

Course evaluation GEOM09 (spring 2021)

Based on both the written reports and our personal impression, all students seem to greatly appreciate the course (in similarity with previous years). This achievement is particularly noteworthy since almost all teaching activities occurred online rather than in real life (IRL) due to covid-related restrictions. However, although the general impression of the course seems fine, it is obvious that the students would have preferred studies IRL had this been possible. While we regret that no excursion to Gotland was possible (due to the corona pandemic), it seems as if the students appreciated our attempts to replace the excursion by visits to various localities in Skåne. Based on recommendations given by the students last year, almost all online lectures occurred live (rather than being pre-recorded); this facilitates interactions between the teacher and students. Regarding the lectures, the overall impression is that they worked fine, although some perhaps were a bit lengthy. Likewise, most students seem to have been fine with the changed (online) format of the seminars. Two students suggest a different schedule in which the teaching activities follow the geological time scale. We have not received this critique previous years, but will keep it in mind when we schedule to course in 2022.

As in previous years, the level of the course seems appropriate given the different study background of the students and the fact that they additionally originate from multiple countries. As last year, the individual project was introduced early in the course; however, some students still have issues with a work-load that is perceived as being slightly biased towards the end of the course. Thus, for next year, we might consider scheduling the final presentations one week earlier in order for the students to be able to focus more on the final exam during the last course week. As with previous years, it seems as if we cannot stress enough (at the beginning of the course) that the students need to plan their time carefully and start early with the individual projects.

The guest lectures received good reviews, although we need to schedule more time for the exercises. We are further very pleased with the fact that the students have shown appreciation for the uniqueness of our course, and that they get to experience an unusually broad range of palaeontology-related topics and issues, including the cross-disciplinary exercise and lecture by Emma Hammarlund. Obviously, guest lectures are somewhat difficult to evaluate as we do not know what can be expected next year and which teachers will eventually participate. We do, however, hope to be able to continue with this teaching activity.

In summary, despite the unusual format that was 'forced' upon us this year, we feel reasonably pleased with the outcome of GEOM09. Hopefully, we will be back with in-house teaching and a proper field excursion next year.

2021-09-09



Johan Lindgren



Mats Eriksson (course leaders)

Linus Brakebusch

Linus Brakebusch (course representative)

Course evaluation 2021: GEOM09 (summary based on the replies from seven students)

1. How did you perceive the course in general (from 1-5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent)?

(1) (2) (3) (4) 43% (5) 57%

2. How did you perceive the level of the course (from 1-5, where 1 is too simple and 5 is too difficult)?

(1) (2) 14% (3) 71% (4) 14% (5)

3. How easy was it to keep your level of interest up during the course (from 1-5, where 1 is difficult and 5 is easy)?

(1) (2) (3) 29% (4) 43% (5) 29%

4. Did you miss something on the course? If so, what?

- No, I do not think so
- Excursions, and creepy crawlers, such as placoderms
- More about synapsids and connection between dinosaurs and birds
- Cenozoic fossils
- More about plant evolution

5. How could we improve the course?

- More engagement [from teachers?] during onset of individual project
- Reduce the amount of lectures, and instead introduce more practical stuff to keep up interest (×2)
- Re-arrange the course structure so that it is in chronological order (×2)

6. Potential views on the lectures?

- Excellent in general
- Lecture material was interesting and the teachers were good
- The lectures were generally good; sometimes a bit long
- ME's lectures looks like an old metal band internet fan site, which is positive and worth of praise
- They were good; some felt a bit similar, like the dinosaur ones
- I really enjoyed them, although some were really fast (like the Mesozoic ones)
- The amount of lectures made it hard to keep up with the literature; thus, more texts in the slides to facilitate repetition

7. Potential views on the labs and seminars?

- I loved the seminars
- Good
- The seminars were a good way to learn the course content
- The seminars were good; mixed up the learning activates and helped to retain focus. Labs were good but hard to do online
- Disliked the fact that I had to sit alone (×2)
- Nice, although covid restrictions prevented in-depth discussions IRL
- Brachiopod lab was interesting but needs more time

8. Potential views on the excursions?

- Good/great substitutes; Gotland would have been better (×2)
- Good experience
- I could listen to ME's stories about swimming with mosasaurs and his Mesozoic boathouse all day
- I loved them. You successfully made Andrarum interesting again after already being there four times – that is no mean feat!

9. Other issues?

- Unwise of MH to cancel her lectures and instead offloaded these as homework
- Too few exercises
- Keep recorded lectures in Canvas
- Online education worked well; suggested improvement: do not spread the zoom links all over Canvas (×3)

10. Corona-induced online studies 2021: Please provide your thoughts on the online teaching of 2021. What worked, what did not work, what should teacher's think about, etc. Basically whatever comes to mind and that you wish to report to us.

- Although better IRL, the online teaching activities (lectures and seminars) were well organized
- EH and RG were by far the best teachers on online teaching; I felt very engaged during their online lectures
- Avoid pre-recorded PowerPoints
- Too little time for some exercises
- I just wanted to thank you ME and JL. You made the course so much more fun than I imagined: Never change and keep up the good vibes up!