

Summary

This course took place over 5 weeks, with 4 weeks (plus one week holiday) being the main contact time. Students were encouraged to read in advance of the lectures, and an introductory (live) lecture was given at the beginning of the term (3 weeks before other sessions started) to help explain the format of the course. All lectures were pre-recorded and posted to Canvas a minimum of 2 working days before the scheduled lecture slot on Mondays. On Tuesdays, the class met in person for face-to-face learning. These sessions were structured around large and small group student-centred learning with discussions and activities designed to consolidate and apply the ideas from lectures and readings. Emphasis was placed on students being prepared before class having done the reading and watched the lectures. All live sessions had a hybrid option and at least 4 students were on Zoom for each session.

Overall outcomes

The responses to the survey were too few to make statistical representations but nevertheless showed a large majority very satisfied with all aspects of the course, and a small minority with complaints. Nightingale also received very positive feedback from over 12 students in other formats: emails, verbal feedback, and chat messages on Zoom during hybrid sessions.

Some selected quotes:

“Very thought provoking - I feel as though Andrea explains quite complex concepts really well.”

We had pre-recorded lectures for this course which was of a very high quality. I have really enjoyed all of them.”

“The teachers are engaged and seek to get discussions involving the students”

“Really good questions that I learn a lot from”

“Nightingale is very good at giving feedback and informing the group - both in class and via Canvas. She is very much on top of things and publishes clear instructions. She is also very kind with us, and helps us when we need her assistance.”

Results of student feedback were provided verbally in class and in Canvas.

Conclusions

1. The students were nearly unanimous in preferring pre-recorded lectures. The reasons were varied: easier to manage their own time; abilities to review; abilities to go back and forth between lectures and readings. Most indicated they were of very high quality in this course.
2. Students really liked the interactive sessions with the exception of one who suggested they were a waste of time. However, they felt the compressed time period was too much. While most students seemed to have done the reading for the first week in advance, they appeared to have not read further into the course until lectures started, so it would have been a lot to keep up with.
3. The after effects of COVID and the stresses it has generated have elevated students overall stress levels.

4. The course essays were of very high quality and the vast majority reflected a very good understanding of the course themes. They reflected the kind of 'cumulative' pedagogy I was trying to achieve.

Changes to be implemented based on the feedback

1. The course will be run over a longer time period in the future.
2. I will be more careful to speak slower to ensure that all students can follow my English. I will also check in with them frequently during the course to be sure language comprehension is not interfering with learning.
3. I will continue to emphasise the need to read before coming to class. It was clear from the essays and discussions that students had engaged more reading than they normally do which had very positive outcomes.