Bioinformatics 1 (BIO1)

Response to student feedback in 2017/18 course survey

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

- This course is an Introduction to Bioinformatics that is taken by Computer Scientists wanting to apply and develop their knowledge to applications in the Biological/Biomedical domain and Biologists wanting to learn computing skills relevant to their research interests. As such we aim to bring everyone to a level of understanding and skill to allow them to further pursue Bioinformatics as a discipline. This can mean that for some Computer Scientists it can seem too Biology heavy and for some Biologists too Computing heavy. Over the time this course has run we tend to get a balance of both comments which suggests we are pitching it about right.
- We fully encourage and expect students to ask us plenty of questions throughout the course, both in and following lectures and on the course Piazza forum.
- Room 5.05 is no longer being used for the lectures, we ran a poll on Piazza to ask this Semester's intake how they felt about the room and as a result arranged to deliver lectures in a dedicated lecture theatre with up-to-date AV facilities.
- For the first time we have moved the course to LEARN and are using the embedded Noteable Jupyter Notebook system which means students can start coding immediately without worrying about technical installation issues. It also means that students can run the system on their laptops during lectures if they want to without depending on DICE machines.
- We have expanded the coding aspects of the course with example notebooks and optional challenge questions that are discussed on the Piazza forum.
- We have developed "Resource Lists" for the course so that students can easily find the relevant texts, references and other resources associated both with the course in general and with specific lecture weeks. We have also categorised the essential, recommended and optional reading to help with prioritisation.
- We plan to develop the course further to allow for more hands-on practical computing.
- Clarifications around coursework are now addressed as they arise in the Piazza forum, common marking scheme and expectations were clarified at the beginning of the course.

Ian Simpson & Douglas Armstrong (pp. Matthias Hennig), October 2018