

Fall 2012 Virginia Tech Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) Survey

GEOS_1034_97934_201209

Results of survey

Started: November 30, 2012

Ended: December 13, 2012

Reply rate: 61% (165 / 270)

Fall 2012 Virginia Tech Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) Survey

Please provide constructive feedback by responding to each of the following items. While you are encouraged to express your thoughts and opinions freely, keep in mind the Virginia Tech Principles of Community which support open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.

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.

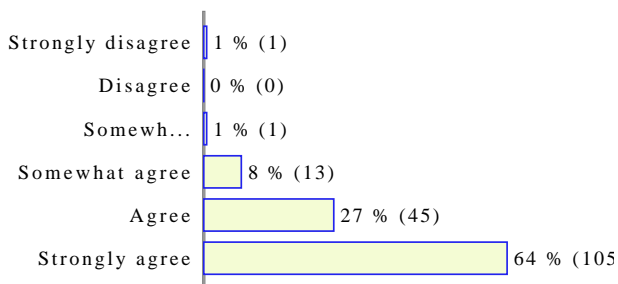
Thank you for contributing to the goal of continuously improving teaching and learning at Virginia Tech.

Instructor/Evaluated: Neil Johnson

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

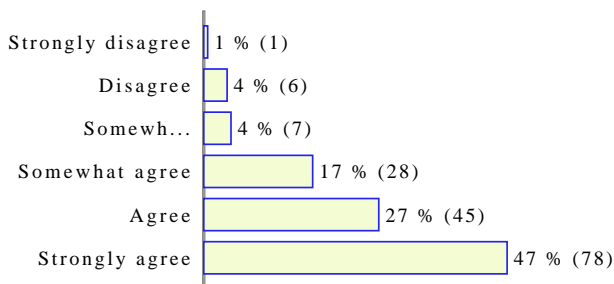
1. The instructor was well prepared.

165 answers, mean = 5.52



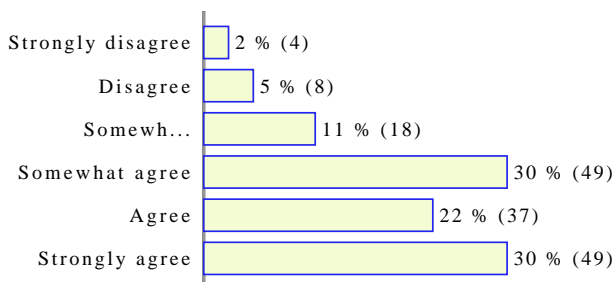
2. The instructor presented the subject matter clearly.

165 answers, mean = 5.08



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

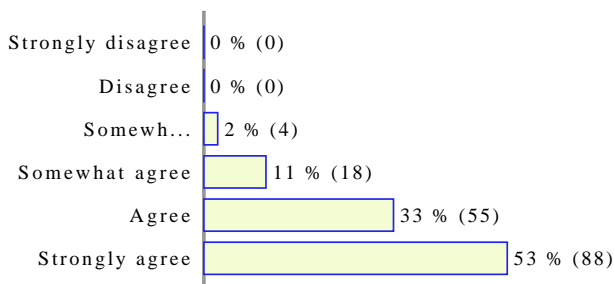
165 answers, mean = 4.54



4. The instructor fostered an atmosphere of mutual

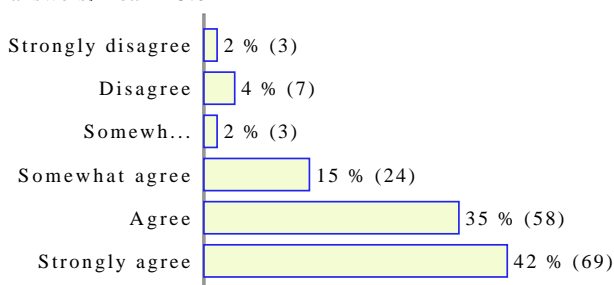
respect.

