The Psychology of Criminal Justice

CRIME101x

Course Report 2014

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Introduction

This course systematically explores the effectiveness of the law and justice system from a psychological perspective. By experiencing a fictional case first hand, students learn about the psychology of law and some of the misconceptions commonly held about criminal justice.

Course Information

Overview

Registration Open:
18th March 2014

Launch Date:
20th October 2014

Close Date:
17th December 2014

Report Generated:
30th July 2015

Course Length:
9 weeks

Course Instance:
First run

Estimated Time:
1-2 hours per week

Languages Offered:
English only

Pre-requisites

No prior knowledge about psychology or the legal system necessary, just curiosity about the criminal justice system.

Course Team

Blake McKimmie

Mark Horswill

Barbara Masser

Course Structure

Welcome to CRIME101x

Episode 1 - Investigating the Crime Scene

Episode 2 - Interviewing the Witnesses

Episode 3 - Identifying the Suspect

Episode 4 - Questioning the Suspect

Episode 5 - Getting Ready for Trial

Episode 6 - The Trial (part 1)

Episode 7 - The Trial (part 2)

Episode 8 - Epilogue

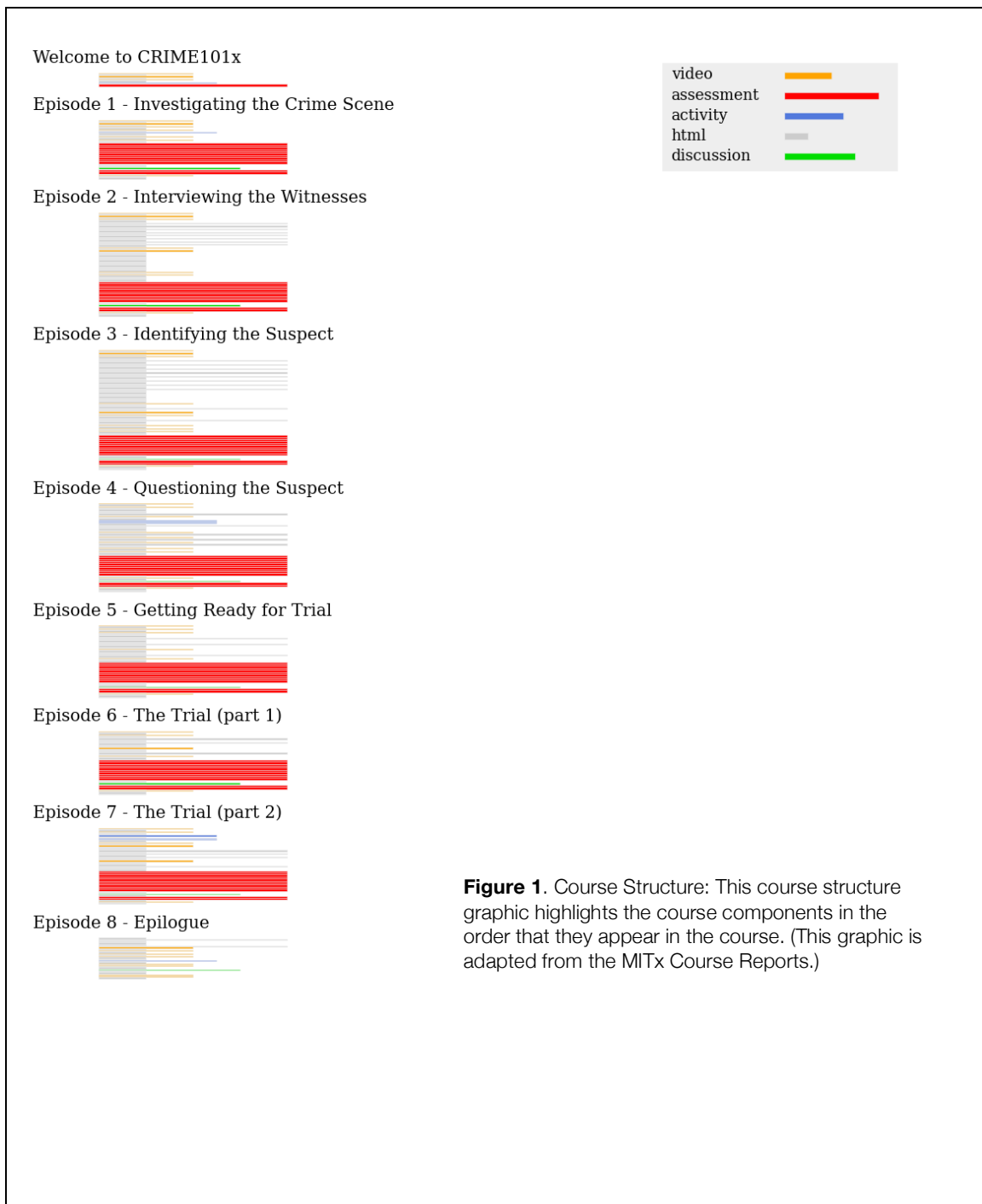| video	
assessment	
activity	
html	
discussion	

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

In CRIME101x a fictional case was designed, filmed, and used as an introduction each week to the lecture videos and online activities that made up the core content of the course. Commonly held myths about how justice should be done are examined by looking at the research around the different phases of an investigation. The fictional case was filmed on campus with a mix of professional and amateur actors.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify some of the myths about how the criminal justice system works from a psychological perspective.

