



Environmental Issues in Crop Production BI1283, 20063.1718

15 Hp

Pace of study = 100%

Education cycle = Advanced -

Course leader = Linda-Maria Mårtesson

Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2017-12-31 - 2018-01-28

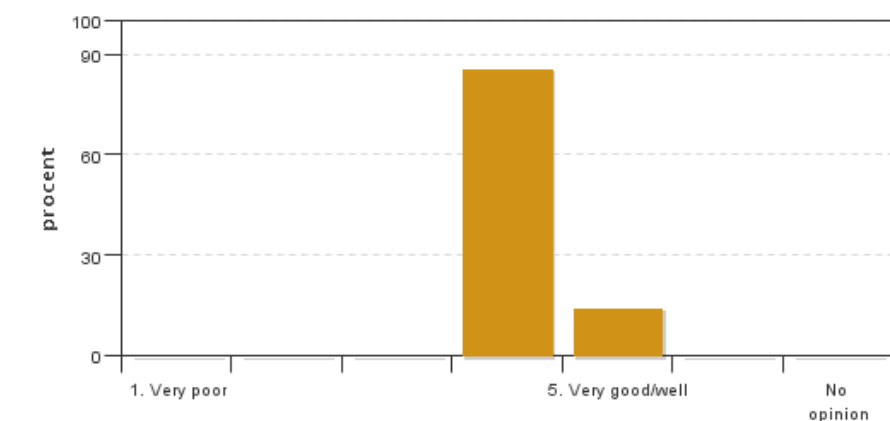
Answers 7

Number of students 10

Answer frequency 70 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:

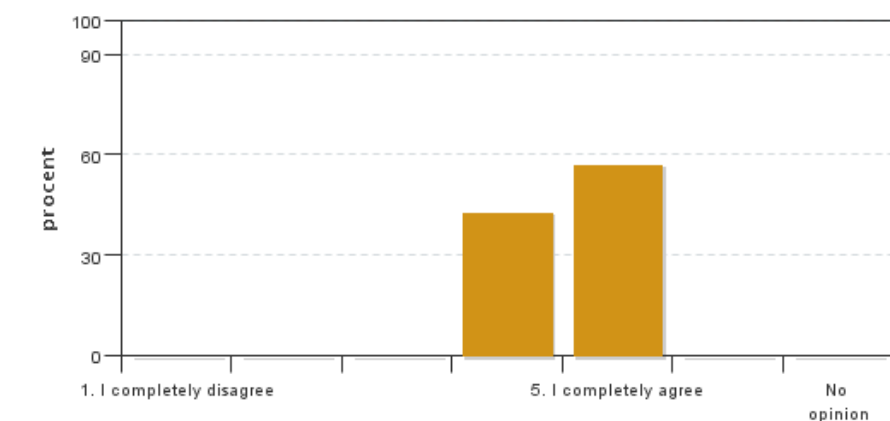


Answers: 7
Medel: 4,1
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 0
3: 0
4: 6
5: 1

No opinion: 0

2. I found the course content to have clear links to the learning objectives of the course.

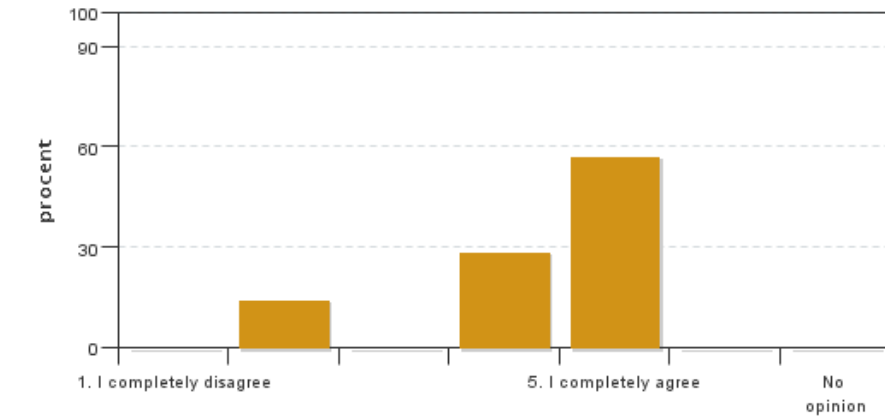


Answers: 7
Medel: 4,6
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 0
4: 3
5: 4

