

## Course analysis GeoN06, autumn 2022

Course leader: Anne Birgitte Nielsen

GeoN06 is a master's level course open to students from geology, archaeology, geography, biology and related subjects. The course is built around a project work running through the course and a series of lectures by different teachers, with different specializations within paleoecology and related methodologies.

A course evaluation questionnaire was handed out in paper form on the last day of the course. All 8 students on the course have responded to the course evaluation questionnaire, most have replied to all questions, one student skipped one question.

Over-all scores for total impression of the course are high, four to five on the five-grade scale (fig 1). The lectures, exercises, project work and seminars likewise get scores of four to five. The course literature gets scores of three to five, and thus has the lowest average score. The most popular part of the course seems to be the fieldwork and excursion, which gets scores five from all students this year.

The average scores are slightly higher than previous years (2021 shown in figure 2 for comparison) and has a lower spread. This might reflect the lower number of participants in the course this year compared to 2021. However, similar to 2021, the students have a diverse background, with students from both the quaternary and biogeology tracks, physical geography and archaeology, and with a mix of nationalities.

Especially for the seminars, scores are improved. The lower number of students meant that every student gave two presentations of different papers, and had feedback in between. This was not possible in 2021 due to time constraints; however, constructive feedback on the seminars will also be implemented next year regardless of student numbers, so the learning from the presentations can be maximised.

The point scores, as well as the open text comments reflect that the students are generally still very happy with the content and overall structure of the course, which we will therefore maintain next year.

In addition to the above questions, the students were asked to score the level of the course (compared to previous knowledge) and the workload as low, appropriate or high. The results are shown in figure 3.

All students found the workload appropriate. The deadlines for the group work and individual reports have been deliberately spread more compared to the past, which seems to work better for the students and make the workload more balanced. One student commented that having the deadline for the report after Christmas break was problematic, and one would prefer to have only the exam after the break. However, depending on much of the term falls after New Year, it is not always possible to place everything else before the break. Also, some students seem to appreciate the longer deadline, and the chance to plan when they do the individual work. But maybe some more advice on the need to plan for the report writing could be included in the course introduction. In previous years, some students have indicated that the workload on the course is too low. It might have helped this year that the teachers placed some more emphasis on the importance of also reading the course literature during the course.

