

DR CHRISTIAN URBAN

Compilers and Formal Languages (6CCS3CFL 2023/4 SEM1 000001) (6CCS3CFL-2023/4-SEM1-000001)

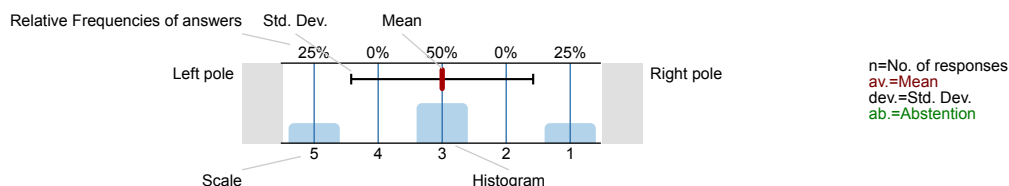
No. of responses = 63



Survey Results

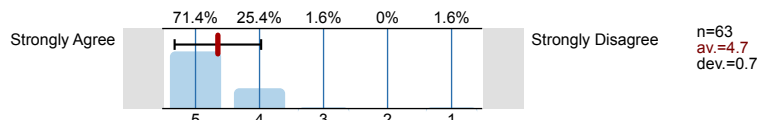
Legend

Question text

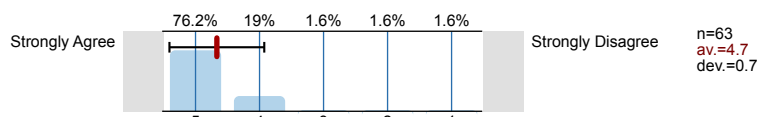


1. CHRISTIAN URBAN - Lecturer Questions

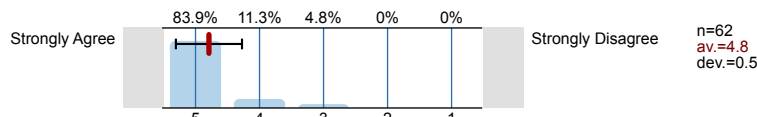
1.1) The lecturer has been good at explaining the subject



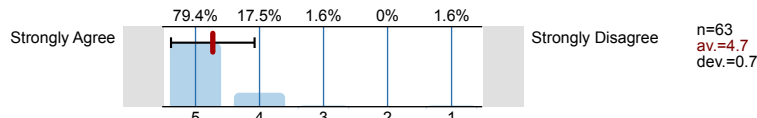
1.2) The lecturer has made the subject interesting



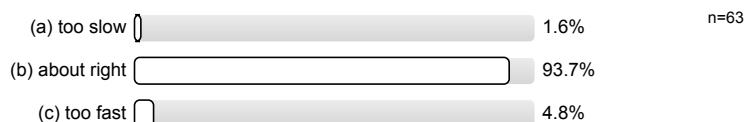
1.3) The lecturer has been well prepared for their classes



1.4) The lecturer cares about my learning experience

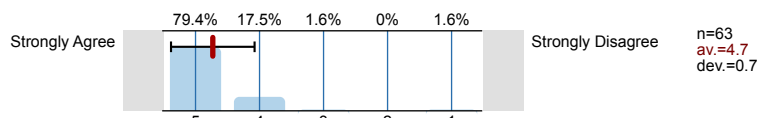


1.5) The pace of the lectures/seminars was

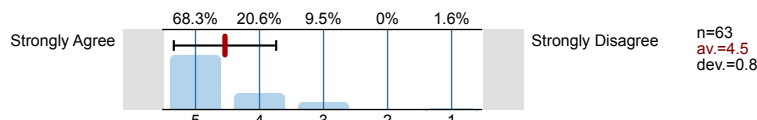


2. Compilers and Formal Languages (CORE) - Module Questions

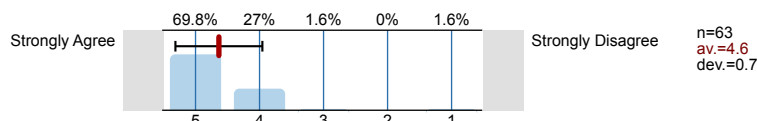
2.1) This module was intellectually stimulating