165 answers, mean = 5.38



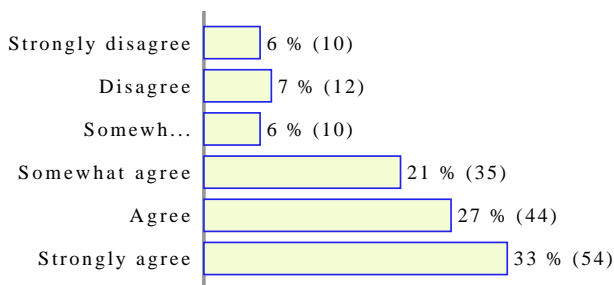
5. I have a deeper understanding of the subject matter as a result of this course.

164 answers, mean = 5.04



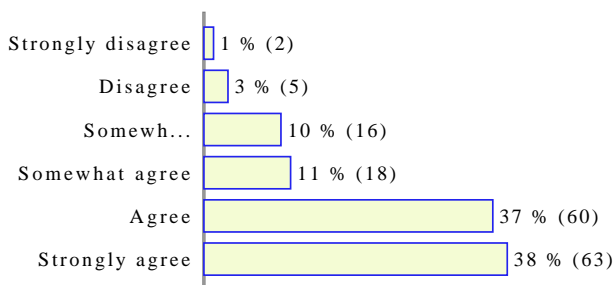
6. My interest in the subject matter was stimulated by this course.

165 answers, mean = 4.53



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

164 answers, mean = 4.94



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

- Put his lecture powerpoints online.
- iClicker questions during class
- He used some dry humor that kept me entertained and pay attention to lectures.
- had interesting topics for lectures
- He taught me about hazards and information that I did not

know before.

- his power points were clear and helped to better understand the textbook.
- Provided detailed notes and slides which correlate directly with the material on the test
- The instructor's humor kept me relatively interested in a subject that I would otherwise have no interest in
- I absolutely loved this course! My interest in Geology spiked to a point where I am now considering declaring a minor in geology. The information was presented clearly and orderly. Professor Johnson's enthusiasm for the subject in addition with his expertise created a great atmosphere.
- The only thing that the instructor did was lecture on slides. Sometimes it was confusing and it did not help me learn.
- Easy to understand.
- I liked the movies shown in class, especially the Krakatoa one. Really gave me some insight and information about volcanoes that didn't just come from the textbook.
- posted the powerpoints online
- The powerpoints by which we learned were very well prepared and detailed.
- He gave iclickers in the lecture, which gave me an idea of what kinds of questions there would be on the tests.
- He gave us iclicker questions that most closely resembled exam questions, giving us an idea of what we needed to know for the exams. Also, he made his lectures available to us via scholar which made the material easy to study.
- Presented the information clearly with pictures to accompany lectures.
- iClicker questions
- His lectures mirrored the textbook extremely well.
- He had the information set up in a clear and systematic way that allowed me to be able to follow it easier.
- Made the lecture and subject matter more interesting by using relevant and relatable examples and by making plenty of jokes.
- Provided powerpoint online to go over what we weren't able to do in class.
- The way the material was presented along with the fact that he was well organized and had everything we needed easily available to us. The fact that the notes were available prior to class, we were able to go through them as he did, we were given the chance to take online quizzes twice (and in many cases were provided the feedback needed to better understand), put practice tests online a few days prior to testing days, and the way he organized his class as a whole

definitely benefitted me and my learning and understanding of the class and its material.

- The instructor's quizzes were very helpful in the learning process. The quizzes made you read over the textbook or at least skim over the chapters. It caused you to remember important points and was helpful to the overall learning of the material.
- The instructor used his own experiences to explain things in lecture.
- taught well
- He uses real world examples to help us understand the research behind natural disasters
- Quizzes on Scholar
- The professor was an eloquent speaker. That helped a lot.
- Clear and concise
- the emphasis during the presentations helped
- Posted the notes online before class
- I clicker Questions
- Kept the class simple and the lectures were fun.
- The iclicker questions was a great way to get me to pay attention because they were the easy questions that would appear on the test.
- He made the class very interesting, and he presented the material in a very high class fashion to where we all understood the material.
- Pictures and examples
- He had "clicker questions" that not only made sure you were paying attention, but also took about a good percentage of the exam questions. So if you paid attention in class, you were almost guaranteed to get those correct.
- His lectures.
- practice exams available and posted power points
- Real life scenarios related to the learning
- Answering any question I had.
- Provided practice exams for each upcoming exam.
- Online quizzes
- The i clicker questions in the middle of the lecture helped me understand exactly what do I know, and what do I not know. This also gave me an idea of how difficult a section of material was based on class performance.
- It was Ok.
- Clicker Questions.

