Informatics Student Course Feedback 2020/21
http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/surveys/2020-21

This report contains feedback from students about a course taught in the School of Informatics during the 2020/21 academic year, in response to the following questions:

- What advice would you give to a student taking this course in future?
- 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, tutorials or labs on this course
- Please add any other comments you have about the presentation of course materials online and their accessibility
- Reflecting on your experience of hybrid teaching and learning on this course, what has worked well for you?
- Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about your experience of hybrid teaching and learning on this course that would help us improve our approach?

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/2iyPZBy

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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/2iyPZBy)
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.
1. Introduction to Vision and Robotics [INFR09019_20-21_SV1_SEM1_ONLINE_CACORE19] -

1.7) What did you find most valuable about the course?

- Obtaining some introduction to computer vision algorithms. I like how you could apply them in the practicals. The lecturer is somewhat caring and slightly more approachable towards his students.

- Really interesting and well taught, fantastic considering the sudden shift to online only.

- Robotics was something completely new to me and this course was a great introduction to a fascinating topic.

- The content itself was very interesting and there were many real-world examples given in the course that showed the practical applications of it.

- The contents of this course are very interesting. Bob Fisher videos are very good and explain the vision part on a good way. The coursework is pretty challenging. The programming language is Python and I think this is a much better choice than having MATLAB or C++.

- The course consists of a wide range of knowledge in Vision and Robotics.

- The pre-recorded lectures on the vision section were extremely useful and informative.

- The robotics part was really good. I also liked the coursework.

- This course has been terribly organised, we have lectures where the slides were not produced, readings were not given out past week two the coursework has elements we've not been equipped to deal with and the instructors either give uselessly vague answers to questions, no answers at all or answers that are plainly wrong. We are also not given important information, an example of this is that part of the coursework depends on how many CPU cores the problem has, this was mentioned today, Wednesday, the coursework has been out for almost a month and is due on Friday, when we're we going to be told this if the instructors weren't asked...
What improvements, if any, would you make to the course?

- I think this should be at minimum 20 credits as I have worked here more than in ILP which is a 20 credit course. Also, make it compulsory for students to know calculus as robotics is heavily relied on them. Offer labs in the week of coursework so that we can get help with the coursework.

- If there could be an in-person activity such as a lab it could make explaining some things a whole lot easier.

- Overall I felt like our lecturer was spread a bit thin in essentially doing all the lectures/labs himself. I feel like additional staff could help improve the quality of certain areas of this course. Also some of the videos for the vision section were somewhat outdated, 6 years old at this point, and it would have been good to see more up-to-date content in that field.

  Also I feel like the coursework might have been better suited to being broken down into a number of smaller questions that build up the overall vision/robot control algorithms. I think telling students outright in the question to write an algorithm that does gets x from the robot can seem daunting and put a lot of students off. Maybe by breaking the assignment into parts i.e a question on just getting coordinates from blob detection, a question on transferring those to 3d coords may allow for a more guided approach that allows students to be less confused.

- Significant improvement to instruction needed or don't run it.

- Slow down the pace - it feels too fast for a 10 credit course. It really feels more of a 20 credit course, especially heading to the Robotics section. It felt very fast-paced since week 2.

  The coursework assignments took way too long to complete for a short period of time - material content was not very self intuitive to many.

  The assignment should be broken down into two or three smaller but shorter assignments, because one assignment shouldn't solely determine too much of your grade.

- The coursework was a completely unreasonable amount of work, completed in a team which was too small. Enforcing the use of virtual machines and dual-boot made the development experience extremely unenjoyable.

- The vision part would profit from a redo of the videos since they are from 2014.

- Try to reduce the content that you want to introduce in this course. This course is too comprehensive and it is impossible to get familiar with all of them.

- Weekly tutorials would be great for a course like this.

  Some more examples in slides would be great.
2.1) What advice would you give to a student taking this course in future?