2. Understand some of the empirical evidence that can inform our understanding of criminal justice.

3. Understand how to improve how justice is administered.

Other uses of the course

A portion of the materials generated for Crime101x was used in the PSYC2361 (the Psychology of Criminal Justice) on-campus course in Semester 1, 2015. Run using a flipped classroom format, each week students watched the relevant crime episode (from the Crime 101 series developed for Crime101x) along with the online lectures. These lectures were those developed for Crime101x augmented by additional filmed lectures prepared by the coordinators. New standardized assessment questions were asked before and after exposure to these materials.

This learning experience was enhanced by attendance at a three-hour workshop each week. These workshops took a variety of formats depending on the subject matter, but typically involved applying the knowledge acquired through the online lectures (supplemented where necessary by additional content delivered in class) to a particular problem or issue. For example in Week 1 where the online content focused on investigating the crime scene, the activities in class asked the students to profile the murderer from Crime101 and then identify the additional information that they would need to be able to accurately profile the offender. Across the course, activities were done in a variety of smaller and larger group formats.

Ninety-five students completed the course and overall teaching and course evaluations were favourable. Although the first run of a new on-campus course is as much of a learning experience for the teaching staff as well as the students, the on-campus course received 4.45/5.00 overall course evaluation (where 5 = outstanding and 1 = very poor). In relation to the materials developed for Crime101x the students noted:

"Absolutely loved the episode clips of the "real" staged crime show. Was great to go on the experience with something like that, while learning all the content"

"I loved the on-line aspects. Being able to look at the content in my own time was fantastic. They were also put together really well, much more interesting than listening to a lecture"
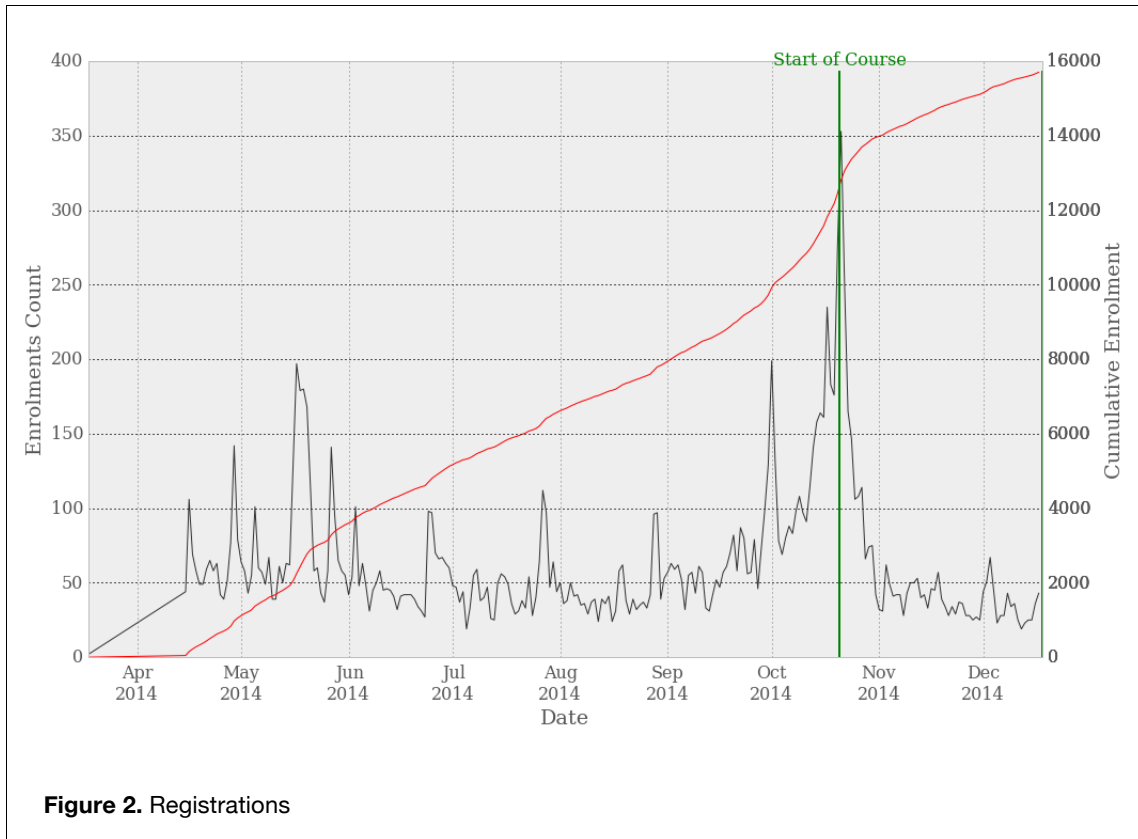
Overall the integration of the Crime101x materials into the on-campus course enhanced the impact of the time spent in class with lecturers and tutors.

