Degrees in Computing

Dr Jon Nicholson

Course leader for BSc (hons) Digital Games Production

University of Brighton

Hastings

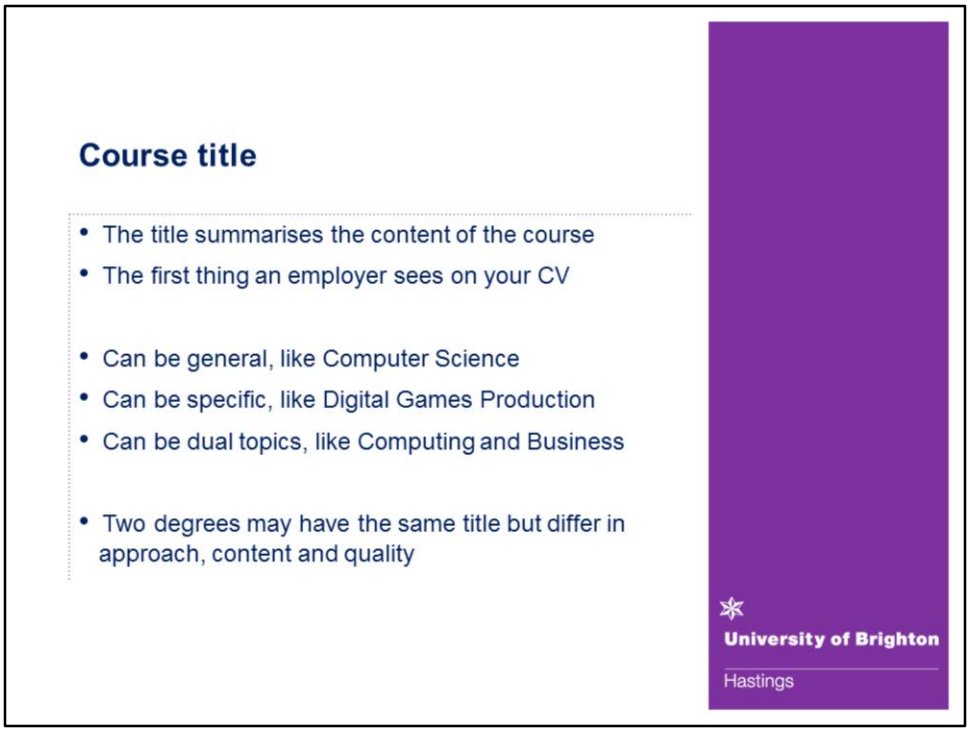
A bit about me

- From the local area
- BSc (hons) Computer Science
- MSc Distributed Information Management Systems
- PhD Computer Science
- Postgraduate certificate in higher education

University of Brighton
Hastings

Hands up who is interested in games, digital media, interactive systems etc.
Hands up who is interested in networking, internet, social media, etc.
Hands up who is interested in robotics, artificial intelligence, etc.

Does anyone have a particular career in mind? It's ok if you don't.



As in any subject, there is a spectrum of courses

'Computer Science' degrees tend to cover the core foundations of computing, think of it as the 'pure' subject
Typically you'll be taught programming, databases, operating systems, and networks. Usually there'll be a one or two modules of math.

Other degrees may focus on specialist subjects, like the internet, games, forensics

