UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN
Institutt for geografi

Emnerapport H2020:

GEO215 Geographical Information Systems: Theory and Practice

1. Informasjon om emnet

Emnebeskrivelse	https://www.uib.no/en/course/GEO215
Undervisningssemester	Høst 2020
Emneansvarleg	Benjamin Robson
Vurderingsform	- Portfolio assessment. The portfolio contains two written assignments, assignment 1 (25%) and assignment 2 (75%). The portfolio work is done throughout the teaching semester. - Oral exam. The oral exam may adjust the final grade. Alternative assessment form - Assignment (25% of final grade) - Oral exam (75 % of final grade)
Undervisningsform	Lectures/seminars and data labs
Obligatoriske arbeidskrav	2 approved lab reports

2. Statistikk

Eksamensmeldt	26
Bestått	23
Ikke møtt	3
Stryk	0
Gjennomsnittskarakter	B

Karakterfordeling

Vurd.enhet	Ordning	Antall studenter	A	B	C	D	E	F	Andre
2020 HØST ORD	LM Mappeevaluering + muntlig	26	4	10	8	1	0	0	0
		%	17	43	35	4	0		
		%	17	43	35	4	0	0	0
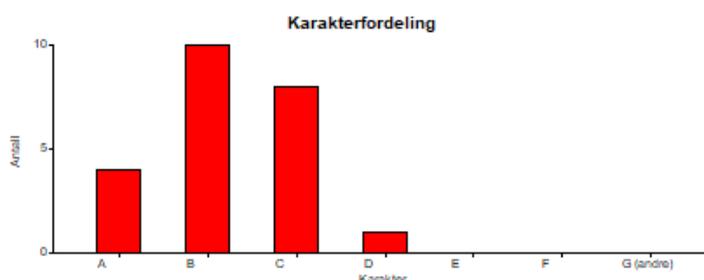
3. Egeneevaluering
Vurdering av undervisningsopplegget i forhold til mål og resultater (emneansvarlig)

The course had difficulties in the Autumn 2020 semester, some of which were preventable, and some of which were not. Due to COVID-19 we had to move the course from a physical based course to a digitally based course in September. I had made the decision to make all lectures one hour this year to accommodate for the COVID restrictions (no breaks in lecture rooms and such). Although this meant that some content had to be excluded, the feedback from the students for this decision was positive, and in my opinion concentration levels were higher. I would therefore recommend that in the future, shorter lectures are used, with additional information disseminated though the datalabs, and perhaps MittUiB pages.

The remainder of the lectures were delivered through videos uploaded to MittUiB, with one Q&A lecture on Zoom. The former worked very well, and good feedback was received. The latter due to whatever reason (communication reasons primarily) only a few students turned up.

The two student assistants did an excellent job in fielding questions for the datalabs, both in person, and through Microsoft Teams. This meant that students had access to help at unprecedented ease.

There were large problems associated with the datalabs and COVID-19. The local restrictions in Bergen led to the computer rooms at first being closed, although they were later given permission to use the computer rooms by UiB, many were understandably cautious about doing so. Sadly the solution offered to the students to use ArcGIS from home (apps.uib.no also known as the tredjepartsportelan) was riddled with bugs, instabilities, and was generally unreliable. Despite repeated messages to the IT department over the semester, these issues did not go away. This had the unfortunate consequence that over 40% of the students dropped out of the course, while three students submitted an official compliant about how they were unable to work on their assignment.

The overall assessment of the course was positive, and the students who completed the course achieved high grades. One explanation for this however is that the students that were struggling dropped out earlier in the semester and did not have the final exam. As such, although the course

received positive comments about the lectures, lecturer, and communication with the Geography administration, the course responsible feels that the shortcomings of others at the University had a detrimental affect on the course this year, and it must absolutely be ensured that such (avoidable) problems do not arise again.

4. Studentevaluering:

11 svar.

