



## Agroecology and Sustainability of Production Systems LB0109, 20006.1920

15 Hp

Pace of study = 100%

Education cycle = Advanced

Course leader = Georg Carlsson

### Evaluation report

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**Evaluation period: 2020-01-12 - 2020-02-02**

Answers 5

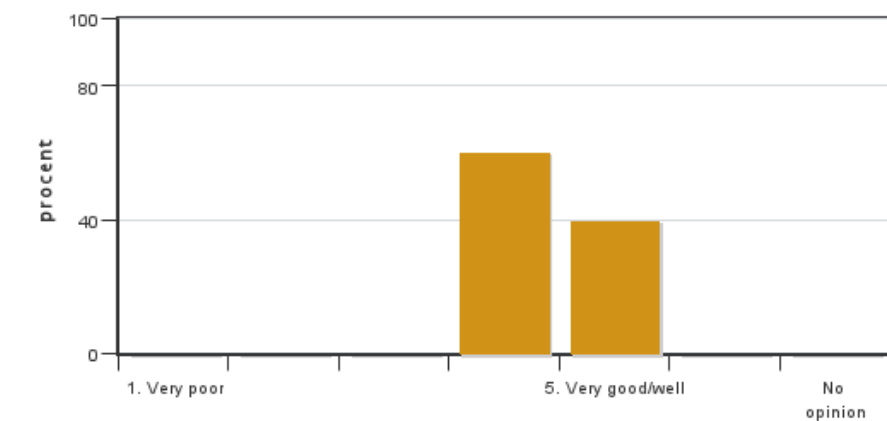
Number of students 16

Answer frequency 31 %

### Mandatory standard questions

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#### 1. My overall impression of the course is:

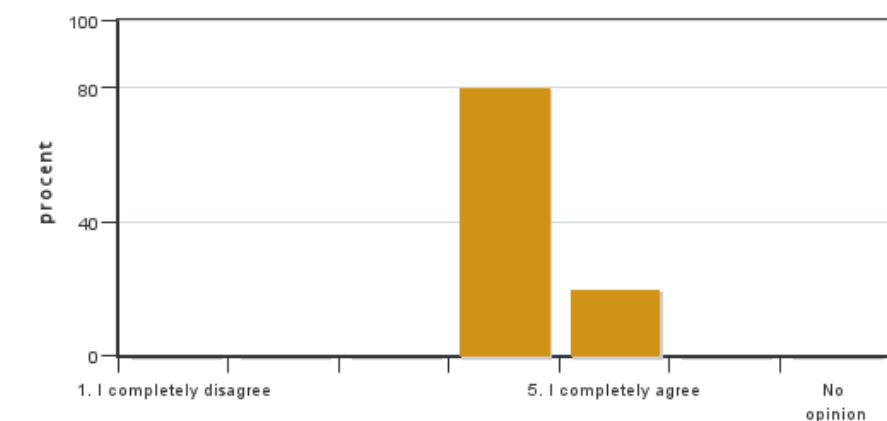


Answers: 5  
Medel: 4,4  
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 5  
Medel: 4,2  
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

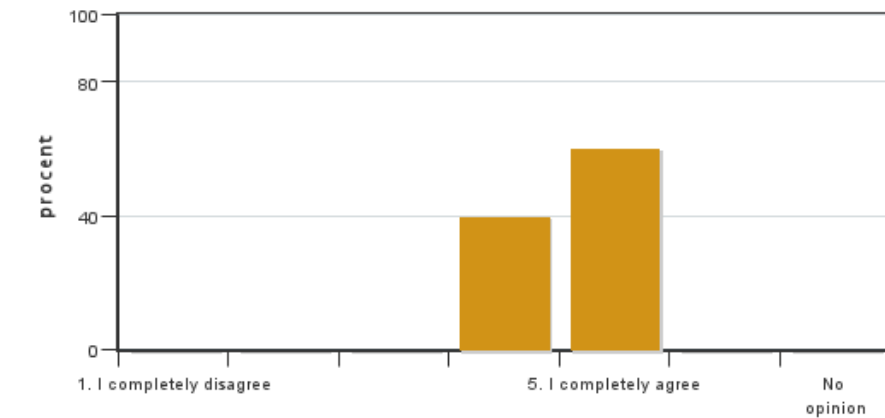
**3. My prior knowledge was sufficient for me to benefit from the course.**



