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/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/1Cq0V2Y)

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. Computational Cognitive Neuroscience

What did you find most valuable about the course?

- Angus and Peggy are both fantastic teachers and inspiring academics. Willingness to answer student questions. Course well adapted to home learning (one of very few courses that absolutely got this right).
- Computational modelling of behavioural data
- Going out of my comfort zone, well organized and presented coursework
- I enjoyed the content and how it was backed up with studies.
- It's hard but satisfying - after a session of studying I feel like I achieved something and really understood something new
- The course was really well-structured. The lab sessions and coursework were always related tightly to the topics discussed in the lectures. Especially without any background in Biology, I was expecting to struggle with the coursework a lot more, but thanks to the informative and detailed course materials, all parts of the course have been very manageable.
- The lecturers and the topics they've chosen as well as the example were very interesting and helpful.
- You can see the passion of both Angus and Peggy in the classes and the information provided is very interesting.
- none
What improvements, if any, would you make to the course?

- A lot of information is said whilst discussing the papers during a lecture but this is not written down, maybe add notes for each lecture. This could easily be achieved by using the auto transcript generate for the recording and including these in the notes, instead of writing them from scratch.

- CW2 was disproportionately long to complete. The pile up of courseworks from other courses, given the switch to coursework assessment due to Covid19, was not well calibrated at all. I would have preferred (it would have been more productive) to spend more time studying lectures, textbooks, papers than doing courseworks.

- In its current form, it has way to much content for a 10-credit course, and either should be upgraded to 20 credits or make the assignments a lot shorter

- Make it clearer how challenging the course is and what is required of the students to take full advantage of it. I took it with no background Biology/Neuroscience knowledge and I'm still struggling with understanding - the CW is manageable, though. CW2 is a lot bigger than CW1 which isn't really a problem. However, I'm not sure how to feel about a 4000-word essay accounting for 50% of the grade - all I know now is I'm a bit frightened by it and I'd appreciate another simulation coursework instead, with the grade percentage more evenly split.

- Maybe more support for the CWKs.

- Python as default.

- Reduce the workload for assignment 2 or increase the percentage it contributes to the course. I also think having three separate assignments is a lot for a 10 credit course.

- The course is way too difficult for a 10 credit course. The first 2 courseworks took way to long and were only worth 25% each, which is a joke.

- The courseworks are too long

- none
2. Computational Cognitive Neuroscience -

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

- Do something so that the first 2 courseworks are worth 100% of your total grade, if they are only worth 25%, then don't take it; it's too hard for a 10 credit course.

- Enjoy it. The assignments are really interesting, start early so you have time to play with your code. These were the only live lectures I attended this semester and I didn't regret it.

- Make sure you're willing to struggle or put in the time to properly understand this course. Some basic machine learning / Python simulation knowledge is very useful. Coursework is doable even if you barely understand anything, a lot of it is simulations and plotting.

- Please don't take the course if you don't know how to code.

- Set a LOT of time aside for this course

- Start everything very early

- Take part in the course! Ask questions during the lectures, piazza and read!

- This course is not about psychiatry nor about neuroscience; Computational neuroscience is a really specific field

- Visit the labs, as they really help out with the coursework later on.
3. Computational Cognitive Neuroscience -

3.2) Please add any other comments you have about workshops, tutorials or labs on this course

- I only went to one or two because they weren't too frequent and I tried to focus more on coursework itself, but the instructor I had for one of my labs was very helpful. Only Matlab is officially supported (isn't it about time to change this?) but many instructors and students use Python so they can help.

- The TA was great, pointed to a lot of interesting resources

- The tasks were always interesting. In some cases, they were a bit too long for the two-hour session, which can be a bit frustrating sometimes.
4. Computational Cognitive Neuroscience

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

- Everything was on Learn, well organized and accessible, no problems here
- The live lectures and recordings were easy to access and organized well.
- The second assignment is taking a long time to complete which is putting pressure on my other courses. It would be nice if this was released a bit earlier.
- Too much work for a 10 credit course...
- Very easily accessed and organised
Reflecting on your experience of hybrid teaching and learning on this course, what has worked well for you?

- Allowing me to work from home has really helped me go through this year, and I think it should stay at least one more year, to fully protect the students. At least allow students to do MSc or undergrad online if they can't/don't want to come to the UK next year (2021-2022).

- I can't recommend hybrid learning to anyone, but going to the live lectures gave me something to look forward to in the week, and setting aside a lot of time to do the coursework was a must (and extensions)

- Personally, I always prefer coursework over exams, as I believe it allows me to show my proficiency in the area and try my best to do well more than a time-constrained exam. Therefore, having 100% coursework was certainly the better alternative for me. The live lectures were also easily accessible.

- The course's LEARN page was well-organized

- The lectures were good in the sense that could be delivered online without too much hassle.

- The online lectures and Q&A at the end worked well.

- Watch downloaded lectures on increased speed and mostly focusing on coursework which was 100% of the grade.
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?

- Again more support for Python would be nice
- Make labs focus more on coursework than additional interesting topics, although maybe others will disagree.
- Maybe rethink workshops.
- Not great
10. Thank you -

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.

- Courseworks are too long for the marks.
- Thinking about pursuing a PhD in Computational Psychiatry so thank you!!!
- This course really kept me going this semester, thank you!
- This course should be worth 20 credits, not 10. It is way too hard to be worth 10 credits.