



Forest History - Human utilisation and vegetation dynamics BI1332, 10002.1920

15 Hp

Pace of study = 100%

Education cycle = Advanced

Course leader = Lars Östlund

Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2019-10-24 - 2019-11-14

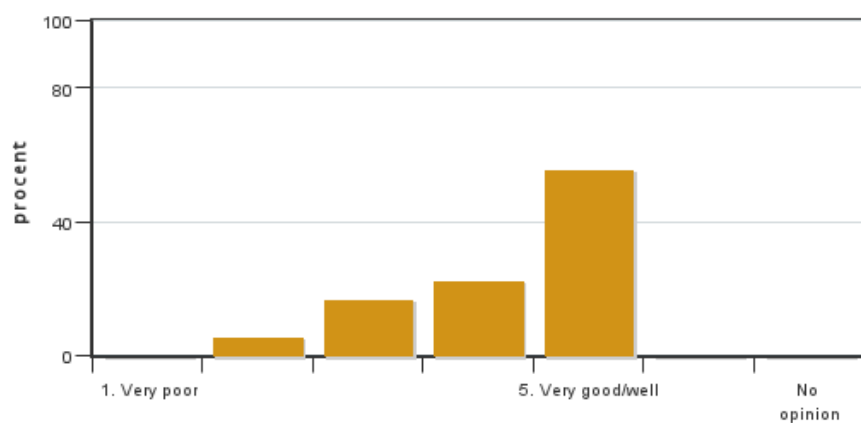
Answers 18

Number of students 22

Answer frequency 81 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,3

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 1

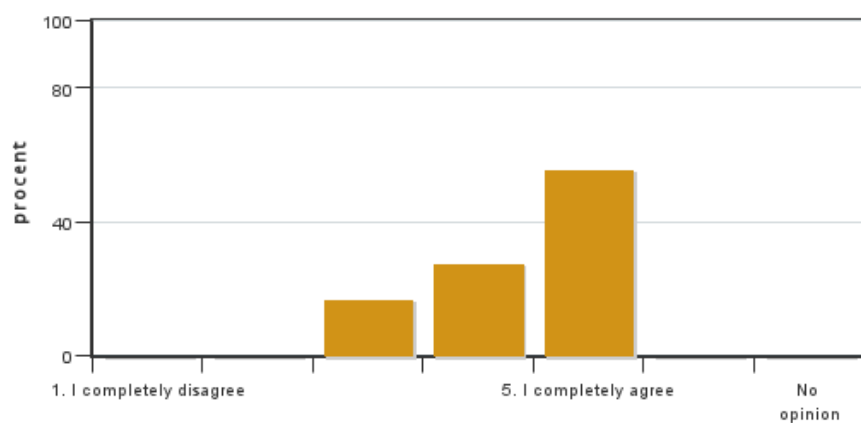
3: 3

4: 4

5: 10

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,4

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

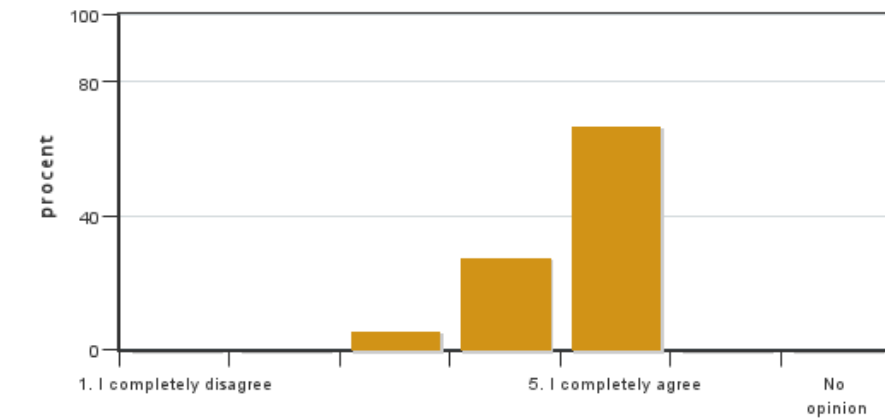
3: 3

4: 5

5: 10

