

MART 2021: Analysis of the course by the course leader

The anonymous course evaluation was answered by 62% (5/8) of the students. Overall, the students appeared to be quite satisfied with the VT2021 course and gave it an average score of 4.4 of 5. This is noteworthy given that the 2021 course ran fully online, whereas the course over the past 5 years (when given IRL) has received scores around 4.5. This suggests that the 2021 course was received roughly similar to past years course, and that the online teaching did not affect the perceived quality of the course.

Most students also agreed the course was relevant for, and gave the right conditions to, achieve the intended learning outcomes. In terms of specific exercises, most of them also received high scores (the management [literature seminar] exercise, the trap fishing game, the roleplay, the individual essays all received scores around 4.5). The only part that stands out as getting slightly lower scores was the home examination (open-book); a form of learning assessment that we have not used since the current course leader took over in 2014. This exercise got a 3.4 average, and the range was quite high (2,3,4,4,4). The home exam had relatively few questions (students instructed to answer 3 of 4 large questions) and covered several course-relevant topics. An anonymous Zoom survey the day after the exam suggested that most students found that the time available (6.5 hours; 8.30 to 15.00) was sufficient, that the level of difficulty of the questions was ok, but that the questions only covered parts of what was taught at the course, and that the relatively few questions posed therefore didn't fully examine all of the intended learning outcomes. Meanwhile, the home exam was one of two individual assessments (the other one an individual 3500-word essay written during the course and presented 1 week prior to the home exam,). Together, these two individual assessments are to cover the intended learning outcomes. As a suggestion for the future, should an open-book home exam be used again it should include more questions that together probe a larger fraction of the entire course content, and then be done over 2 consecutive days. However, it should be noted that its neither feasible nor needed for an exam to cover all specific parts of a course to examine the relatively broad intended learning outcomes.

In terms of other suggestions and reflections from the students, some suggest it would be better to write the essays in pairs. This year was the first where we tested that the students wrote individual essays (which has been a common suggestion following previous year's courses). All in all I currently think the essay writing takes too much time to do individually, and that there is a social benefit with writing in pairs, which we unfortunately missed now. Therefore, we will return to writing in pairs next year.

We will also work even harder to make sure more lecturers use more interactive forms of teaching (not only talking for 2-3 hours). This is especially important when teaching over Zoom, but also important in a classroom setting.

Finally, the 2 suggestions for the future were in fact already fulfilled. The essay made up 40% (not 30%) of the course grade and the students had 3 full days to also work on the essay, addition to many half-days.

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