



## Agroecology and Sustainability of Production Systems LB0109, 20088.2021

15 Hp

Pace of study = 100%

Education cycle = Advanced

Course leader = Raj Chongtham Iman

### Evaluation report

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**Evaluation period: 2021-01-10 - 2021-01-31**

Answers 16

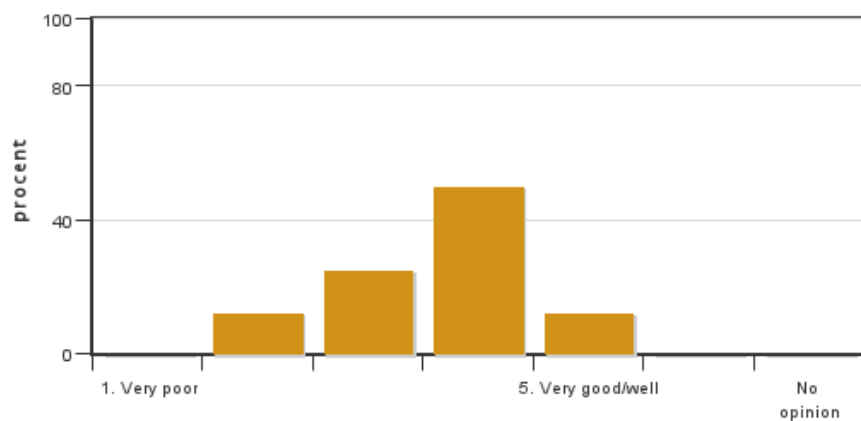
Number of students 38

Answer frequency 42 %

### Mandatory standard questions

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



Answers: 16

Medel: 3,6

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 2

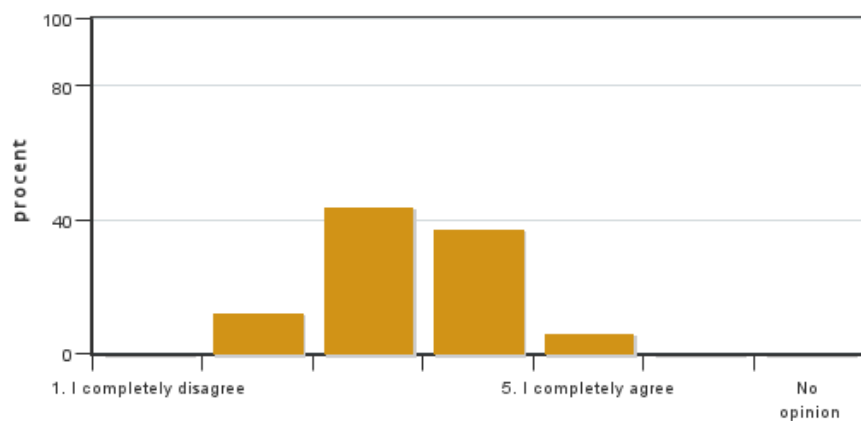
3: 4

4: 8

5: 2

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 16

Medel: 3,4

Median: 3

1: 0

2: 2

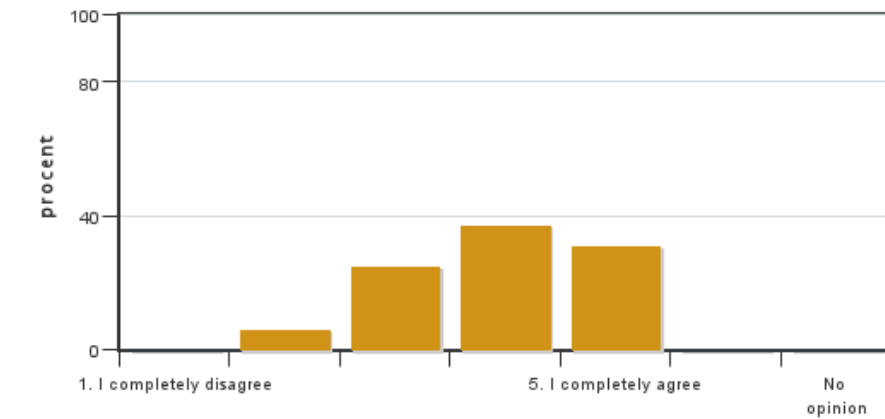
3: 7

4: 6

5: 1