- Gave examples and experiences to engage the students interest.
- Provided lecture outlines on scholar
- The Iclicker questions in class helped to supplement the material.
- Professor Johnson is a great lecturer. He keeps the subject matter interesting and simple. His random jokes on slides tend to make me chuckle.
- His lectures were always clear and to the point and gave further explanations if needed.
- Very clear and distinct in his details. Also was very relaxed so made it a comfortable learning environment
- He gave us real life scenarios along with the basics of the material.
- Not much.
- Very enthusiastic and engaging.
- videos
- He added jokes to try and interest the learner. I really liked the I-clicker questions also, kept me interest in the lecture. Professor Johnson seems like a really nice guy.
- He made very good, organized powerpoints.
- His Powerpoints were great.
- The online quizzes posted every week were a great incentive to read the chapter and the iClicker questions during class helped me pay attention more.
- Made the material relevant to now and current events to show us how hazards are present in our lives.
- He used humor in his lectures
- videos
- Explaining the issues and having a lot of visual examples.
- Talked about slides
- I really liked that he provided real life examples of the hazards. It made the class more interesting and I was more likely to pay attention.
- Allowed multiple attempts on quizzes
- The iClicker questions he put up and went over in class really helped me mentally review what we just went over in the lecture. I don't think I would have been able to absorb all the information as well if he had just kept going non-stop with the slides and lecture.
- He was very personable and helped with my specific questions.
- Did a good job of comparing the text to power-points in class
- Online quizzes forced you to actually read the chapter and learn the material
- Not much at all.
- not much...you pretty much just talked about everything i just read from the text book. The examples you provided that were not in the text book were helpful though, as well as the many diagrams in class.
- Presented porerpoints that made the learning experience more realistic.
- He is a very dramatic and engaging speaker.
- He explained everything very well. He made it so it was easy to understand.
- He was very clear, answered all questions thoroughly and maintained a very approachable attitude
- iClicker questions
- Used power points that were easily understood. He posted all notes online.
- liked the lecture presentations
- Good use of IClicker's and pretty interesting lectures.
- Put all the slideshows of his lectures online so I could go back and review them if I missed something in my notes.
- He often broke the stereotypical monotony of lectures with some humor and often told brief stories related to certain points in his lecture.
- I thought the iClicker questions were very helpful.
- His PowerPoints were always organized and straight forward, and he was always willing to answer questions. I appreciated his willingness to meet with me during office hours.
- power points
- The most helpful tool in this class was the textbook. The lectures helped sometimes, but not always.
- The instructor gave us quizzes for each chapter that we had two chances to take the quiz and the best score is chosen. He also provided a study guide that was helpful to study for the exams.
- His presentations were clear and lessons were short and interesting.
- Providing pictures and events that clearly described the lesson.
- Discussed Powerpoints thoroughly
- Engaged students in iclicker questions.
- Powerpoints

- obviously passionate about what he teaches, funny sometimes
- I ended the semester with dropping this course so I did not see anything that the instructor did that helped my learning. I did not take anything from his class.
- He gave many examples and spoke in a clear, easy to understand manner.
- He was entertaining as well as informative
- use many real world examples
- Posted his lectures online
- He posted his notes online
- He gave prime examples of all the material.
- went through the power points very interestingly. not boring
- Gave iClicker questions throughout lecture.
- NOTHING, his class is boring
- He really enjoys his material and it shows. Also, having current, real examples of the material in the news everyday is a unique.
- Just the way that he taught, very energetic and interactive, was helpful to stay awake.
- Set up good powerpoints and went over a lot of information. Had in class questions to make sure we were paying attention.
- The power points with diagrams, videos and pictures made the material a lot easier for me to understand and made the lectures easier to pay attention and not day dream.
- Posting the practice exams. My performance on the practice exams was a very good predictor of my actual performance.
- He held lectures and added in iClicker questions that made students attend class as well as actively participate in the class. I think that helped lead to a better understanding of the material. He also posted the lecture notes online.
- Made the Powerpoints very easy to understand. Made everything simple.
- Used lots of real life examples to explain the effects of specific hazards.
- Used interesting depictions and graphs to keep us interested.
- iClicker questions forced me to pay attention
- I loved the teaching style. While this was at times a long lecture to sit through, I still enjoyed coming each class.
- His powerpoints were very clear and he would explain them very well.
- Dr. Johnson is excellent at explaining things. The use of i-