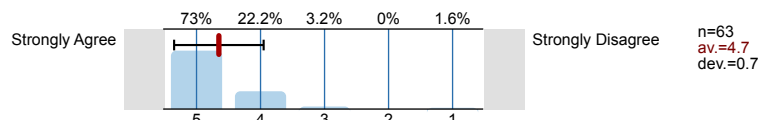
2.2) The criteria used in assessment for this module have been made clear in advance



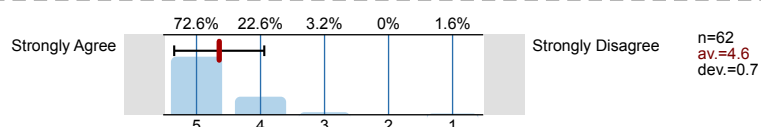
2.3) The written/verbal feedback I have received has been helpful



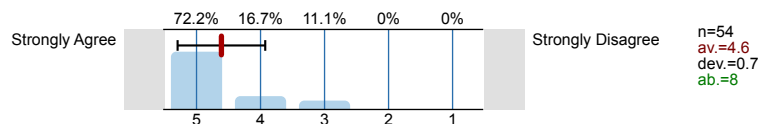
2.4) This module has been well organised



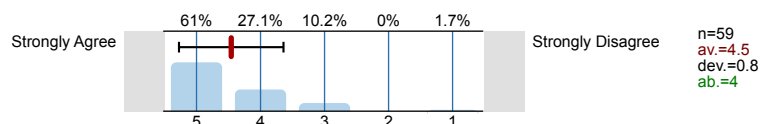
2.5) Learning materials (e.g. handbooks, study guides, teaching materials and online content) for this module have effectively supported my learning



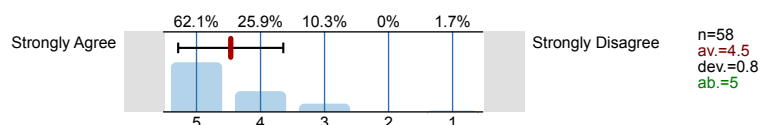
2.6) I have received helpful study advice and support when I have asked for it



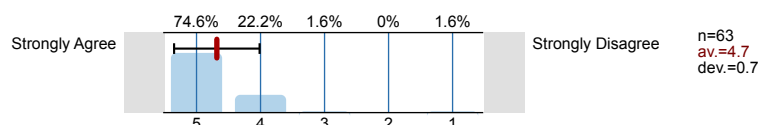
2.7) I have felt included in this module through having been encouraged to ask questions and/or participate in discussions



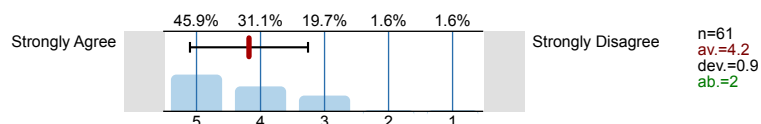
2.8) Staff value my views and perspectives in this module



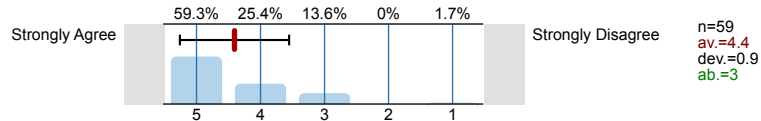
2.9) This module has helped to broaden my knowledge and/or skill set



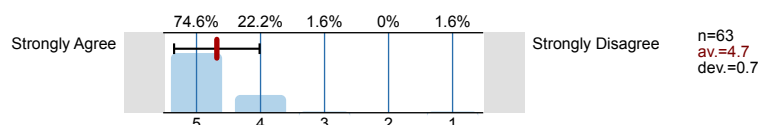
2.10) I feel part of a community on this module



2.11) The design and approach of the module made me feel included



2.12) Overall, I am satisfied with this module







Profile











Subunit: Informatics
 Responsible for modules: DR CHRISTIAN URBAN
 Name of the course: Compilers and Formal Languages (6CCS3CFL 2023/4 SEM1 000001)
 (Name of the survey)

