

Course evaluation GEOM09 (spring 2022)

Based on both the written reports and our personal impression, the students seem to greatly appreciate the course. However, some students perceive that there is a lack of structure, and suggest that the course either should be held in stratigraphic/chronological order or be sub-divided into modules with overarching themes. In fact, this is already the case, but the headings of the various modules were lost because we were 'forced' to use Excel rather than Word this year when laying the schedule. We, the course leaders, have pointed this out to those responsible at the department, but are, for now, required to follow the new guidelines. Notably though, for next year, we will see if we can re-arrange the course somehow, so that the students perceive it as we intended it to be.

It was further suggested that we sub-divide the written exam into two smaller exams amounting to 7.5 credits each (which is a recommendation on basic-level courses). We will consider this, but since the course content is rather coherent, we may stick to a single written exam also in the future, as this has worked well so far.

It seems as if the students greatly appreciated our attempt to replace the one-week excursion to Gotland by visits to various localities in Öland, Skåne and Denmark.

Regarding the lectures, the overall impression is that they worked fine and had a relevant content. Likewise, the students seemed to be fine with the seminars.

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 very early in the course; however, some students still have issues with a high workload that is perceived as being stressful. 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. They also need to note that 'self-studies' indicated in the schedule as a pointer/help should not be confused with 'vacation'. For example, there is not a whole week of 'Easter Holiday' but only a few days that are 'red' in the calendar.


The combined guest lecture/exercise received good reviews, particularly the chicken embryogenesis. 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 paleontology-related topics and issues. 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 new, sub-optimal format of the schedule, we feel reasonably pleased with the outcome of GEOM09.


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Course evaluation 2022: GEOM09 (summary based on the replies from 11 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) 64% (5) 36%

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) 9% (3) 64% (4) 27% (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) 9% (3) 18% (4) 18% (5) 45%

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

- Maybe more osteology (2 students) and practical work
- Biomechanics
- More exercises
- Evolution of bilateral symmetry and worms
- More connection between the biosphere and geochemical cycles
- No, everything seemed clear enough!
- Not really

5. How could we improve the course?

- When working in teams/groups, these could be more varied
- Reorganize the order of the lectures to improve the “red thread” (2 students)
- Maybe reduce the volume of lectures (2 students)
- Add osteology
- Divide the course so that there are two written exams amounting to 7.5 credits each (2 students)
- Add more information (stratigraphy) and instructions to the one-week excursion

6. Potential views on the lectures?

- Great content, poorly ordered
- Great
- Extremely good; very interesting content and good discussions
- Good level of information (even for one that has studied paleontology before) (2 students)
- Nice with guest lecturers
- Upload all lecture notes/ppt-files to Canvas beforehand
- PhD student lecture a bit too fast; otherwise content good
- Presenting good but poor separation between main message and extra details in slides

7. Potential views on the labs and seminars?

- The labs were good and seminars taught me to be prepared and learn from others
- Generally very good and interesting (3 students)
- Chicken embryo lab exiting (2 students)
- Chicken embryogenesis slightly out of place in the course and a bit overwhelming
- Fun!
- Shear amount of lectures, labs and seminars left us with little study time

8. Potential views on the excursions?

- Fun! Öland was great, and so were also the one in Mesozoikum
- I loved it! (4 students)
- Fun; would be nice to combine with microscopic world
- It was very fun, although I lacked a bit of background knowledge in sedimentology
- Paleobotany trip could benefit from a bit more structure

9. Other issues?

- Too much whining from some fellow students
- Hectic course; lack of apparent structure (e.g., “category blocks”) made it unnecessary stressful

- Thank you for a lovely course! I wish that I could do other things related to paleontology here
- Overall, I think that it was a great course
- Maybe update course description to better fit the current content