clicker questions was also quite beneficial, I believe.

9. What could you have done to be a better learner?

- Given us back our tests to see what we did wrong.
- Paid attention more in class
- Study more from the book
- paid attention more
- Honestly, nothing. I would spend hours and hours studying and never got the results i wanted.
- been less distracted during class.
- I could have spent a little more time reading the material in the book.
- I never figured out a good way to take notes in the class.
- Been more involved, gone to more office hours and asked more questions.
- I could have focus on memorizing all of the slides on the subjects, but that's the only thing that I can get a better grade. It is hard to learn from this teacher. Although he is nice, he did not teach effectively.
- Pay attention a little better.
- reviewed the powerpoints more in depth
- I could of spent more time studying for exams since they accounted for 80% of our grade.
- I could have read the book before taking the online quizzes. They would have probably been easier if I did.
- Read more consistently.
- Listen more
- Study the power points more than the textbook.
- I could have reviewed my notes more
- Paid far better attention in class and studied more for exams.
- Previewed the slides as well before coming to the class
- To be a better learner, I think I could have payed a little more attention to the notes and discussion during the lectures periods and I definitely could have tried harder when it came to completing and absorbing the material presented in the readings.
- I could have studied earlier for tests. I waited to long to study for them and would end up cramming the night before so if I spaced it out more evenly it would have been better.
- I could have paid attention a little more during lecture.
- pay more attention
- Read the book carefully

- The quizzes were tough because sometimes the material in the book wouldn't line up with the quizzes
- study more
- Read more from the book
- Read the book
- Read the book before class.
- Read more from the textbook.
- Read more for the quizzes
- payed more attention
- I could have read and focused more on the material from the text book instead of just listening to the lectures.
- read more of the textbook, studied with other students
- Done better on the online quizzes.
- Studied more.
- Read the textbook rather than just his lecture files
- Study more
- Payed better attention.
- Read the book.
- Had a greater interest in the topics.
- Read the book more thoroughly
- Preview the textbook before coming to class.
- I could have read more into the chapters out of class.
- I could have studied a little harder for tests.
- Take more notes
- I could devote more time to studying.
- I did all I could.
- He often reads directly from the powerpoint and I copy down exactly what's there instead of listening sometimes.
- started studying earlier
- Read completely off the powerpoints so there wasn't much point going to class. Also by doing this, it was easy to get distracted and not pay attention to the lectures. I just didn't like how he went about the lectures as I don't think it's the most efficient way to learn. Tests were worded oddly.
- I could have taken more notes about what he said rather than only what was on the powerpoints.
- I could have sat closer and asked more questions.
- Focused more on the reading instead of just skimming for quiz answers.
- Look over the material more frequently.
- I could have read more
- take notes
- Listened better.
- took better notes, read the book.
- I should have studied more than the night before the test
- Read to comprehend
- Got off of facebook or twitter while in lecture.
- I probably could have studied a bit more and read the chapters more thoroughly.
- Read before class instead of after.
- Read the book more thoroughly
- Cared about the class.
- It was very hard to stay awake in that atmosphere of a big class, and a long repetitive, tedious lecture.
- Revised the subject after every class.
- Study more.
- I should have studied more.
- Worked harder on the online quizzes
- Spent more time studying the notes, reading over the text book pages in more depth.
- taken notes on powerpoint slides
- Focused on the lecture more vs. the text book
- I believe the tests were rather difficult. Made many questions on the tests hard to understand. Very weird wording on many questions. I felt as though I knew the information but would be confused by the question wording
- I have no completes.
- I could read the textbook more carefully and studied more.
- I could have read the chapters before going to class.
- gone to class more
- I could have devoted more time to studying more thoroughly.
- To be a better learner in this course, I could have attended more of the classes because I missed 4 or 5 classes which probably affected my ability to excel in the course.
- Maybe a little more reading won't hurt.
- Focus more on taking notes and taking the quizzes on scholar.
- Read chapters with greater intensity
- Paid closer attention in class.