#1 I study GEO215 as part of:

Bachelor Programme in Geography at UiB: 7
Exchange programme: 3
Other programmes: 1

#2 How often did you participate in the lectures and seminars?

80-100%: 8
50-79%: 2
0-19%: 1

#3 How do you assess the different parts of the learning and assessment?
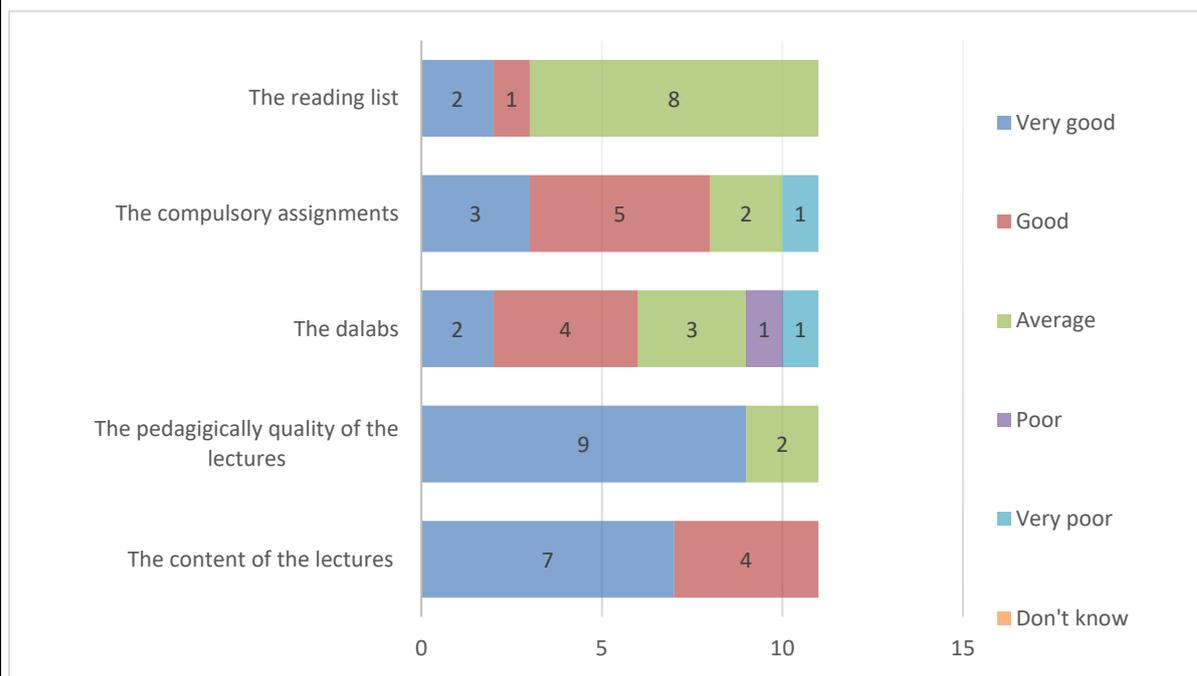
#4 Do you have comments on the lectures?
Åpne kommentarfelt er slettet i denne visningen.

**#5 Do you have comments about the datalabs?**
Åpne kommentarfelt er slettet i denne visningen.

#6 Do you have comments on the compulsory assignments?
*Åpne kommentarfelt er slettet i denne visningen.*

#7 Do you have comments about the reading list?
Åpne kommentarfelt er slettet i denne visningen.