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,6

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

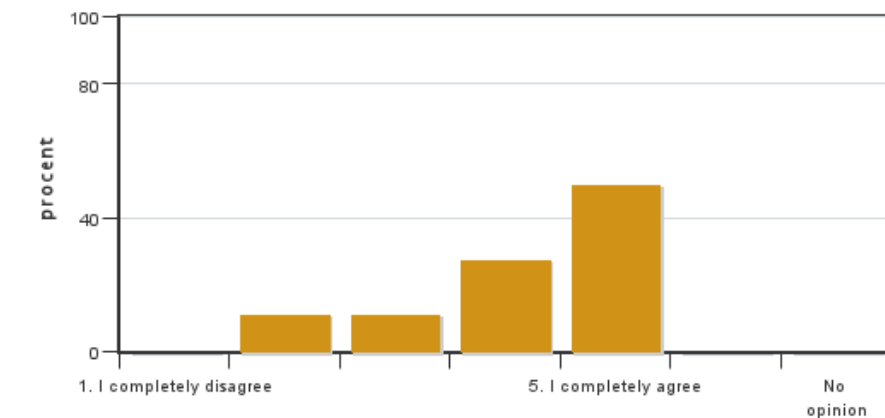
3: 1

4: 5

5: 12

No opinion: 0

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,2

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 2

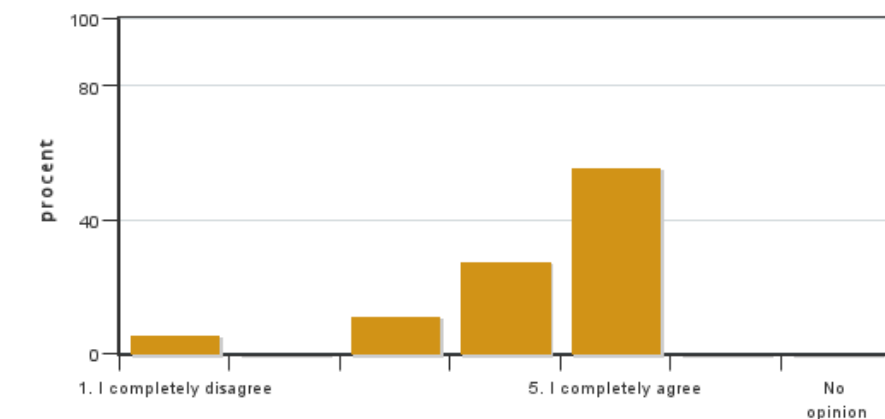
3: 2

4: 5

5: 9

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,3

Median: 5

1: 1

2: 0

3: 2

4: 5

5: 10

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,6

Median: 5

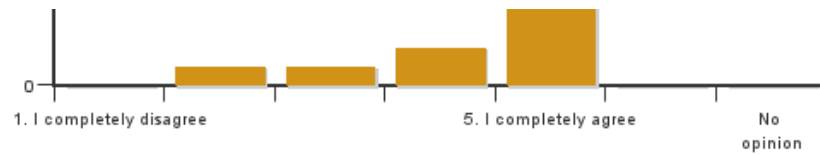
1: 0

2: 1

3: 1

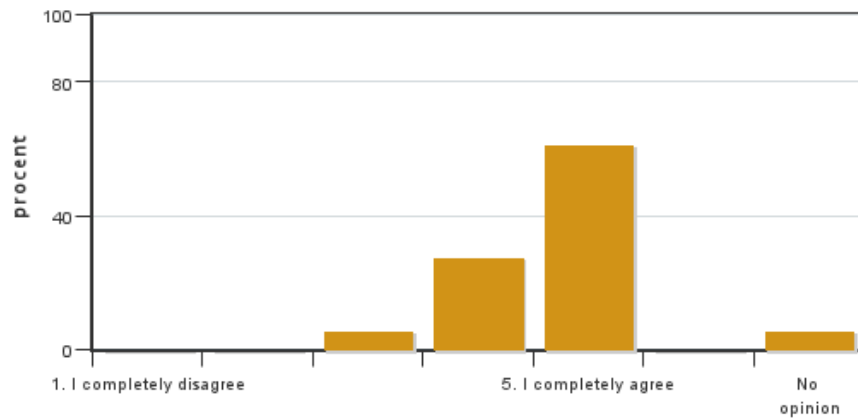
4: 2

5: 14



No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,6

