MODULE REPORT

Module	CS4248 - NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING
Academic Year/Sem	2020/2021 - Sem 2
Department	COMPUTER SCIENCE
Faculty	SCHOOL OF COMPUTING

Note: Class Size = Invited; Response Size = Responded; Response Rate = Response Ratio

Raters	Student
Responded	46
Invited	92
Response Ratio	50%

1. Overall opinion of the module

Distribution of Responses

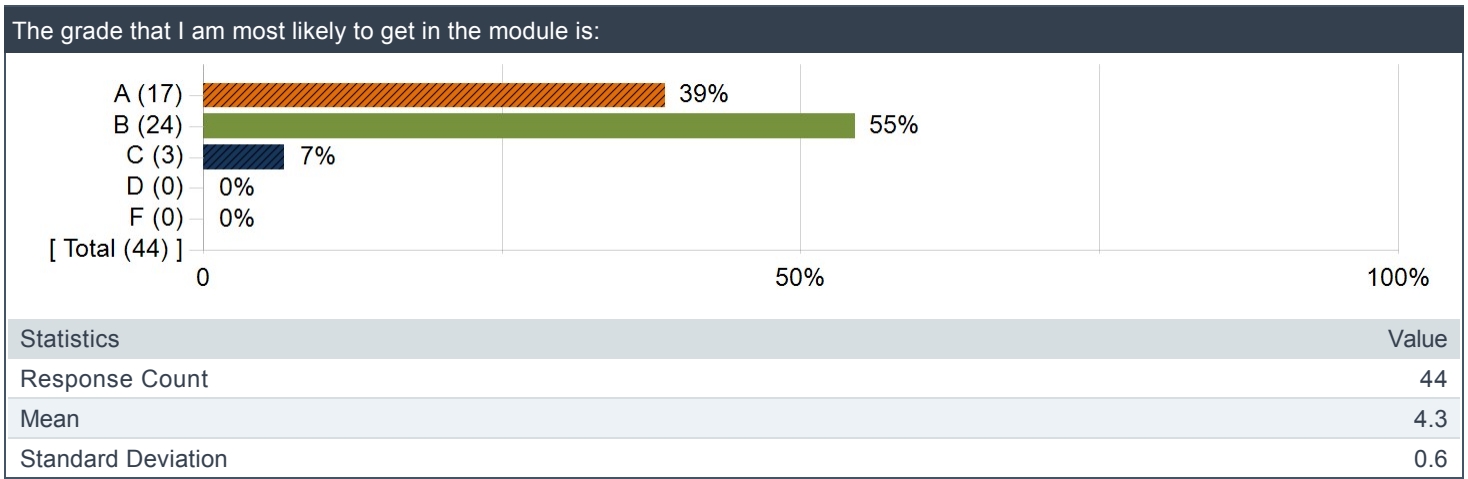| Statistics	Value
Response Count	45
Mean	3.8
Standard Deviation	1.0

Rating Scores

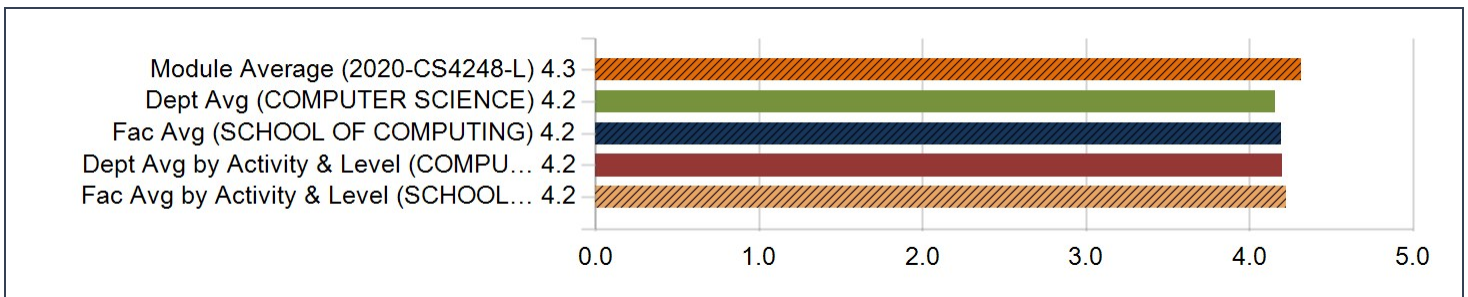| Question	Module Average (2020-CS4248-L)		Dept Avg (COMPUTER SCIENCE)		Fac Avg (SCHOOL OF COMPUTING)		Dept Avg by Activity & Level (COMPUTER SCIENCE-LECTURE (Level 4000))		Fac Avg by Activity & Level (SCHOOL OF COMPUTING-LECTURE (Level 4000))	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
What is your overall opinion of the module?	3.8	1.0	3.9	0.9	3.9	0.9	4.0	0.9	4.0	0.9

