

# Course report – Information Retrieval for digital libraries 1, 7.5 credits, fall 2016

The course is offered in the Master's study programme in Library and Information Science: Digital Libraries and Information Services (MADL). It was offered during the first half of the fall term 2016, from August 29 to October 30. When the course started, according to the PingPong evaluation statistics, 21 students were registered, with 13 of them active throughout the course and 1 person having passed one component of the course.

During the residential week in Borås, both IR1 and IR2 (NLID12 and NLID23) were covered to a general satisfaction of the participants. Further, this year we welcomed Prof. Juan Antonio Pastor Sanchez, University of Murcia, on ERASMUS exchange who added new material to the course content (with special significance for linking NLID12 with NLID23).

Course content and teaching was structured in accordance with the following themes and problematics:

- Information representation for IR; Classical IR models; IR and the web; IR evaluation.
- Based on criticism from NLID12 VT-16, the group tasks of former years focusing on digital library IR needs were replaced by individual essays where the students had to abstract and explain Chapter 4 of Gödert, W., Hubrich, J., Nagelschmidt, M. (2014). *Semantic Knowledge Representation for Information Retrieval*. Göttingen: Hubert & Co. GmbH & Co.

The above mentioned parts of the course were examined one at a time. In the first step, the essays were graded on an individual basis. With an overall good grasp of the topic, some of the students excelled in providing insights and implications not discussed in the source chapter. In the second step, students had to submit their home exams which were graded individually. The results were as follows:

- Component 1 (2 essays, results averaged): 14 submissions, 8 of them VG "strong/solid" = A "excellent", 6 of them VG "ordinary" = B "very good";
- Component 2 (home exam): 12 submissions, 6 of them VG "strong/solid" = A "Excellent"; 5 of them VG "ordinary" = B "very good"; and 1 of them G "ordinary" = D "satisfactory". One student actively participating in the course asked for a two weeks postponement of his exam period due to moving. His results will be available in December 2016;
- Out of 12 students who have passed the course, 6 were graded VG "strong/solid" = A "Excellent", and 5 earned VG "ordinary" = B "very good". One person finished with grade G "ordinary" = D "satisfactory".

Prof. Pastor Sanchez was informed of the results in due course and his input in the examination questions was gratefully acknowledged.

The course evaluation was planned to be conducted by a digital questionnaire published in Ping Pong at the end of the course. With less than 3 responses, the outcome could not be evaluated.

During the course, standard feedback from the students came in by PIMs and email. The general pattern of problem solving was offering targeted answers to targeted questions. This worked to everyone's satisfaction. Obviously, the residential week contributed to brushing up some of the

secondary school mathematics necessary to follow the course. This year the course textbook was not criticized, but the participation rate to submit voluntary home exercises improved (8 submissions for Exercise 1, 6 for Exercise 2, 2 for Exercise 3).

A typical comment of relief was this: *"It was a tough course so I am happy that I was able to do this good on it."*

After the course was finished, a registered student asked for the compulsory five more examination dates as these were not listed on the course website. To remedy this, action is in progress.

Those teaching in this course are grateful for feedback from our students and we will consider as many of the recommendations as feasible.

Borås, 16-11-27

Sándor Darányi, course responsible