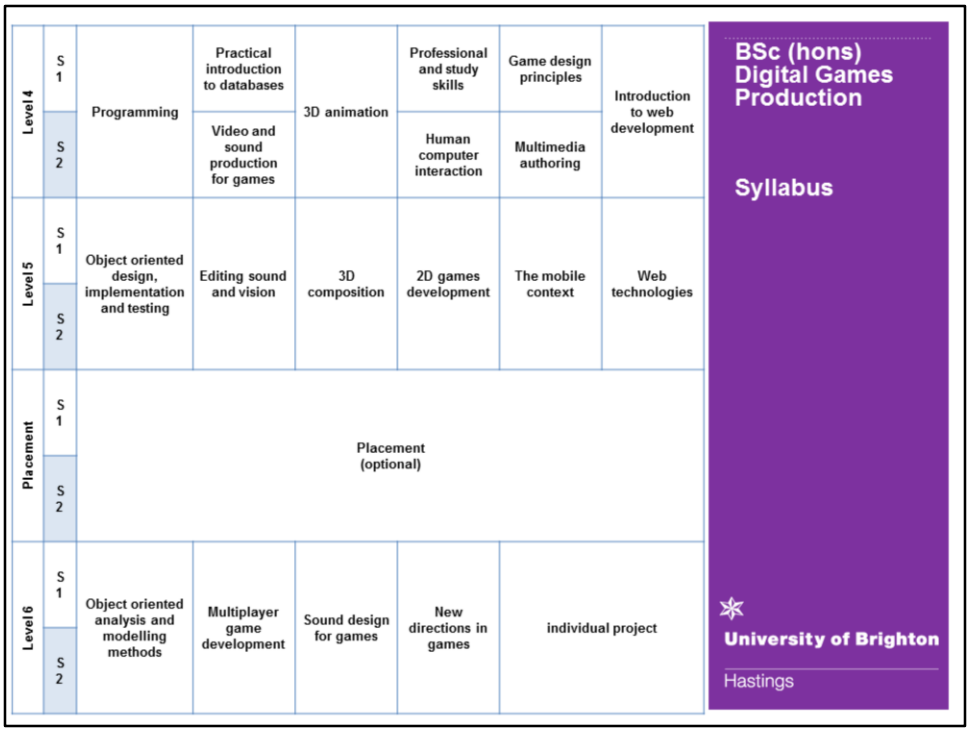
Modules

- Degrees are typically made up of modules
  - The individual subjects you'll study

- Look at the curriculum to find out if:
  - the focus is more theoretical or more practical
  - each module sounds interesting
  - there is choice in which modules you take
  - you can get industrial qualifications (e.g. Oracle)

University of Brighton
Hastings


Digital media
Mobile computing
Human Computer Interaction (HCI)
Computer security
Games
Software engineering
Business computing
Legal and ethical issues
Operating systems
Mathematics
Artificial Intelligence (AI)
Robotics
Networking
Computer forensics
Web technologies
Databases
Programming
ersity of Brighton



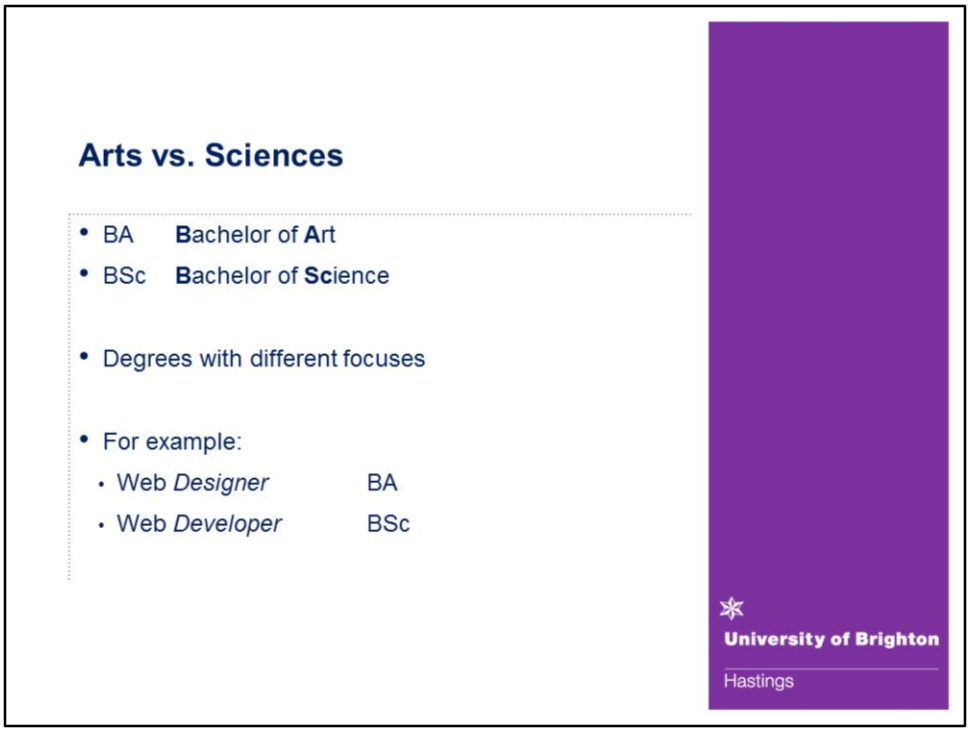
<Describe the diet>

- Themes in programming, art and sound, web and games
- At least 6 modules a year