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

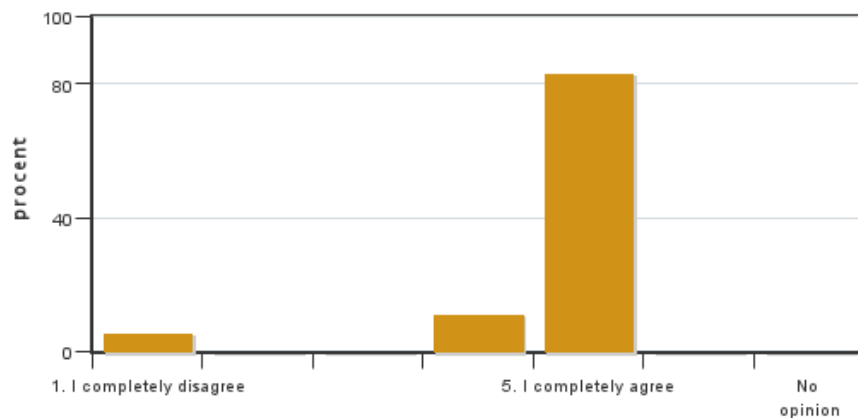
3: 1

4: 5

5: 11

No opinion: 1

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



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,7

Median: 5

1: 1

2: 0

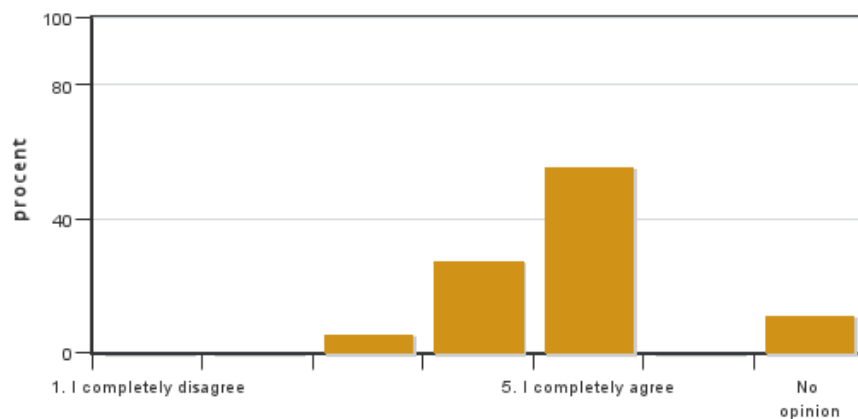
3: 0

4: 2

5: 15

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,6

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

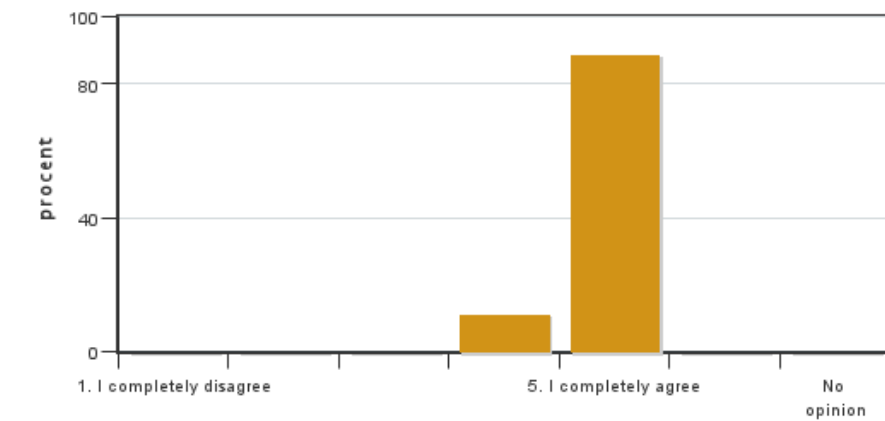
3: 1

4: 5

5: 10

No opinion: 2

10. 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).

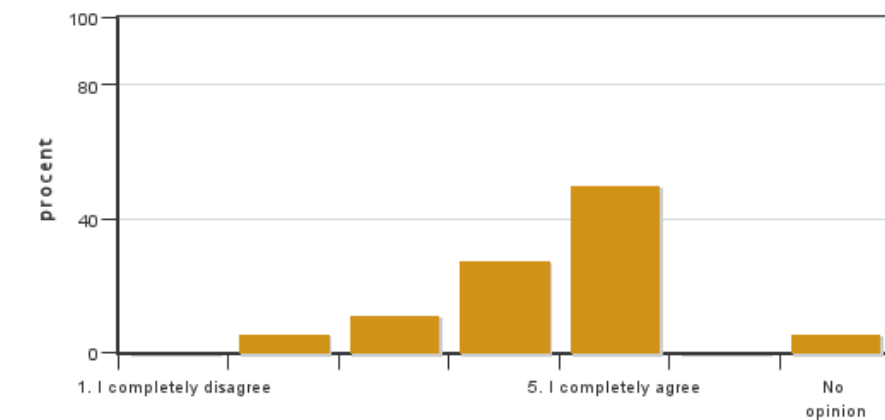


Answers: 18
Medel: 4,9
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 0
4: 2
5: 16