No opinion: 0

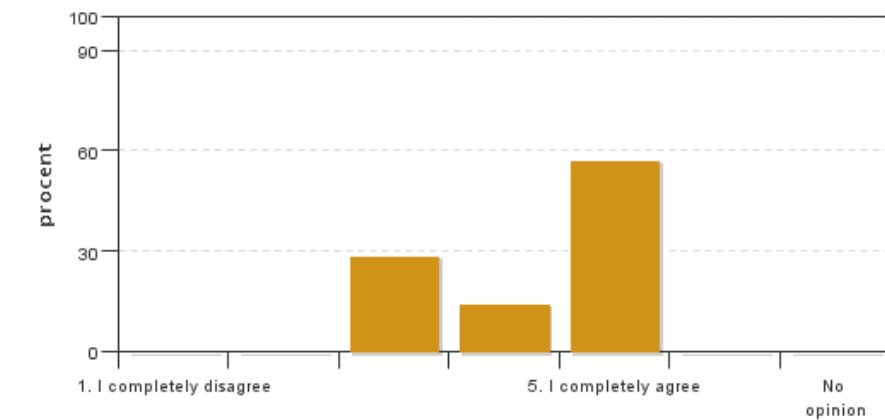
3. My prior knowledge was sufficient for me to benefit from the course.



Answers: 7
 Medel: 4,3
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 1
 3: 0
 4: 2
 5: 4
 No opinion: 0

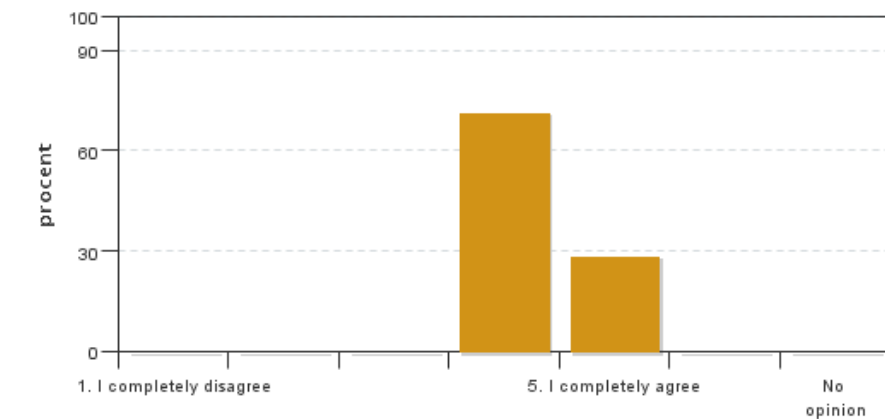
4. The information about the course was easily accessible.



Answers: 7
 Medel: 4,3
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 2
 4: 1
 5: 4
 No opinion: 0

5. The various course components (lectures, course literature, exercises etc.) have supported my learning.



Answers: 7
 Medel: 4,3
 Median: 4

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 0
 4: 5
 5: 2
 No opinion: 0

6. The social learning environment has been inclusive, respecting differences of opinion.



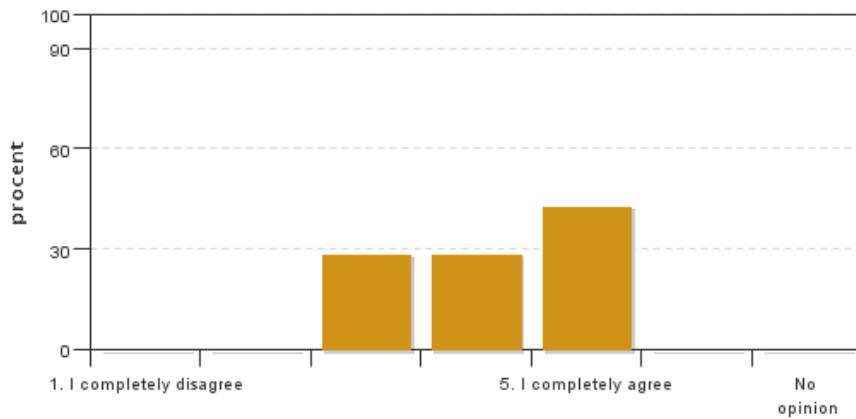
Answers: 7
 Medel: 5,0
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 0
 4: 0
 5: 7



