

Form A: Course Evaluation - Student Comments

Faculty	: Engineering	Session	: 2008 Teaching Period 2
School	: School of Computer Science	Enrolled	: 14
Course	: COMP9242-Advanced Operating Systems	Repondents	: 13
Survey Description	: (Course Evaluation) COMP9242 Form A	Survey Type	: ONLINE (17 Oct 2008 - 17 Nov 2008)
Survey Alternative	: Course Evaluation	Administration Date	: 21 Nov 2008

The best features of this course were

- It was awesomely challenging
 - the massive project, although it would have been nice to have more freedom on it when the spec is so vague
 - Great project - where you basically did everything yourself.
 - The project and how (unique|independent|interesting|challenging) it was. Structure of the course was very appropriate really, lectures were generally interesting and unpatronising, project was the project.
- Oh, and the camaraderie. And the feeling of eliteness after finishing it :-)
- A lot of practical work means that you learn the hard way, which is often the best way.
 - The assignment. It was complex and interesting
 - The project itself and the weekly milestones are wonderful ways to gain practical experiences to building operating systems. The lecture materials are well designed to give a more in depth insight into system design etc.
 - - Very challenging and way too time consuming assignment, but it was really rewarding and I feel that I have learnt a huge amount about operating systems, so it was well worth doing despite taking away 12 weeks of my life :)
 - Lectures were well presented on different research topics.

This course could be improved by

- Making the marking criteria for each milestone more clear, it was a bit vague at times.
- More active support from lecturers and tutors
- one of the following two things
 - 1, make it 12 units
 - 2, make it a summer course
 either option would generally give the students much more time on which to devote their life to the project, it isn't nice to have to underload, which i found necessary
- Better documentation for the project, and perhaps a little more understanding of what is needed to be done for a milestone in the project.

- Regarding the project: a little bit more help at the start (was a pretty steep learning curve), more sensible code to start off with (took a lot of time to get in to things).

Also, Oud is freezing. Please petition whoever is control of the air conditioning to raise it by ~3 degrees.

Regarding the lectures: personally I find RT theory pretty boring (partly because it seems hard to justify the amount of money/research that goes in to it - when is good enough, good enough?), and that is even without a bad lecture on the subject. I would have (in general) preferred lectures that are less generic and more in-depth on a certain specific example/subject.

Not really much wrong though. It was a very tough, relentless course but that is why it was so good :-)

- The lectures could have been re-arranged to suit the project a bit better. Sometimes lectures that would have been extremely useful for a project milestone were delivered AFTER that milestone was due.
- 12Units of credit or less milestones on the project (drop the timer driver?) . This is too much to cram into a 12 week semester and survive other courses
- Having the milestone on the day of the lecture isn't great -- since we are all falling asleep by then!
Perhaps have it on a Monday if the milestone is due Friday -- we aren't up all night the morning before the milestone is due and hence awake in lectures :)
- There were a few specific parts of the assignment that could be improved a little, if they are still relevant next year:
 - m0, dealing with ipc's - the first time you look at the main.c file with the ipc's, it is quite confusing, and it takes a while to understand how ipc's work and how to use them, but the specs indicate that it is simple and you should have no problem doing it, which is a little misleading as it is only true after m0 is finished!
 - the bootinfo parts need to be documented more, and mentioned for m1 when it is first needed rather than m9 or about.