

AGEC 644
International Agricultural Trade
Spring 2021
Purdue University
Russell Hillberry, Instructor

In this course Anton Yang served as my informal teaching assistant. Because his appointment was not a formal one, his performance was not part of the evaluation given the students by Purdue University. I oversaw a collection of comments that are anonymous (to Mr Yang) from the four students in the class. Three students responded. The survey consisted of the two open ended questions that are usually included on Purdue University's evaluation of Instructors. Note, for the record, that this course was conducted on-line during the COVID-19 pandemic, so Mr. Yang was not able to meet the students in person.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Russell Hillberry".

Russell Hillberry

1. *What is something/are some things that the teaching assistant does well, e.g., something you hope the teaching assistant will continue to do in the future?*

- I appreciate how Anton always finds more than one way to explain the answer to a question. Even if I understood how he explained something the first time, he will explain it another way or use another paper as an example to really make sure I understand the point he is trying to make.
- It is nice to help us with questions about the homework and class. And it is very nice to introduce the newest study in this area.
- Anton has a good understanding of the theory, and I believe this is the core of all good teachings. He should keep working on his theory base.

2. *Make a suggestion(s) for improving the teaching assistant's work (a criticism alone is not helpful; tell your instructor how you would fix any problem).*

- N/A - I would have like to have Anton as an in-person TA - I feel like he probably does a very good job being hands on and sitting with you while you're trying to understand a problem. This is not a critique of him, of course, he did a wonderful job as a virtual TA - so I can imagine that in-person he would be just as great.
- Since this difficult year, we cannot have in person office hour. But I think a weekly office hour would be very helpful.
- He tends to go into the problem too quickly and too technically. Being technical and theoretical is fine, but he needs to understand most people don't know where it comes from. That being said, he should start with a brief introduction if it's a new or advanced topic, and explains why he did what he did. Basically, to re-wind his thought process from the beginning.