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Anthropology of Current World Issues

WORLD101x

Course Report 2014

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Introduction

World101x: Anthropology of Current World Issues is an introductory level anthropology course led by Dr. Gerhard Hoffstaedter, DECRA research fellow and lecturer in anthropology at the University of Queensland. In World101x, students begin with discussions of definitions of anthropology, indigeneity and migration, applying those concepts to their own experiences and knowledge. This series of episodes is followed by lectures and interviews that focus on material culture in Cuba, water scarcity in the Atacama Desert in Chile and the challenges refugees face in Malaysia. At the midpoint of the course, students complete a museum project in which they submit photographs of items for inclusion in a future museum that would help museum-goers understand world culture in 2014.

World101x was offered as a UQx course on edX in September-October 2014. The course was led by Gerhard Hoffstaedter and discussion forum moderation was provided by Fern Thompsett. Interviews with notable anthropologists from around the world added to the content of the course. Additionally, the course was used to supplement ANTH1030, an on campus course that included 350 UQ students.

Course Information

Overview

Registration Open:
17th March 2014

Launch Date:
25th August 2014

Close Date:
27th October 2014

Report Generated:
18th February 2015

Course Length:
9 weeks

Course Instance:
First run

Estimated Time:
2 hours per week

Languages Offered:
English

Pre-requisites

None.

Course Team

Gerhard Hoffstaedter

Fern Thompsett

Course Structure

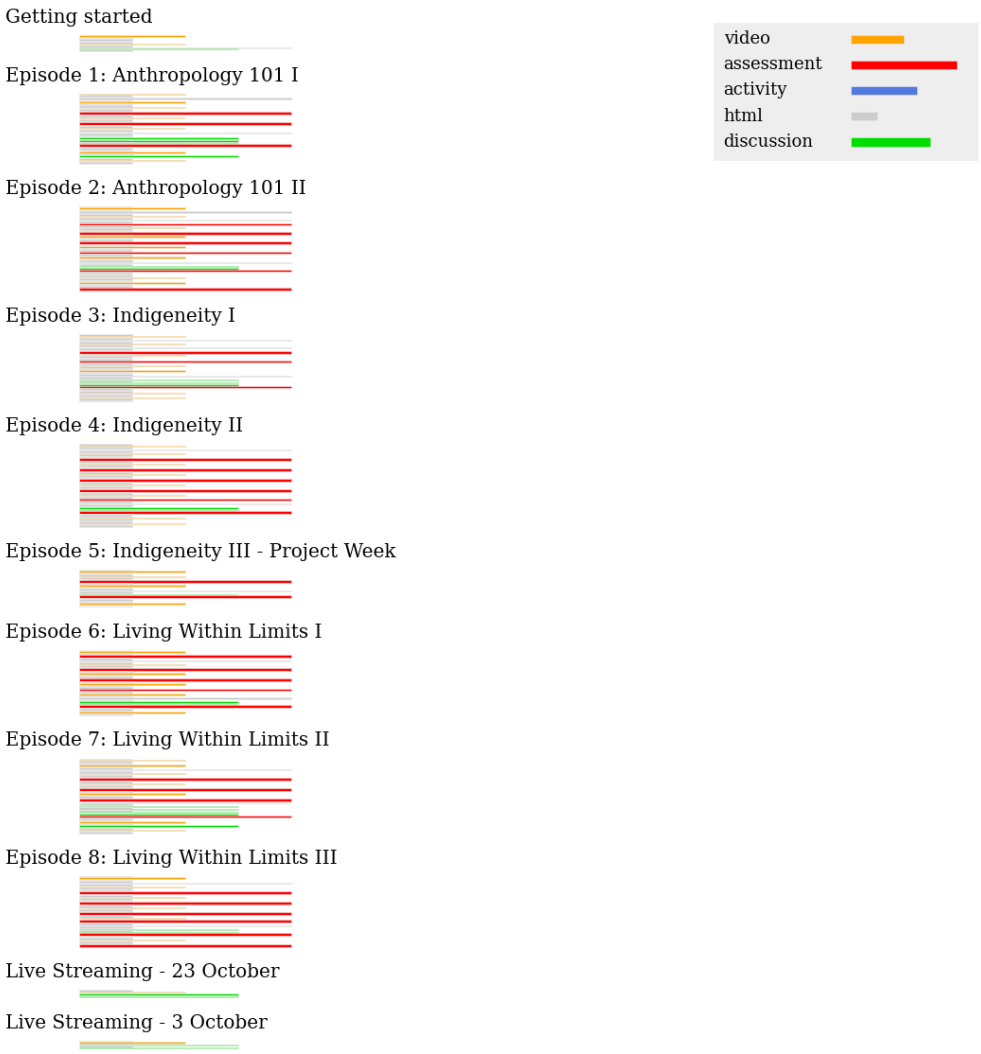


Figure 1. Course Structure. This course structure graphic highlights the course components in the order that they appear in the course. (This graphic is adapted from the MITx Course Reports.)

Unique Structures

This course followed a similar pattern each week that mixed videos with polls, response maps, word clouds and brief quizzes. A unique element of the course was the inclusion of the introductory course survey not in week 1 but in week 2. This decision was made in order to gather initial impressions from students about the content and layout of the course. We also included live streaming events within the course.

Learning Objectives

Learning Objective #1: Students will develop basic skills of the anthropological toolkit in order to better understand cultural difference and sameness, be able to better engage in cultural comparison and see the world from a range of perspectives and points of view.

Learning Objective #2: Students will understand key anthropological concepts and methods.

Learning Objective #3: Students will develop critical thinking ability.

Learning Objective #4: Students will develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of current world issues relating to identity, power and everyday life as experienced in a variety of places by a variety of people.

Learning Objective #5: Students will transform what they have learnt into action and recognise that another world is possible and, in fact, already exists.

