

Introduction

One common mechanism for feedback on instructor performance is the end of term instructor and course evaluation. UM uses these evaluations to inform course improvements, assess student self-perceptions of learning outcomes and as one form of evidence of teaching proficiency for faculty evaluations.

One argument against the use of instructor evaluations is the rationale that these evaluations might be influenced by a lenient grading policy.

To investigate whether evidence exists to support a relationship between grades and instructor evaluations, we examined a database of student grades and composite course evaluation scores from 401 courses from Fall 2008 graduate and undergraduate courses offered in the UM CoE. This analysis focused on two evaluation questions:

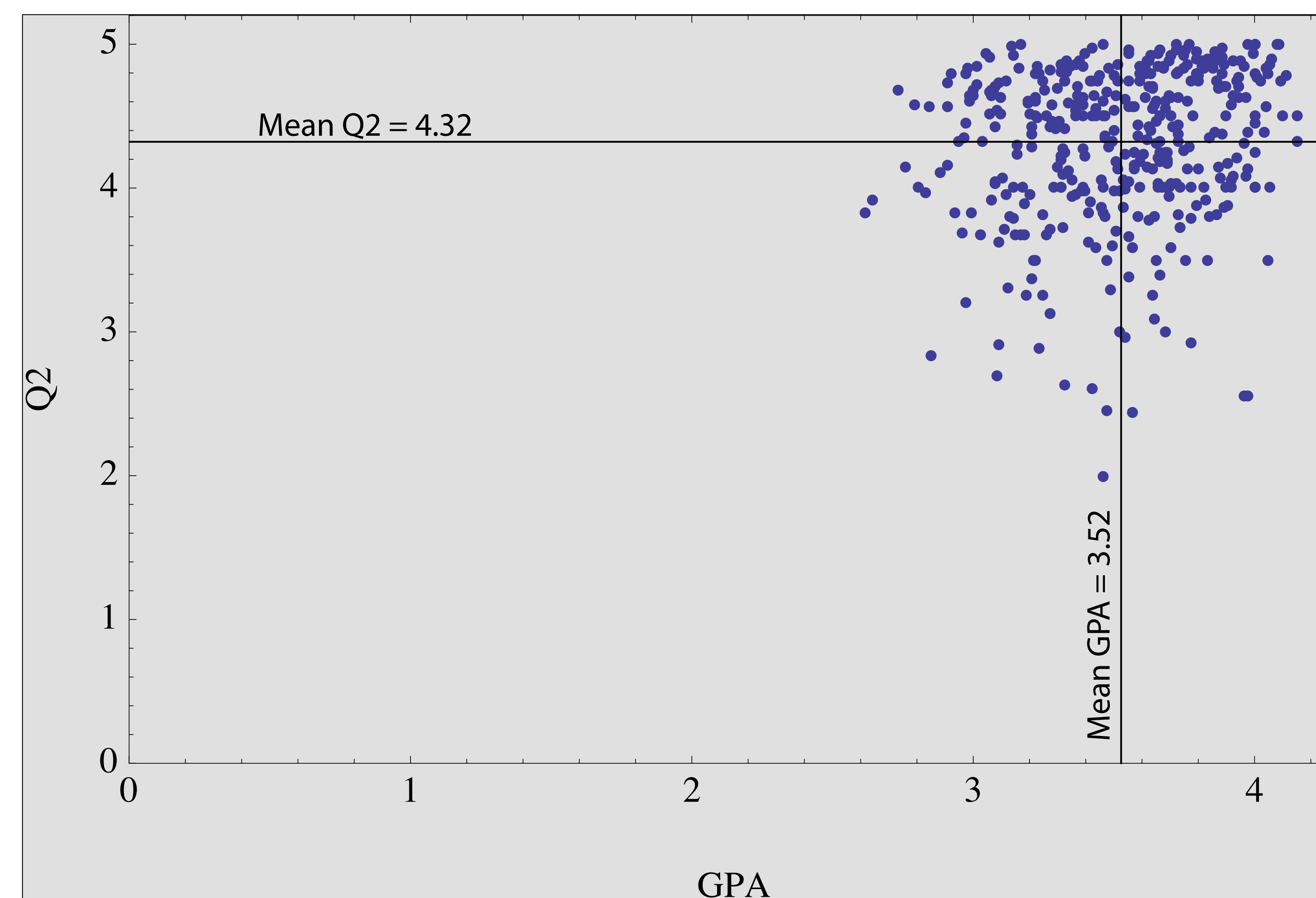
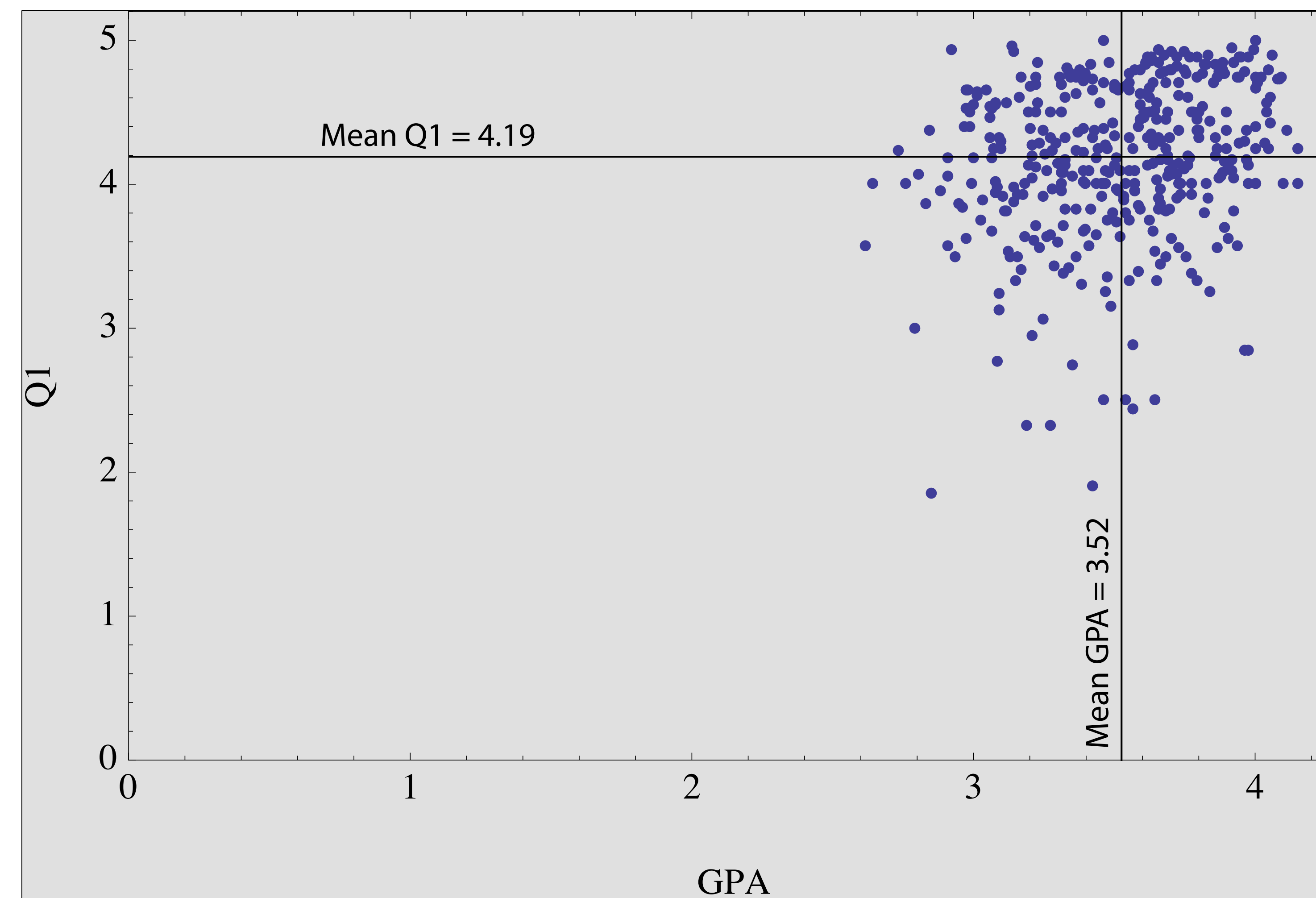
- Q1: Overall this was an excellent course
- Q2: Overall the instructor was an excellent instructor.

Each of these was scored on a 5 point Likert scale.

We explore this data for evidence of a correlation between the instructor evaluation composite scores and the student grades within courses. In order to treat graduate and undergraduate grades together, all grades were computed on the same scale, with A+ scored as 4.3.