Answers: 5  
 Medel: 5,0  
 Median: 5

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

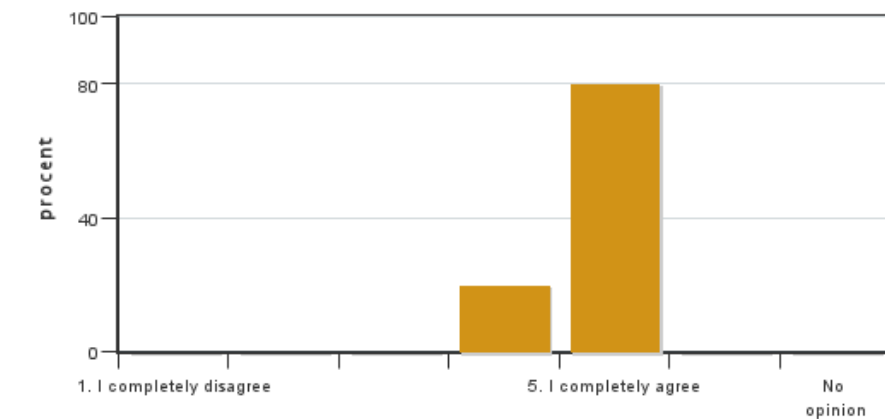
**4. The information about the course was easily accessible.**



Answers: 5  
 Medel: 4,6  
 Median: 5

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

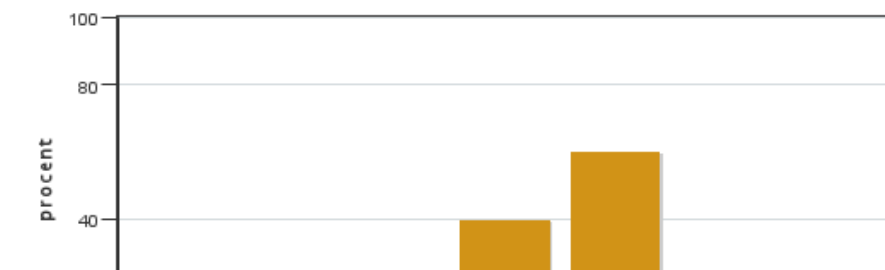
**5. The various course components (lectures, course literature, exercises etc.) have supported my learning.**