Other uses of the course

This course was used in conjunction with ANTH1030 to supplement the on-campus content.

Course Demographics

Total Registrations

16,071 students.

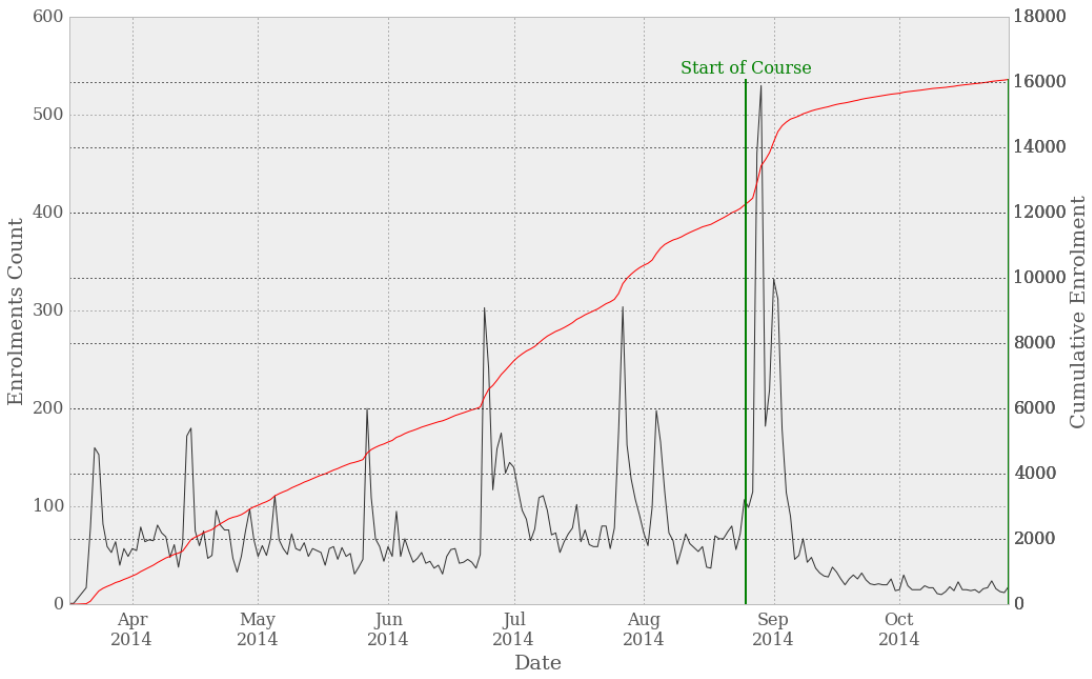


Figure 2. Registrations

UQx Course Registration Comparison

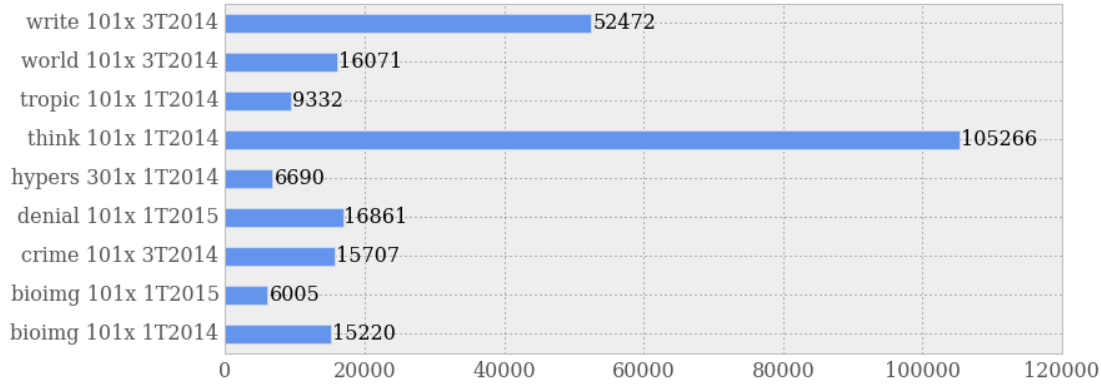


Figure 3. Registration Comparison, as of 30 July 2015

Enrolment Types

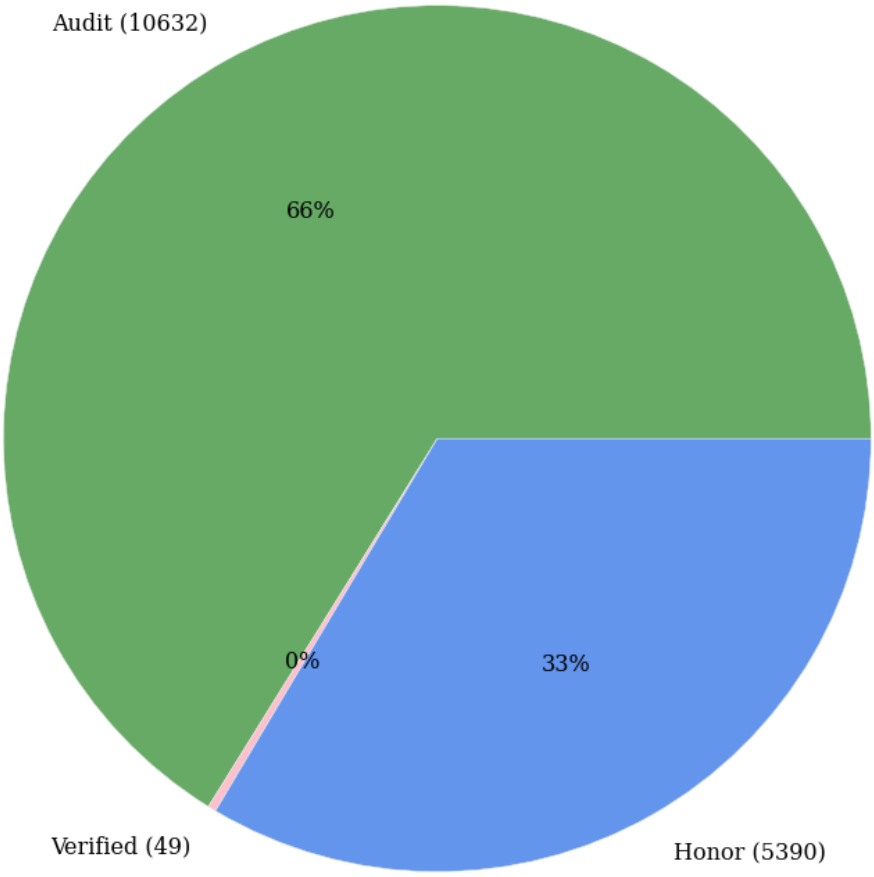


Figure 4. Enrolment Types. Three types of enrolment pathways (and associated certificates) were offered through edX when this course ran. These are honor certificates (which are free and awarded if the student passes assessment), verified certificates (there is cost associated with verifying that the student is who they say they are) and audit enrolment (which gave students access to course content without the possibility of a certificate). During the course edX eliminated audit, so that all students were eligible for a certificate.

Student Demographics

Certified students are students who earned a certificate.