- paid more attention.
- been on time more often
- I took notes every class, and paid attention. I don't see how I could have done anything more to prosper in this class.
- I could have written down more of my own notes during lecture.
- Paid better attention in class
- Not use PDF for power points
- Paid more attention in class
- I could have reviewed the material on a weekly basis
- Studied more and paid more attention in class. Take more notes.
- nothing
- Focused more on the textbook, not solely on notes.
- Asked more questions.
- Read the book over more times than once.
- Kept up with the reading in the book.
- I could have reviewed the lecture notes and re-read textbook chapters.
- Read the textbook.
- Study more for the first test.
- nothing.
- Not skipped so many classes.
- Made better use of the book.
- I regret missing the few classes I did.
- Studied more for tests.
- Visit office hours, but I didn't really need to as the material didn't come too hard for me to learn rather effectively.

10. Please add any additional comments regarding the course and/or instructor here:

- You made the weekly quizzes off of the book, but we only had to study the powerpoints for the exams. So just make the quizzes based off of your slides as well.
- His lectures were SO boring, the class was not enjoyable at all.
- it was a well taught class but since I am not interested in science it was hard for me to maintain my concentration on the subject.
- I think the textbook and the online quizzes are unnecessary. A lot of the information between the textbook and the lecture are slightly different, which is confusing. And the lectures

are sufficient for learning the material that is being tested.

- Professor Johnson did not "baby" us. He gave us the material needed to succeed and it was up to us to get the grades we want. He cares a lot about his students, but gives them the independence expected at a research university such as Virginia Tech.
- None
- Really difficult to learn from this instructor. Drove me nuts how he would make a quiz due the night before an exam. This made it really hard to remember there was a quiz (because who does that?!) and took away from my studying time. The quiz questions were also poorly worded and did not facilitate my learning. Overall, I regret taking this class. The description sounded really interesting (and I think it could have been really interesting), but the instructor kind of ruined it. Very dry instructor.
- I recommend it to anyone interested in Geology. I'm a geoscience major here at VT and I really liked it.
- I enjoyed the course
- Neil was great. He really knows what he's talking about and he seems like a genuinely nice guy. He always seems to be in a great mood and he's very understanding when you go to him individually with questions or problems.
- Organization of powerpoints was very different than anything I've experienced so far. It was hard to take notes because the topics would be split up and all over the place on the powerpoints
- The instructor made the class very interesting. The information was normally pretty cool so it was fun to learn about these things.
- The instructor was one of the best and effective I have had this semester.
- nada
- The tests are weighted a lot
- Exams were tricky.
- Good instructor.
- Professor Johnson is very knowledgeable. The only complaint i have would be the reading quizzes. The quiz questions were sometimes so generalized and the answers were so closely related it was hard to know which was the most correct answer. The reading quizzes i expected to be verbatim from the text.
- the tests are tricky and worded in a confusing way
- Great professor, if a little dull at times, but he's incredibly friendly and most of the time I enjoyed his lectures. He was pretty great with a large class and the notes were always very thorough. Great class.