No opinion: 0

11. The course covered international perspectives.

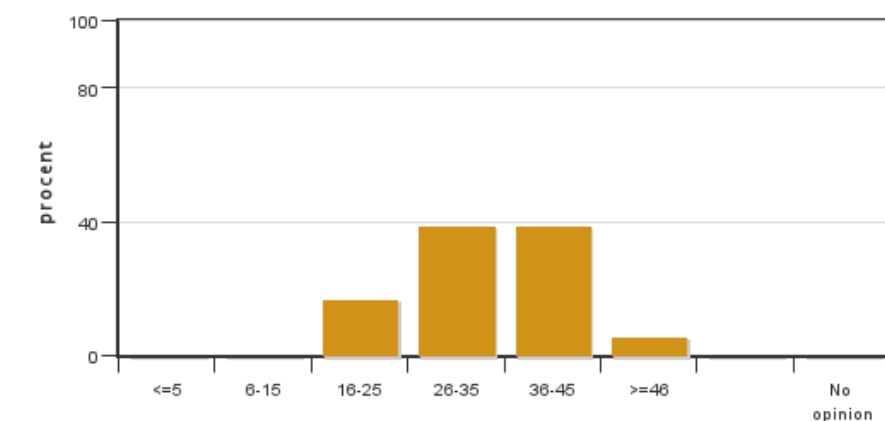


Answers: 18
Medel: 4,3
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 1
3: 2
4: 5
5: 9

No opinion: 1

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



Answers: 18
Medel: 33,1
Median: 26-35

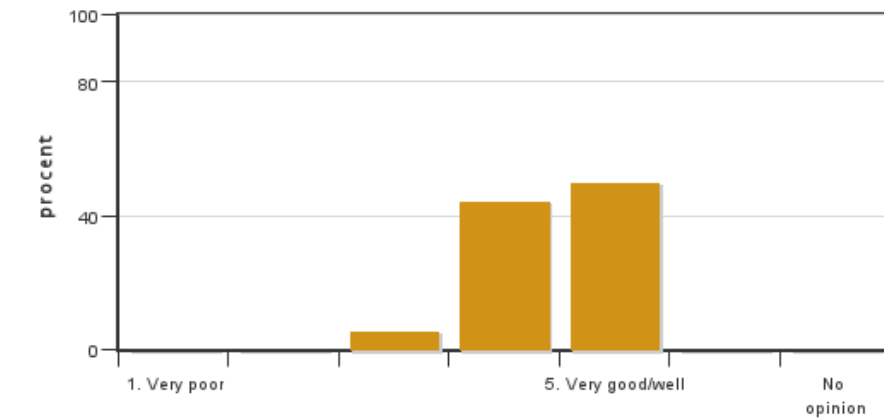
≤5: 0
6-15: 0
16-25: 3
26-35: 7
36-45: 7
≥46: 1

No opinion: 0

Additional own questions

13. What is your opinion about the fieldweek (fieldwork in Saddegavva and fieldexcursions)?

Please comment on what was good and what can be improved!

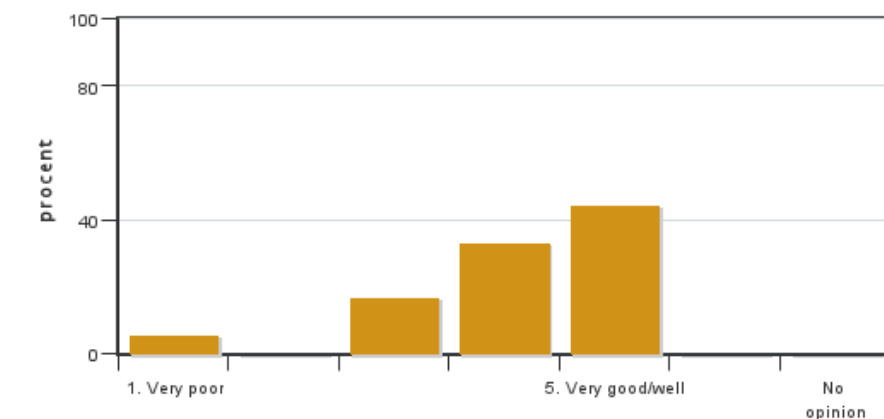


Answers: 18
 Medel: 4,4
 Median: 4

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 1
 4: 8
 5: 9

No opinion: 0

14. What is your opinion about the week containing "Project work (in the lab) and Reading and Writing science (including lectures and abstract Writing)"?