Typical to most computing degrees are core computing skills like programming and databases.

There's usually a large individual project in the last year where you will produce a dissertation.

Hands up who considers themselves an arty person.
Hands up who considers themselves a techy person.



Most computing degrees are BSc's, but there are quite a few BA's out there too.

An arts degree in computing will typically have a greater focus on digital media (e.g. colour theory and typography) with less emphasis on the technical aspects (e.g. programming), e.g. web designers

A science degree in computing will typically focus on more technical components, e.g. web developer

But it’s a spectrum… look at the modules a degree contains to see if it’s right for you.

What kind of learning environment are you looking for?

A typical degree uses a combination of lectures, seminars/classes, and labs.

Lectures

University of Brighton

Hastings

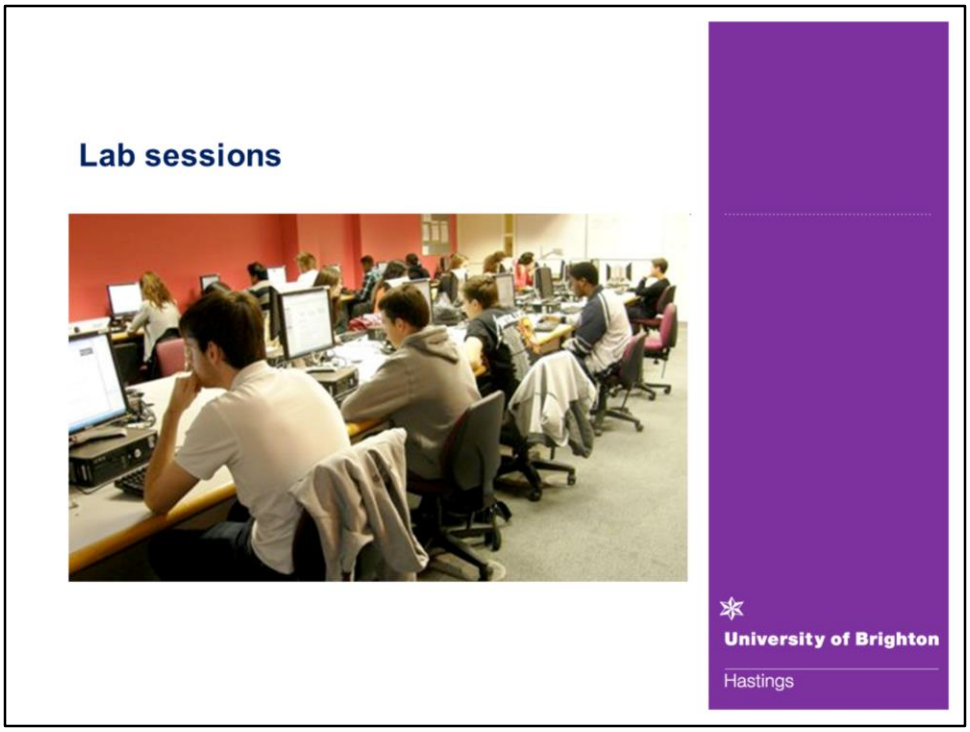
Usually in a week a module has a 1 hour lecture followed by either

