

Informatics Student Course Feedback 2017/18

<http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/surveys/2017-18>

This report contains feedback from students about a course taught in the School of Informatics during the 2017/18 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?
- Please add any other comments you have about workshops and tutors

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 Learning and Teaching.

Please note that these are personal responses from individual students: some courses only have a few responses 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 pages at <http://edin.ac/2iypZBv>

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

We value your opinions on the courses you take here at the University, as they allow us to shape future delivery and development. We welcome 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 resources which may be helpful to you:

- Equality, Diversity and Unconscious Bias (<http://edin.ac/2iypZBv>)

You also have a responsibility to provide feedback in a manner which does not breach the University's Dignity and Respect Policy:

- University of Edinburgh 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, please do not identify yourself in your answers to the survey questionnaire implicitly or explicitly.

Comments Report

What advice would you give to a student taking this course in future?

- Make sure you can do the maths as you go along and that you understand the concepts
- Only take it if you are interested in neuroscience. Do not think it is a machine learning course.
- Only take it if you're crazy about the topic, otherwise it wouldn't be worth putting up with certain things. Also bear in mind that the course uses a lot of math and physics. More than one would expect from the course description I would say.
- The course involves lots of math concepts. It is challenging and interesting.
- The subject matter is very interesting, but if you want to take it you should be prepared for largely unhelpful teaching and to do a lot of reading and work yourself to compensate for this.
- This is taught in a very physics way so just keep that in mind.

Comments Report

What did you find most valuable about the course?

- A chance to gain a good overall perspective on past and present theories of neuroscience with a computational perspective.
- The content was good.
The extensive lecture notes are valuable.
- The link between machine learning neurons and biological neurons. It was good to see where the artificial neurons came from.

Comments Report

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

- Basically the lectures consist in the lecturer writing equations on a whiteboard which most of the students can't see, either because they see far away or because the lecturer himself is covering it with his body as he writes. This is extremely frustrating and counterproductive and feels like being back in a low-resource high school. I would use a projector and ideally record the screen and upload the lectures, as in the course MLPR.
- The lab sessions could be more interactive. Most of the time I find not knowing what I am supposed or what I am doing.
- The labs are rarely finished in the allotted time and there is no follow up discussion of them or solutions provided, so knowing if you're correct or not is incredibly difficult and impacted my learning.
- The lecturer is clearly interested and passionate about the subject, but his lecturing is quite poor. Ideas are sketchily presented, important details are skipped/forgotten, the sometimes specific explanations are often not well connected back to the broader topic of the lecture/section of the course, diagrams and writing on the board are usually not very easy to read (and are often erased before they can be copied up.), could go on... It is often unclear exactly what is assumed knowledge, what results can be taken for granted, and what needs to be known (for the exam, for instance).

Comments Report

Please add any other comments you have about workshops and tutors

- I was not able to attend any of the labs as the one session a week clashed with something else.
- Please release solutions after the labs are done.
- The subject of the labs are well chosen and are helpful but they can rarely be finished in the allotted time and there is no follow up discussion of them or solutions provided, so knowing if you're correct or not is incredibly difficult and impacted my learning.
- Would maybe be good to have someone explain the aims of the lab or go around to help