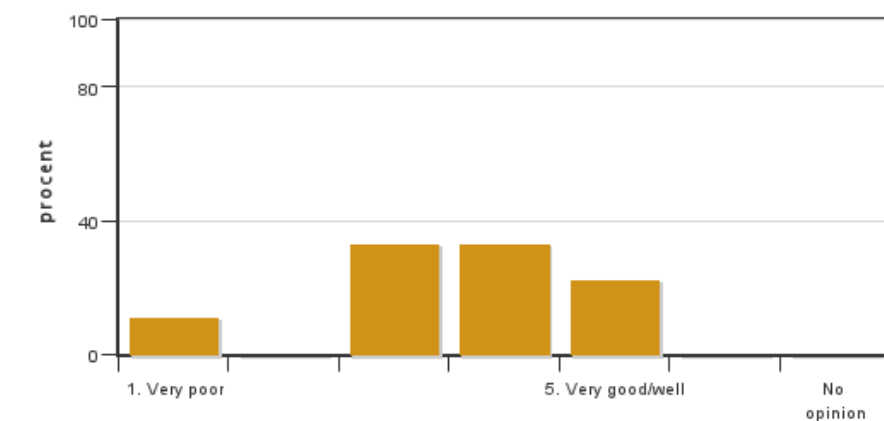


Answers: 18
 Medel: 4,1
 Median: 4

1: 1
 2: 0
 3: 3
 4: 6
 5: 8

No opinion: 0

15. What is your opinion about the Long term vegetations history week (including global change lecture Mats N, vegetation history lecture Elisabet B and seminar)?

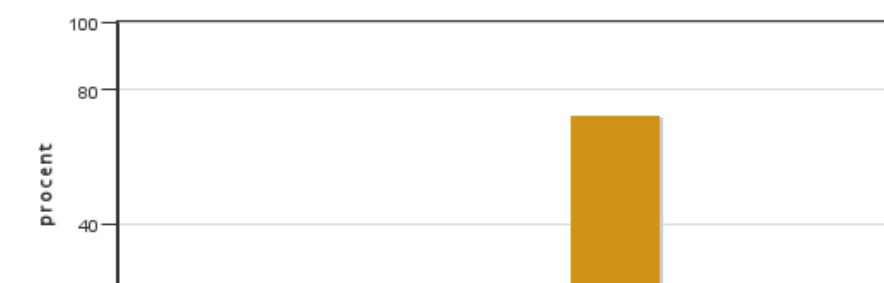


Answers: 18
 Medel: 3,6
 Median: 4

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

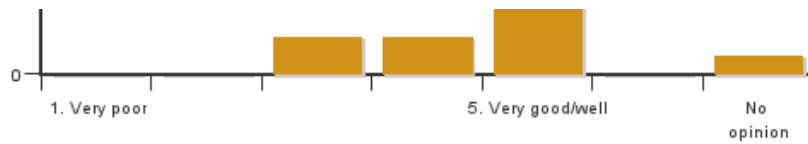
No opinion: 0

16. What is your opinion about the week Long term human use of the forest in the boreal region (lectures by Ingela B, Malin B, Anna-Maria R, Gudrun N Nancy T & Lars Östlund)?



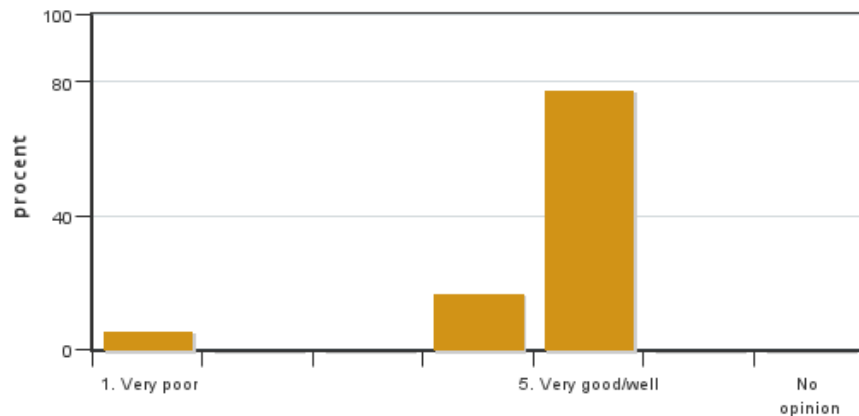
Answers: 18
 Medel: 4,6
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 2
 4: 2
 5: 13



No opinion: 1

17. What is your opinion about the week "Forest management history" (including lectures by Lars Ö, Erik T, Matthias B, Marie-Charlotte N and task Time-line)?



