



Lecture 1

Part 1: Overview of the IRR course

Informatics Research Review (IRR)

Aurora Constantin

Based on and adapted from earlier versions by Armstrong, Anderson, Franke
van Rossum, Bundy, Lavrenko, and Viglas

IRR Course Team



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IRR Tutors

Content

- **Essential information about IRR**
- **Wider context of IRR**
- **Organisation of IRR**
- **FAQ**

Key points

- 10 credit course. Approximately 100 hours of work total.
- Runs through the semester 1 (and into next semester).
- Assessed by coursework only (final submission in sem 2)
- Part of the research component in your MSc.
- Largely self-managed and very personal.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Select literature in the chosen area appropriate for the review subject, and critically evaluate research literature in the chosen area.
2. Search, and use appropriately, databases of scientific literature.
3. Evaluate and search traditional library resources.
4. Discuss a research topic in detail leading to new hypotheses.
5. Deliver a detailed and balanced report on a research topic.

Wider Context of IRR

- **Taught component (100 credits)**
 - Lectures, tutorials, coursework, exams
 - Learn established techniques that work
- **Research component (80 credits)**
 - Do something that has never been done before
 - Study a new problem, develop a new method, etc.
 - Probably the most exciting (and hardest) part of MSc
 - ***Dissertation (60 credits)***
 - 20-40 pages in Informatics
 - **Two courses prepare you:**
 - **IRR: literature review in your broad area of interest (10 credits)**
 - IPP: write a detailed plan for your specific MSc project (10 credits)

Your research year

- **Semester 1 (IRR)**
 - Learn about a relevant area: **explore** research papers
 - Write a 10-page **critical review** of what you learned
 - *All research projects start with a literature review so we know what has already been done and what options exist that we can build on.*
- **Semester 2 (Project selection and IPP)**
 - Research staff supervisors propose **project topics** or
 - You submit a self-proposal
 - IPP: Develop and write a detailed research project plan
- **Summer**
 - Work on your **project** (design, build, test, analyse results)
 - Write a **dissertation**

Organisation of IRR

	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	...	Sem2 W2
Lectures	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓						
Live session: workshops, Q&A, open hours	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Tutorials			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
IRR draft submission for feedback from ELE										✓			
IRR draft submission for feedback from tutors											✓		
Coursework (IRR) submission													✓

Lectures

Week	Lecture Topic (Lecturer)
W1	Lecture 1: Introduction <i>Aurora Constantin</i>
W2	Lecture 2: Academic Reading <i>David Caulton</i>
W5	Lecture 3: Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism <i>Murray Cole & Aurora Constantin</i>
W6	Lecture 4: Academic Writing <i>David Caulton</i>
W7	Lecture 5: Writing a Good Research Review <i>Aurora Constantin</i>

Tutorials

- Tutorials focus on **generic** skills for reading and writing a review (e.g., analyse and synthesise findings, organise an argument)
- Meet every week, from week 3 to week 8
- Tutorial group allocation → TTU
- To change your tutorial group, you need to complete a GCRF form direct to TTU:

<https://www.edweb.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/timetabling/personalised-timetables/group-change-request>

- Tutors are there to help you. Take benefit from that
- Attendance is mandatory: ignore meetings = fail IRR

Tutorials – elevator pitches

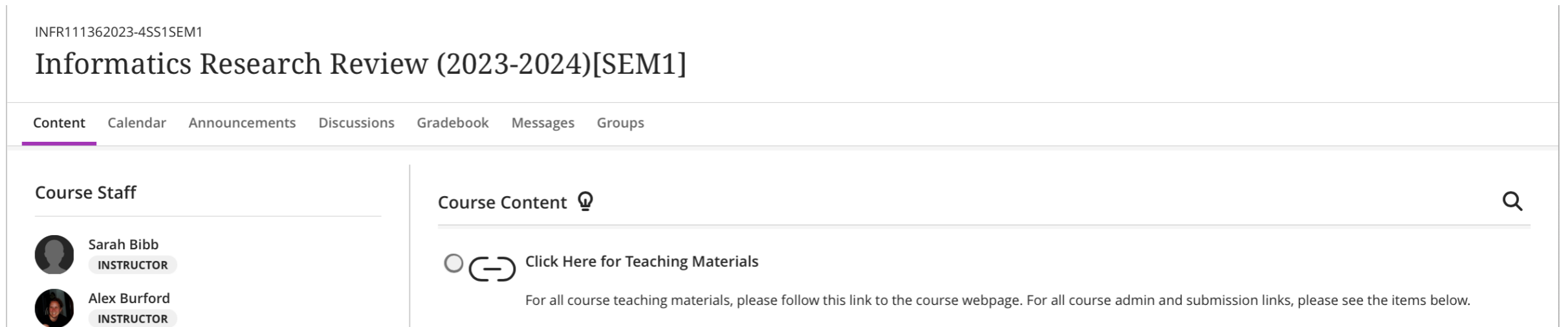
- A key element of reviewing literature is to **condense the key findings** into a very short and ideally engaging narrative
- Each week each student should deliver a single short **‘elevator pitch’** on a topic relevant to the tutorial.
 - Each pitch should have between 50 -100 words
 - Post your pitch on Piazza – we will pick up 1-2 examples to discuss at the beginning of each tutorial

Coursework

- IRR is assessed entirely by one piece of coursework
- Students work individually to produce an Informatics Research Review (10 pages) on a topic of their choice.
- Marking: pass/fail, based on a set of criteria
- Template will be provided

Course Materials



- All the materials for the course will be made available on the IRR OpenCourse (OC) page.
- There is a link from the IRR Learn page to the IRR OC page




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Informatics Research Review (2023-2024)[SEM1]

Content Calendar Announcements Discussions Gradebook Messages Groups

Course Staff

-  Sarah Bibb
INSTRUCTOR
-  Alex Burford
INSTRUCTOR

Course Content 🔍

 [Click Here for Teaching Materials](#)

For all course teaching materials, please follow this link to the course webpage. For all course admin and submission links, please see the items below.

- Materials from meetings and recordings of all meetings will be linked from OpenCourse.
- Among the resources on the OC page there is a collection of IRRs from last year.

Learning Style

- An important part of IRR is to help you develop an **independent learning style**:
 - You choose the direction
 - You decide how you will work
- You need to choose a **Topic** – this is difficult, and we will help with this
- You will earn skills of research reading, gathering evidence and marshalling it to write up in scientific style. Key skills are:
 - Critical Thinking, and
 - Constructing an argument to justify your thinking.
- **Your tutor facilitates, they don't direct you**

FAQs

Q: Does IRR need to overlap with my course choices?

A: No, but it often does.

Q: Does my project need to be in same area as IRR?

A: No, again but it often does

Q: Does my project need to be in line with course choices?

A: No, but be careful you have the required expertise/skills.

Q: I am part-time, when do I do my IRR/IPP?

A: IRR any year, IPP ideally same year as project.

Q: Can I reuse my IRR later in the literature review chapter of the IPP and/or MSc dissertation?

A: If you want, you can reuse content from your IRR, but phrased in a different way (i.e., paraphrase) to avoid self-plagiarism.

Questions

If you have questions, please:

- ask your question during the live session
- ask the tutor of your group
- post your question on the Piazza forum
- email the TA
- email Felipe or Aurora (lcostas@ed.ac.uk or Aurora.Constantin@ed.ac.uk)
- make an appointment to see Felipe or Aurora