"The format of the course was absolutely brilliant. The online videos and quizzes were good in preparing students for the weekly classes - which in themselves were really enjoyable, fun and educational at the same time. All the tutors and coordinators were so helpful and approachable and made all the students feel supported and encouraged to participate in activities. I am a very shy person but I felt comfortable to participate in the group activities, even getting up front in class to participate in the whole class activities etc. The format of the assessment pieces was great and pushed students to really take in the necessary information to do well".
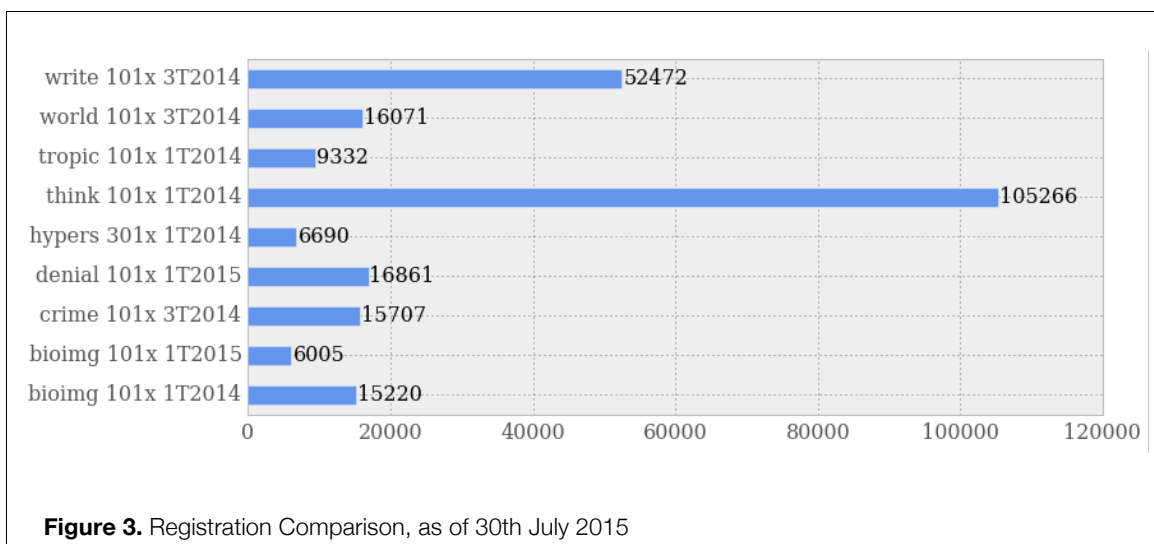
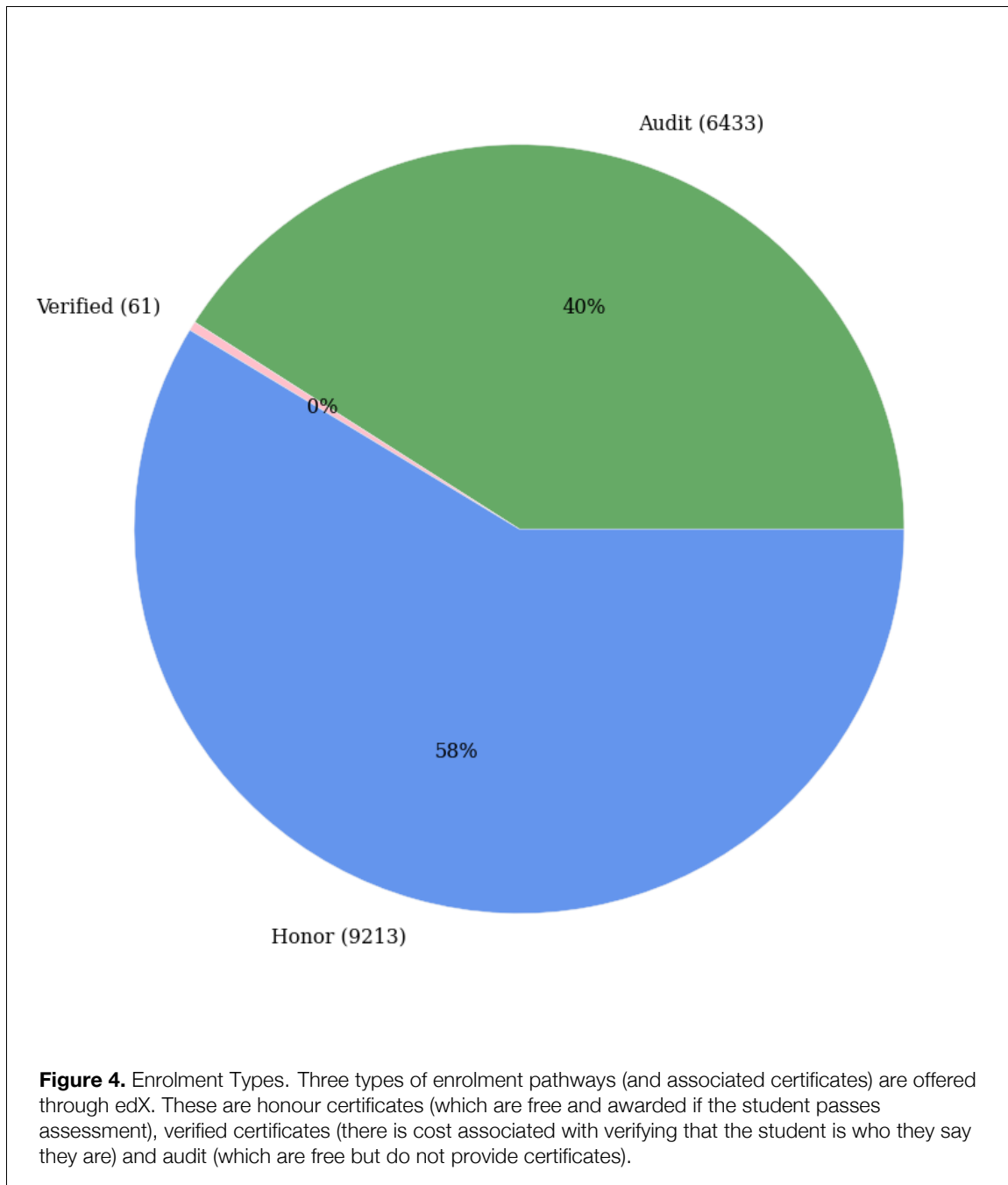# Course Demographics