Answers: 5  
 Medel: 4,8  
 Median: 5

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

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



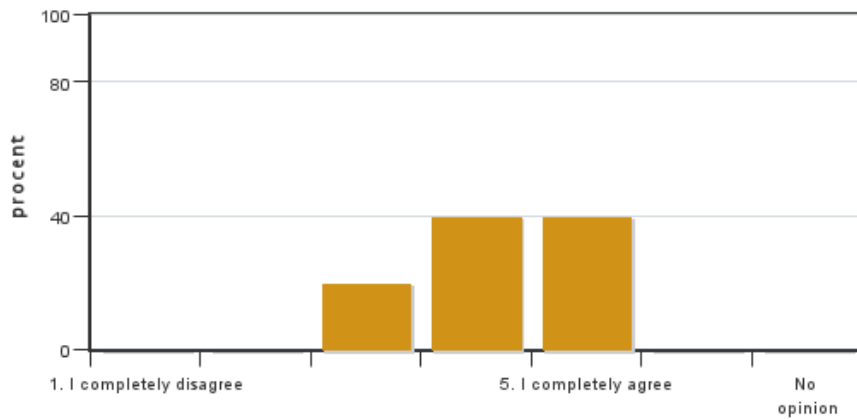
Answers: 5  
 Medel: 4,6  
 Median: 5

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



No opinion: 0

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

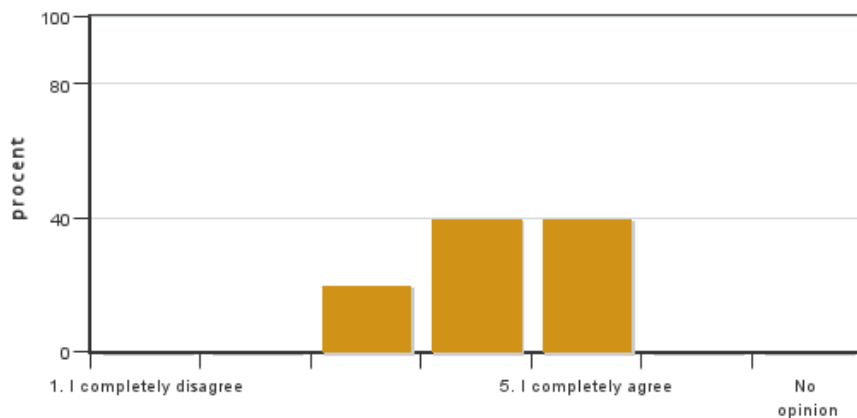


Answers: 5  
Medel: 4,2  
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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

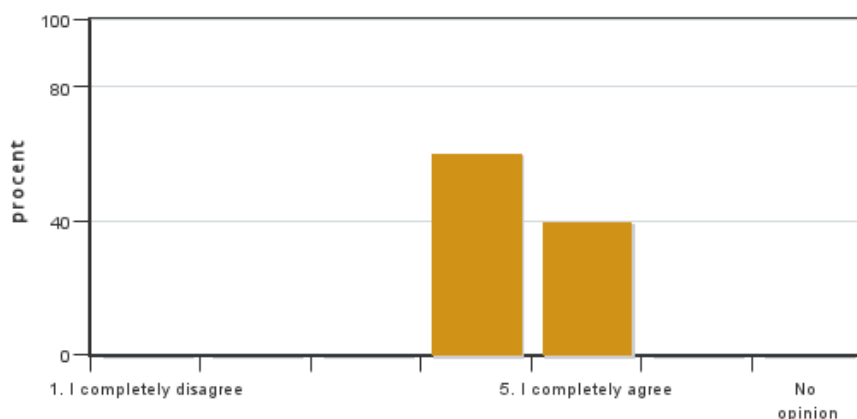


Answers: 5  
Medel: 4,2  
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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