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,6

Median: 5

1: 1

2: 0

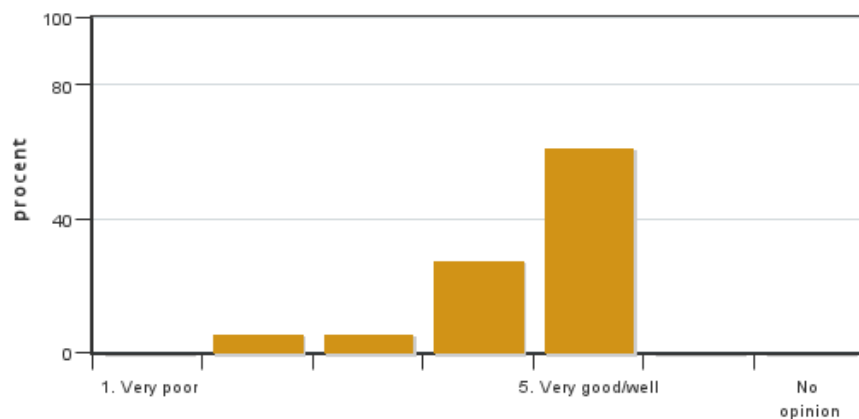
3: 0

4: 3

5: 14

No opinion: 0

18. What is your opinion about the week "Disturbance and disturbance history" (including lectures by Torbjörn J, Anders G and seminar)



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,4

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 1

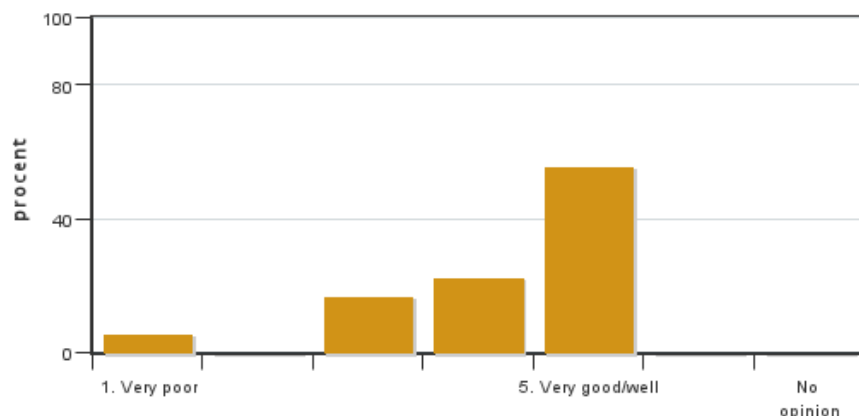
3: 1

4: 5

5: 11

No opinion: 0

19. What is your opinion about the week "Conservation, cultural legacies and management - forest history as a practical tool today" (including lectures by Torbjörn J, Gudrun N and seminar)?



Answers: 18

Medel: 4,2

Median: 5

1: 1

2: 0

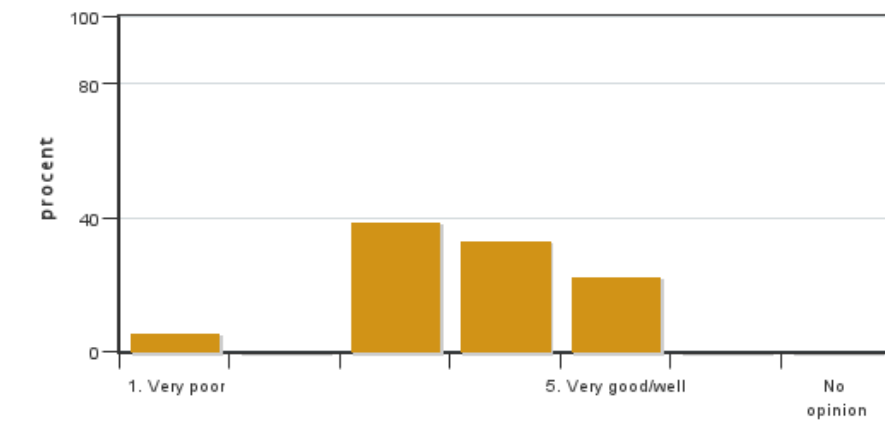
3: 3

4: 4

5: 10

No opinion: 0

20. What is your opinion about the Project work in groups (including all aspects from fieldwork, lab-work, reading science, writing report and presentation of the report)?