Total Registrations

15,707 students at course start date. At completion of the scheduled run in December 2014, Crime101x had 13,336 students enrolled.

Figure 2. Registrations

UQx Course Registration Comparison

Figure 3. Registration Comparison, as of 30th July 2015

Enrolment Types

Figure 4. Enrolment Types. Three types of enrolment pathways (and associated certificates) are offered through edX. These are honour 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 (which are free but do not provide certificates).

Student Demographics

Certified students are students who earned a certificate.

Gender Distribution

Figure 5. Gender Distribution

Age Distribution
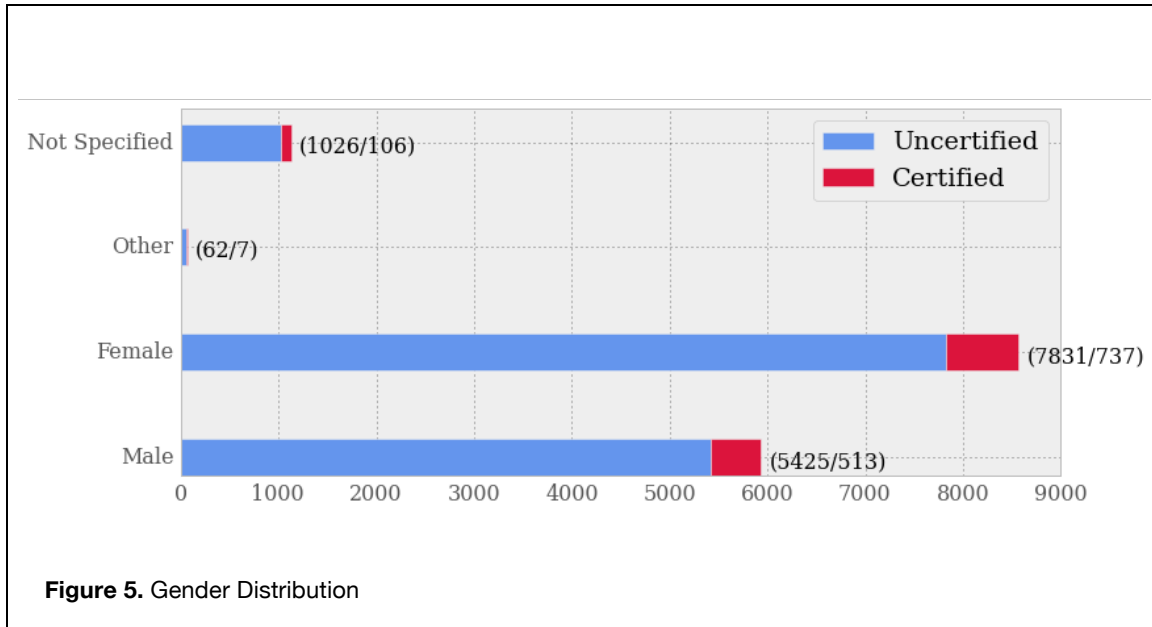
Figure 6. Age Distribution