Gender Distribution

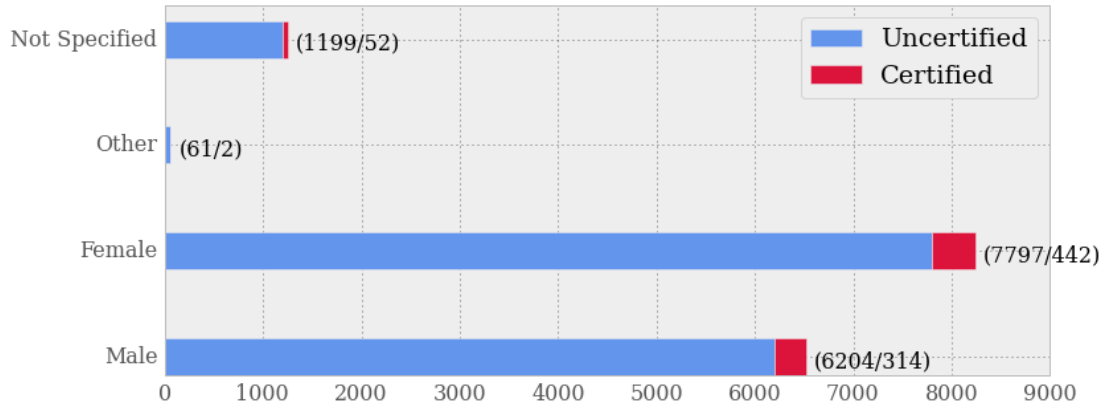


Figure 5. Gender Distribution

Age Distribution

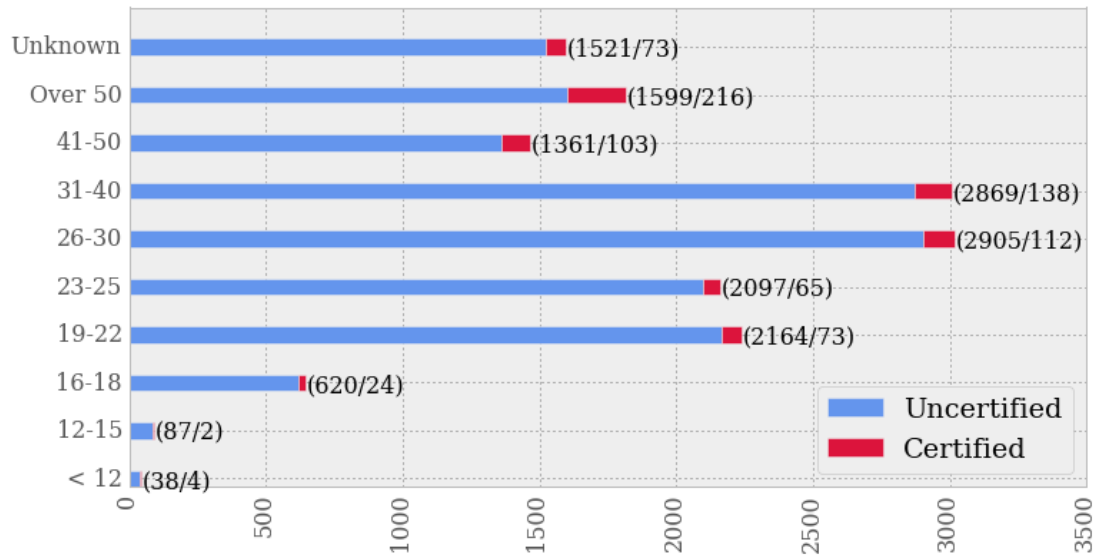


Figure 6. Age Distribution

Education Distribution

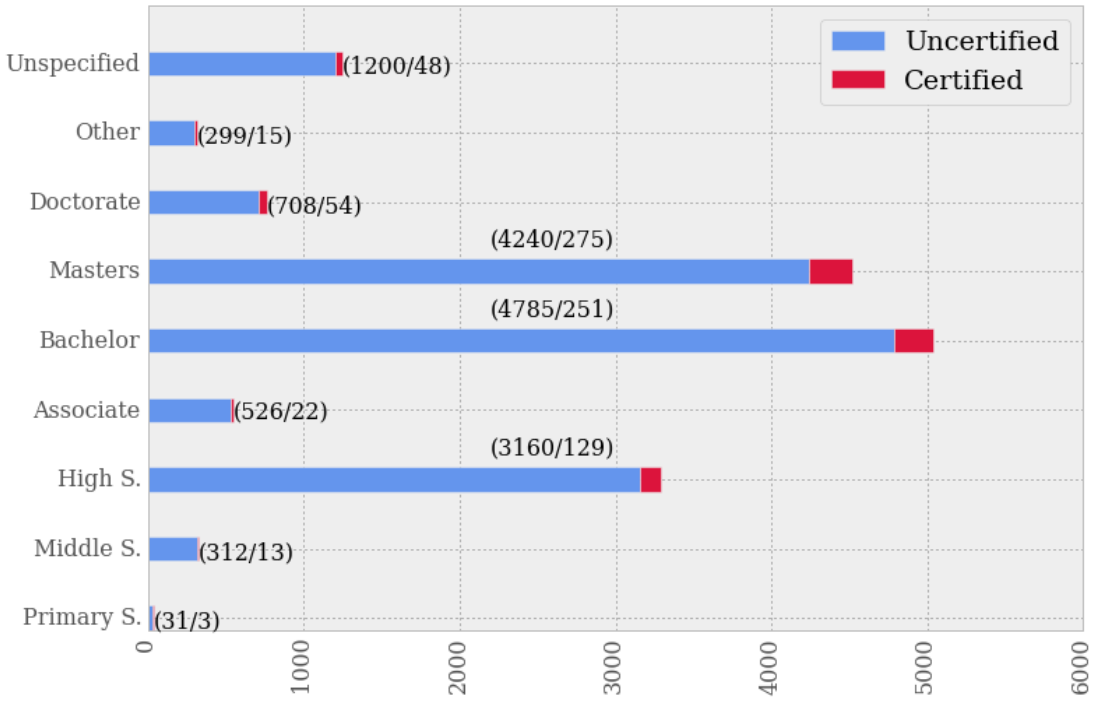


Figure 7. Education Distribution

Country Distribution

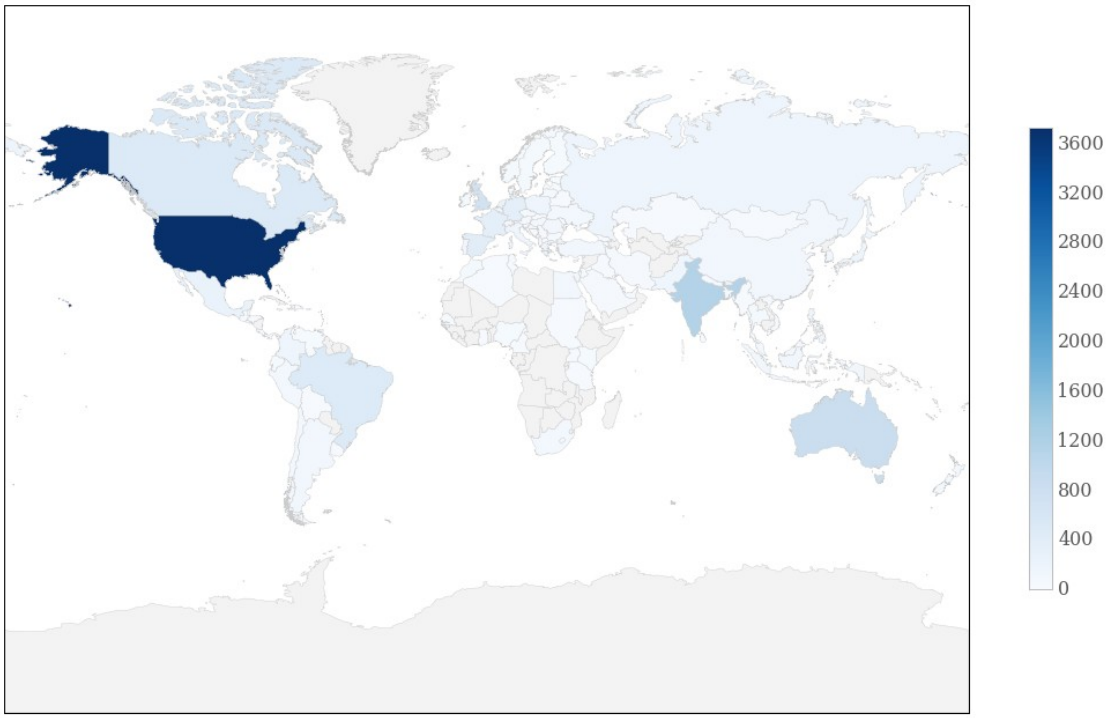


Figure 8. Country Distribution (per enrolment) 180 countries with registered users

United States
(3922 registrations)

Canada
(536 registrations)

Germany
(345 registrations)

India
(1196 registrations)

Brazil
(498 registrations)

Mexico
(266 registrations)

Australia
(886 registrations)

Spain
(406 registrations)

United Kingdom
(716 registrations)

France
(354 registrations)

