

# Fall 2011 Virginia Tech Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) Survey

GEOS\_1004\_98000\_201109

Results of survey

Started: November 26, 2011

Ended: December 8, 2011

Reply rate: 68% ( 153 / 226 )

## Fall 2011 Virginia Tech Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) Survey

If a course was taught by multiple instructors, you will be asked to respond to the same items for each instructor. For course-related items, please consider the nature of the course as it was taught by each named instructor.

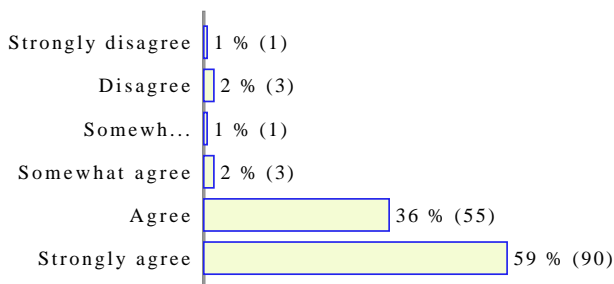
Thank you for contributing to the goal of continuously improving teaching and learning at Virginia Tech!

Instructor/Evaluatee: Neil Johnson

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

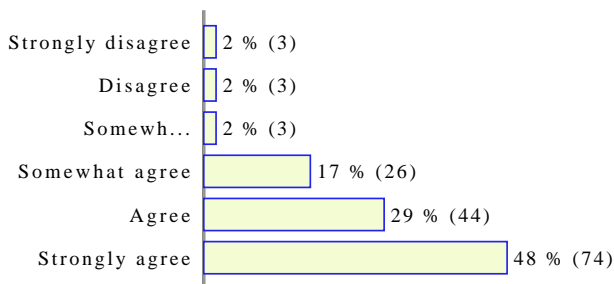
### 1. The instructor was well prepared.

153 answers, mean = 5.47



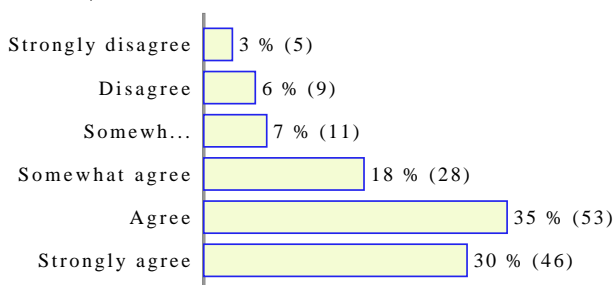
### 2. The instructor presented the subject matter clearly.

153 answers, mean = 5.14



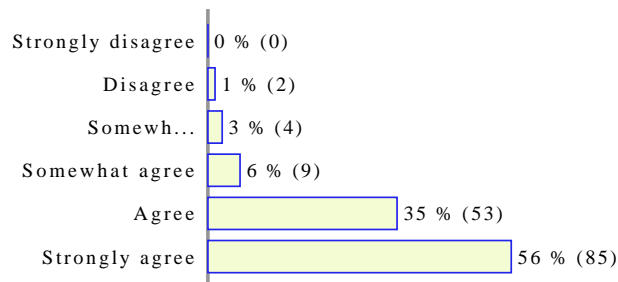
### 3. The instructor provided feedback intended to improve my course performance.

152 answers, mean = 4.66



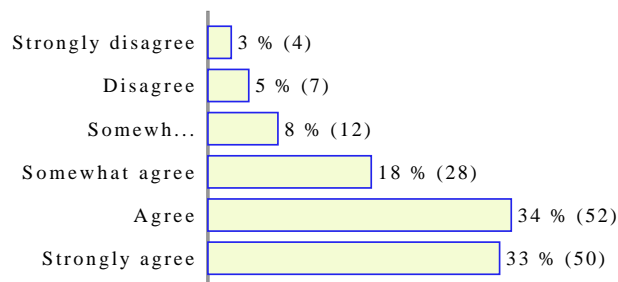
### 4. The instructor fostered an atmosphere of mutual respect.