Education Distribution
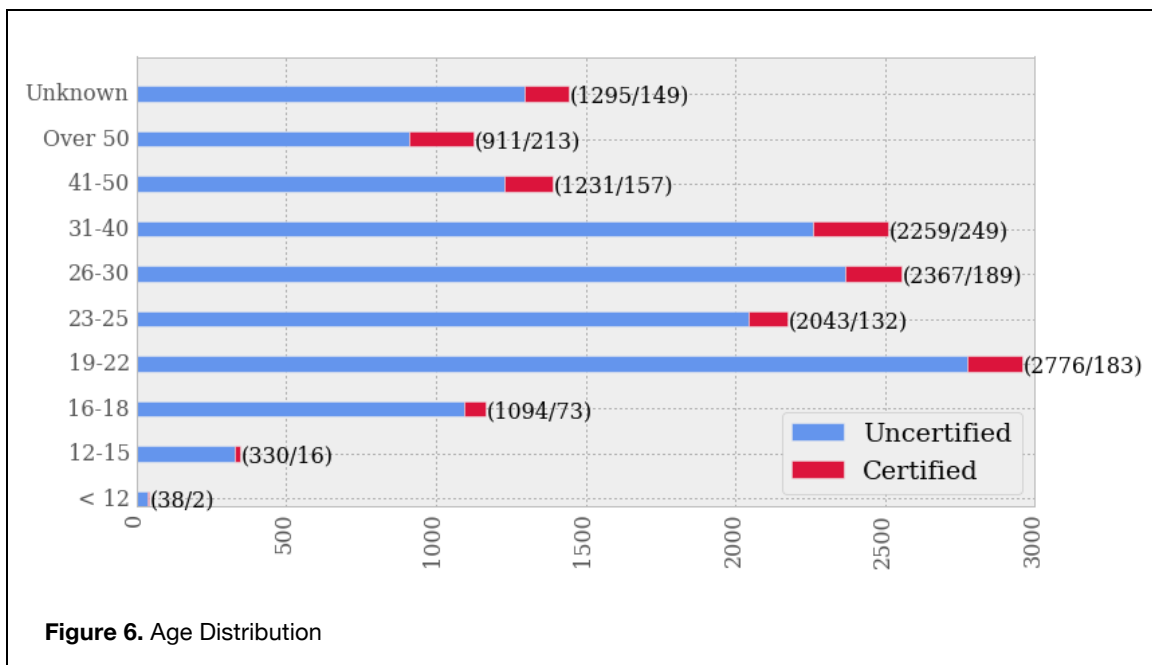
Figure 7. Education Distribution
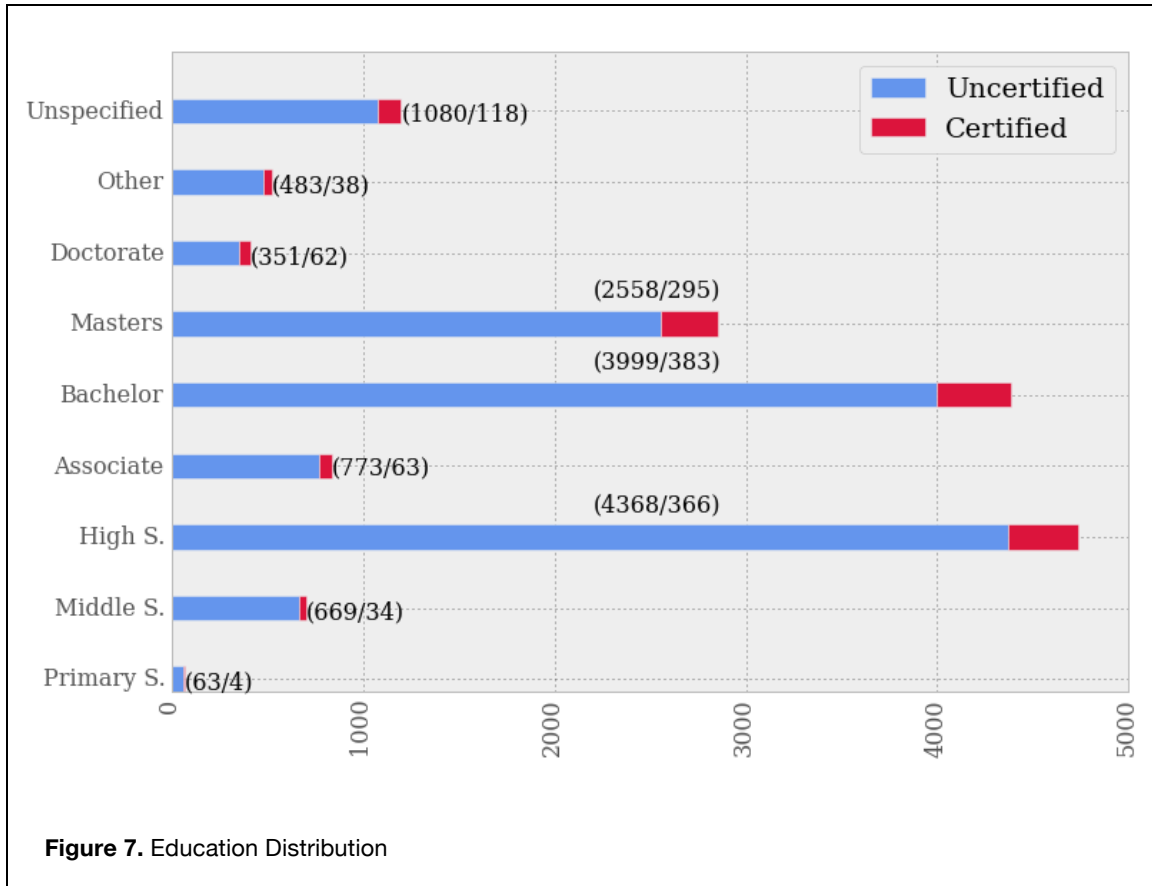