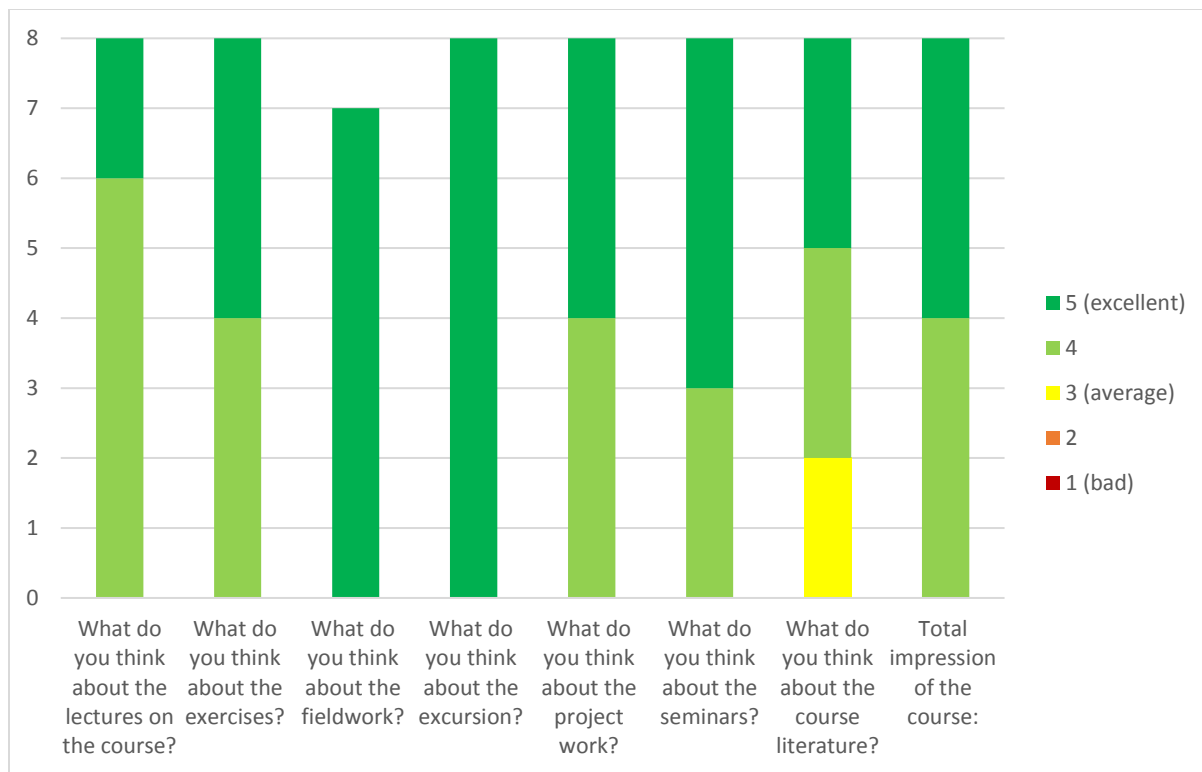


Figure 1: Point scores from the course evaluation questionnaire

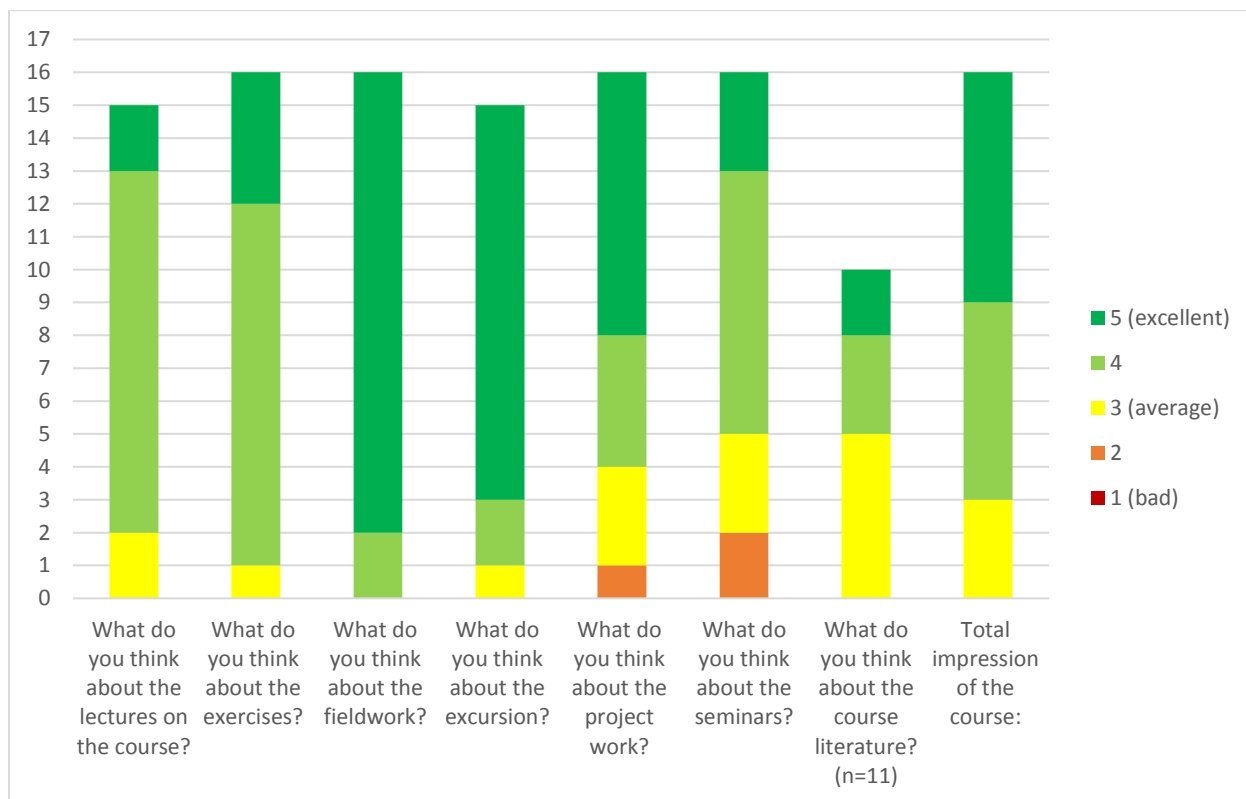


Figure 2: Points scores from the HT 2021 course evaluation for comparison.



*Figure 3: Scores for workload, previous knowledge from HT 2022 (left) and HT 2021 (right)*

As for the level of the course, all students found it appropriate. One potential worry with the course is that it could overlap too much with previous courses in the geology programme, in order for students of other backgrounds to be able to follow. However, from these free text comments: “Some repetition from BSc but still a lot of new stuff”; “As a geology student who has taken GeoB24 previously, this course really built on that knowledge”, this does not seem to be a large problem. Especially considering the diverse backgrounds of the students on this course, this balance seems to be quite good and can probably not be improved much.

Some useful ideas can be gained from the students’ free text comments in the surveys. For example that it would be good with a bit more active engagement between teachers and students through class, some discussion sessions e.g. This could be incorporated into at least some lectures.

Another comment is that the LPJ-Guess exercise could be more demanding, and maybe finished as a small (1-2 page) report. It is of course not clear if all students would appreciate this, but it is something we will look into.

Overall, the free text comments like the point scores were mostly very positive. In conclusion, we will keep the course outline for HT 2023 much the same as it was this year.

Lund, 2023.04.12

Anne Birgitte Nielsen, course coordinator

Read and approved by the student's course representative