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 16

Medel: 3,9

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 1

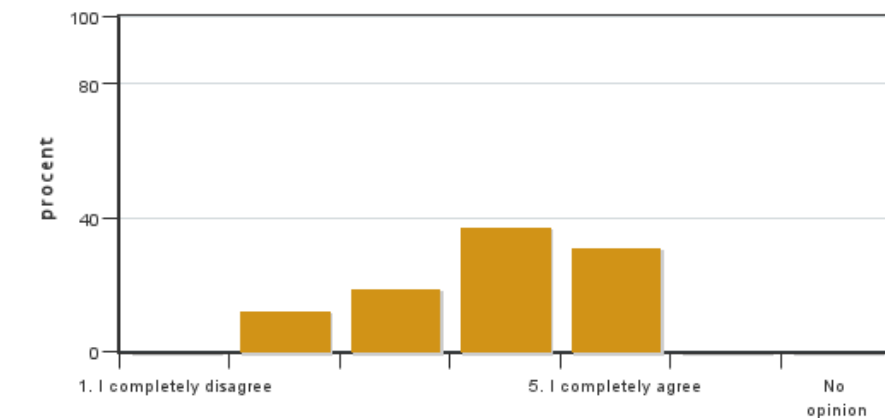
3: 4

4: 6

5: 5

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 16

Medel: 3,9

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 2

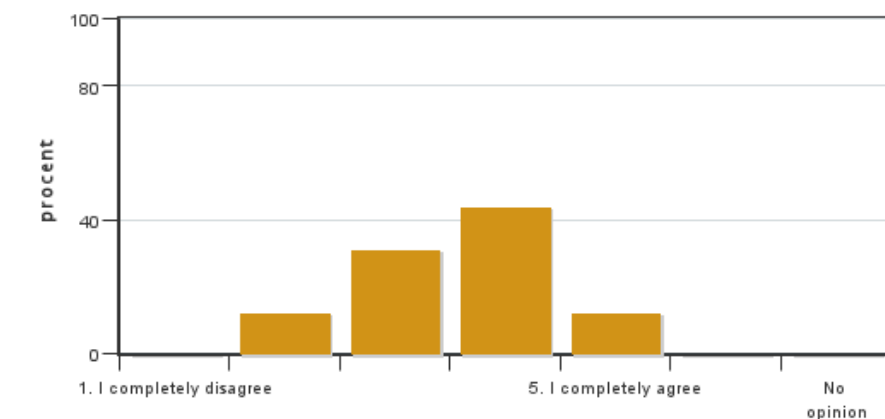
3: 3

4: 6

5: 5

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 16

Medel: 3,6

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 2

3: 5

4: 7

5: 2

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 16

Medel: 4,3

Median: 4

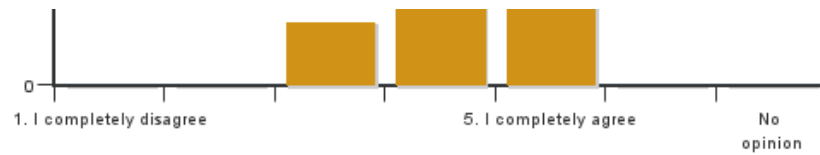
1: 0

2: 0

3: 3

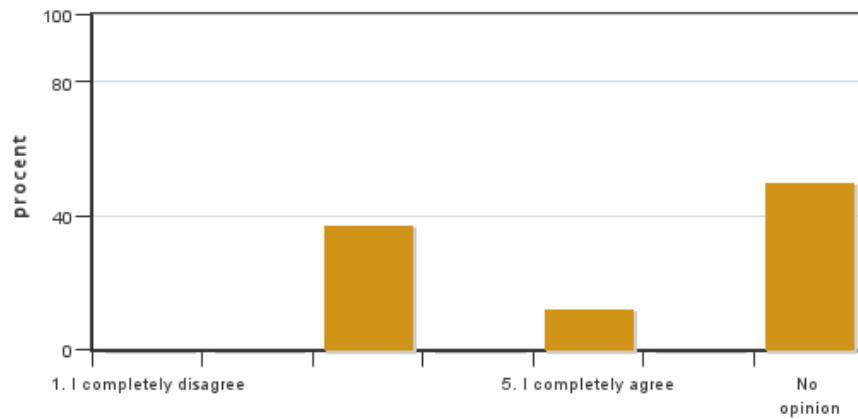
4: 5

5: 8



No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 16

Medel: 3,5

Median: 3

1: 0