No opinion: 0

7. The physical learning environment (facilities, equipment etc.) has been satisfactory.

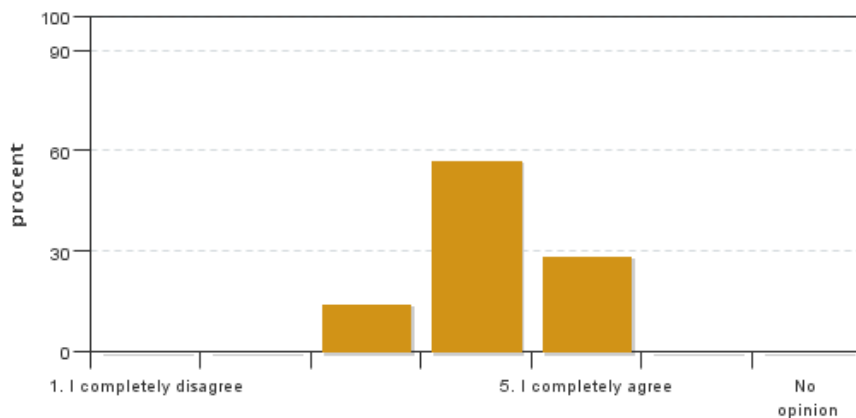


Answers: 7
 Medel: 4,1
 Median: 4

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 2
 4: 2
 5: 3

No opinion: 0

8. The examination(s) provided opportunity to demonstrate what I had learnt during the course (see the learning objectives).

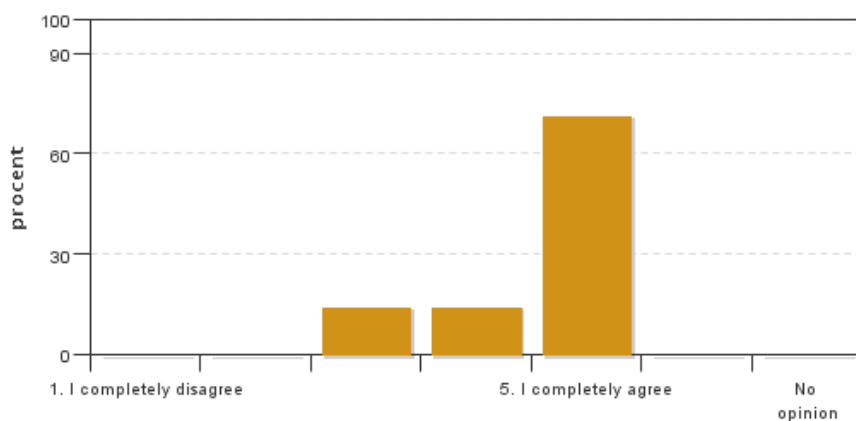


Answers: 7
 Medel: 4,1
 Median: 4

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 1
 4: 4
 5: 2

No opinion: 0

9. The course covered the sustainable development aspect (environmental, social and/or financial sustainability).

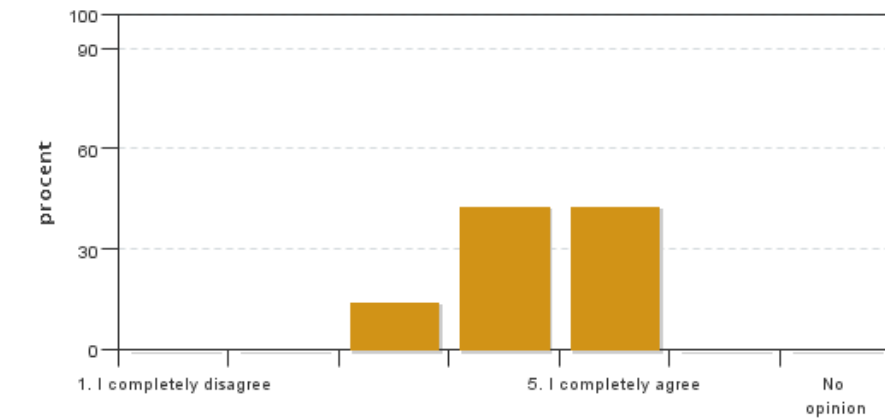


Answers: 7
 Medel: 4,6
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 1
 4: 1
 5: 5

