

To whom it may concern:

When I started my Organic Chemistry II lab, I was not very excited. I have had several TAs since coming here, and I was expecting the worst, a shy, rude, inattentive TA who never cared about students and their needs. I was pleasantly surprised that Rajat was the opposite of all those qualities. Not only was he a good teacher, but he also was a kind person that cared about us all individually. When I told people that I had Rajat for lab, many students would quickly tell me about how they loved having Rajat as a TA and that he was very nice. In fact on the first day Rajat went out of his way to learn our names and made us all introduce ourselves to the entire lab. He always does little things that shows he cares, like giving us candy to take home on Halloween. It's Rajat's personal connections with his students that really make him stand out as a TA.

On top of having a personal connection with his student, Rajat seemed to enjoy teaching and helping each of his students succeed. Most TAs I have encountered are scared of answering questions, because they are afraid that they are going to get in trouble. On the other hand, Rajat was an experienced TA that confidently answered our questions with his vast knowledge of Organic Chemistry. Sometimes he would gather the class around the chalkboard to answer and explain the post lab questions to us. During this time, he encourage class participation and would lead us to think critically. This allowed us to have a better understanding of the material in the post lab questions and have more time in the lab to perform the experiment.

Rajat always started the class the same. He would tell us the general procedure, things to watch out for and then he would tell us how long the lab generally took for other students to complete. Since our lab was late on a Friday, we were extremely excited and hopeful when he told us we could finish the experiment early. He always gave us important tips about how to avoid potential problems. This made a lot of students work more efficiently. Sadly, my lab partner and I were not part of that group. Even though my lab partner and I were always the last ones to finish, Rajat never rushed us to finish early. One time when we were the last group, Rajat extensively went over the mechanism of Fisher Esterification and it's reverse mechanism, Hydration for the last hour of the lab. His efforts undoubtedly helped me to perform better in theory class.

During the explanation of the general procedures, Rajat would also include some safety precautions. He enforced this by walking around the lab and checking on all of our experiments. Even when students made lab safety mistake, he would patiently point out their errors, instead of yelling at them and taking off points right away.

Outside the lab, Rajat was just as helpful as he was in the lab. No matter what time of I would email Rajat, he would reply within a few minutes with a clearly communicated answer. He was also willing to stay a little after class if you had concerns about an assignment he graded. Generally Rajat was consistent with grading and he was willing to explain reasons he took off points. If he made a mistake while grading, he will admit to it and give points back to the students. This did not happen too often though, because he rarely made mistakes while grading. At all times, Rajat made himself approachable and students were comfortable asking him questions. However the most striking attribute that set Rajat apart is his career advices: he encouraged all of us to engage in research, apply for internships as well as open account in LinkedIn to avail job opportunities. He made a real difference in shaping our career.

Bottom line, I am willing to recommend Rajat to anyone. He is a kind, knowledgeable and fair TA. Thanks to Rajat, I actually understood lab!!

Sincerely,
Jane Varkey

About me: I am a senior Biomedical Science major with a Psychology minor at Texas A&M. I will graduate this May 2017 and planning to attend A&M veterinary school, to fulfill my passion for science.