Course analysis 2020

DT2212 Music Acoustics

Spring 2020, period 3
2020-05-19 Anders Friberg

Requirements

Four written assignment	4.5 hp
Project work and report	1.5 hp
Two laboratory sessions	1.5 hp

Teachers, CSC

Anders Friberg (course responsible)
Sten Ternström
Bob Sturm
Karl Johannes Jondell (lab assistent)

Students

There were 14 registered students and eight that passed the course with all required assignments at this point (May 2020). There were 12 students that did most of the course work of which four still have some missing parts.

This small class of 12 active students made it possible to have a good interaction and continuous feedback. In particular since most of the students attended a major part of the lectures including common coffee breaks.

Changes from last year

There was a change of course responsible from Bob Sturm to Anders Friberg. The organization of course was kept more or less the same as the previous year. The main topics remained the same but there were some adjustments mainly of the assignment and lecture schedule. A challenge was to fit everything within the rather tight schedule in a well-balanced way.

Questionnaire

Due to the small number of students we decided to do a simplified procedure for the questionnaire and course evaluation. We therefore asked the students to write free comments about the course on a piece of paper during the last meeting, the project presentations. The responses were collected anonymously after the class.

The big advantage with this was that we got a response from most active students since participation was mandatory during this class. It was also an easy task for the students who could focus on the topics they found relevant without going through 'standard' questions. However, this method is less feasible with larger courses due to the relatively extensive analysis of the answers in this case.

Overall
Seven students (out of nine) were positive or very positive about the course in general. The remaining students did not give any feedback in this general sense but rather on specific topics, see below. Several students reported that they put more time and energy than they should considering their overall workload. This was also reflected in the quite high attendance. Some students reported that our lectures were the only one they attended to during that period.
"I really enjoyed the course"
"Väldigt rolig och trevlig kurs!"
"It allowed me to get a more technical overview on a topic which I always found relevant."
Content
Overall, the students appreciated the mix between theory and practical work.
"Good balance of theory, math, programming and applications!"
There were only positive comments about lectures.

Literature
A problem occurred with the course literature. Due to the large proportion of students registering late we could not prepare course in advance (we were prepared to not give the course this year). It also turned out that the current book we were using was no longer available. Therefore, the students could borrow a book from us but they had to share it. This was obviously a problem that was pointed out in the questionnaire. It also seemed to affect the overall outcome for the students, for example, for understanding the theory necessary for solving the assignments in one case.

Assignments and labs
Several students commented that the assignments and labs were related and relevant to the course material. One remark was that the grading of the assignments was unclear.
"The assignments were quite tricky but also rewarding".
One student suggested to go through the lab solutions afterwards.
"The labs were fun and helped to understand the theory"

Previous knowledge
One student reported problems with the musical terminology. This could have been taken care of in a better during the course and we will consider that for next year.
One student reported having problem with matlab. We have one tutorial in matlab providing some basic code that can be used in the assignments. Still, without any previous experience, this can be a bit challenging.

Disposition
It is always challenging to plan the course so that everything fits within the rather short time period. One remark that it was quite short of time assigned for the project. Also, that we did not provide response to the assignments in time.

Planned changes for next year

The most important change is to fix the problem with the course literature. The book is rather old but still relevant and it is unfortunate that it is out of print. We will either chose another book or select a set of relevant articles.

The background knowledge regarding music and matlab will be better supported by indicating basic tutorials in the beginning of the course.

We will also consider improving the instructions for the assignments and the project with clearer goals for the grading.