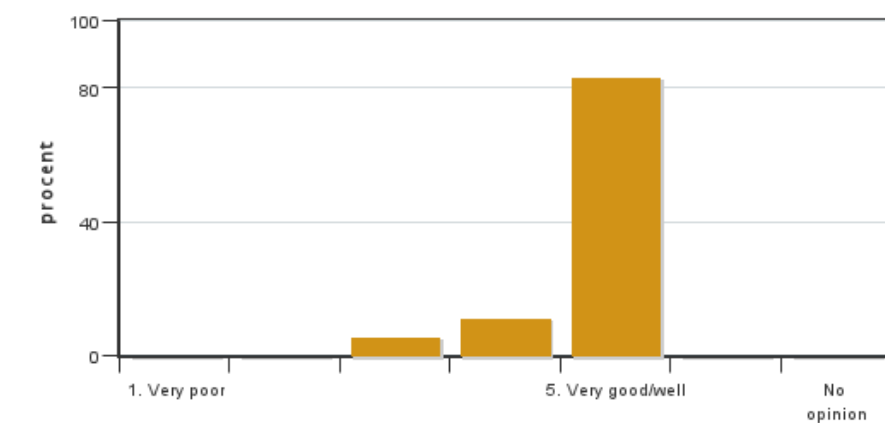


Answers: 18
 Medel: 3,7
 Median: 4

1: 1
 2: 0
 3: 7
 4: 6
 5: 4

No opinion: 0

21. What is your overall opinion about the examination on this course (different task for achieving the grade 3 such as writing abstract, time-line, seminars and Project work and then a choice of extra tasks for getting a higher grade)?



Answers: 18
 Medel: 4,8
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 1
 4: 2
 5: 15

No opinion: 0

Course leaders comments

Overall the evaluation was positive and it seems as if we managed to expand the course to this new larger format from the previous Forest History course of 7,5 hp. One challenge that we encountered was the larger diversity of students and the subsequent diversity of their knowledge of forests and forests in the boreal region. This, I as course leader, tried to counteract when I understood the problem by providing extra literature and some discussions with student, but for the future it would be much better to offer such help at the very beginning of the course.

Some specific actions which should be done for the coming year and which were brought up in the evaluation:

* Better use of Canvas! This platform was new to me and I know now much better how to use it. I will put literature and all other documents in modules and also post things earlier.

* Better preparation for the fieldwork! Although I believe in "learning by doing" in the field I realize that a bit more information should be given and more time allocated before we head out in the field. This is easy to do and should result in a more comfortable situation in the field, especially for students coming from abroad.

* The grading system has been appreciated and this year many students have opted for higher grades. Their work has been of very high quality and some reports have been exceptional. As a course leader I also value this type of work much higher compared to traditional written exams. We will keep this system and increase the work to encourage students to strive for higher grades even more. This year the average grade for the whole course was 4, which is higher than previous years.

* The lecture/discussion methods introduced by teacher Torbjörn Josefsson were liked by many and we will discuss how to make even more use of his methods in the course.

* We will see if we should have the "Disturbance-week" earlier in the course and we should also mix groups several times during the course. It is important that the students get a possibility to work closely together with the fieldwork reports, but also have a chance to interact in different groups.

* More straightforward forest and forestry "history" vs other topics (disturbance, vegetation dynamics etc): we will take

this discussion further and see how to deal with this. I do not know right now.

* The worktime spent during the course was on average 33.1 hours/week. This seems too low in my opinion and although some students not doing extra tasks for higher grades maybe lower the average, we must look into this for the coming course. Also considering the high quality of the Saddegavva report and many of the individual tasks must be put into this consideration, since high quality and not only quantity is important in university teaching.

* A final comment from me as a course leader: It was very inspiring to teach the course this year! The students were very dedicated and put a lot of positive energy into the course! At times like this it is easy to be a teacher and fun to spend evenings reading reports from the students!

Student representatives comments

81% (18/22) of the students answered the evaluation.