Country Distribution
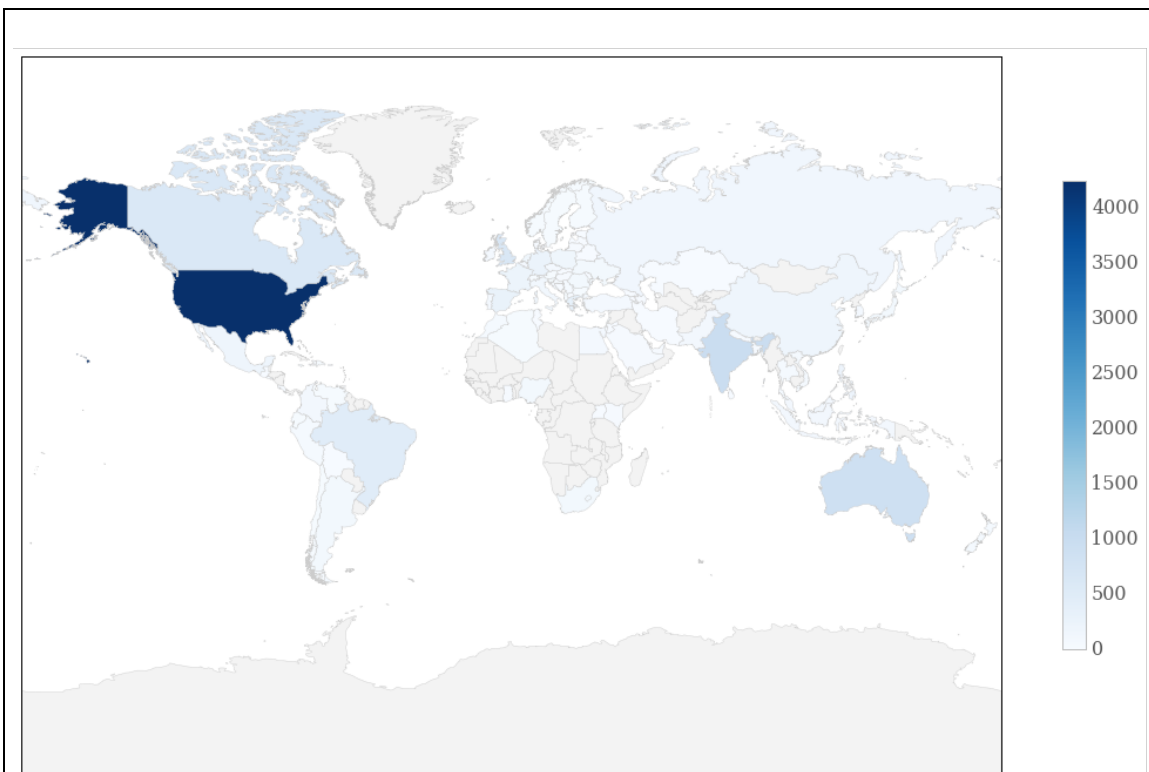
Figure 8. Country Distribution (per enrolment) 172 countries with registered users