#8 Did you find that the course reflected the learning outcomes described in the course description? (http://www.uib.no/GEO215)?
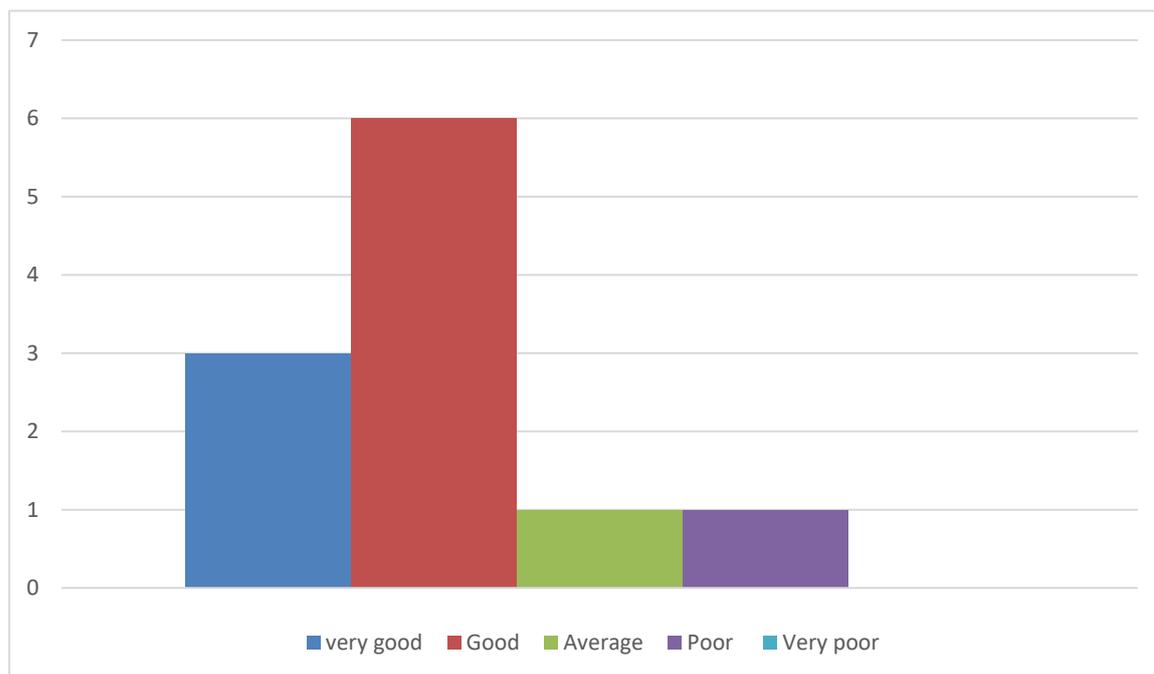
#9 Did you find that the information at Mitt UiB, including announcements, was sufficient to keep you updated during the course?

- Yes: 10
- No: 1

#10 What is your joint evaluation of the course?

What is your joint evaluation of the course?

