

UG1 Staff Student Liaison Meeting
Wednesday 13th April 2022, 1200 - 1300
Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Michel Steuwer UG1 Course Organiser, Matthias Hennig Course Organiser, Chris Lucas INF1-CG Lecturer, Frank Mollica INF1-CG Lecturer, Vidminas Mikucionis INF1-OOP Teaching Assistant, Japjot Singh, Uma Sha, Selina Xu UG1 Representatives, Kendal Reid ITO

Apologies: Fiona McNeill INF1-OOP Course Organiser, David Symons INF1-OOP Lecturer

Informatics 1 – Cognitive Science

The Reps reported that they found the course interesting and engaging but they felt that the content in the lectures was not concise, a lot of the content was glanced over and then later realised that these were important, they would have preferred if the slides were more concise and pointing out what is important what is not! More key points would help, rather than going over the reading and re-watching the lectures. The equations on the slides could have a bit more explained in the lectures rather than in the Q & A sessions, have a screen that you can write on rather than having a pointer would be more beneficial therefore explaining a bit more to the students on how to write the calculations.

Chris agrees that having the writing on the slides would be easier for the students it would have been more realistic and helpful, but having to re-do the slides at this point would not be helpful.

Reading material: Is it possible to have a summary of the reading, the language in the research paper was difficult to read, Chris agrees that this could be done giving points of what to do read.

This course is an elective course and the feedback was good and students enjoyed the course and the Q & A sessions were very well received especially for students who had no prior background.

Negative feedback a lot of MA students with no Maths or Informatics backgrounds they felt that a lot of the content was thrown at them with no prior explanation of equations, symbols and terminology and no one explained to them, it was less accessible to people coming from different backgrounds.

Matthias welcome this feedback and they were unsure what kind of backgrounds students on the course had come from as this year was online last year the live sessions you got a feel of where students were at, and previously you were physically able to ask questions there and then. He hopes it will be different next year but is happy with the good feedback, there was only 6 students who submitted mid-semester feedback, which was partially negative in which Frank apologised about.

The students felt due to this year's circumstances that the course was well ran, it was ran as good as it could have been, the lectures were well formatted.

Tutorials were not well attended, the tutors were good but the discussions were not well engaged with their fellow tutees, Matthias asked why he thought they had low attendance, the Reps were said that they didn't hear anything negative, it was probably due to circumstances, such as coursework deadlines, illness, COVID etc. and the tutorials were not marked so may not have had enough incentive.

Chris thinks providing incentives might help but he isn't sure what that could be, he asked the Reps for any suggestions!

Less focus on the tutorial materials as there is a worksheet every week which is not worth any marks, maybe having an extra 15 minutes at the end of the tutorials have a Q & A to ask questions about coursework and material, would be nice.

Attendance usually drops at this time of year due to deadlines.

Could more support be available on assignments due students not having any background on Python, the students are on different levels, maybe some links or tutorials or references to a book, also some specific questions would be good.

Matthias asked how effective was the labs? The Reps felt there was more googling questions than lab attendance, if you have a specific question were you can get the answer to the questions. Learning to code with no one teaching you was overwhelming for others. CW2 was better structured for the course less coding the format was much better.

Matthias explained this year has been really different to previous years due to the pandemic and thanked the Reps for all their feedback.

Informatics 1 – Object Orientated Programming

The students enjoyed INF1B more that INF1A and they felt the Quizzes were also better than INF1A and the assignments were also good but they felt at the end, assignment one and two they had 3 weeks to complete the assignment with the recommended time of 9 hours to finish with the last assignment they also had 3 weeks to complete with a recommended time of 20 hours to finish. This was quite an in balance to the other assignments, if they first two had a 2 weeks deadline when things were just starting off then the last assignment could have had an extended deadline.

Vidminas explained that this was something that they considered at the start of the course but they were counting not assignment hours per week but counting total course hours per week but with assignment three it had more assignment hours nearer the end of the course where there are fewer lectures and no new course material. Michel suggested that Fiona and David could communicate this to the students that this plan for assignments was given some thought.

Assignment one the level was too high a lot of people found it difficult, a lot of stuff you needed to do the assignment you only learned at the end of the assignment i.e. interfaces and making objects, maybe having short videos in the assignment folder explaining key terms or a glossary or links and pictures of that the board should look like would have been useful. The terminology was confusing and the students hadn't covered a lot of the material in the lectures!

Interfaces and objects clearer instructions would have been better a bit more step by step and explanations of what you are doing, rather than guessing what they have to do!

Assignment one there was no feedback given for the advanced tasks in the tutorials it only covered up to intermediate lot of people that done the advanced task (which is beyond the course material), having some feedback would have been useful i.e. a general solution would have been helpful, so they knew if they were on the right track or where you went wrong. Vid explained that tutorial notes did not include a sample solution because they did not want to distribute solutions in case of any similar future questions but the tutors were supposed to give individual feedback on the advanced parts Vidminas will make a note to explain this was supposed to happen to the course team.

Piazza was amazing, Q & A was good, the lectures were well structured for the first part of course lot of people liked the light coding but they felt the lectures didn't go into enough detail there was a basic foundation but they felt they needed more to cover the assignments.

In terms of the lectures, the students had to do questionnaires and they felt it took up quite a lot of valuable teaching time and it would have been better to have done them outside of the lectures. There was surveys every week which they found helpful. Feedback was also given from the lecturer during the lecture the students didn't feel this wasn't a useful way of using teaching time as they were the ones that gave the feedback!

They didn't feel the quizzes were challenging enough compared to Semester one the quizzes relied mostly on the lectures there wasn't a lot of problem solving but they were well structured and the lecturing style was good.

Their assignments had a lot of written elements which was good as you could were able to write down where you felt you were going wrong, although some students were keen on the writing part, Vidminas explained that writing will always be useful in future.

At the start of the course could it be mentioned what kind of style would the assignments will be the first assignment was functionality and the second one was a written report which confused the students.

The lab work wasn't marked a lot of people did try it at the beginning but became a low priority, could it be changed to have more of a balance between lab work and assignments, the lab work was good the instructions very quite vague but they became difficult to do along with the assignments.

Vidminas explained that the labs came from the previous course team and they haven't changed but the assignments have! He explained that if you had done all the labs, it helps to do the assignments, the labs are not necessarily in the same order that assignments need them in, so he will bring this to the Course Organisers to about the restructuring labs.

Vidminas asked about pair programming on how to code together, how much of pair programming was actually done if any at all?

There didn't appear to be a lot of pair programming which wasn't done in INF1A, it was mostly in the labs and people were more focused on the assignments.

Drop in lab sessions were useful instructors were helpful and supportive, good for socialising and discussions.

The Q & A's were very helpful but could have been advertised better in the lectures telling the students to attend the Q & A to ask questions.

What would you change in the course?

Make assignment one more approachable, make instructions simpler and more team work, the students felt confused.

Selina made feedback documents throughout the year and collated it and will send it on to the Course Organiser.