153 answers, mean = 5.41



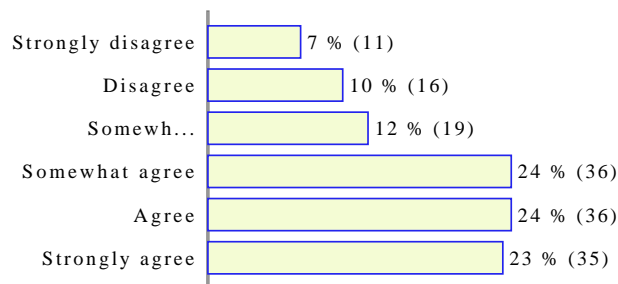
### 5. I have a deeper understanding of the subject matter as a result of this course.

153 answers, mean = 4.75



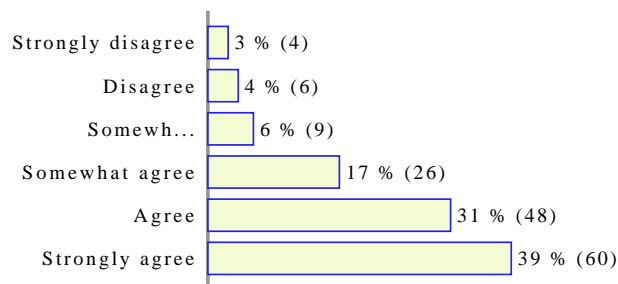
### 6. My interest in the subject matter was stimulated by this course.

153 answers, mean = 4.14



### 7. Overall, the instructor's teaching was effective.

153 answers, mean = 4.88



### 8. What did the instructor do that most helped in your learning?

- notes online
- He presented the material in an interesting and straightforward manner.
- Gave examples.
- interactive
- Practice Exams
- Understood the material inside and out. Always used analogies to simplify the concepts

- He has the powerpoint we can follow along with.
- Every helpful during office hour!! Very friendly and understandable,
- A lot of pictures and graphs
- His slides helped you focus on what would be most important to study for exams.
- iClicker questions.
- online quizzes
- clicker questions
- visual aids
- nothing.
- Presented the material in a way we could understand
- Posted powerpoints online
- Quizzes
- He gave us power-points of what we "thought" would be covered on the test.
- i clicker questions
- Providing lecture notes and practice exams.
- assigned on line quizzes
- He discussed his powerpoints and sometimes showed animations.
- by only putting things from class on the tests
- The powerpoints were very helpful
- the pictures with the slides helped understand the material.
- He always had powerpoints prepared, as well as had students answer iclicker questions, ensuring we attend class.
- he was very flexible and helped me personally through the semester.
- He tried to provide examples of geologic structures that we would see/ understand in our everyday life.
- His powerpoints helped the most.
- provided sample tests
- He was very well prepared and knew what he was talking about.
- Nothing
- Made clicker quizzes
- He had visuals and took time to explain complicated things.
- nothing
- Made it fun. Johnson is pretty awesome.
- Online quizzes helped test my knowledge.
- He would use examples from real life and have volunteers present a demonstration.
- Posted power points
- Nothing
- clicker quizzes in the middle of class encourages that students pay attention during lecture
- He went over notes very thoroughly.
- Clicker questions
- He sent out the powerpoints from class so we could study them at home.
- Put information clearly on easy to read PowerPoints.
- Great and informative lectures
- clearly explained the course material
- Explaining the power point
- Provided i-clicker questions throughout the lecture that later appeared on the exams
- Put the notes online
- powerpoints
- his teaching methods were thorough
- The instructor most helped in my learning when I went to visit him during his office hours. I went to him for helpful exam preparation tips and test-taking tips to better my grades and performance in his class. This did result in a 10 increase in my third exam from my first and second ones.
- I really liked the iClicker questions.
- Told interesting stories.
- iClicker questions
- lots of real life examples
- He put the slides on Scholar
- He was very courteous during office hours
- Told a lot of anecdotes
- his sense of humor
- He gave excellent examples that helped me to better understand what he was talking about. Geology is not the most stimulating subject for most people but he made it entertaining and interesting to learn.
- The stories that he told that related to the content was helpful.
- The use of iClicker questions helped because i was able to apply what i learned to actual questions.