■ Very good ■ Good ■ Average ■ Poor ■ Very poor
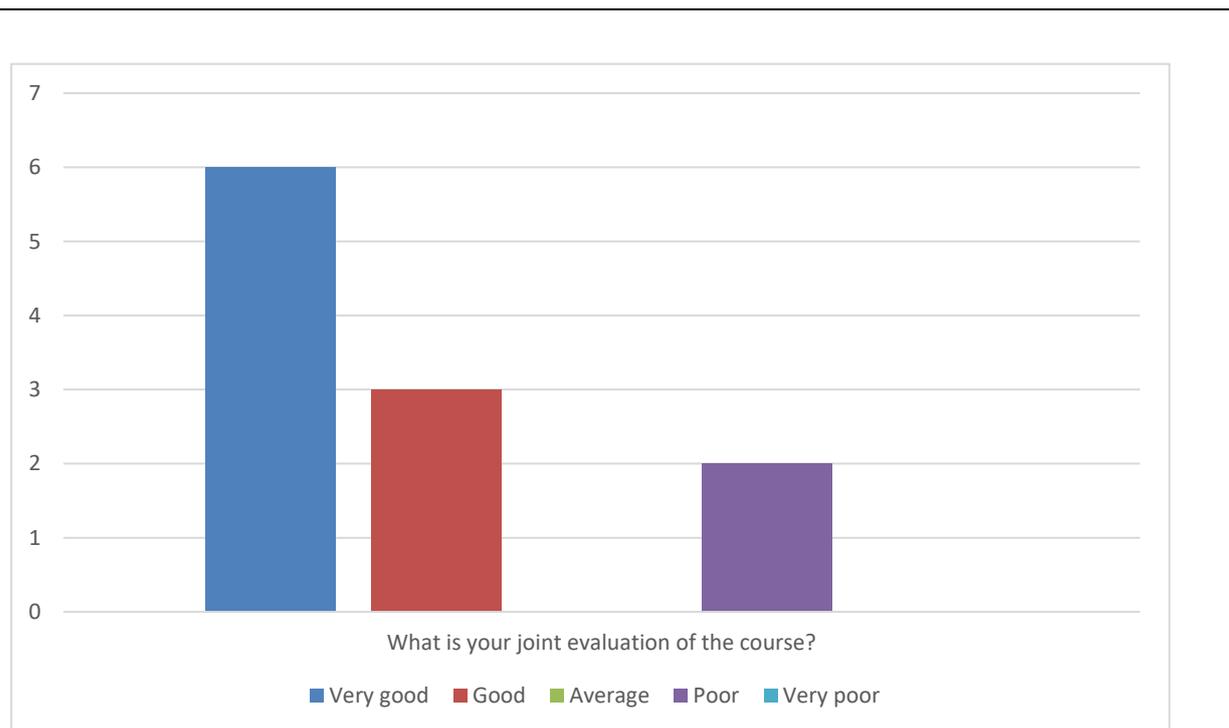
#11 Do you have comments to your joint evaluation of the course?

Åpne kommentarfelt er slettet i denne visningen.

#12 Do you have suggestions to how we can improve the course?

Åpne kommentarfelt er slettet i denne visningen.

5. Oppfølging
Oppfølging av/kommentarer til tidligere evalueringer. Hvordan rapporten følges opp, evt. tiltak eller endringer som er gjort/planlegges gjennomført på bakgrunn av emnerapporten

This was an exceptional year due to the ongoing pandemic, but at the same time we were already 4 months into the pandemic when the course started, as such me and other colleagues should have been more prepared for digital teaching this autumn. In hindsight we were naïve to assume the semester could be performed physically. We are pleased that the course evaluation was overwhelmingly positive, yet as pointed out above, we assume that this was influenced by the huge dropout rate of the course.

The following recommendations are to be made for GEO215 in 2021:

1) Apps.uib.no shall in no way be relied upon or offered as an alternative for GEO215 until it has proven to be comparable to having software installed locally. It has shown to be unreliable and unstable, with a lack of support from the IT department when problems arise. The reality is that even if apps.uib.no worked perfectly, it still relied on the students having a computer suitable for GIS, which is an unreasonable expectation.

2) A virtual machine **must be set up** that allows students a full desktop through a remote desktop client or a net browser. This is **especially critical** given the faculty's decision to remove the majority of the computer rooms in 2021 leaving GIS students at a **significant disadvantage.**

3) Datalabs should be updated, with clearer information on data sources and at times clearer instructions. It is recommended that instead of instructions for the datalabs being saved as a PDF, they are input onto a MittUiB page. This allows the integration of videos (such as showing the steps how to solve a certain task), links to files, and perhaps commenting/discussions based on the page.

4) Lectures should be no more than one hour, with the reading and datalabs proving more detailed information (such as specific GIS operations that can be performed that digital teaching appears likely for Autumn 2021, it is recommended that the datalabs and lectures be integrated onto one MittUiB page for each topic (in the same way that GEO316 is done). It could also be an option in such a case to split the lectures up into smaller bits, and have them interspersed through the data practical.

As GEO215 is going to be updated to use ArcGIS Pro in 2021, many of these changes can be incorporated. A student assistant would be a great assess to help update the labs and create videos.