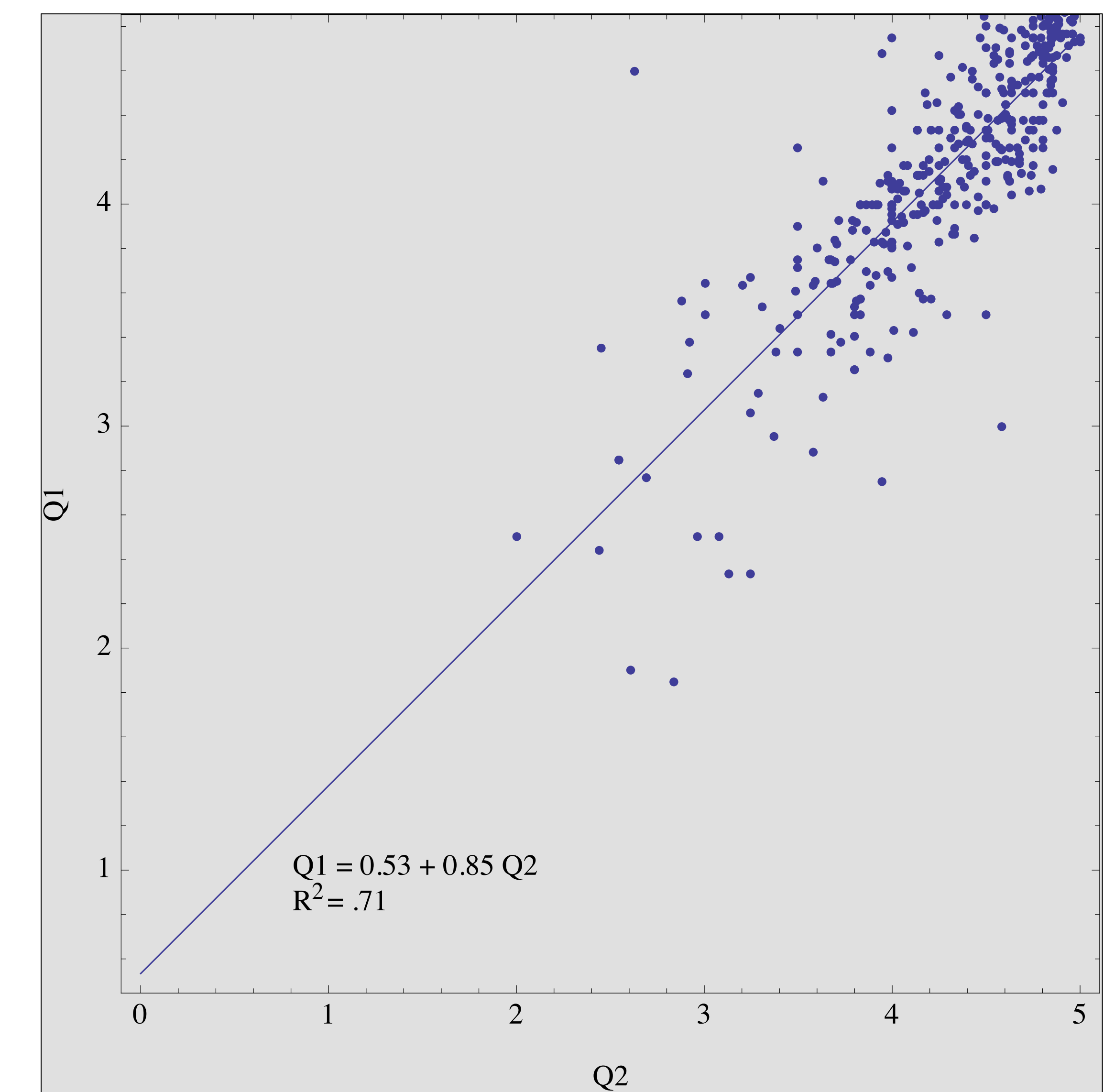
Results

- The plots below show the Q1 and Q2 scores plotted vs. class GPA for these 401 classes
- There is no correlation between evaluation scores and class GPA (a regression test indicates that no more than 6% of the variation in Q score can be explained by GPA)



Observations

- A similar analysis with graduate and undergraduate classes separated produces the same lack of correlation.
- The number of classes with low GPA and high Q scores is nearly equal to the number of classes with high GPA and low Q scores.
- There is a strong correlation between Q1 and Q2 scores.



Conclusion

There is no evidence in these data to support the hypothesis that course/instructor evaluation scores are correlated.

Acknowledgements

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