Module Average (2020-CS4248-L)	3.8
Dept Avg (COMPUTER SCIENCE)	3.9
Fac Avg (SCHOOL OF COMPUTING)	3.9
Dept Avg by Activity & Level (COMPU…	4.0
Fac Avg by Activity & Level (SCHOOL…	4.0
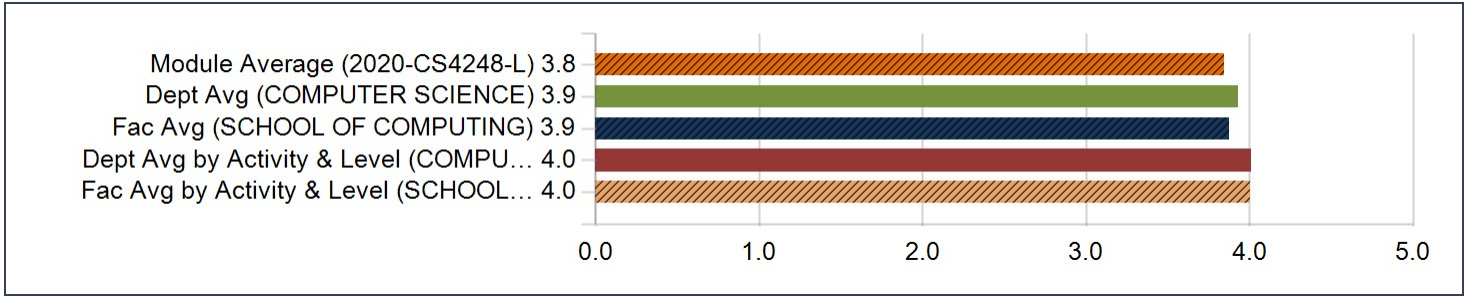
2. Expected Grade

Distribution of Responses

The grade that I am most likely to get in the module is:

A (17)	39%
B (24)	55%
C (3)	7%
D (0)	0%
F (0)	0%
[Total (44)]	

