Course report

Department of geological sciences

Course code: GG2008

Course name: Tellus i - Geology 15 credits, ST26, HT26

Course Director: Christophe Dupraz

Number of enrolled students: >300

Number of students who completed the course: 120

Course evaluation answer count: 17

1. Description of changes since the last course and decisions already made since last course date (if any was made):

For HT26, I introduced a scheduled one-hour Zoom office hour each week to improve teacher availability compared HT26. Students use the session to ask questions, discuss assignments and examinations, or clarify the course organisation. Attendance was modest, typically 10-20 students. But the sessions provided a regular and predictable point of contact for students progressing at different rates. I think this regular format, though more demanding for the teacher, more effective than offering meetings only on request. Additional forms of interaction are still needed.

2. The strengths of the course's according to the students (summary based on quantitative results, text responses from the survey and any other evaluation during the course):

The evaluations show strong overall satisfaction. In ST26, 7 of 9 respondents selected positive response options for overall satisfaction; in HT26-VT27, 7 of 8 did so. Students also rated the relevance of the course content highly: all 9 ST26 respondents and 6 of 8 HT26-VT27 respondents selected a positive option.
The open comments highlight the breadth and depth of the subject matter, the clear Moodle structure, the rock box, the recorded video lectures, the textbook, selected Google Earth assignments, and the possibility of studying at an individual pace. This indicates that the combination of rock box, recorded explanations and flexible study is a central strength of the distance format.

3. The weaknesses of the course according to the students (summary based on quantitative results, text responses from the survey and any other evaluation during the course):

The main concerns relate to teacher contact, the quality and clarity of some course materials, and some frustration about assessments. In ST26, respondents asked for greater teacher availability and engagement. I addressed this concern through the weekly Zoom office hour introduced for HT26. We show improvement for the HT26 ratings but additional effort need to be done. Some students considered the examinations too short or insufficiently demanding. A student questions the entire level of the course, which is contradicted by the orverall student assessment. However, this type of remark is useful to review learning density, assignment design and the alignment between intended learning outcomes and assessment.

4. The teachers' analysis of the course's implementation and results:

The course provides a solid and demanding introduction to geology, at a level comparable with the on-campus course. Its flexible pace is important for distance students, but it makes regular interaction and personal feedback difficult in a cohort of more than 200 students. The weekly office hours help, although more can be done. I introduced during HT26 improved automatic feedback at the end of each assigment, available only if the student pass the assignment with 50% or more. This feedback include more explanation and additional animations and table allowing the student to go a bit further.
The examination generally covers the learning outcomes. Although some students considered the examination too easy, the grade distribution is generally balanced and approximately centred on grade C. The results therefore do not indicate that the examination is systematically too easy, although its format and difficulty should still be rewieved.

5. Conclusions and suggestions for possible changes in order to develop the course and any decisions already made to develop the course before future course dates:

I have added detailed feedback to each assignment, including explanations, tests and animations, available after students achieve 50%. I am also producing more field-excursion videos and will continue the weekly Zoom office hours.
Course texts, assignments and automatic marking will be checked and corrected. I will also review the rock-box delivery and the format and difficulty of the examinations, while maintaining flexibility for distance students.

6. Other comments:

Over the past year, I have worked to improve both the flexibility and the structure of the course so that students with complex schedules can complete it without lowering academic level. The course is for students who follow the normal two-month schedule as well as those who need a lot more time to finish. The current model makes this possible, but supporting both groups consistently is a challenge.

The low response rate for the assessment induces limitation in this report. Only 17 students completed the two evaluations, compared with more than 300 enrolled students. I will try communicating the purpose of the evaluation more clearly in the future. and remind the students. A higher response rate is necessary for a more balanced assessment and for judging whether the changes described above improve the student experience.