- He emphasized important points.
  - Diagrams, charts and pictures explaining what certain concepts actually looked like
  - The instructor posted a practice test on scholar before any exams.
  - Explains concepts exceptionally well.
  - He presented the material in a way where everyone could see it and made sure people were paying attention by asking questions every so often during class.
  - powerpoints
  - The powerpoints available online were helpful when studying.
  - The instructor is organized and has a constant routine which helped with class work and overall understanding of the material.
  - The instructor took his time and didn't really rush anything.
  - Thoroughly walked through the subject matter.
  - Prepared slides that somewhat addressed the material on tests
  - When I went to his office hours, he went through my test with me and showed me where I could improve.
  - questions with iclicker during class
  - He didn't just lecture, but tried to present the material in ways that we could understand.
  - taught with clarity and was very approachable
  - Provided Power points for lectures.
  - He encouraged meeting with him regularly during his teaching hours.
  - He put his lecture notes on scholar and used iclicker questions
  - The instructor's enthusiasm for geology was evident in every class period. He communicates topics very well and in good humor.
  - Give out iclicker questions that help with understanding the class
  - put the power points online
  - Put the slides on Scholar.
  - Practice quizzes
  - He was very precise and did not overload you with information.
  - had the online quizzes
  - He gave good lectures with good powerpoints.
  - provided good examples and taught the material in a way that can be applied outside the classroom
  - He's very nice and very fair, but its sometimes difficult to prepare for tests.
  - Thoroughly explained everything with pictures.
  - Slide shows with pictures
  - he was clear in his lectures and was very enthusiastic. The iclicker questions also showed up on alot of tests which was helpful.
  - He communicated effectively and made the subject enjoyable
  - Posting slides online for review.
  - Provided study guides for exams.
  - Powerpoints were very helpful
  - used powerpoints
  - The slides that were available to us for each lecture were the most helpful.
  - He was really good at explaining things during the lecture.
  - the powerpoints
  - Went into detail for every topic covered. Made understanding the material much easier
  - I-clicker questions were relevant
  - Answered many questions during class.
  - iclicker quizzes made sure the information was retained
  - the lectures were always informative and he provided the lecture slides to study from.
  - The powerpoints were clear and to the point. The powerpoints made great study guides. He explained the topics very well and his questions were very fair.
  - He always explained the concepts very clearly and was aware of who his audience was giving a lecture clearly designed to engage attention.
  - clear powerpoints
  - He presented the information
- 9. What could you have done to be a better learner?**
- Studied more.
  - Taken more notes in class
  - Challenge the ideas in mind and in response during our lecture
  - Asked more questions and use his office hours.
  - the online quiz should be involved to the test questions,

should give extra credit for students who would like to work hard.

the true, false question should be something that is taught in class.

- Read the book
- Studied more.
- Different way of presenting info other than powerpoint.
- paid attention in class
- payed attention
- Nothing.
- Not much.
- taken notes in class
- Listened better
- Gone to the teacher and asked what I had to study, because I could not understand on my own what I had to do.
- read the chapters more thoroughly
- Read the text more.
- ask questions, take better notes
- Well I paid attention in class, took notes, took all the quizzes, read the book, answered all the iclicker questions, studied his practice exams, and somehow I still got a 75 on the exam.
- pay closer attention when taking notes
- smaller class with discussion.
- Keep focus more during class
- nothing. i dont find the material interesting
- Read the book instead of just powerpoint
- He pauses when speaking, leaving cliff-hangers. This is good but I feel he over uses it.
- read more in-depth
- Pay attention better and attend all of the classes.
- I couldn't have done anything
- Paid attention more in class
- Taken more time to learn from the mastering geology quizzes.
- n/a
- Do more work out of class
- Attend all class meetings.
- Make the class into introductory class not a 2000 or 3000 class