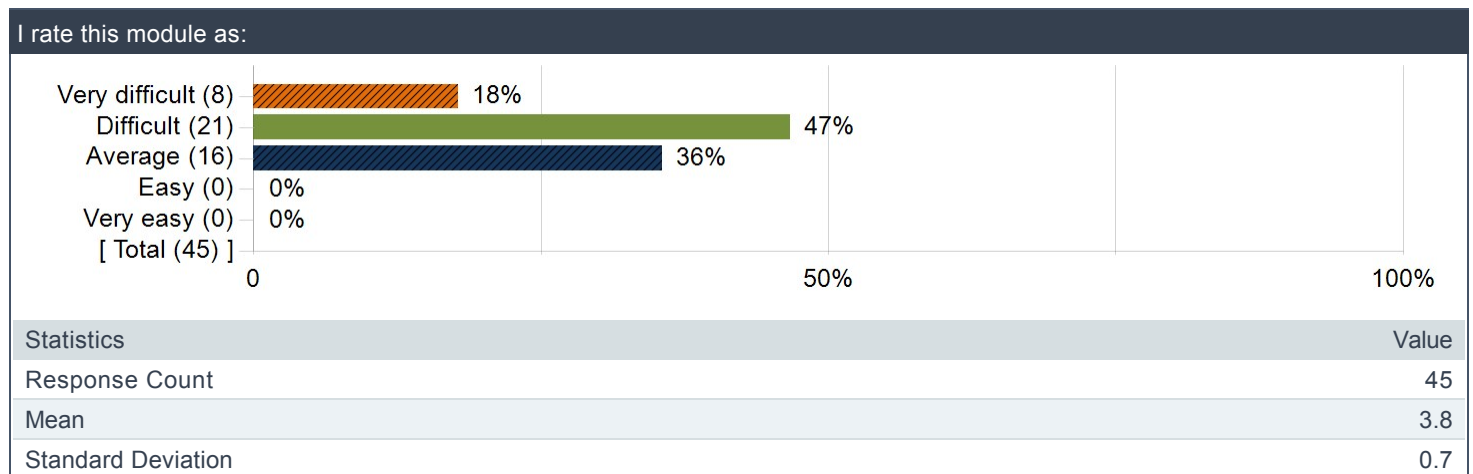| Statistics	Value
Response Count	44
Mean	4.3
Standard Deviation	0.6

Rating Scores

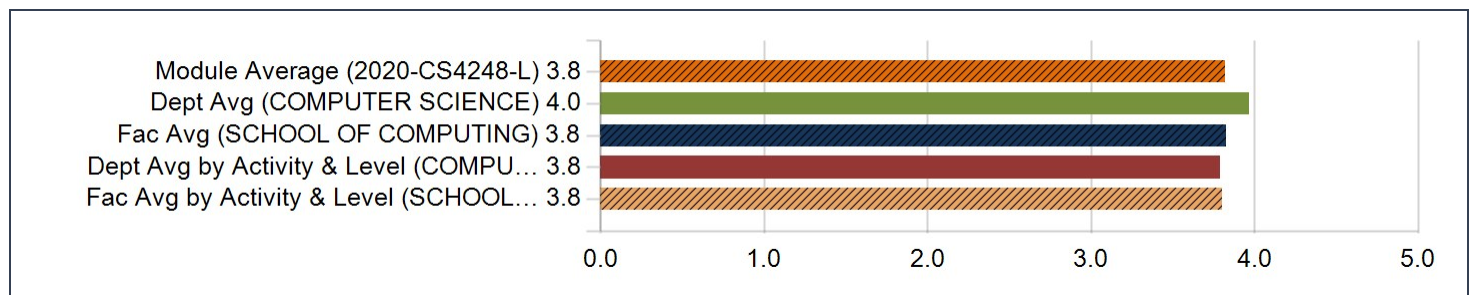| Question	Module Average (2020-CS4248-L)		Dept Avg (COMPUTER SCIENCE)		Fac Avg (SCHOOL OF COMPUTING)		Dept Avg by Activity & Level (COMPUTER SCIENCE-LECTURE (Level 4000))		Fac Avg by Activity & Level (SCHOOL OF COMPUTING-LECTURE (Level 4000))	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
The grade that I am most likely to get in the module is:	4.3	0.6	4.2	0.7	4.2	0.7	4.2	0.7	4.2	0.6

Module Average (2020-CS4248-L)	4.3
Dept Avg (COMPUTER SCIENCE)	4.2
Fac Avg (SCHOOL OF COMPUTING)	4.2
Dept Avg by Activity & Level (COMPU…	4.2
Fac Avg by Activity & Level (SCHOOL…	4.2

3. Difficulty Level of the module

Distribution of Responses

I rate this module as:

