

Course Change: Natural Language Understanding

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Level 11, 10 points, UG4 course

Background and Rationale

This course is an advanced NLP course covering methods from lexical semantics, part of speech tagging, parsing, and discourse processing. It has been running for six years and is taken mostly by students on the NLP specialism. It was redesigned to bring it in line with recent trends in NLU (mostly deep learning) in 2015/16. In the current academic year, the course enrolls around 100 students.

The course does not correspond to the new workload model, as it contains too many lectures and assignments. This year, students started to complain specifically about the amount of time they spend on the assignments; presumably because they compare NLU to the new 20 pts courses (e.g., in machine learning), or to the revised 10 pts third year courses. The aim of this proposal is to bring the course in line with the new workload model.

Proposed Changes

1. Cut the number of lectures from currently 18 to 16.
2. Cut the number of assignments from currently 2 to 1.
3. Change the weighting from 70/30 (exam/coursework) to 75/25.

The course also contains two feedforward sessions (these are Q&A sessions in the runup to the assignments). We would like to retain these. The course also incorporates formative assessment in the form of quizzes. We would like to retain these as well, and maybe make them more comprehensive, to compensate for the loss of the second assignment.

References

Student workload model:

http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files//course_workload_assessment.pdf