next few weeks, due to how some classmates have been handling the last few meetings. The professor even has the nerve to make jokes/comments about the drop count which is clearly unprofessional in it's own right. There is definitely a huge problem when more than over half the class drops.

### **---GRADING---**

The grading policy for the class is questionable. There are projects and labs that are done on your own time and handed in via moodle. The projects count for 40% of the the course grade while exams are 60%. The projects and labs are an issue when it comes to the fairness of grading. The labs are out of thirty points and the professor takes off points liberally should you not do the problem a certain way to her liking, not following "business practices" or something similar, overall just silly excuses to take off points to discourage students from doing well in the course. The stubbornness and inability to teach well is a major flaw that will ultimately affect one's grade.

### **---ATTENDANCE---**

Attendance is required for the most part in this class. The reason I use the term "for the most part" is because she will not even show up half the time. There are only seven mandatory class meetings. The rest of the class meetings are optional. This being said it optional for the students as well as herself as she makes it quite clear that she tries to not attend the optional meetings to a great extent. This is in part that she relies on an in class tutor who is present at all meetings and is there mainly to assist the students during the meetings. The tutor will also cover meetings for her during these optional meetings. This is very shocking that a teacher such as herself makes no effort and has little intention to show up to these "optional" meetings with the excuse that they are optional thus relies on the tutor (who is not as well versed in the subject). A tutor is in The tutor is by no means a suitable replacement for the teacher whose job it is to actually teach the class. Clearly the professor should be available during the normal class time schedule as I find it hard to imagine the college's administration would not offer her a flexible schedule that works for her ensuring that she is able to come to school and teach on her given days/times. The fact that the professor does not show up regularly to the sessions every meet makes class extremely difficult. The professor is courteous enough to post the days that she will be absent posted on moodle. The intention of this policy seems completely unnecessary given that the class only meets once every week as it is a hybrid course. Most of the people skip class on the days she is not there where the tutor is present. Going an entire week without an official class meetup is brutal to some students, especially for those who are better suited to learning in a classroom with the teacher present. You are of course expected to keep up with the work, even if there is no one there to teach or less qualified to teach it for the days in which she is not present. One would turn to the online resources as a means of information however it is by no means a good source of information.

### **---IN CLASS---**

The overall atmosphere of the class is not pleasant. There is a big emphasis on participation during class in which the professor will ask questions back to back. I personally have not felt comfortable answering the questions in class as the professor does not make it easy to participate and to some degree indirectly discourages students when they give her the wrong answer. This is also in part due to her nature of wanting a specific answer when in general there are multiple ways of answering a question however if it is not her way it is the wrong way. This stubbornness is heavily reflected in her grading, for instance she does not seem that competent with the material herself when writing SQL commands in class and makes numerous mistakes when providing

examples to the class. This is the case where someone will provide a solution that should work for a given problem and will mark an acceptable solution as incorrect.

### **---QUIZZES---**

Expect Quizzes at the start of every class. She won't actually count these quizzes towards your grade, but rather they will be "bonus points." From my experience, this is extremely stressful towards the beginning of the semester, when you are just learning the material and are getting quizzes thrown at you left and right (yes, be expecting a quiz the second time you meet). She will not grade the quizzes, she will have hand back the quizzes and you and the class will grade each other's quizzes. After grading, each classmate will have to find the person who's quiz they graded after they have finished in order to hand it back to them. This is a point worthy of mentioning because it can make some students feel uncomfortable the first few class sessions, especially if they were not expecting the quiz (and yes, there were many zeros on the first few quizzes).

Quizzes often take up a good portion of class time spanning from around an average of 25-35min, this includes the process of taking the quiz itself and peer grading the papers. This is not good considering the class only meets once a week for about two hours. Quite often she extends the class time by about ten minutes or so to get her full lecture in. This is a result of the quizzes that take up too much time as well as other setbacks and disruptions that may occur. Students will often try to walk out when she extends class time, however she will put them on the spot and question as to why they are leaving. It should not be the burden of the student to stay in class when they may have another class immediately after or have other obligations as a result of her poor time allotment.

### **---TESTS---**

The tests with the exception of the final, are all online (moodle). Each test on moodle has harsh and unnecessary settings applied to them. Firstly, you are not allowed to go back to any question you have previously answered (one question displays per page). So you cannot come back to a previously flagged question that would require more time to think about. Apparently the reason for this is because of "security reasons". It makes the tests much more stressful. You won't be able to review the tests after you have completed them as well. She will not be able give any hints towards a test prior to taking it, again for "security reasons." The tests are more or less all restricted to about 1 hour for 50~60 questions, some questions may require a few minutes to do the work in order

to find the solution. The pacing of the tests may seem overwhelming and a good time allotment would be about an hour and a half per test which seems reasonable.

This professor treats the final differently than most. A lot of professors make the final count as the highest grade, however a student could still pass if they flunk the final but did great on everything else. In her class in particular, if you fail to get a 60 or higher on the final, you will fail the class regardless of previous grades for the course. Obviously you would hope that a student that gets to the final would know the material by then, however it adds a unnecessary stress factor when a student has other classes/finals to study for.

### **---ONLINE CONTENT---**

Since this is a hybrid course, you would expect everything to be laid out neatly and structured properly online. The reality is quite the opposite. Her online moodle page is an absolute mess, linking you to various websites. For the FALL 2017 semester we were working with the textbook which focuses on Oracle 11g. During the tests there have been questions that appear referencing the previous edition of the Oracle software, Oracle 10g, although there may not be much of a difference the online material should reflect what is required of in the syllabus and most up to date material, this is to say that the online content is not the most up to date and is disappointing. Being able to obtain all the information you need to understand for the test is unnecessarily difficult. The resources provided online will link you to multiple different websites where you need to get your information from. You will have to create various accounts, and remember all of your login information.

### **---TECHNOLOGY USE---**

She will CONSTANTLY peer over people's shoulders to assure they are doing work for her class. If you bring your own personal laptop to class, be prepared to have her glaring at your screen on a regular basis. She will call you out in front of everyone if you appear to be off task. She will do the same if you use your phone, even for a split second to check a notification or anything of the sort. She has asked to talk with students outside of the classroom about their behavior related to this.