Seminars / classes / tutorials

University of Brighton

Hastings

A 1 hour seminar/class, or



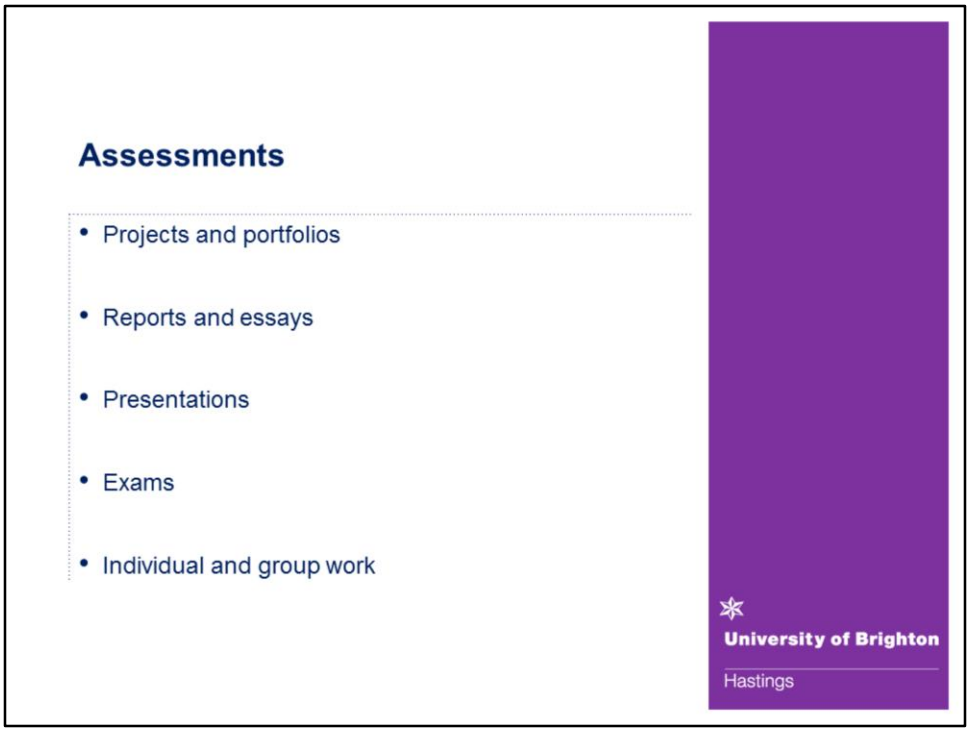
A 1 hour lab session per week.

You will also be expected to about 6 hours a week of independent study.

That's about 12 hours of contact time a week and 36 hours of study in your own time, but it does depend on the university and even the lecturer.

For example, at the University of Brighton in Hastings we have a very good student to staff ratio and tend to combine lectures and labs into one session.

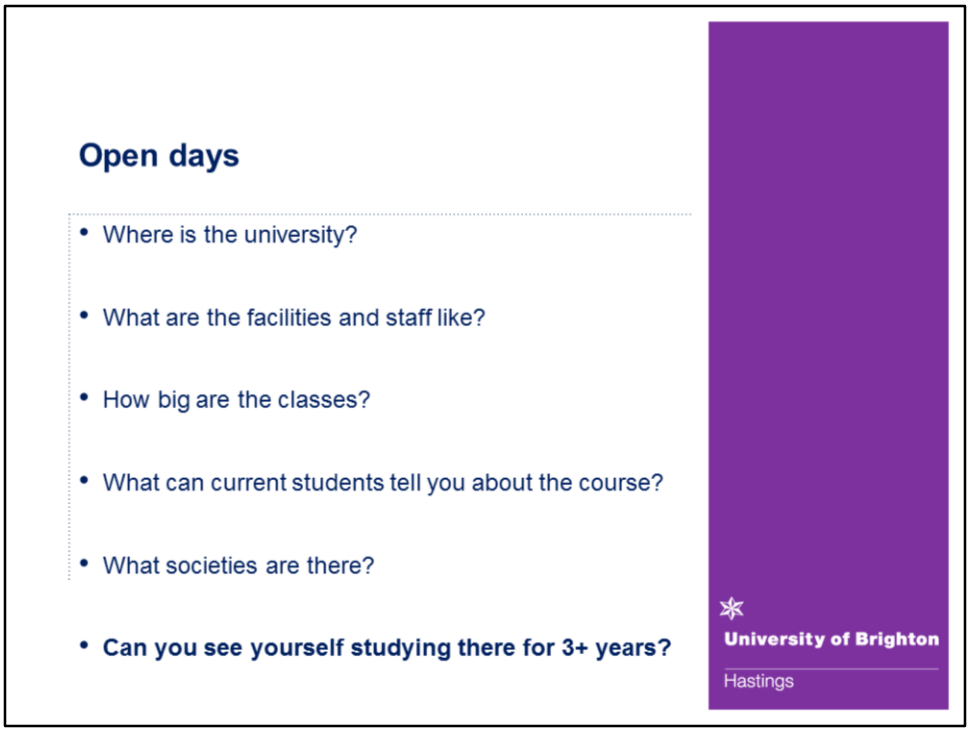
Computing degrees are usually 'good value for money' in terms of contact time.