- i could have read the material in the book more closely before the tests and online quizzes
- I could have taken more notes rather than relied on the presentation so much.
- Study more
- I could have studied more before the tests since there was so much material.
- Studied longer.
- Taken better notes
- taken more detailed notes
- Read more
- been more attentive
- go in to ask more questions or stay after class
- I could have read the text in the books more frequently but then again, I felt that I read through the material quite effectively by understanding the geological processes involved, simplifying the material, and using a highlight marker for key pointers. I am not sure, then, what else better I could have done in the course considering my dedication to seek for better test-taking strategies and constant perusing of the text and his power point slides.
- Reading the textbook really helped me to improve my test scores.
- Paid attention more.
- Completed every online quiz
- paid more attention to lecture than on the internet
- Visited him during office hours to review my tests
- Stayed awake more in class
- utilized his online quiz resource more
- I think I could have used the office hours more effectively, but I feel as though I did a good job.
- I could have paid more attention during the lecture.
- I could have gone to more office hours. Also I could have studied the material more in depth so that I understood it more.
- Sit closer to the teacher during lectures.
- checked the online website everyday, more time relegated for studying
- To be a better learner, I could have studied further in advance to perform better on the tests.
- Read the textbook.
- I could have distracted myself less during class.

- better note taking
- more visual examples
- Presented the material more clearly and more understandable.
- I could have spent more time reading the text.
- Paid better attention in class at times.
- Attempted to acquire a more thorough understanding of the material in any way.
- I could have paid better attention in class.
- I could have taken better notes along with his powerpoints.
- I could have read through the chapters more.
- Payed attention more to the lectures.
- The exams could have been more relevant to the lectures.
- Studied more
- I could have studied material more outside of class.
- Not sleep in class and get some rest
- focused more on the material that was actually on the tests
- asked more questions
- Paid better attention in class.
- Studied more
- Tried to read the chapters more.
- Focused more in class
- Studied harder for exams.
- studied a little more
- I could've spent more time on the geology website that we take quizzes on its a very good resource that I found out about late
- Read the chapters before the lectures
- Write down the I clicker questions
- wrote notes over again after every class
- studied more than I did.
- Payed better attention in class.
- Read more, focus more in class.
- Studied more
- Make the information more interesting
- I could read ahead so that I have a better understanding of the information that we cover.
- I could have payed attention better. I had a problem with

zoning out of the lesson.

- paid more attention in class
- N/A
- I found it difficult to learn in the large lecture environment. I could have tried harder.
- Read the textbook more often.
- I could have read the textbook more often.
- The online quizzes are terrible.
- remembered quiz dates
- I could have gone to office hours

### **10. Please add any additional comments regarding the course here:**

- It was sweet
- Well structured, well organized. Gave me a good understanding of the material and a good understanding of important material to study for
- I think any professor who shoots for an overall target exam average of 75 is absolutely ridiculous. Shouldn't they want their students to fully grasp the information and do as well as they can, possibly getting an A? He makes the exams very difficult and the material we cover is nowhere to be found on the exam. I think Prof. Johnson is a horrible professor.
- sometimes boring lectures
- very difficult for a 1001 level course
- He essentially copies the book. His powerpoints and pictures are the same. The reiteration does not help me learn.
- it would have been better if there were reminders for the online quizzes.
- He was also incredibly helpful during office hours, willing to answer any question and go over tests.
- The course as a whole was terrible. The tests reflected nothing that we had learned in class and the homework was pointless. Even after putting in tireless work into studying for this course I came out with nothing. This class is nothing short of a waste of time and a GPA dropper.
- He is a great teacher and is really excited about the material.
- The course material on the test was not relevant to the book or lecture notes. The instructor did a poor job of explaining subject matters and preparing the class for the exams.
- Good prof
- students should be encouraged to take advantage of what the mastering site has to offer
- Considering this class was a strict lecture course, it was hard

to pay attention.