Course Activity

Student Progress and Certificates

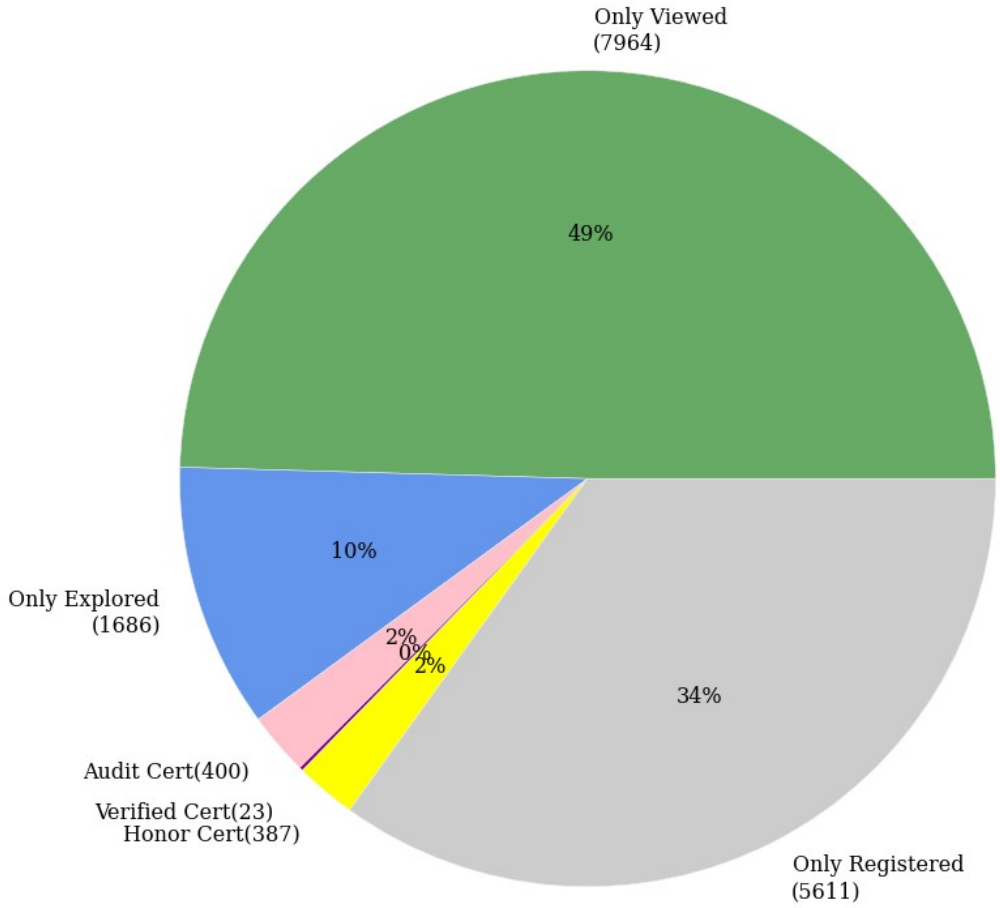


Figure 9. Student Progress and Certificates

Registered: Registered for course but did not access any content.

Viewed: Anyone who accessed the 'Courseware' tab (the home of the videos, problem sets, and assessment) within the edX platform for the course. Note that there exist course materials outside of the 'Courseware' tab, such as the Syllabus or the Discussion forums.

Explored: Anyone who accessed at least half of the chapters in the courseware (chapters are the highest level on the "courseware" menu housing course content).

Certified: Anyone who earned a certificate.

Active Days

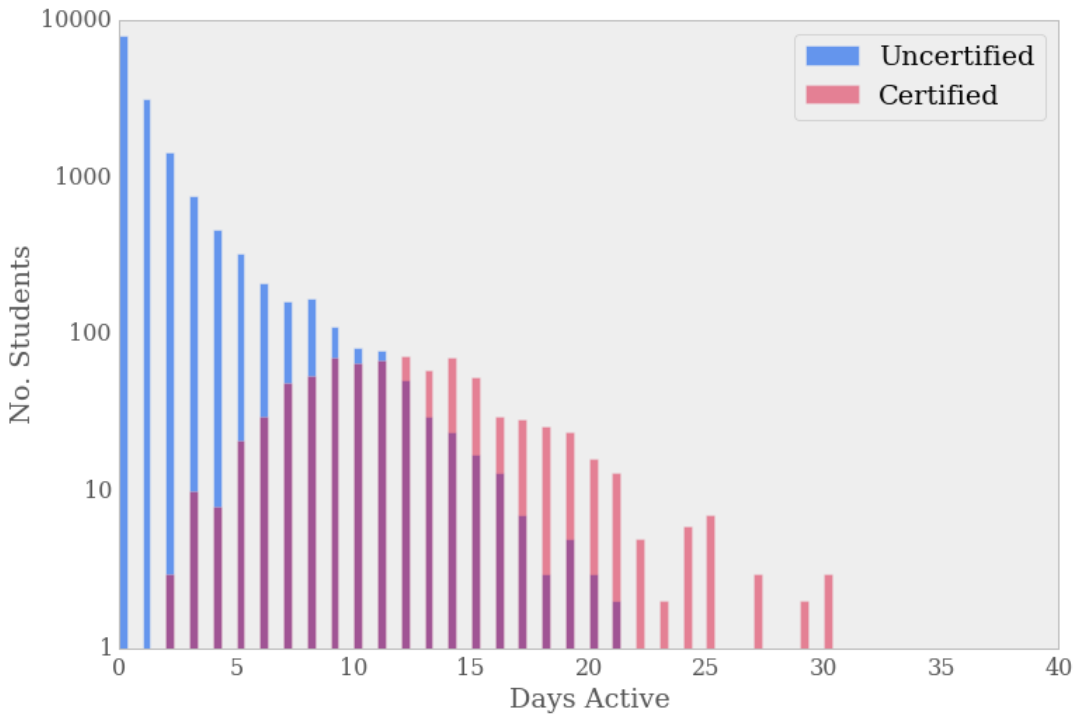


Figure 10. Activity over days. An 'active day' is one on which a student accessed the course and spent any time engaged with it.