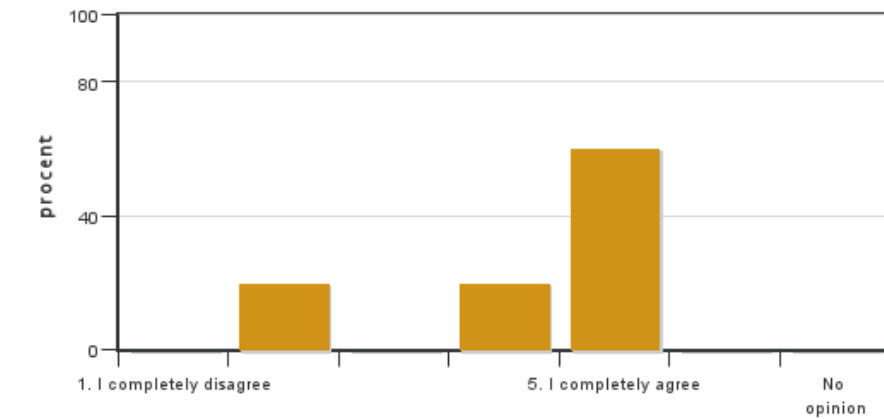


Answers: 5  
Medel: 4,4  
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

**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).**

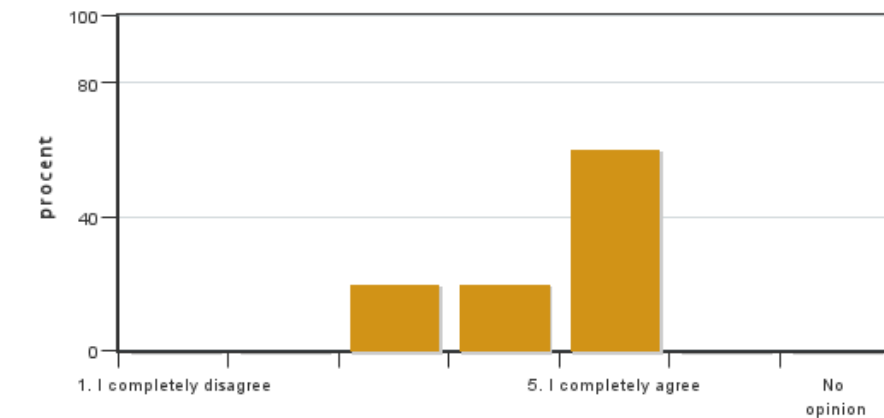


Answers: 5  
 Medel: 4,2  
 Median: 5

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

No opinion: 0

**11. The course covered international perspectives.**

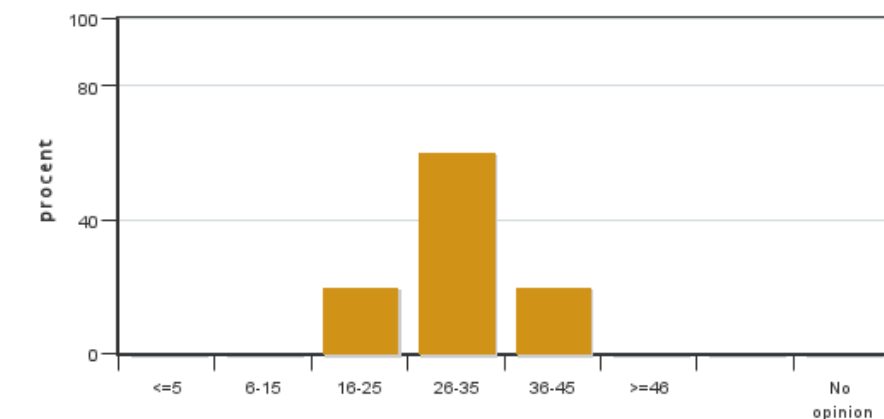


Answers: 5  
 Medel: 4,4  
 Median: 5

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

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 5  
 Medel: 30,0  
 Median: 26-35

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

No opinion: 0

## Course leaders comments

### Student comments

Comments from Course leaders on the course 'Agroecology and sustainability of production systems (LB0109)' evaluation, 2019-2020

#### General remarks and reflections

Unfortunately, we had only five student out of 16 who took part in the online evaluation, despite sending out a reminder about a week before the deadline. Next time, we plan to send several reminders. However, on the last day of the course, we had an elaborate oral evaluation in the classroom with 15 students. From both the oral and online

evaluations, it seems that the course provided relevant and valuable learnings for the students. The scores of 4 and 5 in most of the online questions clearly reflects their positive impressions. We also sincerely acknowledge the main criticism by the students about the individual assignment: the need for more feedback, and the wish for plenary oral presentation of the final individual assignment. This criticism will be carefully considered when we plan the course for coming autumn semester (2020-2021).

It has also came up in previous years' evaluations that the students liked the course structure and contents and they responded to the student's diverse educational backgrounds. Nonetheless, some also expressed that certain lectures could be at a more advance level. This could be a challenge for the teachers, but the teachers will be informed to include different levels of complexity in the teaching to respond to the different needs. We have also introduced peer-based learning sessions to respond to this.

Peer-based learning session was introduced for the first time in this course, as an effort to take into account the diversity of educational background of the students, to facilitate learning from each other and also an opportunity to go deeper on certain topics (which are interesting/complex). It was made very open, leaving large space for student's own initiatives, but it seems that the students felt a bit lost and wanted more instructions to perform these sessions. We still think this as an important and interesting learning activity, and we will develop clear instructions for the peer-based learning sessions.

