

Informatics Student Course Feedback 2016/17

<http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/surveys/2016-17>

This report contains feedback from students about a course taught in the School of Informatics during the 2016/17 academic year, in response to the following questions:

- What would you say to students interested in taking this course?
- What did you find most valuable about the course?
- What improvements, if any, would you make to the course?

Each course organiser receives this report as well as statistics on multiple-choice responses. All these reports, together with student feedback about individual members of teaching staff, are collected and sent to the Director of Teaching.

Please note that these are personal responses from individual students: some courses have a low response rate, and a small sample can be unrepresentative.

Stereotyping and bias, especially unconscious bias, is a serious concern in any survey gathering personal responses. All students received the rubric below before completing the surveys, and you can read a brief introduction to issues of unconscious bias on the university web <http://edin.ac/2wgp1hh>

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Rubric given to all students taking the end-of-course feedback survey

As a member of the University community we would like your opinions on the courses you take here, to inform future delivery and development. The University welcomes constructive comments about your courses, whether positive or negative, and ask you to give details about any issues in order to help the course organiser to understand and address them.

We encourage you to be aware of the potential for bias in the completion of these questionnaires, so we have developed a short section on the Student website which may be a helpful introduction for you: <http://edin.ac/2wgp1hh>

You also have a responsibility to provide feedback in a manner which does not breach the University's Dignity and Respect Policy: <http://edin.ac/1Cq0VZY>

The results of the questionnaires will never be analysed in a way that seeks to identify individual students from their responses, however should you wish to remain anonymous in your response, please do not identify yourself in your answers to the survey questionnaire implicitly or explicitly.

If you require any further information about Course Enhancement Questionnaires, or how the data we gather is used, please visit our Course Enhancement site: <http://edin.ac/2vWEq1P>

Comments Report

What would you say to students interested in taking this course?

- If either probability or algorithms are not strong points in your academic record, I would strongly advise brushing up on this before taking the course. It is extremely good to learn, but also proving quite difficult.
- Interesting course, the outcome strongly depends on the lecturer.
- It really needs a very very good background in math and a lot of hours of self-study. It is quite challenging, so it may hurt your grades if you're not committed enough.
- The course was interesting and covered a fair range of topics - more probability theory with algorithmic application than a course on algorithms or data structures. No randomised data structures were discussed.
- Very mathematical, will involve a lot of proofs, but is great if you want to prove correctness and bounds of algorithms.

Comments Report

What did you find most valuable about the course?

- Combining knowledge in probability and Algorithms to develop an understanding for the significance of Randomised Algorithms in Computer Science. An extremely challenging course, but I enjoy what is covered here.
- It offers very good theoretical tools that are useful to anyone doing computer science. I also found very helpful the fact that it is based on one handbook only.
- The contents of the course seemed interesting, and would be, if taught correctly.
- The lectures were informative
- Very good class to dive into probability theory and its applications to theor. CS. Helps with developing proof skills in general, too. In general, the lecturer has very good explanation skills (but his needs to be paired with good preparation ahead!)

What improvements, if any, would you make to the course?

- Better preparation of the lectures. The lecturer seems very competent and together with more preparation this would work out great. Most crucial though: There needs to be a tutorial with weekly ex. sheets (NOT delivered by lecturer, as having a student TA will have a different perspective on material)
- Finish lectures on time.
Lecturer better prepared for classes (that does not make so many mistakes in notes and on the board).
More exercise but easier than coursework.
- I would prefer two summative assignments each 15% rather than one formative and one summative forming 30% of the final grade. Both assignments this year were extremely challenging - the formative one in particular.
- Preparation and checking handouts before they are given out for mistakes
- Since it is a "theoretical" course, more in depth analysis of topics taught. Also, tutorials.
- The course is in desperate need of tutorials - it is very math oriented and even though the lectures cover the theory by applying it to various examples, it is definitely not enough.

There were a lot of problems with the material of the course (typos and other errors).

The lectures were also a bit disorganized, although I feel they improved after around Week 6-7.

It would be worth making it a 15 or 20 pt course.