- Very good teacher, knows his subject well, very knowledgeable
- Overall a very interesting course
- iClickr questions should be on the test too!
- Overall, Dr. Johnson is a highly intelligent professor and seems to explain things fairly clearly. However, I do not agree with his decision to weigh the four exams for 84% of the overall grading system, while only 8% for hw and iclicker questions. I feel that if the tests were only counted as 50% of the grade, my grade would be more satisfying and deserving (a letter grade higher!!). If he weighs the tests so high, you would think that the tests themselves would be a piece of cake, but that is clearly not the case when you consider his class averages of 75%. 75%!! They are rather tricky for most and I can justify that easily when you observe koofers.com and it shows his average rating as a professor. And, not to misquote him here, but somewhere in his syllabus he is satisfied with a overall class average of 75 on each of his exams, and therefore will not curve them. Really? If I was him, I'd strive for a much higher class average like an 85 and thus would have better results as a teacher and for his pupils. He says that he would curve grades by a few minor points if the mean was below that average of 75, but still it does not add up well or fairly in my standing. I am sitting at possibly a B- for the course pending on the final and want a B but that is only possible if he were to make the averages for the tests 34 points fewer!! As the NFL Sunday Countdown crew says, "Come on man" perfectly fits this predicament and should be considered highly by the professor himself to change (i.e. lower significantly) the weight percentages for the exams if he expects higher grades from his students and a better overall approval rating as a professor.
- N/A
- I did not like Mastering Geology one bit
- i would ask him to please cover more of the material that is actually on the exams in class
- He teaches by the slides that don't have a lot of information or detail. Then the exams are all on the textbook, which have a lot of detail that we never go over.
- Awesome teacher, but hard tests
- none
- NA
- There should be something to help make the class a little more interactive.
- the online quizzes were my biggest issue. i rarely, if ever, received decent notification letting me know an assignment was due. I understand i should check the website more often

but sometimes that's just not possible. Because the quizzes were scheduled so erratically, it was difficult to keep up and i received several zeros i shouldn't have. this affected my grade more than it should have and i'm pissed that this wasn't organized better by the instructor. If you're going to schedule online quizzes inconsistently, BE SURE TO NOTIFY STUDENTS better than just one random email every two weeks. The due dates should also be posted on Scholar. Better yet, just make them due on the same day of the week each week, even if it means 2 are due in 1 day (they're only 10 questions a pop anyways). just my two cents

- too many monotone powerpoints
- Fascinating! I can't drive on the interstate now without looking at the soil profiles in the cut-aways. I know this doesn't exactly help you improve the course, but I thought it was worth saying.
- Very knowledgeable teacher.
- The material covered in lecture was not as relevant to the questions asked on the test. I found the tests to be more difficult than what they should have been.
- great intro class.
- Good organization of class materials and assignments.
- Really enjoyed it and hope my comments serve to make it a better course for the future
- The tests were very difficult, even after hours of preparing for them all week.
- I disagree with some of the teaching like how the earth is millions of years old and i feel that this shouldn't be taught.....  
This is a cite that helps prove my point.....i hope this is taken into consideration.....i feel that is should be a priority...  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szBT13S24MY>  
Thank you
- It was harder than I expected.
- fun class
- The course was not very interesting but not terribly hard.
- the textbook was pretty pointless
- Some of the questions on the exams were worded strangely, different from what the powerpoint and the book said. It seems as if the questions were there to trick me, when under normal circumstances, I would know the answer immediately. Also, I think that the professor should assign other work that counts as part of our grade because I am not a strong test taker even when I study a week in advance.
- the class in general was pretty boring and uninteresting
- N/A

- Mastering Geology was a waste of time. Though, the web resources were good for studying.

Neil is an interesting and respectful instructor.

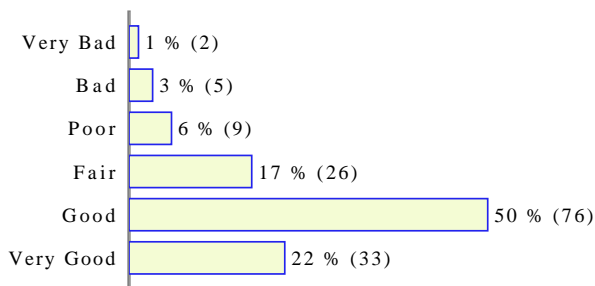
Studying 5 chapters at once to memorize odd geological vocabulary terms seemed to be a waste of time, but this was critical for success on the exams.