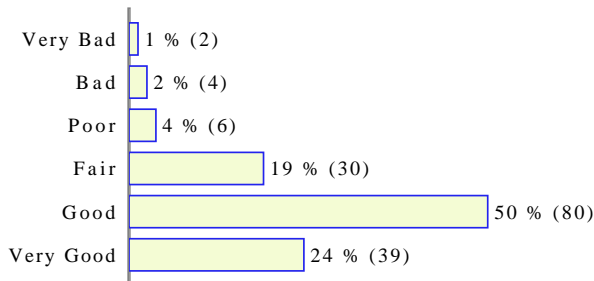
- I found that the lecture files didn't match the textbook, and some of the material we were tested on was not found in those lecture files. This was inconvenient and made it hard to learn the material needed.
- His tests were supper hard.
- He was a great teacher for the subject matter, however most people were only there to fill a science credit.
- I feel that this class should not be listed as a 1000-level class. As I am a senior, I feel this class definitely requires more work and effort than my other 1000-level classes I took. The online quizzes were ambiguous and I had problems with the questions at times because there always seemed to be more than one possible answer.
- The exam questions are relatively hard or confusing. The true/false questions are compound statements that may have true and false components which can be confusing.
- I can tell he's very passionate about his subject, however, that's the only good thing about him as an instructor.
- I love Neil Johnson!
- Dr. Johnson was very enthusiastic about this material.
- I thought the instructor did a good job of ensuring all the students could hear him and always answered any questions that popped up thoroughly.
- I really did not like the online quizzes. They were unreasonably difficult and did not really correlate with the material we learned in class. It was based on a book that we did not use for any exams.
- In general the course was interesting, but I expected it to be more about how to prevent natural disasters. For example, organizations that helped people through natural disasters and how we can improve the effectiveness of these organizations.
- I think he needs to make the class a little bit more interesting in the way he presents the information. This would make it easier to pay attention and learn the information.
- Professor is a great guy!
- I thought it was an interesting class about things that actually matter. I don't think that chemical formulas and the makeup of a cell matter, but tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc. all do. Professor Johnson was really nice and he really knows what he's talking about. I, being a visual learner, also liked how his lectures weren't all notes, he added a lot of pictures and videos to supplement what he was talking about.
- Just an alright teacher.
- I think that the material was presented a little too technically for it being a 1000 level class open to all majors. The fact that earth's processes are complex and not always the easiest thing for people to understand especially if they are in a very different field.
- FIND A WAY SO WE CAN SEE THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO THE ONLINE QUIZES! I do not have time to write each question down and go in to office hours for you to explain 5 questions. Also, reading all of the material of a chapter and taking the quiz BEFORE the lecture, is almost pointless. It makes the class very boring because you know most of the material and there is little that is learned. and MAKE THE ICLICKER QUESTIONS HARDER! If the whole class gets them right, then we learn nothing. When the hard questions come around on the test, i wish those would have been the iClicker questions so i would have learned them. Like the online quiz questions are so much harder, they are very ambiguous and hard.
- Make the exam 50 questions instead of the current 52 questions so it is simpler for us students to calculate our grade just after the exam.
- He is an amazing teacher
- Online Quizzes were impossible. Not much elaboration off the slides, pretty much just read them.
- He is clearly passionate about the subject matter and that shows, but the class becomes repetitive and it was sometimes difficult to focus on slide after slide when it was paraphrasing the textbook. Study guides would have been really helpful because I wasn't always clear on what was on the exam, even after going over quiz and i-clicker questions.
- All in all, the lectures were clear.
- Could use a little more information on slideshows.
- Very entertaining guy.
- At first I thought it was boring, but after plate tectonics it actually got pretty interesting.
- Powerpoints would be easier to view because the pictures on Scholar sometimes overlap each other.
- The quizzes are just randomly assigned and when you receive only one notification of their post it is very easy to forget them. Happened several times to me over the course of the semester.
- i liked the instructor because he made class more fun and it was easier to go to
- Awesome class and teacher.
- Great teacher and nice guy
- I would have read more of the chapter material in the book if the quizzes consisted of ten to fifteen questions instead of just five.
- -
- The instructor presented the material in the best way possible

and was very effective in his method of teaching.

- His tests are wayyy too hard. Test answers were very hard to align with the question.
- I must say I was disappointed that Hurricane Sandy occurred during this semester and was hardly mentioned. I would have loved to discuss why it was so significant but outside of being referenced to during the "perfect storm" section, it was never mentioned.
- The natural disasters of this Earth are fascinating! Because of this course, I am well aware of potential hazards and will keep them in mind when purchasing a property!