United States
(4463 registrations)

Canada
(644 registrations)

Germany
(269 registrations)

India
(1036 registrations)

Brazil
(499 registrations)

France
(247 registrations)

Australia
(922 registrations)

Greece
(351 registrations)

United Kingdom
(676 registrations)

Spain
(313 registrations)

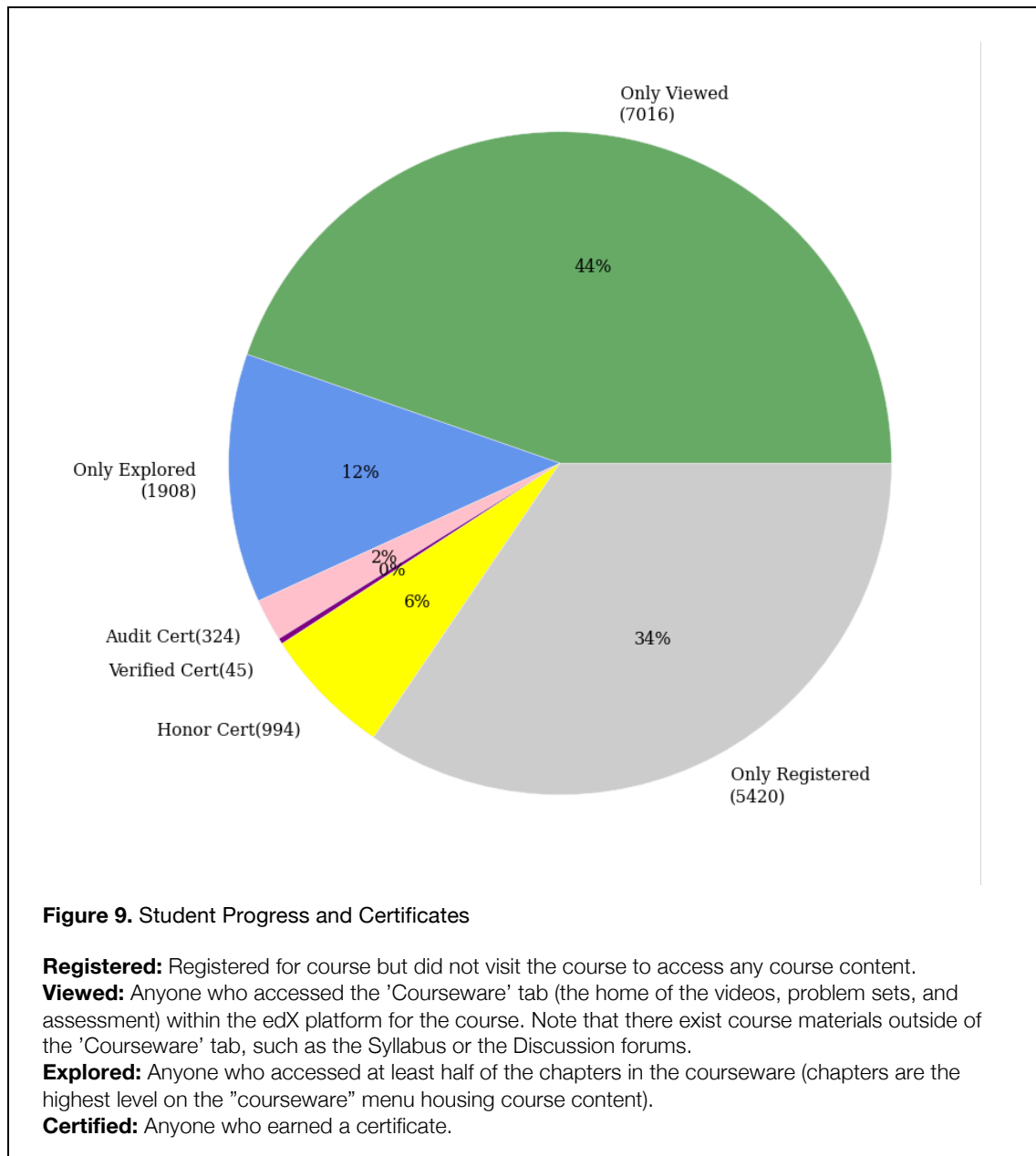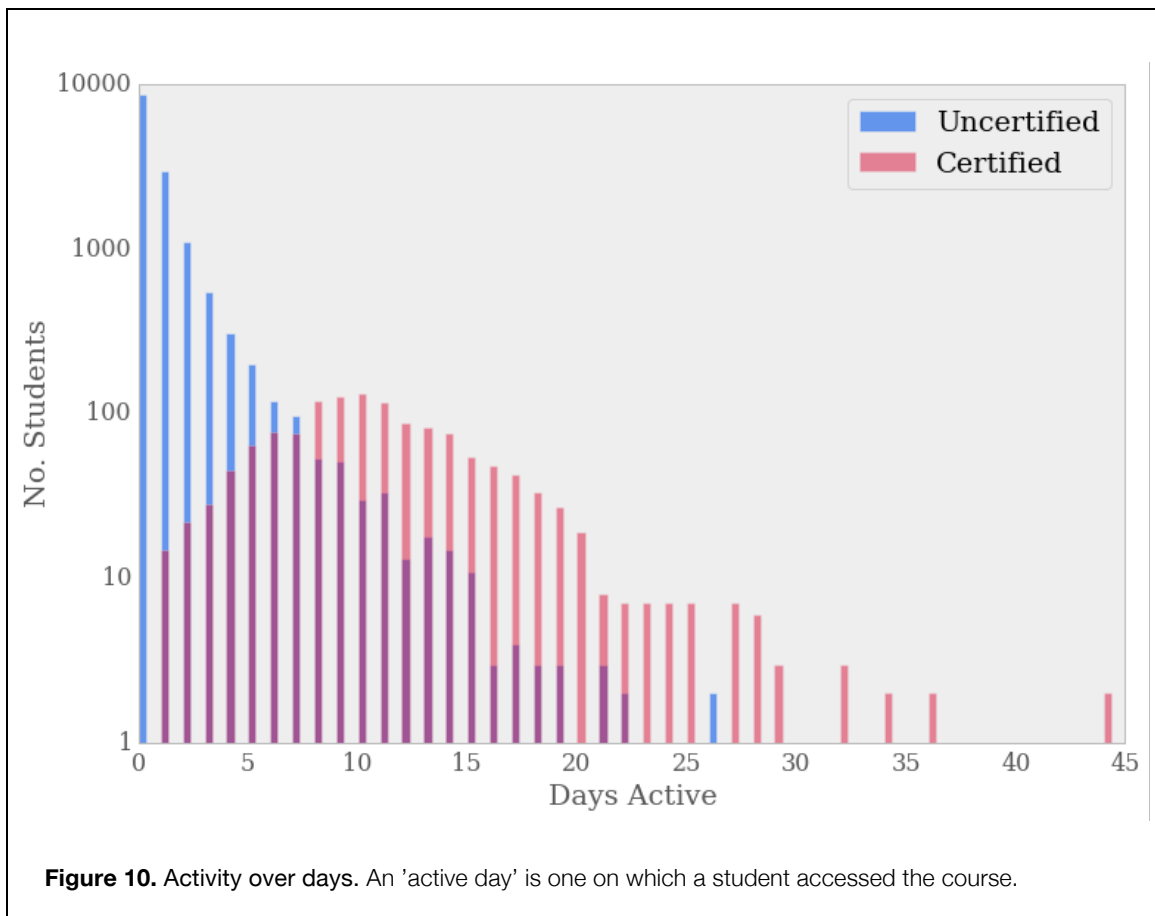# Course Activity