- Overall interesting course and was very manageable.
- I didn't like the variable schedule for the homework. Because it was due on different days during different weeks, I had a hard time remembering when each chapter was due and sometimes even forgot to do it because I confused the due time.
- It was difficult being the material didn't match very well with the assessments.

- large class hard to focus.
- The dim lights were troublesome for test taking
- too big to focus
- It is really cold and dim
- too much distractions
- The environment was quiet and pretty easy to zone out in.
- There were little to no participation opportunities.
- It was good
- N/A
- The lighting was not very good.
- none
- It's a big room. You have to be self-motivated to focus and stay of Facebook. He is easily heard. I think that it is just a personal preference if you choose to listen or not.

### 11. How would you rate the physical environment in which you took this class based upon your ability to see, hear, concentrate, and participate?

151 answers, mean = 4.77



- the GLC auditorium has horrible lighting
- Too noisy, nobody paid attention, everything was very distracting
- It could get very dark and hard to see tests in about half of the auditorium. The lighting could have been better but it was overall good.
- The class was large and spread out in an auditorium with dim lighting which made it hard to concentrate at times.

### 12. Please add any comments about the physical environment here:

- the lighting in the glc auditorium makes it very difficult to see sometimes. very dark.
- Large class room, so it could be difficult to participate for some people
- There were enough seats to sit where you wanted, and there weren't many disruptive people.
- No desks
- dark room
- The auditorium we were in was very dimly lit, hard to see when taking exams.
- nice
- close the doors of the GLC
- Well it was an auditorium. No one beyond the second row participated because otherwise you'd have to yell. There was no discipline in the class since it was so large, so it was easy to be distracted by rude loud students. Also, everybody ate, so my mind was always focused on my hunger.

- I like taking notes on paper rather than on my laptop, so not having a desk or particularly decent writing surface was a bit of a challenge sometimes.
- comfortable seats; no desktops
- Couldn't always hear him clearly
- It was a larger class in an auditorium, so it was sometimes harder to participate and ask questions. And in the auditorium setting other students didn't have to pay attention and would be on their computers and it was hard to concentrate on the lecture.
- chill environment. Awesome professor, I enjoyed taking the class
- the classroom is very big and containing over 200 students
- Really nice auditorium and the screen was big enough for anyone as well as the instructors tone of voice
- The lighting cast an awkward shadow when taking the exams and made it hard to see all the bubbles on the scantron sheet.
- Class environment was good.
- the graduate life center has horrible lighting



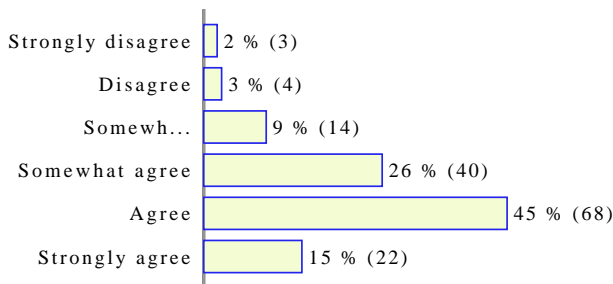
- The lecture room is very dark, which made it a little difficult to read the exams.
- The environment was good!
- Taking tests in Graduate Life Center was annoying for we had to use boards to write on since there were no underdesks on the chairs
- Dark, cramped classroom.
- There were no desks with the seats which made it physically difficult to take notes. The back portion of the classroom is poorly lit.
- It was hard to stay interested in the material when it was presented in such a boring way

## College of Science

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

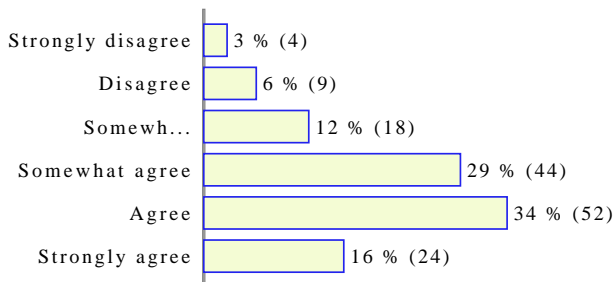
### 13. I improved my ability to think independently about the course material.