1. The overall impression of the course was good with an average of 4,3. Students commented that they were motivated to be ambitious and liked the educational techniques. The history parts were liked a lot and it was also highlighted that everyone could chose the working level they wanted as we could decide on our own how many extra assignments we wanted to do.
2. One student commented that the leaning objectives were very clear, also because the assignments were connected to them. This was also my perception, as it was stated clearly from the beginning, what was expected from us to get certain grades with additional assignments.
3. Some students had higher previous knowledge on the topic and some on the other hand little to none. All stated that it was nonetheless easy to follow the course even though some did not have previous knowledge about forest history or Swedish boreal forests.
4. Most students were happy with the use of Canvas and stated that information was easily accessible. On the other hand, some students said that more information about the assignments and the grading could have been given. Not all information or presentations were uploaded in time. This may also have been a difficulty as many different lecturers were teaching in this course.
5. Students agreed that the course components supported their learning through the variation of activities during the course and especially the field work was highlighted. One student criticised that the discussion of the Anthropocene paper did not support the learning as everyone read the same paper.
6. Overall students stated that they were encouraged to discuss during the course and that the discussions where very inclusive. One student criticized that some students were interrupted in a discussion by a teacher and other students. Another stated that the course was sometimes biased in favour of ecology and conservation.
7. Some students did not like Bokskogen as lecture hall, but I guess this cannot be influenced much by the course leader, as it is difficult to organize lecture halls here at SLU. Another student criticized that more equipment could have been helpful to divide better the tasks during the fieldwork, as well as having a soft measure tape for measuring diameters.
8. Almost all students were very happy about the examination in this course. Students stated that they were motivated to be proactive and work independently as they did not have to write a final exam.
9. Maybe some financial sustainability content could have been given, but on the other hand students stated that there are also other courses at SLU that focus on those aspects.
10. The course focussed mostly on northern Sweden and the boreal zone. Some students wished more content from southern Sweden, southern Europe, Asia and other parts of the world. A more international perspective would have been liked by some students.
11. Most students have spent on average 33,1 hours per week on coursework and some students commented that having less stress, made them have more motivation for work.
12. Gender equality was very well in this course. Jägmästare students especially highlighted that there were more female lecturers than they usually had in previous courses.
13. The first three days were liked a lot and especially the first two days of fieldwork in Sáddegávva. The last two days were stated as repetition for jägmästere students. Some international students did not like the last two days and would have liked to have some more history days instead. Some students also stated that they would have liked to have a third field work day. More time at the Silvermuseum would have been appreciated. Most students stated that more preparation before the course would have been needed and that maybe the excursion could have been set to a later point to have more time for field work preparation and to be more effective during fieldwork. Some also would have liked to have been supervised more by the lecturers during field work.
14. Most students liked the repetition about scientific writing and to have a week to get started in the course.
15. Some students liked the lectures about vegetation history a lot, but in contrast some found it difficult to follow.
16. Only positive feedback on the week on long term human use. One student stated that more lectures about this topic could have been part of the course.
17. Very positive feedback on the week about forest management history. It was also very appreciated by a student that one lecturer took some time after the lecture to have a free discussion with some interested students. Most students liked the whole week and the time-line exercise. Maybe some more concise instructions on the timeline would have helped some students.
18. Very positive feedback also on the disturbance week. One student stated that it was not clear how this was related to the whole course and others would have liked to have it less focussed on fire, but to hear more about other disturbances. Everyone seemed to like the teaching methods of the lecturer. One student suggested to move this part to an earlier time of the course.
19. More lectures on this topic would have been liked by the students, as only two lectures for such an important topic were stated as too little. The discussion in the end of the course was also liked. Maybe next year remote

sensing methods used in recent studies could be linked to a GIT lesson if time schedule and available resources can make it possible.

20. Overall students commented that the project work was good and that they learned a lot by doing it. Especially the fieldwork and the labwork were highlighted as very good. Still some students did not like the group work at all. A lot mentioned that smaller groups (4 instead of 6) would have been better to prevent some members to slack. Some commented that it was very good that the course leader said that teamwork is very important and that if something was not working, we could approach him. Still some realized too late that some group members were not doing their work and a person commented that it was a bit unfair, as those who did not contribute that much to the report had more time for their extra assignments. It was both mentioned that the mixing of the groups was good and on the other hand a person commented that more mixing of internationals and Swedish students could have been done. Moreover, the lab assistant's help and support during the labwork was highly appreciated.
21. The examination method was overall very much liked. Everyone seems to have been able to chose what to do and to hand in as many extra assignments as they wanted to get higher grades. The way of examinations should be kept like this for the following years.
22. The history part was overall very much liked. The vegetation dynamics part seems to not have been liked that much and some commented that it was not clear how they were linked together. Students wished for more forest history content instead of vegetation dynamics. The flexible timetable was very much liked and gave on one hand international students the opportunity to settle down at their new university and on the other hand in general time for other obligations in life.

What should be kept for the coming years is the fieldwork/fieldtrip to Sáddegávva and especially the history parts. Some students wished they could have had one more day of fieldwork or the whole week just on forest history. The gender perspectives and the international diversity of lecturers should be kept for the next course. The interview assignment was also liked and not having a final exam but being solely responsible for one's own grade by submitting additional assignments should also be kept in future.

The use of Canvas could be improved, for example uploading all lectures and giving more detailed information about the assignments. A further suggestion was to maybe highlight the most important lectures instead of stating them as mandatory. Having also smaller groups for the group work was also suggested by several students. Another thing that could be added to the course would be a more international perspective including forest history from other regions like Africa, Asia-Pacific and (Southern) Europe. Learning more about industrial forest history, reindeer herding, forest Sami land use and about land use by Sami people during the middle ages was suggested for future courses.

Many students highlighted that the course leader was great. It was stated him being one of the best and most engaged lecturers they have had so far and overall inspiring through his work/teaching.

It was very appreciated that a variety of lecturers were teaching in this course.

Overall students were saying it was one of the best courses they have taken during their studies in the forestry program or even "by far the best course I ever have taken".