Values used in the profile line: Mean

1. CHRISTIAN URBAN - Lecturer Questions

1.1) The lecturer has been good at explaining the subject	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=63	av.=4.7	md=5	dev.=0.7
1.2) The lecturer has made the subject interesting	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=63	av.=4.7	md=5	dev.=0.7
1.3) The lecturer has been well prepared for their classes	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=62	av.=4.8	md=5	dev.=0.5
1.4) The lecturer cares about my learning experience	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=63	av.=4.7	md=5	dev.=0.7

2. Compilers and Formal Languages (CORE) - Module Questions

2.1) This module was intellectually stimulating	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=63	av.=4.7	md=5	dev.=0.7
2.2) The criteria used in assessment for this module have been made clear in advance	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=63	av.=4.5	md=5	dev.=0.8
2.3) The written/verbal feedback I have received has been helpful	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=63	av.=4.6	md=5	dev.=0.7
2.4) This module has been well organised	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=63	av.=4.7	md=5	dev.=0.7
2.5) Learning materials (e.g. handbooks, study guides, teaching materials and online content) for this module have effectively supported my	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=62	av.=4.6	md=5	dev.=0.7
2.6) I have received helpful study advice and support when I have asked for it	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=54	av.=4.6	md=5	dev.=0.7
2.7) I have felt included in this module through having been encouraged to ask questions and/or participate in discussions	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=59	av.=4.5	md=5	dev.=0.8
2.8) Staff value my views and perspectives in this module	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=58	av.=4.5	md=5	dev.=0.8
2.9) This module has helped to broaden my knowledge and/or skill set	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=63	av.=4.7	md=5	dev.=0.7
2.10) I feel part of a community on this module	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=61	av.=4.2	md=4	dev.=0.9
2.11) The design and approach of the module made me feel included	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=59	av.=4.4	md=5	dev.=0.9
2.12) Overall, I am satisfied with this module	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	n=63	av.=4.7	md=5	dev.=0.7

Comments Report

2. Compilers and Formal Languages (CORE) - Module Questions

2.13) What has been the most positive aspect of this module for you, and if you could recommend one improvement to the Module Organiser what would it be?

- A big thank you to Christian Urban, the module topic is interesting, this is one of the few modules where I found the courseworks interesting and not stressing. The lecturer is always so kind and prompt when replying to emails and any questions. I enjoyed very much this module. Thank you and have a nice Christmas break!!!!
- CFL has to be one of the best organised modules I have taken at KCL. Originally, a lot of people had concerns about the numeracy of courseworks set, however, I have actually really liked how it's been set. All being fairly short courseworks, where each one follows on from the previous coursework and the gap between lecture material and work is quite small allowing for the coursework to cement knowledge rather than being some abstract piece of work loosely connected to the lecture material. The handouts are amazing and I love them so much. The module feels like I'm learning with the aid of Dr Urban rather than in spite of the lecturer, as I've experienced in some modules. Feedback is given for each module and is quite personal despite how many people take the course allowing you to see where you've gone wrong. I took CFL as Dr Urban's PEP module was so good and I've been pleasantly surprised how interesting he's made compilers seem. Thank you very much, Dr Urban.
- Christian has always provided help whenever I'm confused about something in the module. An improvement would be to change the lecture hall where the lecture is held (although this is probably out of Christian's control)
- Christian is very knowledgeable when it comes to the content of this module, and occasionally shares information that is beyond the scope of the module to give additional context to what we are doing, as well as teaching content that is up-to-date with recent research. My only issue is that we don't get shown the solutions to the HW questions, obviously this encourages us to go to sessions in person, but it means that if you miss the session you might struggle to know if your answer is correct. I hope that these can be uploaded after the content is finished, for revision purposes.
- Christian Urban is a good lecturer who continues to be available to answer any questions I have relating to the content and the coursework. He is really focussed on ensuring that we understand the content.
- Chris urban is an amazing lecturer, he explains concepts really well and the way he has organised the course is very stimulating, with each week being more challenging than the next. The TAs have been extremely good (at least the TA I have) and he explains the homework questions really well. Each coursework has a varying level of challenge yet is very satisfying once solved, which is different from my other modules. My only issue with this module stems from sometimes the ambiguity of the coursework, especially with the submission files, as many people have mentioned that it is very unclear as to what is needed for a successful submission of the coursework. Overall this module has been one of the best modules I have picked and I will most certainly recommend people to pick this module!
- Creating each step of the compiler is intellectually stimulating. The SGTs are a bit underwhelming, but that may be more to do with the TA (don't know her name) rushing through things with little explanation.
- Dr Urban was always willing to spend the time to help people improve their understanding. His feedback and method of marking the courseworks was the best I've experienced and I'm glad I changed to the module. I did find I started to fall behind after reading week due to the intensity of the content and the amount, however, I feel confident going into the exam due to the coursework being related to the content.
- Honestly, great job, one of the best modules from King's. I am so glad to be able to have a strong base understanding of the compilers world now and I feel like this opened me a whole new world of possibilities in the industry in general. I would have preferred more robust automated tests for the coursework submissions and I felt like the coursework could sometimes be more exhaustive in its explanations of what the requirements are for some of the implementations - for example, I would have appreciated more transparency with the syntax of the while language when it came to the exact use of the parenthesis placements around different kinds of operations. Despite some minor details like this, I am really grateful for having chosen this amazing module, many kudos!
- I found the module content extremely interesting, and Christian was extremely good at explaining difficult content in his lectures. The coursework was enjoyable and at a good standard of difficulty. (I haven't yet started the fifth but have finished the first four.) The handouts were extremely useful and on par with the best I have seen for any module in any university. In my opinion they compare favourably with Andrew Ng's lecture notes for his machine learning course in Stanford University. If I may suggest a few improvements: in lectures it would be useful if we could go over some of the homework style questions, as opposed to mostly going over that week's lecture content. I think that would help to make the lecture's more engaging. I also felt that Christian's expert Scala skills meant that boiler-plate code given to us for the coursework was very difficult to use, as opposed to if only more generic functional programming features were used.
- I like how, unlike other modules, we receive personal feedback for the courseworks that we do, which helps us to understand what we did well and what we could improve.