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

161 answers, mean = 4.86



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

- Sometimes it was a little hard to see.
- Easy to listen and well attended.
- I didn't like the room we were assigned to (the GLCDB Aud). I especially didn't like how there weren't desks connected to the chairs so writing was always awkward
- This environment did not have any desks or something hard to write on. It is sometimes rather difficult to have to find a hard surface to write well on, and it is hard to keep the iClicker from dropping every time you move.
- None.
- GLC auditorium drives me crazy, its so poorly lit! My eyes struggle to take notes in class and even during exams its poorly lit. This room has by far been my least favorite room to have classes in.
- It's in a big room, but everyone focuses most of the time. The environment wasn't really distracting until everyone started getting colds and coughing all the time.
- The large auditorium isn't preferable but it worked.
- horrible chairs.
- Although the presentations were well put together and the informations was clear and concise, being in a large class it is sometimes hard to hear, see and concentrate. People

around you are doing other subjects or playing games and that gets distracting. Participation wise, he gave clicker questions which got the class involved.

- The room was a little large and dark, but other than that everything was fine.
- meh
- No desk chairs
- It was a large lecture so there was no one on one time with the professor.
- large auditorium but it wasn't bad for the way he taught
- The GLC is dark and often made me feel tired
- none
- I sat in the front row, centered. This allowed for less distractions by the ~ 230 other students.
- Dark and huge auditorium. Sucked.
- GLC is out of the way for many students.
- The using the graduate life center as a lecture hall is a good idea.
- The auditorium was drafty and could be cold during most classes, it was also hard to hear the professor at times because noises from other students would project loudly and drown him out.
- GLC is very dark so it makes me sleepy, but it's not so bad.
- When people got sick, some times I couldn't hear the professor (He uses no mic) because of all the coughing, sneezing, and sniffing.
- Everything's good here.
- students always talking, getting up in the middle of class and leaving
- My only complaint is that the auditorium in the GLC doesn't have any desks on the armrests and the lighting is pretty dim.
- At some points, the material was a little repetitive and it was hard to concentrate.
- The only thing I didn't like was that there were no desks to write on.
- It's a big room and I didn't have any problems with it.
- Could have been a smaller class.
- Big class room for such a small class.
- Lighting in GLCDB could be stronger - easier to take notes.
- Could have been more effective as a smaller class.
- No writing space!!

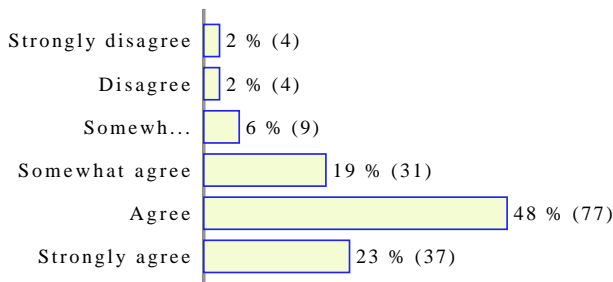
- If I got thereon time and sat in the front I had no problem seeing or paying attention.
- it could have been better lit, and it would have been nice to have real desks
- The class was comfortable, but could add some small tables like MCB 100.
- The physical environment was perfect.
- It was a large class, somewhat difficult to concentrate.
- big lecture
- I had no trouble seeing and listening in the front.
- We were in an auditorium so if you were in the back it was occasionally hard to hear, but there were plenty of seats up front and the professor did a very good job projecting his voice for the most part.
- Could see the screen well and could hear instructor clearly.
- -
- Being in a lecture hall, other students would occasionally sit in seats that would impede my view.
- Poor lighting.
- For the size of the class, we had an excellent location. While it was more difficult to hear towards the back of the room, as long as those around you weren't distracting it was just fine.
- Nothing else really comes to mind.