151 answers, mean = 4.54



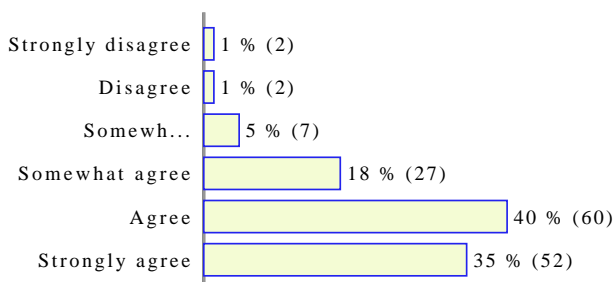
### 14. I learned to identify problems and explore different solutions.

151 answers, mean = 4.34



### 15. The instructor used a scholarly approach in presenting content (referencing theory, research, and debates in the field).

150 answers, mean = 4.98

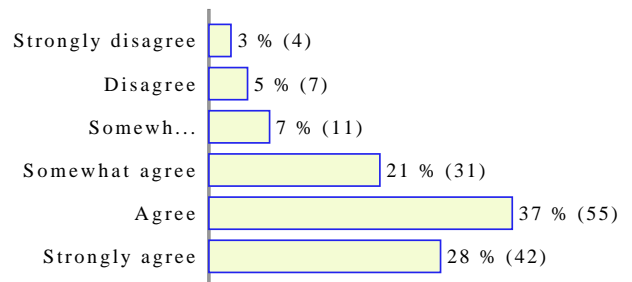


## Geosciences

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

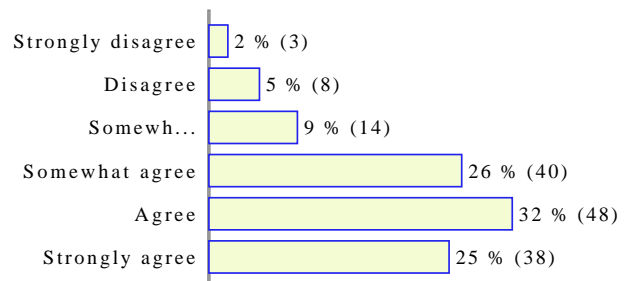
### 16. The instructor seemed concerned about whether students learned the material.

150 answers, mean = 4.68



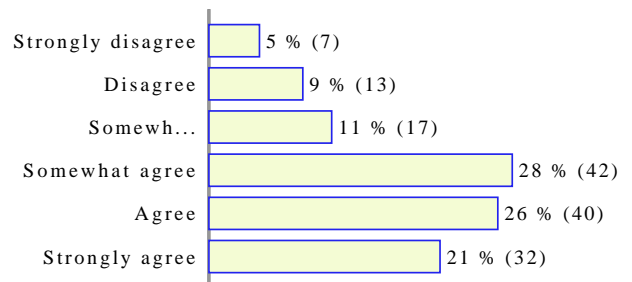
### 17. I became more aware of multiple perspectives on issues in this field.

151 answers, mean = 4.56



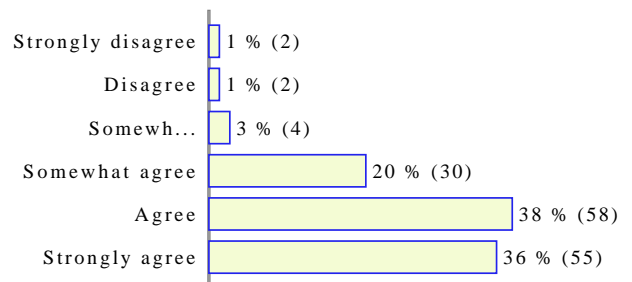
### 18. I learned to apply principles from this course to new situations.

151 answers, mean = 4.26



### 19. The instructor clearly defined students' responsibilities related to the course.

151 answers, mean = 5.02



### 20. The instructor related theories and concepts to practical issues.

150 answers, mean = 5.09