However, one thing which I don't like is how the answers for the Homeworks are not provided on KEATS. I was ill for 2 weeks during the module, and, as a result, missed out on 2 weeks worth of homework answers which I now do not know whether my answers are correct or incorrect.
- I like how we have to implement our own versions of different parts of the compiler and learning about the different parts but it was difficult to keep up with the content and the coursework. It would be better if there are less courseworks and if some of them were combined.
Thank you!
- I really hope that Dr. Christopher Urban has some sort of incentive other than his own kindness to keep up the incredibly high quality

of this module.

The quality of the modules ranging so massively would suggest otherwise, though. If all modules were as good as this one I would start recommending KCL over basically every single university instead of suggesting people look somewhere else.

- It is clear that Dr. Urban is passionate and very knowledgeable about the material and this translates to a very thoughtful and interesting curriculum. I really enjoy applying what we learn to code and mathematical definitions. One thing I would ask to consider is either reducing the number of cws or removing the exam, as this significantly increases the load throughout the semester, but does not reduce it as much from the exam period. Thank you!

- It was just all-round really good and enjoyable. The lecturer seemed very enthusiastic about the topic and when that's the case it's also easy to be interested about it too. Was also very well taught and lecturer would respond to emails/questions on forums very quickly. He's also funny :)

- Module has been great, although I spend more time figuring out what is asked in the coursework rather than actually doing it. I would personally find it helpful to have the videos/code hold back on syntactic sugar / convenient operators for the examples given in the course. When it comes to a functional language like Scala where types are so important, I'd rather have uglier code where the types are all laid out, rather than having an easy time reading code, but having to reverse engineer the types to truly understand what's going on.

- My favourite module :)

- My favourite part about the unit has been the handouts - super comprehensive and remained engaging for their length.

My least favourite part about the module has been having to complete it in Scala. Technically, the freedom is given to implement the coursework in other languages, but it doesn't much sense to as so much work has already been done for you in the scaffold, written in Scala. Rewriting the scaffold in a language of your choosing is asking for errors. Whilst the scaffold code is elegant and succinct, even after the lectures I found it really hard to understand why each function actually works - lots of Scala-specific hacks and shortcuts that make it hard to follow the logic of the code. I'd never coded in Scala prior to taking this unit, so it read very abstractly for me. I found myself treating many of these functions as "black boxes" - only scraping by and knowing that they work, but not truly understanding why.

