

SIOG239-20 Fall Quarter

Meeting notes for SIOG239 meeting with the departmental/guidance committee

Date: Tue, 12/15

Attendance: Gabi, Matti, Adrian and about half of the first-year students

** names of students are protected by UCSD policy and are therefore not disclosed in this public document. Instead, S.S. is used as placeholder*

- S.S. indicates some scheduling conflict with winter classes. A request was made to have 239 earlier in the day (unclear whether this was in reference to 4 pm of the fall quarter or the currently listed 1 pm timeslot for winter). To further discuss scheduling in the future, the core classes and SIOG239 are listed as they appear on the UCSD class schedule:

223B	MWF	9:00 – 9:50	(Agnew)
224	TuThu	10:30 – 11:50	(Stegman, Laske)
229	MWF	10:00 – 10:50	(Borsa, C. Constable)
239	W	13:00 – 14:00	(Borsa)

- winter classes will be held remotely for the foreseeable future (note that 239 is currently listed as being taught in Spiess 330). Unlike on upper campus, there is no outdoor teaching tent at SIO.

- **past classes**: much discussion about what worked (and what didn't work) during fall online classes. Much praise for Matti's and Yuri's way of teaching with a 'white board' instead of teaching from ppts. Students feel that white/blackboard writing slows teaching down and makes it easier to follow. This mode also makes people stay engaged better. S.S. sees some advantage of using a scrolling device (e.g. Matti's iPad) rather than a page-turning mode (Yuri). In the latter, material just taught disappears before students can follow and the context is lost.

- **remote teaching tools**: a discussion on preferred teaching tool for the white/blackboard mode. Matti prefers the biggest available iPad Pro (which is the size of a regular 8x11.5"; some \$1100) for most natural writing, Stylus pen (or the like, from Apple), Notability app. Matti uses this for nearly everything and has practically gone paperless. The Notability app is also recommended by UCSD Teaching Commons but other apps are available (e.g. Gabi uses Notes Writer to annotate pdfs and QuickNotes for handwritten stuff). Adrian uses Sidecar with an iPad. Some annotation snags may be related to Zoom, not the local computer.

- **student engagement in remote classes**: question on how to best engage students in remote learning. Difficult discussion but S.S. suggests that Matti's approach is a good one as he goes slow, anticipates potential confusion and clarifies things 'on the spot'. Instructors have difficulty to monitor chat box while teaching, so a moderator or teaching assistant is needed. Instructors of a small class may also encourage students to instead unmute themselves to ask a question (Gabi). But the chat box is important and useful for students to interact with each other, e.g. clarify 'what did she just say?'. Matti notes that the same students would respond to questions asked, while others are shier. A

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great way to interact is to let students annotate the screen (an instructor has to set the settings properly to allow for that). Matti notes that folks at UCSD Teaching Commons encourage instructors to do that. Gabi notes that Zoom annotations are great though when changing slides, all annotations have to be erased (by hand) to move on while ppt annotations disappear automatically (but the latter does not allow student annotations). Adrian uses the common annotation tool for office hours when a whiteboard tool is needed for all to interact. S.S. points out that the breakout rooms in 239 helped for small student group discussions and interactions. There may be a better experience to let everybody annotate the same worksheet but Gabi chose to designate a scribe so that all others had to actually talk and interact rather than simply annotate in silence. Adrian already had some private conversations on how to teach classes in the winter quarter.

- **meetings with departmental committee:** Matti brings up logistics of future meetings with the departmental committee. Should the committee chat with individual students or with the whole class? The former is definitely needed when confidential issues arise, and the committee will always be available to schedule emergency meetings. But for better planning, S.S. suggests to provide a schedule well in advance. Gabi notes that Zoom meetings will likely stay through the winter quarter, rather than having in-office meetings. *NB: UCSD announced a day later that people should continue to work from home through end of May (previously slated to end of March). This is well into the spring quarter.*

Adrian suggests to set aside a defined time slot at the beginning of the quarter, and students can grab 20-30 min slots first-come-first-served.

- **research during fall quarter:** Adrian inquires whether students have had some time to do research on the side during the fall quarter. No student present took an official 299, but some students met with mentors on a weekly basis to either discuss small research projects or reading assignments on research papers. Gabi notes that every student should meet with their mentor on a weekly basis regardless of whether or not they do research. Adrian notes that he sets a fixed time aside for his students who then take time slots on first-come-first-served basis. S.S. notes that coming back to school was a somewhat rough readjustment compared to doing research exclusively before coming to SIO.

- **summer work:** S.S. inquires about timeline to look for summer jobs, e.g. 'do we have to start looking in January?'. Gabi notes that the summer is usually the time when GP first-year students have the first opportunity to fully engage in a research project. The discussion of that project is usually used to ease into the oral departmental exam at the end of summer. The oral will mainly be a discussion of research papers handed out 2 weeks prior, but the discussion of the research is usually the first part of the exam to get everybody engaged in the conversation. From a funding point of view, research grants do not have to pay for tuition during the summer, so students are 'cheaper'. It is not totally clear how this works with students of fellowships, e.g. if the summer is covered. Will need to investigate/consult the department on a case-by-case basis. But usually, students stay on during the summer to do research at IGPP. Students will need to discuss/clarify details with their mentors. Last year's student cohort had one student on a fellowship who chose to do an internship with a defense contractor on the East coast. That research was relevant for the future PhD work, so this project also was topic of the oral exam.

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- **student interactions and collaborations:** Adrian inquires how students cope and interact in a remote environment. Several students respond say that there are various Slack channels for homeworks/each class. There is also a standing 'Keller zoom' where people can join whenever and interact. There is also a more general hangout. In addition, students recently met, socially distanced, on the SIO beach in person for the first time. Students also communicate directly through direct-message over Slack or SMS. Some students are more active than others. S.S. notes that students interact as one group where some students interact more than others. Most students present have met with many others outside of 'the classroom' but not with all of them. Gabi notes that it is important to try to engage international students even though there may be a language barrier. But perhaps, the time zone issue could be a current hurdle. S.S. notes that international students may feel intimidated and isolated more so than domestic students, though IGPP is a new place for everybody. Matti praises the efforts and level of engagement between students to stay connected.