Evaluation of SGO1910, Fall 2023

Introduction:
The evaluation of the SGO1910 GIS course, based on feedback from 39 participants, reflects a course rich in academic content and practical application.

Most students enjoyed the seminars over the lectures and requested more seminars and fewer lectures. The students expressed a desire for more explicit links between lectures and practical work during seminars. The students want fewer readings and more practical work. The course's scope is deemed comprehensive for first-semester students, with ten lectures, 11 compulsory seminars with hand-ins, a comprehensive reading list, a school exam and a group project assignment. The students report that this is a lot, while they also need to learn basic academic writing, reading, referencing, and a lot of technical skills in the first semester.

Proposed actions: Consider reducing the scope of the course and providing more concrete and limited lectures, with more explicit links between the lectures and the hands-on seminars.

Lectures:

The lectures were occasionally found challenging due to methodological complex topics and a somewhat fast pace; they were generally acknowledged for their academic rigour and room for discussion. 56 % responded that the quality of the lectures was good or very good, and 33 % were indifferent. Only four students indicated that they did not find the lectures satisfying. Overall, while the lectures were valued, there were clear calls for improvements in delivery and structure, explicitly focusing on the structure and pace of lectures.

Proposed actions: Ensure more streamlined lectures, ensure different lecturers do not repeatedly cover the same topic, and at a slower pace. Provide more explicit links between lectures and subsequent seminars.

Seminars:

Students appreciated the practical nature of the seminars, highlighting their helpfulness, though some suggested a need for more sessions per week and more precise tool explanations. 41 % of respondents indicated they thought the quality of the seminars was very good, 46 % good, and three students were indifferent, and only one person found seminars unsatisfying. The feedback on the seminars in the SGO1910 GIS course highlights a positive learning environment. Students appreciated the opportunity for independent work with accessible instructor support when needed. The seminars were praised for their practical application and hands-on help, facilitating understanding. However, there were suggestions for more seminar sessions, clearer explanations, and updated materials. The format of seminars was seen as effective in reinforcing lecture topics, but there were requests for more in-depth explanations and better integration with theoretical aspects. Overall, the seminars were deemed beneficial and engaging.

Proposed actions: Systematic introductions to each seminar that provide links back to the lecture.

Readings:

While diverse in reception, course materials contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Overall, the course is seen as a valuable component of the academic program, with its blend of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Students found the SGO1910 GIS course readings challenging, with some considering certain materials as unnecessary or not directly related to

lectures. There was a consensus that the readings were heavy and sometimes difficult to comprehend, particularly for those facing language barriers. Many suggested a need for more practical exercises to aid understanding of the technical jargon. The reading volume was also noted, with some students finding it overwhelming, especially when combined with practical tasks. Students desired more focused and relevant reading materials to enhance their learning experience.

Proposed actions: Consider reducing the number of readings to essential readings only.

Communication:

The feedback on information flow in the SGO1910 GIS course indicates general satisfaction, with students appreciating the level of assistance and the quality of follow-up on the learning platform Canvas. However, some students desired more feedback on assignments, specifically regarding maps, and better communication about deadlines and exam focus. There were also suggestions for uploading lecture presentations in advance to aid in preparation. The variation in seminar leaders' approach to explaining content was noted, with some students feeling rushed through the material.

Other:

Some students missed learning more QGIS and R.

Despite calls for improved organization and pacing, the course stands out for its effective teaching and relevant content; it clearly demonstrated work relevance for students.