- Super interesting module teaching us very novel and recent content. Content can be difficult but we are given adequate guidance.
- Thank you for the best module I have taken at King's so far. I feel like you really care about your students and that they learn something and you don't make their lives unnecessarily hard.

One thing that made working through your code a bit hard at times is that it is too concise. I think sometimes it would have made my life easier by e.g. writing out variable names or separating a beautifully concise oneliner into 2 or three lines. For my unfamiliar eye, this would have enhanced readability a lot.

Thank you for a great module!

- The coursework has been really enjoyable to work through, and I find that I was able to learn a lot of the theory required for the coursework through just attempting the coursework and reading the provided code examples, I personally prefer learning like this.

The handouts also look quite useful, I appreciate that they have been provided. I haven't used them just yet but I plan on using them to improve and complete my notes wherever I'm missing some information for revision.

I can't think of anything useful to improve on, the module is delivered quite well.

- The detail of the programs provided to show what was talked about during the videos and lecture slides was helpful and informative in understanding the concepts of this module. The coursework too has been proving to be very interesting and engaging throughout the module. One improvement for this module would be providing detailed solutions to the homework that could also be viewed on Keats not just the LGTs. The reason for this is so us students can go back later and review these too after the sgt just in case we can not note it all down during the sgt

- The feedback on the coursework is very helpful

- The most positive aspect for me has been the lecturer. Dr. Urban has a clear passion for the module and this shines through his delivery of the content and the support he provides to students. The module has also equipped me with knowledge that I have used in interviews to secure a graduate job. One improvement I would suggest is to do something similar to PEP where we are given an idea of how much each part within a coursework is worth. This would allow us to further understand the effort required for the parts of the coursework and improve our planning.

- The videos and the assignments were incredibly valuable and helped me understand the content well. My only recommended change would be that the large tutorials/lectures focus more on the content (or focus on the content for longer) rather than mostly on individual student questions, many of which could have been put on the discussion form or asked in office hours.

- The volume of coursework can be overwhelming at times and I wish some deadlines didn't overlap with exam season, however Christian gives you all the resources you need to succeed and has been the most responsive and engaging professor I've had in 4 years. Clearly has a passion for his research and this carries through in his teaching.

I think the videos on Keats could include more examples, I've gone to every SGT but there often isn't enough time to cover everything or have questions answered. The SGT questions need to be updated generally to suit the exam format better because it's online, e.g. other modules include quizzes or recent mock exams.

Generally, I would recommend this module to others, you just have to have good time management to keep up with the lectures.

I will be sad to finish this module and not be taught by Christian again, I hope he continues to teach at KCL for many years.

Thank you for responding to all my emails!

- This has been the best module I have studied so far at King's. Never thought learning about compilers would be this enjoyable. The lecturer really explains well. And the coursework although challenging has been pretty fun to work on.
- This is definitely one of my favourite modules I have ever taken, Christian is very good at explaining the content and is always happy to answer any questions.
Thank you for teaching us!
- This is the most interesting model I have studied in KCL. The model is well organised and has the right amount of challenge in the cw.
- This module is great- its taught really well and the handouts are so helpful. The lecturer has organised it so well and clearly cares a lot about it. I really appreciate how the lecturer takes the time to go through every person's coursework. To improve please see if there's any way to not have the final coursework due the day after the exam. Even a week after would be better, even though it would overlap with next term.
- Very interesting subject, taught well, lecturer very knowledgeable. Questions in coursework can sometimes be ambiguous... and having homework solutions without having to chase our TAs would be nice.
- Very well structured, content is clear and well explained. I have no complaints about the content or how it's taught.

An improvement would maybe be to re-structure the content for the SGTs, it was common to see TAs struggle to fit all content in a worksheet within a single hour.

- Without a doubt the best module I have taken in my 2.5 years here. Christian has been an excellent lecturer and great at explaining concepts, I did not find having to resort to reading from some textbook or watching a YouTube video for aid in understanding something.
The coursework is well structured and does not take too long to complete, it is probably the only coursework I've had actual fun trying to complete.
Honestly, if KCL can look at the CFL and try to mimic it with other modules, no doubt in my mind King's College London can be a top 12 university in the world again, and make every student happy taking the CS course.

Thanks Christian, I will remember you as best lecturer/professor I've ever had. Take care!