Assessments for modules are usually formed of some kind of coursework followed by an exam, usually something like 50% coursework and 50% written exam.

But assessment methods vary between institutions and modules. When I was at Essex the typical ratio was 30% coursework, 70% final exam. I currently teach a module that is 100% coursework.

Ask about assessment when you go to open days.

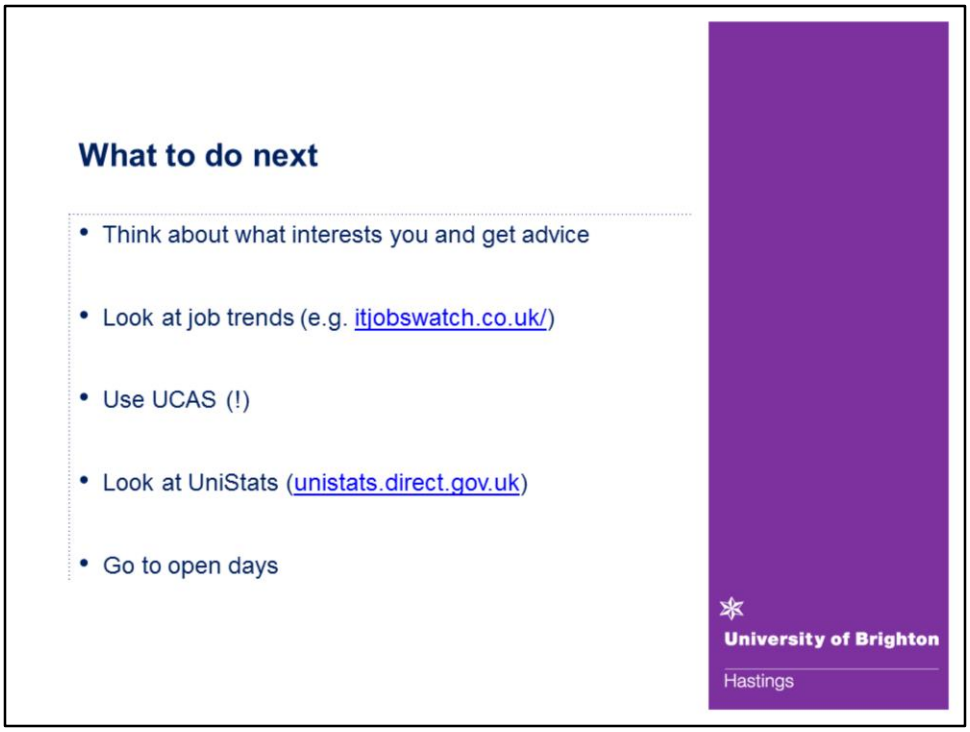


Open days are the best way to find out about the learning environment

What do you do next?

University of Brighton

Hastings



Unistats tell you all sorts of official statistics derived from the national student survey

NSS: asks all students in the UK to tell them about their degree, how much time are in lectures, how good are the facilities, and even how many people are employed after the degree.

- Do be aware however that statistics do not always give a realistic impression
- Some **courses are too young** for statistical analysis (like DGP) so data is used from "similar" courses from that university
- The survey is always at least **a year out of date** and the university will be trying to improve since that data was released
- **Your experience** will not necessarily match those from the survey

The best thing to do is go to **open days**.