Students expressed their wishes to have more time for discussion on student led seminars. This is a good indication that the seminars were interesting and that they had the curiosity to advance their knowledge through student-led discussions. This comment will be taken into account when scheduling the next course.

Couse examinations based on student seminars, and assignments performed in groups and individually were highly appreciated were perceived as relevant for assessing their knowledge on course.

It was a bit surprising that one of the student scored 2 on gender and equality aspects inclusions in the course. However, other students gave scores of 5 and 4 and commented that everyone felt included and respected. The reasons given by the student for score 2 was that the student did not noticed this. Perhaps this could be because the course leaders and teachers had not explicitly mentioned these aspects, and/or also the difficulty in relating the keywords (e.g. perspective on the subject, reading list, allocation of speaking time and the use of master suppression techniques) used in the evaluation question.

We will continue to have group works and discussions in the whole class and in smaller groups, which has been reported to complement each other and important for more inclusiveness/participation of all students.

### **Additional plans for improvements for the next course**

- Exploring alternative tool e.g. SMART for the sustainability assessment tool, SAFA
- Considering to add whole-class oral presentations of the final individual assignment
- Trying to organize more joint lectures and excursions with other courses
- To incorporate specific information from on-going research projects in lectures
- To include one or two lectures on social and political aspects relating to the course
- To organize a meeting with all course teachers in April 2020 to discuss about the student's and teacher's (own) evaluation for the next semester.

### **Course contributions to education for sustainable development and the sustainable use of natural resources**

An important aim of this course is to train students about understanding of ecological theories and concepts of sustainability, assess and diagnose the holistic sustainability of agricultural production systems using tools based on the three sustainability pillars (social, economy and environment) and suggest solutions for enhanced sustainability. The course has strong focus on addressing economic, environmental and social issues using agroecological approaches e.g. ecological intensification, increase production and ecological services with less external inputs, etc.

The course's strong contributions to educating sustainable development is also evident from the online course evaluation score of 4.4. In the upcoming autumn semester, the course will include more social aspects (the need mentioned by the students) as well as lectures on transition pathways to sustainable development in agricultural systems.

## Student representatives comments

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Even though only 5 students have taken part in the online evaluation of the course, its result combined with the oral evaluation of the course showed that many students were very happy with it. The structure of first offering a lot of theoretical knowledge through different lectures and then having the seminars and individual work later in the course was much appreciated.

The fact that the time invested into the course was not very high for some students and that everyone felt, that their prior knowledge was sufficient can suggest, that some lectures can go deeper in depth and be a little more difficult.

The lecture that was liked the most was by Jean Yong about hydroponics and Nicolas Carton on weed management, the lecture and seminar by Per Sandin on ethical issues and the excursion to Sysav. Topics that were enjoyed and should be deepened include animal welfare and the coupling of crop and livestock production. The seminar on designing sustainable production systems was very much appreciated and students want it to be longer and at a time in the schedule where there are no deadlines right after that might distract them.

Concerning the peer-based seminar, students would wish for more structure, but definitely see it as a helpful asset. Similar views exist about the student seminars, which could be improved by having a clearer structure. Here, students also wished for more time during the seminar, to really go into discussions. The farm visits and the work with SAFA were generally enjoyed, but students wonder if SAFA is still an up to date tool to use.

The individual assignment at the center of the course can be improved by having the examiner give students inputs and feedback on their ideas before the entire report is written. In this course, help was offered by the course leaders, but apparently the examiner had different ideas of what the result should look like. Therefore, students had to invest a lot of work into their already finished report even after the course was over. Generally, it was appreciated that this task was finished before the holiday break. It would have been interesting to hear presentation of all the topics, not just of a few.

A more general criticism was uttered about not being able to receive the highest grade anymore when handing in the report late. This creates no incentive for the student to invest a lot of work into the report and the overall learning experience goes down.