

GG2201- Geology and Geophysics- Autumn 2017

Of the 38 students enrolled in the course 14 responded to the survey. The overall sentiment was that the course load was too much, and the structure of the course needed to change to allow for more time to read/study. There was also a general feeling that the exam was not an accurate reflection of what students were expected to learn in the course, and that the link between the learning objectives for the course and some of the lectures and practical exercises was unclear.

Preliminary ideas for improvements that address the answers/comments from the survey are:

- A. Improved structure for the course.
 - We are considering revamping the first week of the course, and removing the Utö excursion, which was there to promote bonding among the students. Instead we may begin with 2 half-days with orientation and lectures, leaving the afternoons free for social activities if the various program leaders want to organize them. This will allow us to better develop some of the groundwork and basics needed for the course, and introduce the students to the course at a better pace.
 - It should be noted, that on most weeks, the students were only expected to attend 10 hours of lecture, and 10-15 hours of laboratory/practical exercises. This is still well short of a full working week. So while we will aim to increase the amount of free-time for studying, we will also more clearly structure the schedule to highlight the time we expect the students to be reading/studying.
 - We will attempt to keep ½ day/week free for scheduled reading.
 - We will begin lectures at 9:15 (instead of 10:15) and provide 2 hours between morning lectures and afternoon labs. This gives the students time for lunch and an extra hour for scheduled reading.
 - Assignments for the Gotland excursion will be turned in on the way home from the excursion, and feedback given within a day or two. This will remove the need for the students to complete two excursion reports while studying for the exam.
 - The exam will be moved to the last possible day of the course to provide the students with the maximum amount of time to study.
 - All instructors on the course will meet in early spring, and carefully revisit the teaching material with an aim to potentially reduce the course load.
- B. Establish a clearer link between learning objectives and teaching methods/material.
 - Due to the number of lecturers contributing to the course, we need to make a better effort at organizing the teaching methods on a very basic level. This could involve a standard format for the introductory and concluding slides of each lecture, stating, and re-iterating the learning objectives.

- We also need to emphasize how the activities in the practical exercises are related to the overall learning objectives of the course. Again this can be done with a standard introductory paragraph for each practical that explains the learning objectives and broader relevance.
- Practical's can/should also be posted on Mondo in advance, so students are aware of what they will be doing before coming to the laboratory/classroom.

C. Preparing students for the exam.

- Across the board, exam marks were lower than they should be. The students were not prepared for the types of questions they could expect. This was surprising, as they were given a set of practice exam questions compiled by each instructor, and had access to previous years exams. Never-the-less, a potential solution to this lack of preparation, is to supply a set of practice questions and answers for each 2-hour lecture slot that is given. These can be posted on Mondo, and students can work through them at their own leisure. Since the answer sheets are also posted, this can be a self-learning exercise for the students. These questions should closely reflect the type of questions they will encounter on the exam, and be clearly tied to the intended learning outcomes of the individual lecture and the course.