- Be prepared to spend a large amount of time on this course though it is only 10 credits. DO FIND a partner you are familiar with since the coursework will be finished by a two-person group. If you are not interested in challenging yourself or exploring a field nearly completely on your own (let's say if you like the structure of the Inf-2B Learning coursework), DO NOT TAKE THIS COURSE.

- Be seriously prepared to work hard. I have spent as many hours as most 20 credit course subjects. If your grades were not stellar, don't take it if you can. It will likely negatively impact your overall grade.

- Doing the labs really helps.

- Don't choose this course unless you are super excellent.

- Don't take this course.

- Ensure you start the coursework very early, work with your partner from the start and don't feel bad about not understanding what is going on

- For the sake of your sanity, I hope you haven't forgotten how to do matrix multiplication.

- It's a difficult course and feels much more like 20 credits than 10 credits. I was in an unfortunate position between picking this and another course, which I wasn't so interested in as doing for my 10 credits this semester so I didn't have much choice. So unless you're very much interested in the course content or your are able to put in the extra time needed for the content/coursework I would not take it.

- Keep up with the weekly content and start the coursework early.

- Unless you have done a good amount of maths, do not take this course as it is very challenging. Start early on the coursework as it takes a lot of time.
3. Please add any other comments you have about workshops, tutorials or labs on this course.

- Computer labs only gave a small introduction to the coursework assignments...labs did not prepare me enough. There should be tutorials for better grasp of understanding.

- I found the labs helpful but certainly not enough for the coursework. There is a huge gap between the coursework and the labs, which I am so confused about. All the labs are demonstrated in 2D but suddenly all the contents become 3D in coursework and Publisher and Subscriber become very complicated and the knowledge is not supposed to be learnt on our own.

- The labs were ok but I felt they didn't work as well in online learning as they might have done in person. Essentially felt like I could have gotten same help by asking questions on Piazza. The course really needed weekly question sheets or something to help us consolidate our learning and gives us some kind of practice for exam type questions.

- They were helpful. Maybe it would be good to add tutorials about the content.
4. Introduction to Vision and Robotics

4.1) Please add any other comments you have about the presentation of course materials online and their accessibility.

- I hope the pdf could be in the well-formed text instead of hand-written style.
- The online material was great for both vision and robotics.
- The structure of having quick-ish videos and then covering them in lectures was sometimes a bit confusing as it wasn't always clear which lecture matched to which section.
7. Introduction to Vision and Robotics

7.1) Reflecting on your experience of hybrid teaching and learning on this course, what has worked well for you?

- I had mixed feelings. I had an interest because of a prior internship for robotics. However, my lack of mathematical understanding in the later parts of the coursework assignment especially put me to a disadvantage.

- It was good how it was, but maybe an additional tutorial would be good.

- Nothing has worked well for this course

- The hybrid teaching on the course, was wholeheartedly awful.

- The live lectures were good but the prerecorded videos could have been a bit better and to be honest once we had gotten onto the robotics parts the live lectures were simply a rehash of the content in the videos. I’d would of appreciated say like the videos being uploaded along with a question sheet, we watch the videos and answer the questions then take any issues we have about the questions to be answered during the live lectures. I think this would help the whole flipped classroom and hybrid teaching model

- the links to all the resources have been clear and easy to find.
Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience of hybrid teaching and learning on this course that would help us improve our approach?

- N/A
- Please refer to my previous comments about IVR.
- Realise that when requiring specialised software, not everyone has the resources to develop the code at the same rate.
- Stop calling it hybrid as it involved zero in-person activities.
Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your response and comments will be fully considered.

Please provide any additional comments you may have about the course, the teaching on the course or the resources that support it in the box below.

Personally speaking, I find all the courses delivered in Year2 and Year3 are either too hard or too simple. School should find a balance in all courses about what should be introduced to all informatics students but what seems unnecessary or a bit beyond the capacity.