

Kursrapport: GG5121, Environmental Geochemistry HT17

Answer Count: 1

1. Course Director

Course Director

Rienk Smittenberg

2. Number of enrolled students

Number of enrolled students

12

3. Number of students who completed the course

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12

4. Changes in the course since the last time it was given

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* Taken away the first task of writing an essay 'what is geochemistry about' based upon browsing through a large encyclopedia. This to give more room for the various 'themes' that form the core of the course. Changed the content of the themes somewhat based on availability of of co-teachers.

5. Course strengths according to the students (summary based on quantitative results, as well as free text)

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(summary based on quantitative results, as well as free text)**

Diverse, lots of new information, basic knowledge but also frontier of science. gives general overview of geochemistry, nice to get lots of experience with analytical instrumentation. good to get practice in report writing and english.

6. Course weaknesses according to the students (summary based on quantitative results, as well as free text)

**Course weaknesses according to the students
(summary based on quantitative results, as well as free text)**

The work load, which exceeded >40 hours a week for many. Level too high compared to the existing knowledge of many students. Information went too fast. Students want parts to be more 'pre-cooked' so they spent less time figuring things out and can focus more on the task at hand. There needs to be more time for consolidation and reflection of what has been learned.

7. Conclusions and proposals for changes

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The students have all learned quite a lot. Not only about geochemistry, but also general academic skills - something that I find is also very important. They were challenged, engaged and interested and overall I got positive feedback. However, like each year, also the feedback that it's much work. - even though the workload has been decreasing each year and again, they had much less to do than e.g. 3 years ago.

The problem is that course is set up to cater 3rd year students who have GEOchemistry background knowledge from previous years. However a recurring problem is that many do not have enough of this particular background and are still admitted, some because they had normal chemistry background too far removed from geochemistry. Students with the right background tend to fare quite or very well, apart from the brightest students who always do well no matter what. If one changes the admittance, however, the number of students will likely drop substantially and then one may as well cancel the entire course. A suggestion of some students is to do a crash course geochemistry in the first week to deal with this problem. This is probably a good idea for next year. The year after the course will be part of the new G3 curriculum and needs to be revised accordingly.