No opinion: 0

10. The course covered international perspectives.

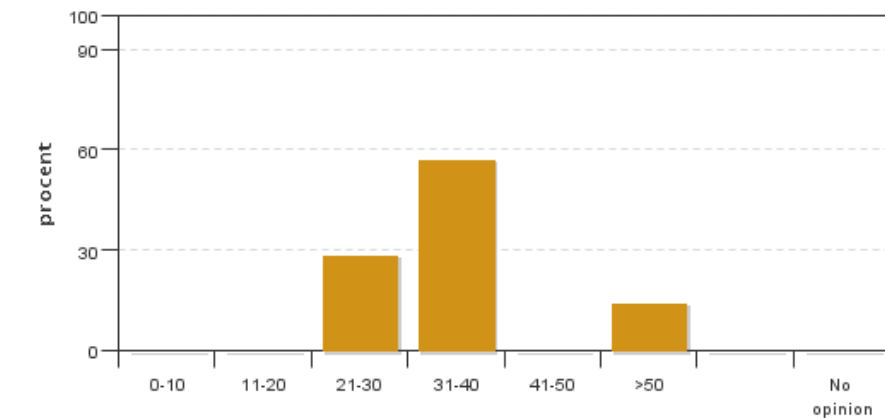


Answers: 7
 Medel: 4,3
 Median: 4

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 1
 4: 3
 5: 3

No opinion: 0

11. On average, I have spent ... hours/week on the course (including timetabled hours).

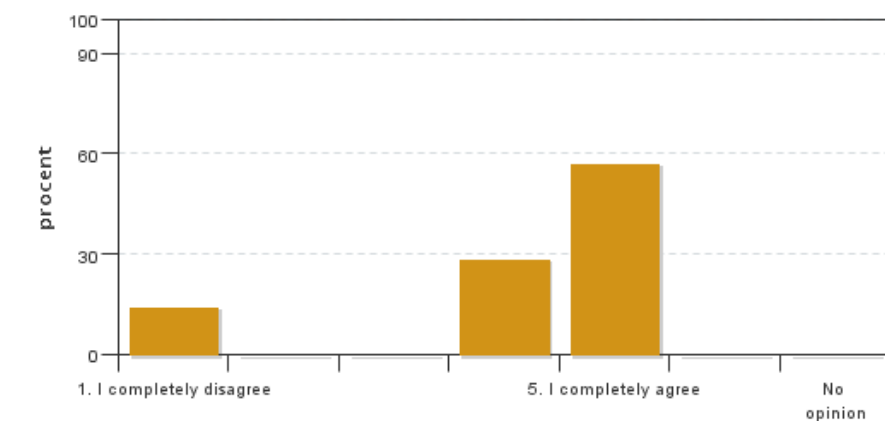


Answers: 7
 Medel: 35,0
 Median: 31-40

0-10: 0
 11-20: 0
 21-30: 2
 31-40: 4
 41-50: 0
 >50: 1

No opinion: 0

12. I believe the course has included a gender and equality aspect, regarding content as well as teaching practices (e.g. perspective on the subject, reading list, allocation of speaking time and the use of master suppression techniques).



Answers: 7
 Medel: 4,1
 Median: 5

1: 1
 2: 0
 3: 0
 4: 2
 5: 4

No opinion: 0

Course leaders comments

A new syllabus was written to clarify the content of the course and to distinguish this course from other, near-laying courses. In the process, the course code BI1232 was changed to BI1283. The LCA module including group work and reporting was modified thorough increased time of supervision to facilitate learning of the use of the instrument. However, these changes did not seem to suffice and further changes will be considered for next course period. An interesting suggestion is to design the LCA group work as a more extensive LCA group lab exercise followed by handing in an individual lab report, instead of a small group exercise and a rather large group report.

To meet the aspirations for more details and in-depth subject knowledge, the reading seminars was developed. A new structure was implemented, assigning the four reading seminars a topic (Common knowledge base; LCA;

Nutrients, fertilisation and eutrophication; Pesticides and alternatives) that supplemented the lectures. Large effort was spent changing the content of the literature to provide in-depth facts on the four topics. The idea from last year's evaluation to use a case study was disregarded, both due to the improvements of reading seminars but also due to the need to maintain diversity in pedagogical methods between courses.

The intention to include legislation and regulatory aspects into the course failed, since the course leader did not find an appropriate person to present such an area. The search will continue.

Practical every-day solutions to minimise negative environmental effects from crop production systems to the surrounding environment needs to be incorporated to larger extent into the course. This will partly be done by integrating a guest lecture with a field visit at the guest lecturer's farm. The lecture will take place at the farm and then followed by a field walk, showing the environmentally beneficial solutions implemented at the farm.