Statistics	Value
Response Count	45
Mean	3.8
Standard Deviation	0.7

Rating Scores

Question	Module Average (2020-CS4248-L)		Dept Avg (COMPUTER SCIENCE)		Fac Avg (SCHOOL OF COMPUTING)		Dept Avg by Activity & Level (COMPUTER SCIENCE-LECTURE (Level 4000))		Fac Avg by Activity & Level (SCHOOL OF COMPUTING-LECTURE (Level 4000))	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
I rate this module as:	3.8	0.7	4.0	0.8	3.8	0.8	3.8	0.8	3.8	0.7

WHAT I LIKE / DISLIKE ABOUT THE MODULE

What I liked about the module:

Comments
new topics/concepts that I found interesting to learn more about related to Artificial Intelligence
Workload is evenly paced throughout the semester. The lecturer is cognizant of the challenges of online learning, and does his best to reduce the confusion it creates by communicating frequently and effectively. The assignments are well designed to ensure learning of the subject matter. The lecturer and his team of TAs are highly responsive. The focus on best pedagogical practices is apparent, and serves the module well for the most part.
I really appreciated the assignment and project–based aspect of the module, because that allowed me to focus on the learning aspect of the content rather than the relentless pursuit of grade optimization deadline after deadline. This module has been a very enjoyable one and a great learning journey.
Almost all aspects of it.
quite interesting i suppose
I learned a lot
Syllabus was interesting and informative. Assignments were fun and exciting to do, albeit challenging at times.
Interesting take on how computers understand natural language. No final exams but instead a big group project.
No finals
Great content, good teaching, with focus on rigorous analysis.
* Min's teaching * Use of Slack – I think there were some minor issues with the organization within Slack, but overall it was waaaaay better than other modules. Big thumbs up for this.
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Very good depth in NLP related stuff. Learnt a lot in this module.
It covers the basics of NLP quite comprehensively.
Everything except the workload.
NIL
I learnt useful knowledge for NLP. Prof is very nice. He organized the module very structuring way, I easily followed each parts or assignments in during studying the module
The assignments are quite interesting, such as programming a SlackBot and creating language models. Concepts are also quite well explained
Quite self–exploratory; allows the opportunity to do things as you please.
– Gave a good introduction to NLP and a bit of machine learning. – Sparked my curiosity about NLP.
Interesting topics taught.

What I did not like about the module:

Comments
Hope they distributed more time for the students to prepare for the project
Please realise that a group project as a pedagogical tool is not useful for a senior undergrad or postgrad module. It has obvious usefulness in a junior software engineering class, where collaboration is in–and–of–itself a learning outcome. However, for a class with rich subject matter like NLP, it is a massive waste of time. A group project comes with the overhead of communication with classmates. Since classmates come from such a diversity of

Comments

backgrounds, what they hope to achieve and how much time they can contribute to a project varies significantly. While some students are particular about a good grade and doing a project well, others (mostly part–time students like myself) are only concerned with maximising learning, and do not want to focus on making a good poster or writing a good report. This puts the more ambitious students at a disadvantage, since students like myself tend to pull them down.

Most senior undergrads and postgrad students already have plenty of experience working in a collaborative setting, so using a group project with the objective of teaching them collaboration and communication skills is moot.

As a full–time software engineer taking this course as a part–time student, the last thing I want is to spend more time on zoom meetings.

As a suggestion, I would like modules to maybe offer the choice between an individual assignment or a group project, with the reasonable understanding that the group project might fetch a better grade because of the inherent excess of effort required to complete a group project. This way, students like me who are only concerned with learning, and don't care about a good grade can work on something by ourselves, at our own pace.

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communication could've been better

It was like a waterhose of information, module felt like a rush.

With a new teaching staff, the module planning and executing of assignments has room for improvement in terms of clarity of instructions.

Midterms, in my opinion, was very poorly distributed in terms of marks. Difficult questions were given fewer marks, with very simple calculation questions given absurdly high marks. This begs to question why are we even putting in additional effort if our efforts aren't even reciprocated. Moreover, having careless mistakes in calculations can cost us very dearly. Moreover, the way questions are phrased can be improved significantly. We cannot give the required answers if questions are poorly phrased.

