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

This information is provided for students and staff at the University of Edinburgh: you may not redistribute or reuse it without permission. If you would like the information in another format or want to use it in your own publication then please contact the Informatics Teaching Organisation at http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/contact

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.
What did you find most valuable about the course?

- Everything was perfect but the sem 1 labs
- Hands-on coursework, especially CW3 where we're doing everything ourselves in a group, start to finish.
- I learned text processing! Oh yeah!
- Interesting courseworks and lectures
- Learning how search engines work, indexing, and how to evaluate performance.
- The activities in the course had a good amount of variance
- The coursework helps you build a search engine which is so cool
- Very well done
What improvements, if any, would you make to the course?

- 2nd semester is essentially self-study with a large piece of coursework. Although there's support on Piazza, there are no labs, no tutorials, no mentors to check on our progress and help us out. If my group forgot about CW3 and focused on other courses for a little bit, there would be pretty much no way for me to find out I still have something to submit because communication has been dead all 2nd semester. So, that could be improved. Also, please provide some DigitalOcean/Google Cloud credits when you expect us to publically deploy CW3. Yes, GitHub education offers free credits, but some students will want to use these for other projects, not necessarily a piece of coursework which needs to be up for at least 2 months so that markers can have a look at it.

- CW3 was badly organized in my opinion. Next time give use GCP or AWS credits...

- For the group project in Semester 2, it would have been useful to have more direction / guidance / interaction with the instructors and tutors. Maybe having a drop-in session once a month to see if we were taking our project in the right direction would have been helpful.

- In semester 2, there are seldom any lectures or tutorials regarding the course. It would be frustrating to only do a project and have no other materials for learning about ttds.

- More support in 2nd semester with group project, weekly/biweekly tutorial would help a lot.

- None.

- Provide reimbursement or funding for coursework three. It's appalling that we have to pay for a good grade. It costs a lot of money to host public sites. "Use your sign up credits" is not an appropriate workaround, because those are attached to our personal accounts on whatever hosting platforms we use, and now we no longer have an opportunity to take advantage of those for ourselves.

Coursework 3 is generally disappointing. Lots of time is spent on non-TTDS stuff. Creating websites is time consuming, doing the logistics with the hosting platform is time consuming. And we aren't FORCED to learn anything or apply any skills. We should be given suggestions of interesting text science to explore and present in our solutions.

- Put the exam closer to the lectures so that students do not have to summarise significant parts of the course material

- Second semester is very poorly organized. Like there is no communication with the University. There should at least be a tutor looking over the work that we are doing. To a large degree it did not even feel like that we were doing the course in the second semester, even though it was such a big part.

- Sem 1 labs could have been improved by allotting proper time slots
2. Text Technologies for Data Science

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

- Do the coursework and tutorials regularly because they help you understand the course well.
- First semester is great, enjoy it. 2nd semester is where the hard stuff comes, make sure you start early with your group.
- Give proper time for all the courseworks.
- It's a really interesting course with stimulating coursework and only 30% of the grade is from an exam (and I wouldn't mind that being 0% at all). If you get a good group for CW3, you'll have a blast developing a search engine while learning a ton of new things. If not, as with all group projects, good luck...
- Make sure you do the labs, it helps a lot with the courseworks. Also with regards to cw3, make sure by the end of January you have scraped all the data you need for your project.
- Start project early and choose teammates wisely.
- Start the project early by defining and following a plan.
- You don't need a lot of code base for this class, because the teacher will teach you in class. This course requires a team, so you'll need to be able to work in a team.
3.2) Please add any other comments you have about workshops, tutorials or labs on this course

- I didn't attend any but still got 100% in coursework. We'll see how the exam goes.
- I fell behind with the course content so whenever there was a lab session I felt too anxious/embarrassed to attend the lab sessions. This turned into a vicious cycle of falling behind, feeling ashamed, and not attending lab sessions.
- None. All good.
- Not applicable, need to implement it for second semester.
- There were no workshops/tutorials/labs this semester, which was a bit of a bummer. This was clear from the start, but I still believe additional workshops could have been useful, especially for students without "full-stack" development experience.
4.1) Please add any other comments you have about the presentation of course materials online and their accessibility.

- Everything is on the course website. I prefer when everything is on Learn. Including lecture recordings, which are who-knows-where for ttds.
- Lectures were great.
- None.
- Same as all other feedback – the course is great but nothing happens in 2nd semester apart from self-study CW3, so not much to say here.
Reflecting on your experience of hybrid teaching and learning on this course, what has worked well for you?

- Accessible resources online, crystal-clear coursework specifications, Piazza.
- Doing the work yourself, watching sped-up lectures in sem1
- Having the lecture sessions occurring live online, as well as having the recordings available afterwards, felt as close to “attending” lectures as it could given the hybrid teaching situation, and I really appreciated that.
- Lectures being recorded
- Online live lectures with chat were great, much better than prerecorded lectures!
- The courseware of Labs is very convenient, I can view and recall the code at any time.
- This course did not employ hybrid teaching.
7.2) 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?

- Everything is on the course website. I prefer when everything is on Learn. Including lecture recordings, which are who-knows-where for ttds.
- More of the teaching and learning in sem2
- None.
- Would be great if group projects in 2nd semester would be more directed and supported by a tutor.
9. 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.

- I really liked the brain teasers in the small break between lectures. They were very entertaining.

- In general, I'm not sure how to give feedback for sem2 of this course when it doesn't really exist. As I've mentioned throughout, I believe having some course interaction in sem2 would be very helpful, at least in the form of some biweekly mentor meetings, office hours for questions, etc.