Student representatives comments

From the online course evaluation:

Overall feedback on the course was very positive.

The general impression of the course was good, and all students agreed that the course material well matched the learning objectives.

Most students felt they had sufficient background knowledge, although one student disagreed with this (2), and suggested there should be more recommended background reading available to aid students with less knowledge.

The course information was generally viewed as accessible, although there was some confusion about changes that were made to the timetable during the course, though it was acknowledged that this could easily be clarified over email.

Course components were very well received, though some students would have liked more lectures and more focus on learning how to do LCA analysis .

The social learning environment was excellent, and received the highest score from every student. The physical learning environment was also good, although it didn't score as highly and one student commented that a more consistent location would have been good, i.e. one class room for all classes.

Students were generally satisfied with the course examination, though one comment highlighted the difficulty of producing group reports and ensuring all students do their fair share.

Most students agreed the course content was relevant to sustainable development (avg. 4.6), and that international perspectives were included (avg. 4.3).

Students spent at least 21 hours per week working on course material, and most spent between 21-40 hrs. One student spent over 50 hrs a week, they commented that this was because they found writing in English difficult and time consuming.

One student strongly disagreed that the course had a good gener/equality balance, though the did not comment why. The remaining students found the balance good, though the lack of ethnic diversity was highlighted.

From the class discussion:

Lectures

Comments:

- Good balance of lecture subjects which complimented the other course content.
- Not enough depth in lectures, some repeat material for students
- Good intro to the subject for students without as much prior knowledge of the topic
- Lecture style makes a difference – classes with integrated activities were more engaging
- Guest lectures Håkan from Värpinge golf club/Rinnebäck Farm and Anna Broekman(certification systems) were well received
- Several students had previously had the same lecture from Margareta Littorin about pesticides.

Suggestions:

Assigning material to students to prepare ahead of lectures could help to give teachers more time to go into further depth during the class time.

Seminars

Comments:

- They were very challenging
- Some students found the format of preparing answers ahead of time very effective
- Other students didn't like the format and thought writing answers ahead of time was not necessary and caused an unnecessarily heavy workload
- Four or five students was the best group size; when all students were together there was too much to do in the time we had available and the quality of the discussion was compromised

Suggestions:

Introduce an element of student organization to the seminar format. Prepare questions ahead of time but submit answers after the seminars.

Individual paper

Comments:

- Freedom to choose any topic was appreciated
- Not a lot of time at the start of the course to choose a subject
- Task guidelines need improving, not easy to follow the problem/solution format
- Follow up sessions throughout the course were valuable and helped students manage the work load to meet the deadline

Suggestions:

Keep the deadline for the individual paper after the break, and allow a later submission date for the initial proposal – this will give students more time to go through the course materials and get inspiration from the lectures/seminars about suitable subjects for the report.

LCA Group Work

Comments:

- Learning about LCA assessment was valuable
- First part of the task had the most educational value
- Writing the report based on the base case was not very useful because too much information was missing and it felt too hypothetical
- A deeper explanation of the calculations in the complete base-case would have been appreciated – not clear where we went wrong when figuring it out for ourselves
- Good this was done as a group project because it was helpful to have multiple people giving input and students could learn from each other

Suggestions:

The time spent writing the report would have been better spent on something else, e.g. learning how to obtain the relevant data in real life, or comparing different LCA assessments of the same product to understand how and why they differ

Study visits

Comments:

- The second farm visit was much more valuable than the first; the discussion with Niklas Göransson was very interesting and gave valuable perspective on the reality of addressing environmental issues while maintaining a viable business
- The purpose of visiting the potato factory was not clear, the presenter also wasn't very inspiring
- It was interesting to see the biogas plant in real life, even though most of the information could have been gained by reading about the plant

Suggestions:

It would be good to visit more farms to hear the perspective of farmers with different systems e.g. conventional, vs large-scale organic, vs. agroecological.

There is also interest in visiting SLU research sites to learn more about current and on-going research at the university.

Additional comments:

I would like to add that the literature for LCA was valuable to read. I found the book The Hitchhiker's Guide to LCA gave a good understanding of the subject. I would have benefited from some more literature suggestions for other topics of the course to get an overall understanding (like the suggestion for the seminars).

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