Also, for assignments, the issue on question ambiguity has always been the hot topic among students. Questions should be finalised and stop changing once the assignments are given out, and the questions should have been phrased better and with more information on what is required and what information is crucial in solving the question.

Assignments are a lot more out of lectures' scope, a lot of self reading and self studying is required.

Poor administration, unreasonable last minute changes to assignment requirements with minimal consideration of students' time and the effort they have invested in doing the project which resulted in students submitting work based on different requirements.

* Ambiguity of assignment 1 – I think I spent nearly double the amount of time this would otherwise have taken due to the ambiguity and change of requirements.

* Ambiguity of assignment 3 – Not nearly as bad as assignment 1 but still annoying.

* No tutorials – I really missed having tutorials as I believe going through problems is where you actually check you truly understand things.

* Project group formation – This is easily my number 1 complaint. I have dreaded most project work because of this issue and this single issue has given me a terrible impression of this module. Besides my initial group mate, we were grouped with two students who had difficulty communicating, did not contribute a lot and were quite below our skill level. This is to some degree mitigated by shifting the grading, but i.e. during our presentation we were asked a relatively easy question related to one of their areas they didn't know how to answer. We stepped in when we realized they could not answer, but it still left a bad impression. PLEASE for future iterations let students choose their groups fully by themselves. If needed, grade MSc and BSc separately. Just make sure to stop the current approach.

The syllabus was very badly planned. Lectures after week 8 are basically not tested as they are no finals which bring me back to the question of what is there to rush and not cut back on the content? Many students realize this and decided not to attend lectures anymore as seen in the declining numbers of lecture goers.

In addition, it would definitely help if linguistics jargon can be explained and went through in more detail as other computer engineering modules do not cover this, yet the teaching style is though we should understand it after a brief mention.

In this whole module, I feel that I am basically practising machine learning with very limited insights on natural language processing. This is probably due to the fact that the linguistics portion of the lecture is not taught from scratch despite many students not having the foundation. I understand that students should not expect to be spoon–fed but if everything needs to be read up by ourselves, including the fundamentals of the module, how can students be interested in this module and want to explore it on a deeper level?

Comments
Due to the first time conducting this module. A lot of instructions are often ambiguous and not clear in assignments and project. Assignment workload vs grade weightage also do not seem to be well considered (i.e. Effort required for each assignment is very high for small weightages like 5–15%)
Many of the assignments had their requirements changed last minute before submissions, resulting in a lot of re–doing and much time was wasted unnecessarily due to unclear instructions.
The workload for some course work is high. And the instructions change in last minutes
Personally, I feel that the project requirements are way too heavy, considering its weightage and the allocated timeframe. In addition, Prof may want to consider reducing the assignments as it seems the TAs and prof are facing great difficulties in getting them back to us on time.
– Assignment 1 was very messy (communication channel, instructions, etc.) and that caused a lot of stress because we had to constantly check Slack and there was a lot of clarifications under threads that was difficult to find and very easy to miss. Later assignments were a lot better though. – Midterms was quite disorganised too. Heard of classmates who accidentally started the quiz early because of unclear instructions from the TA. But no extra time was awarded to them, which is really quite unfair to them. – Marked assignments came back a bit late too. Comments from graders could not be adopted for later assignments/group project.
Assignment 1 was very messy with requirements changing midway, which made students to redo some parts that have already been done. However, this was improved in subsequent assignments. Too many different platforms used (website for grading and exam schedule, slack for communication and Luminus for files) Some files are uploaded to slack and not on Luminus.
The module looks more intense than other module level 4
The assignments had a lot of vague requirements and wording that resulted in many re–hashing of requirements and late clarification which really impacted our time requirement in completing them.
A lot of overlap with 3244. Why not just make 3244 a pre–requisite, and spend time talking about more cutting–edge NLP models instead?
– workload was very heavy for the project, but that is to be expected for this kind of project.
Assignments were very ambiguous, some had very last minute clarifications. Assignments were also often released before the content covered was taught, so leaving us with even less time to complete the assignment.