Neural Computation - INFR11162

Response to student feedback in 2018/19 course survey

We have taken note of the feedback from students in this course survey, and have the following comments in response.

- We taught this course for the first time this year, and will make a number of changes based on the feedback.
- Firstly, as pointed out in the comments and also in the course description, this course has limited direct practical applicability outside academic research. Only chose this course if you are interested in neuroscience and simulation of biological systems, not if your primary interest is artificial intelligence.
- Lecture format: The course used to be taught mainly on the blackboard in the past. In future, we will make sure all derivations are recorded, we will either show them on slides or use the document camera instead of the whiteboard.
- Handout: The lecture handout covers more material than the lectures, and this is intentional as this provides additional context and, we believe, helps to understand the course material better. As we have pointed out in the lectures, only material covered there is exam relevant. Students choosing this course should attend the lectures and make notes, as expected in any course.
- Labs/tutorials: The main purpose of the labs is to implement some of the theory covered in the lectures in simulations, to get a better understanding of the practical issues that arise when simulating neurons and circuits in the brain. We believe this is more beneficial than having tutorials that would rehash the lectures.
- Previous knowledge: We have indeed somewhat overestimated background in physics and mathematics, in particular in the theory of dynamical systems. We will cover this more thoroughly next year, and streamline the contents of the very first part of the course on detailed neuron models.

Matthias Hennig and Peggy Series, 19/03/2019