College of Science

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (if an item is not applicable, leave it blank):

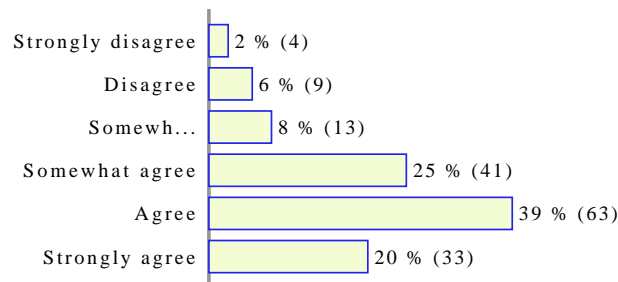
13. I improved my ability to think independently about the course material.

162 answers, mean = 4.75



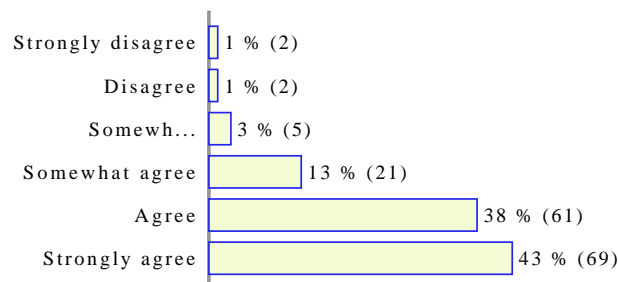
14. I learned to identify problems and explore different solutions.

163 answers, mean = 4.53



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

160 answers, mean = 5.15

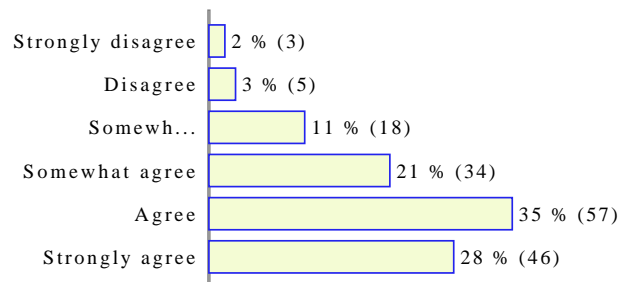


Geosciences

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (if an item is not applicable, leave it blank):

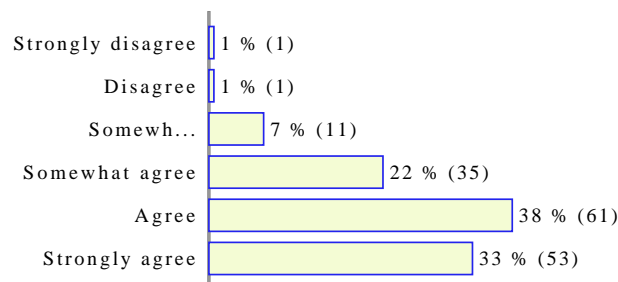
16. The instructor seemed concerned about whether students learned the material.

163 answers, mean = 4.69



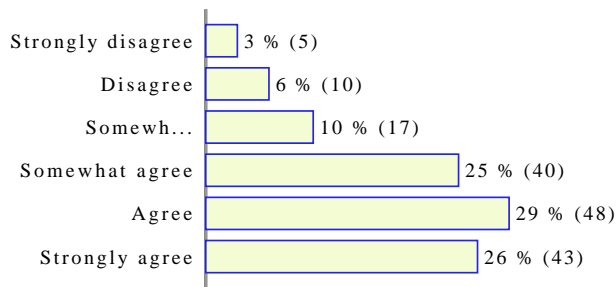
17. I became more aware of multiple perspectives on issues in this field.

162 answers, mean = 4.93



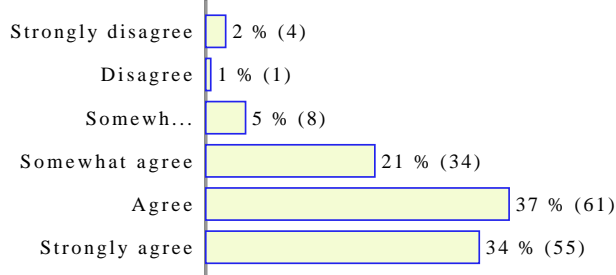
18. I learned to apply principles from this course to new situations.

163 answers, mean = 4.50



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

163 answers, mean = 4.91



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

163 answers, mean = 5.28