Last Activity Over Days

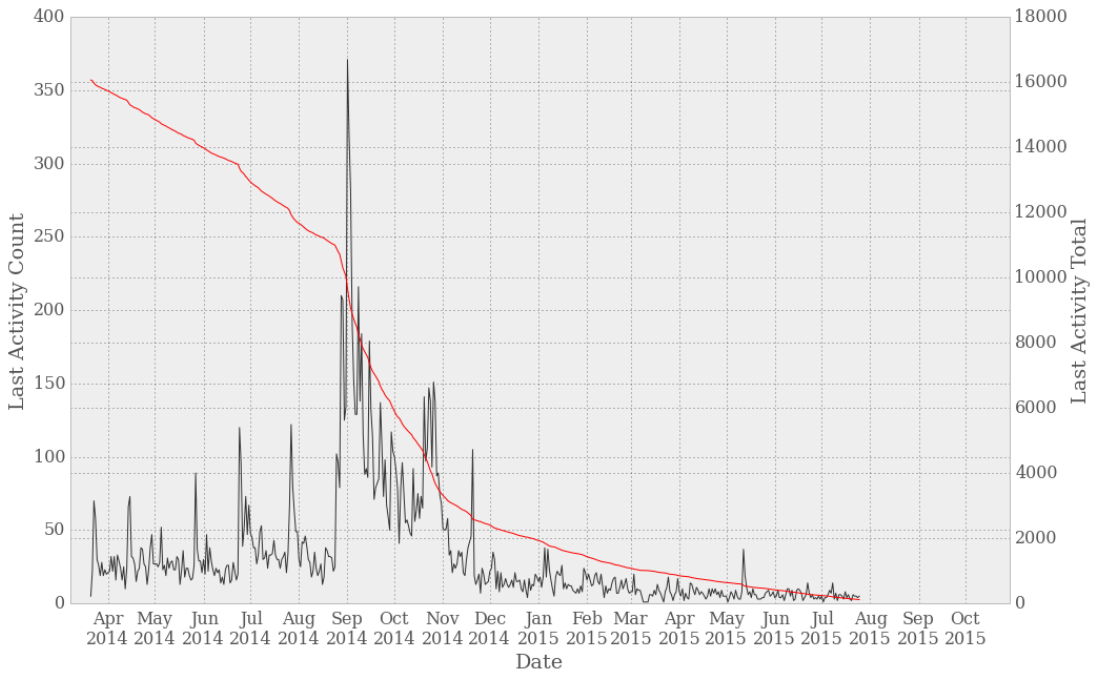


Figure 11. Last activity over days. This graph represents the last interaction with the course by each student. The black line represents the number of students whose last event was on that day (Left Y axis) and the red line represents the number of total students who were still interacting with the course on that day (Right Y axis).

Interesting Activity Patterns

This course offered two live streaming events during Week 6 and Week 8 to give students an opportunity to submit questions to the UQ academics who served as content experts for World101x.

Special aspects of the course

In addition to the two live streaming events, one of the most beneficial activities that students completed in the course was the museum project in Week 5. After viewing a video that discussed the UQ Anthropology Museum exhibit entitled, 'Written on the Body," students were given the following prompt:

> *Imagine that you have been asked to collect items for a museum exhibition that will take place in the future - 30 to 40 years from now. Look around your home. What grabs your eye? What items have special meaning? We would like you to find two things or objects from your own home that are significant to you in some way.*
>
> *Arrange those items on an empty table or against a blank background and take a picture of those items using a camera. You will only be able to submit one picture, so it's important that you arrange the items together in one image.*

Then write approximately 20 words that would explain the items to a future museum goer. You may want to talk about the items' purpose, their composition, or their provenance (where they come from).

Students submitted their images and explanations to a response map. The course team looked through the sub- missions and then curated submissions to share on the course Facebook page and in the course Twitter feed. This allowed for interaction with the images on a larger scale (among the followers of World101x on both Facebook and Twitter) bringing the concept of a future museum into the public space outside of the course and platform.

Discussion Posts Evaluation

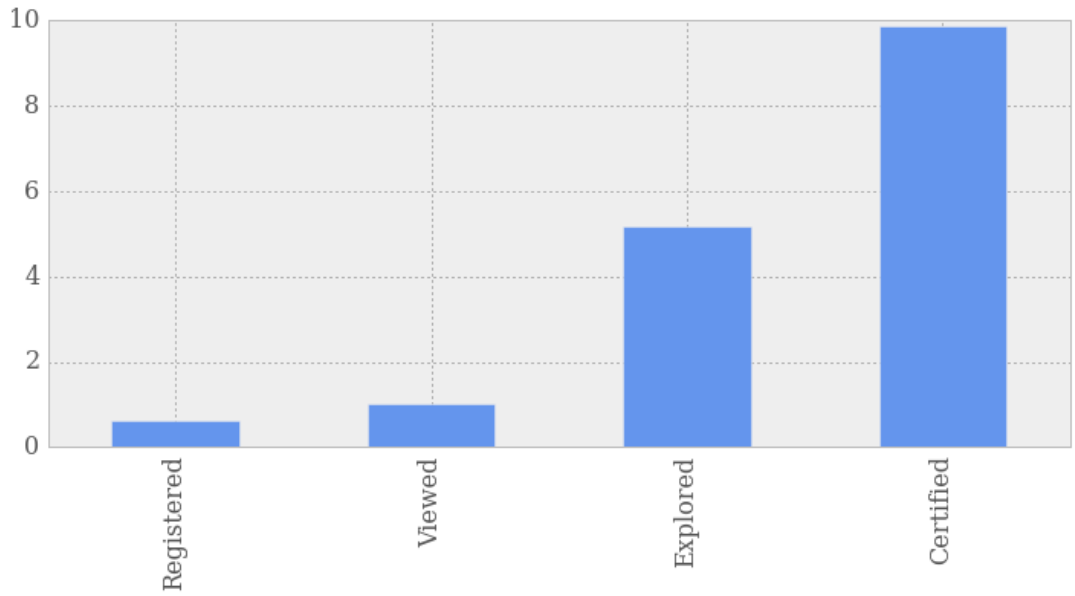
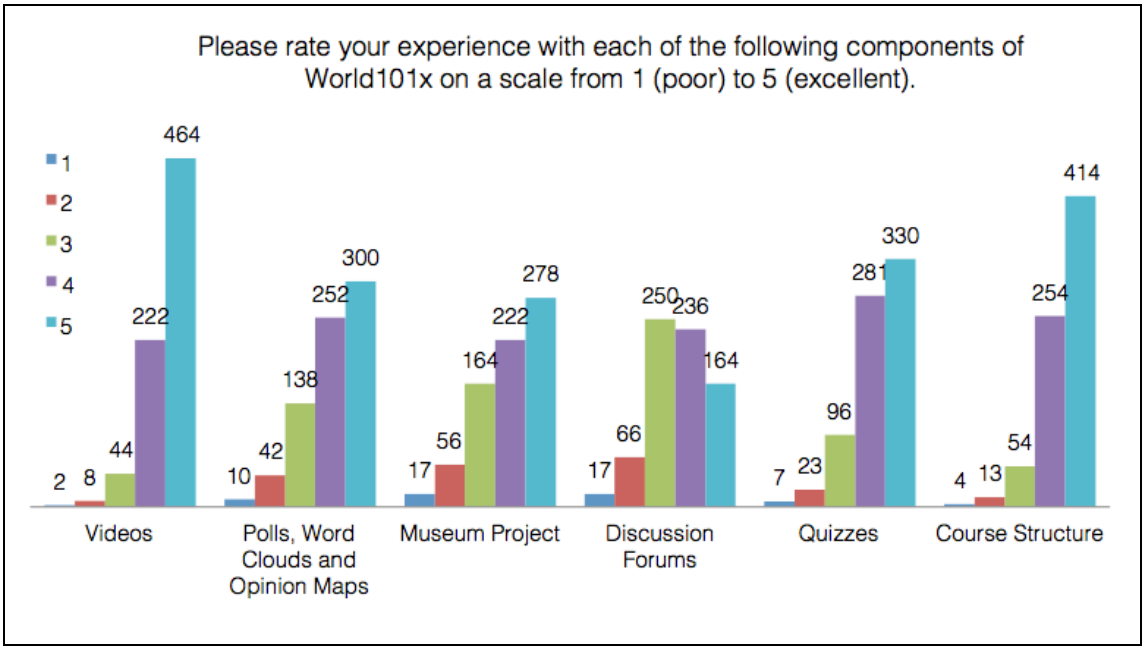