Student Progress and Certificates

Only Viewed
(7016)

44%

Only Explored
(1908)

12%

2%
0%

6%

Audit Cert(324)

Verified Cert(45)

Honor Cert(994)

34%

Only Registered
(5420)

Figure 9. Student Progress and Certificates

Registered: Registered for course but did not visit the course to access any course 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.

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Active Days

Figure 10. Activity over days. An 'active day' is one on which a student accessed the course.

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).

Special aspects of the course

The Crime101x team used confidence/certainty based marking in their quizzes. This meant that students had to decide on an answer to quiz questions, and then rate how confident they were of their answer. At the end of the quiz they were then presented not only with their quiz score out of 10, but also a graphic that showed their overall confidence in their responses.

Discussion Posts Evaluation

Figure 12. Discussion Posts Per Enrolment Type
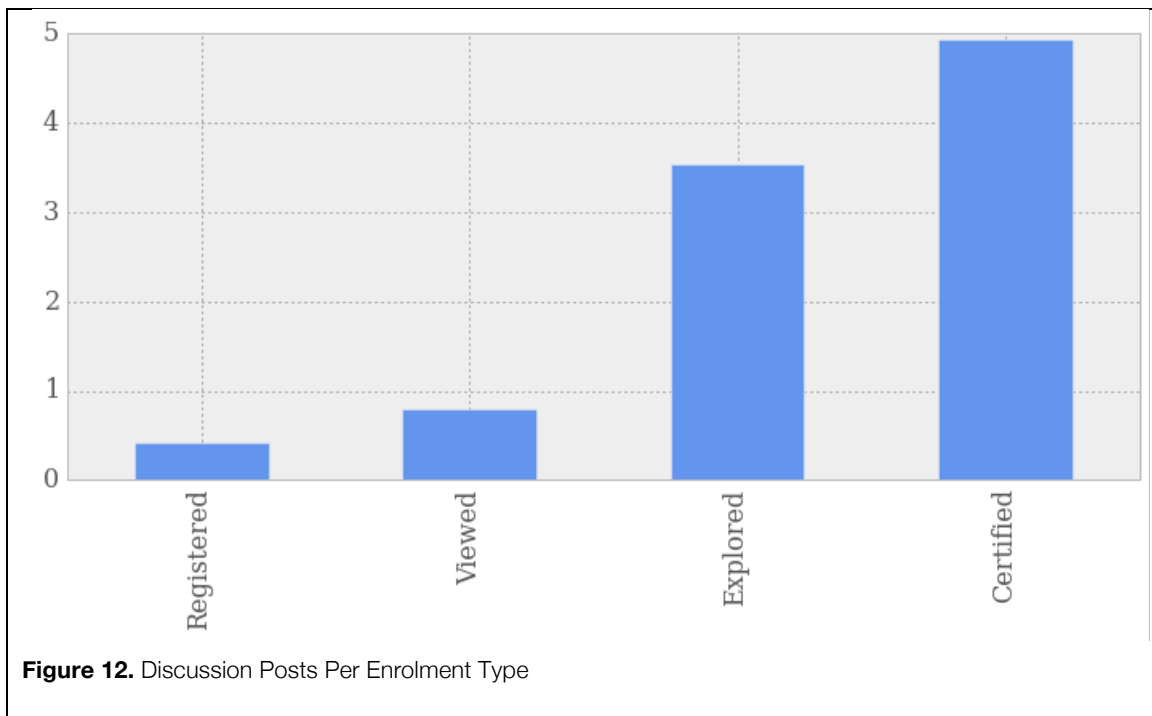
Course Evaluation Findings

Data from the evaluation showed that the majority of students felt the course learning outcomes were met, the difficulty level was appropriate and assessment requirements were made clear. The course was judged to be intellectually stimulating, well structured by the majority of students and they felt they learned a lot.

Administration of the UQ standard CEVAL questions showed that in response to the question 'overall, how would you rate this course' with options from 0 (very poor) to 8 (outstanding), the course received an overall evaluation of 7.19 when delivered to on campus students.

Plans for the Future

The course will be re-run in 2015.