

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in response to Professor Subramani's request for a peer-review of his course, "Optimization Methods in Finance" taught in Spring 2016.

By way of introduction, I have been a faculty member (tenured since 1993) in the Department of Finance at WVU since 1987 and have taught several courses in Finance over the past twenty eight years.

The course offered by Prof. Subramani was along the lines of a seminar course, with guided student research presentations covering use of optimization techniques in finance. Prof. Subramani taught two topics, viz., linear programming and dynamic programming and I conducted a lecture on optimal pricing of American style options. In all, Prof. Subramani presented three foundation lectures. The rest of the classes consisted of student presentations covering topics selected by them from a prescribed list. The course was well organized and the topics covered followed a logical sequence.

I would like to make the following observations regarding the conduct of the course:

1. Atmosphere - A very positive atmosphere was maintained during the lecture sessions with students actively participating in the lectures, by asking questions and raising several points. Prof. Subramani encouraged student discussions and prompted questions himself by discussing a topic from different angles. Prof. Subramani also presented several research problems in class that introduced students to applying optimization techniques to problems in computational finance.
2. Course content - The course covered advanced techniques in optimization and their applications to finance. The finance community is now invested in rigorous decision making. Consequently, the topics that were covered are important not only for the optimization community but also the finance community, and may be useful for the doctoral students in the Department of Finance.
3. Student background - I had several occasions to interact directly with the students taking this course, as I helped them formulate their critiques. During these discussions, it became apparent to me that some of them lacked an understanding of fundamentals of finance and optimization theory. I would suggest that in future students admitted to this class be vetted for such understanding before being admitted to this class.

4. Material prepared - Prof. Subramani's website for the course ([http://\\_www.csee.wvu.edu/~ksmani/courses/sp15/optfin/optfin.html](http://www.csee.wvu.edu/~ksmani/courses/sp15/optfin/optfin.html)) provides detailed lectures for each optimization topic covered in the course. This material is useful not only of the students who took his course, but also students in the Department of Finance, who may benefit from this material.

Sincerely,



Ashok B. Abbott  
Associate Professor of Finance