

Course assessment GEOM11 2020-2021

Introduction

This course assessment is based on the responses, comments and suggestions made by the students in a course evaluation performed the last day on the course using zoom (2021-01-15). Additional comments were given in a round table discussion format.

Student course valuation summary

In general the students think that there is a good balance between lectures, exercises and presentation material (lecture notes etc.). The course is well structured and the content is relevant for the course goals. The students were very pleased with teachers' engagement throughout the course. The extensive introduction and no. of exercises and assignments quickly resulted in a nice "group atmosphere" that enhanced learning through communication between students. The tempo is high and the students find the course demanding (especially the home assignments), but they also find the course fun and that hard work pays off with respect to learning and understanding.

Suggestions for improvements are clearer instructions on some of the exercises and home assignments although efforts were implemented as outcome of earlier student evaluations (especially home assignment no. 6 – major and minor elements). The students suggested contextual answers to exercises and to go through the home assignments. Nevertheless, the students enjoyed the home assignments, which encouraged interaction and discussion between students. Exercises between crystallisation processes, phase diagrams and petrography were appreciated.

The students are well pleased with the course literature (Winter), although we should bear in mind that it does not cover all parts of the course (e.g. geochronology). Some pointed out that the lectures really helped understanding the course book. Additional material such as videos, links and other resources on Canvas were appreciated. There was a general opinion that the instructions for the Gran Final could be more detailed.

The students are generally pleased with the teaching methods for the course. Video lectures are also appreciated. Some also express that thermodynamics might need a little more time. New for last year was multiple choice questions accessible from Canvas that provided self-tests on the content of lectures. This was much appreciated and should be expanded comprising all the lectures.

Due to the pandemic the fieldtrip to Tenerife was cancelled. The students still found the "Tenerife" assignment/project very useful and enjoyable. The seminar by Valentin Troll was highly appreciated and inspiring.

All students that responded to the course evaluation felt that the course met their expectations and that they are satisfied with their learning outcomes.

The students have reported no harassment during the course.

The main suggestions for improving the course are:

- Clearer instructions for some of the exercises.
- Maybe more group discussions, preferably with lecturer present.
- Contextual answers to exercises and to go through the home assignments.
- Expanding the no. of quizzes with multiple choice questions that summarise the most important aspects of the lecture.
- Continue to develop more flipped classroom style lectures + exercises.

Reflection and summary

This course was highly affected by the covid-19 pandemic, with most lectures and some exercises performed through zoom and digital media. The positive attitude and engagement from students were surprising considering these difficulties. We teachers were especially pleased with the outcome of the Tenerife project and that the changes worked out. We have realised that some teaching and exercises may actually work better in the future using zoom – especially the introduction of microscopy exercises (we had live-video of thin sections during these events). The relatively new structure with “the Gran Final” (Tenerife project) before the exam and the excursion was found to improve the learning outcomes. We thus intend to retain having the written exam relatively early in the course, followed by the Gran Final work that leads up to a concluding fieldtrip. We will continue collaboration with Valentin Troll for the Tenerife project, and we want to implement his seminar at the start of this project also in the future.

The suggestion to produce more video material and more exercises is encouraging and we are positive to this, but note that this will inflict on the time available so this must be balanced. We will also continue to consider more “flipped classroom” style lectures as we think it would enable more integration between exercises and lectures. However, it would also require more preparatory work from the students. This setup would also enable us to provide more quantitative feedback quicker to the students. Single best answer multiple-choice self tests might provide an additional way to assess progress during the course and should be expanded to comprise all lectures. These self-tests can be organised to mimic written exams in both context and form, thereby providing the students with a direct and quantifiable assessment of their progress.

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