Figure 12. Discussion posts per enrolment type

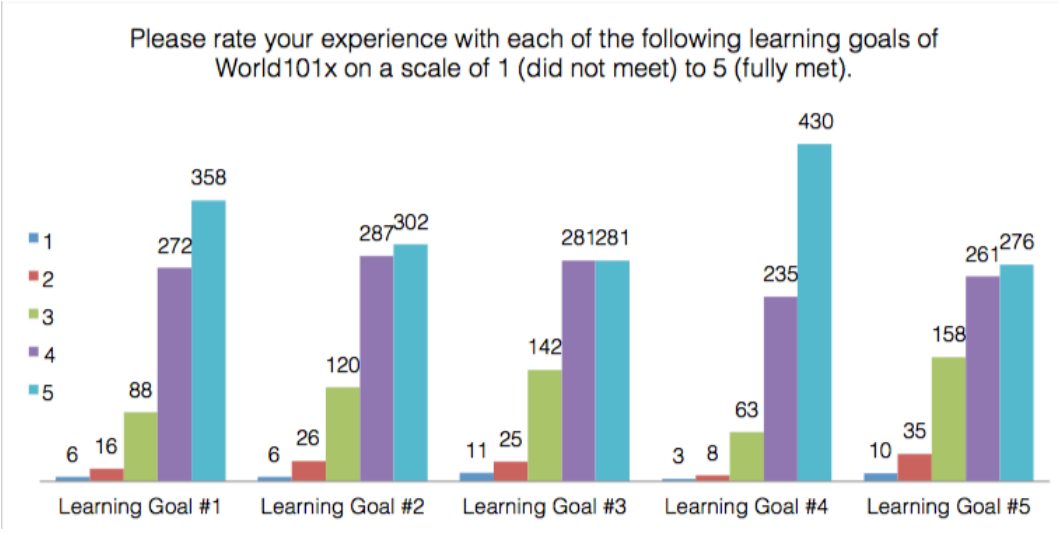
Course Evaluation Findings

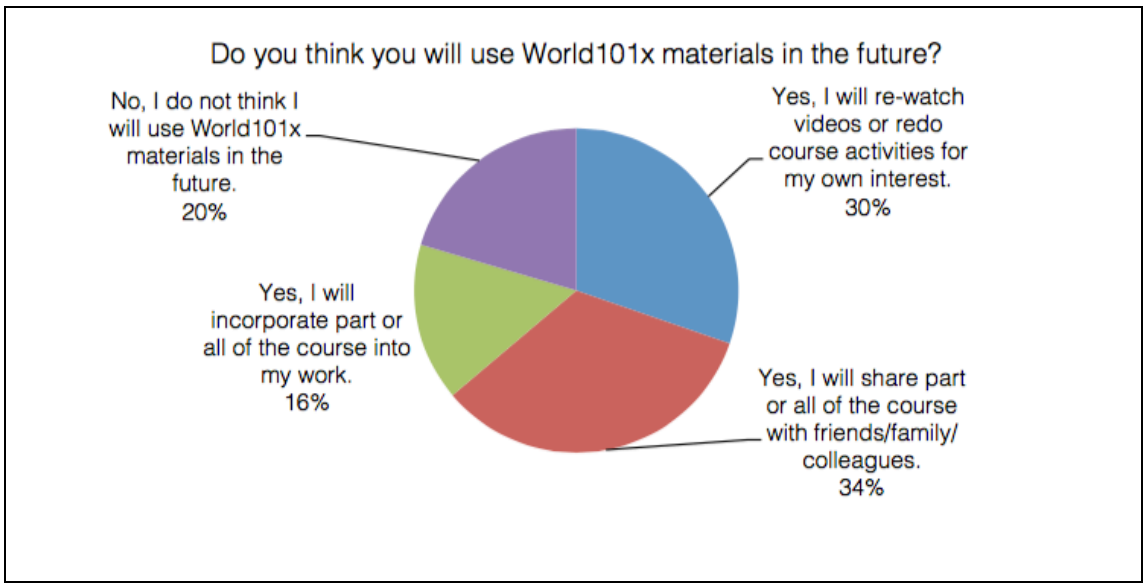
What We Learned

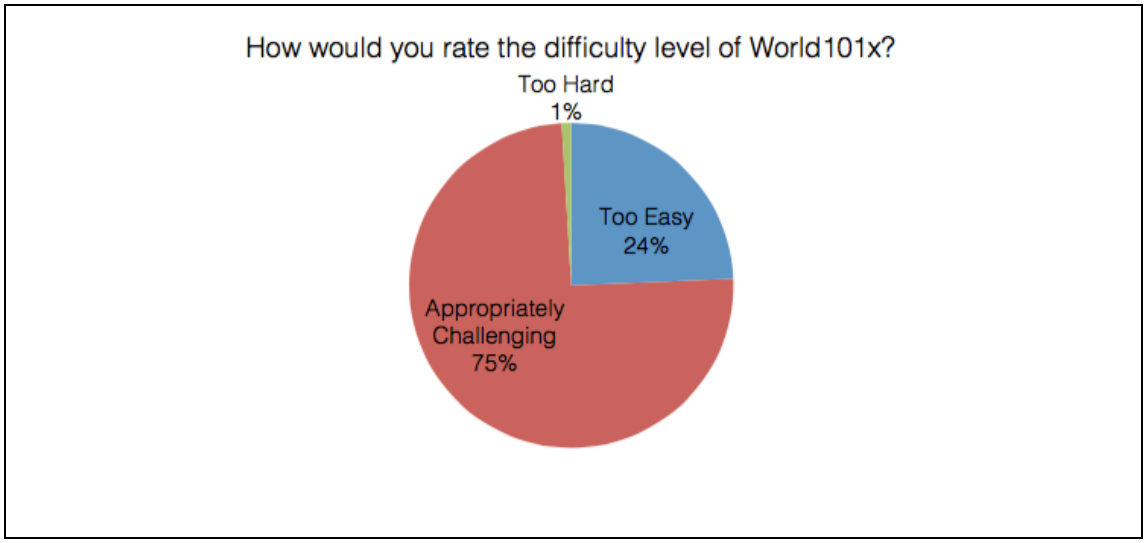


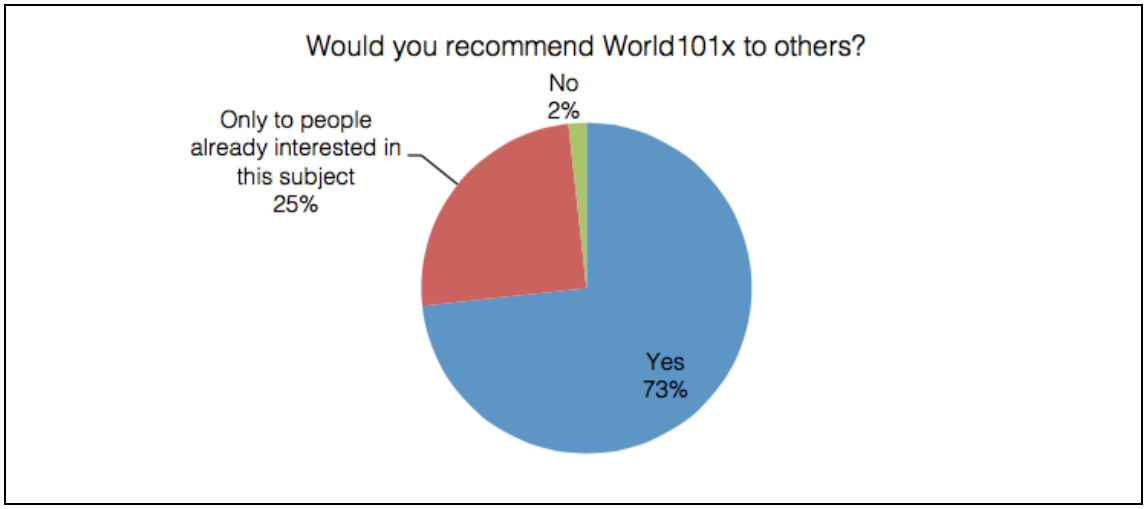
Learning Goals for World101x

Learning Goal #1.	Students will develop basic skills of the anthropological toolkit in order to better understand cultural difference and sameness, be able to better engage in cultural comparison and see the world from a range of perspectives and points of view.
Learning Goal #2.	Students will understand key anthropological concepts and methods.
Learning Goal #3.	Students will develop critical thinking ability.
Learning Goal #4.	Students will develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of current world issues relating to identity, power and everyday life as experienced in a variety of places by a variety of people.
Learning Goal #5.	Students will transform what they have learnt into action and recognise that another world is possible and, in fact, already exists.




Do you think you will use World101x materials in the future?
No, I do not think I will use World101x materials in the future. 20%
Yes, I will re-watch videos or redo course activities for my own interest. 30%
Yes, I will incorporate part or all of the course into my work. 16%
Yes, I will share part or all of the course with friends/family/ colleagues. 34%


How would you rate the difficulty level of World101x?
Too Hard 1%
Too Easy 24%
Appropriately Challenging 75%


Would you recommend World101x to others?
No 2%
Only to people already interested in this subject 25%
Yes 73%

Plans for the Future

After the course closed, some additional filming was done in the coal seam gas fields near Chinchilla. This new material will be added to future runnings of the course. The course reopened as self-paced including the new content on 11 May 2015 and will remain open until 30 April 2016.