2: 0

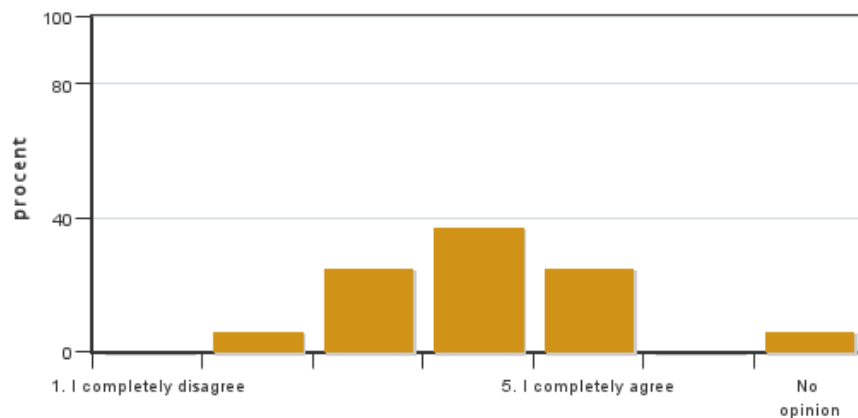
3: 6

4: 0

5: 2

No opinion: 8

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



Answers: 16

Medel: 3,9

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 1

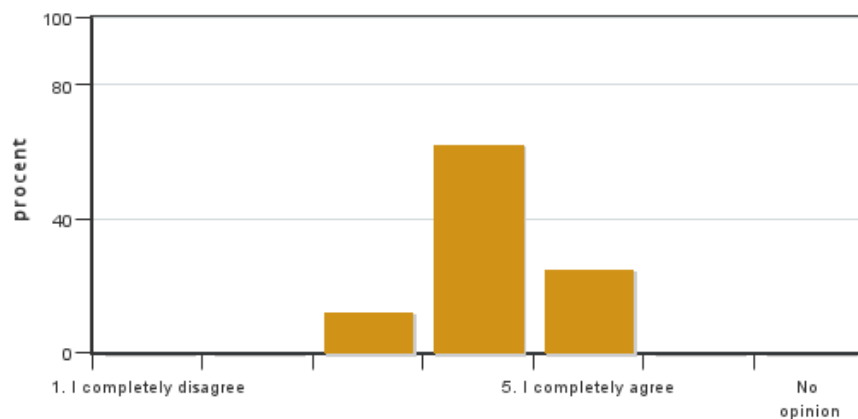
3: 4

4: 6

5: 4

No opinion: 1

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



Answers: 16

Medel: 4,1

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

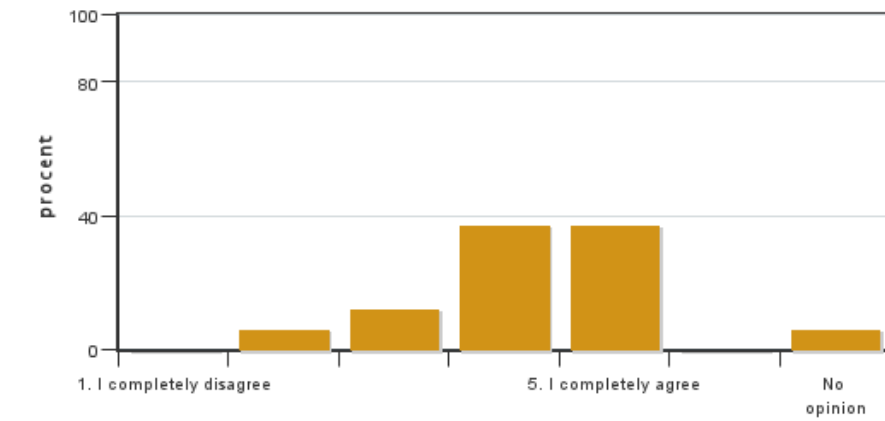
3: 2

4: 10

5: 4

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).**

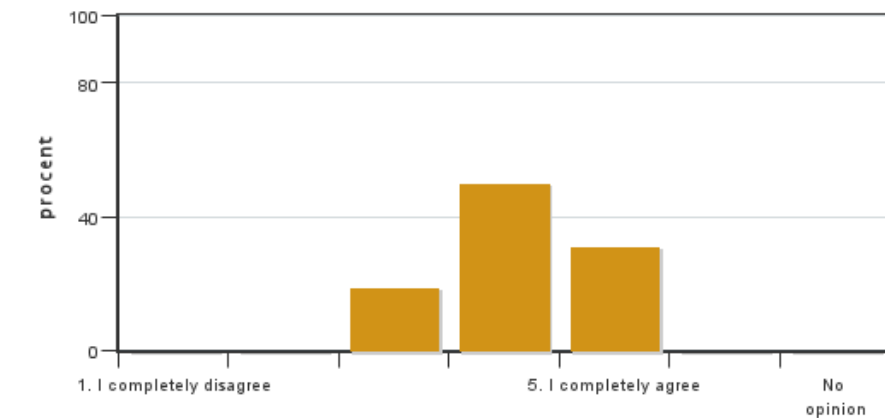


Answers: 16  
Medel: 4,1  
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 1

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

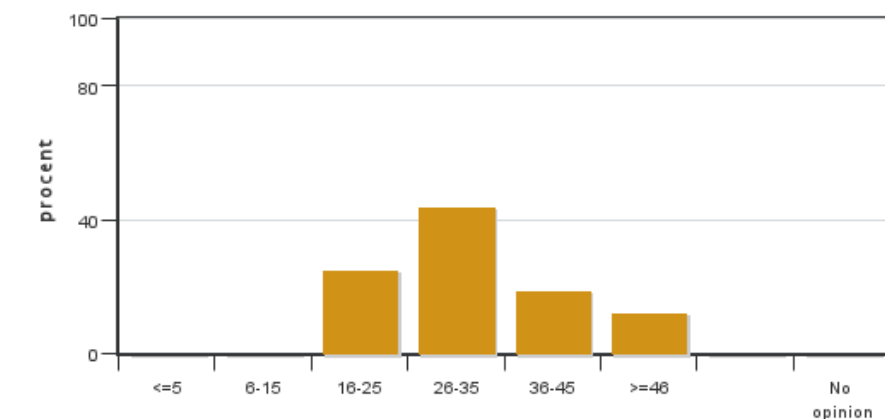


Answers: 16  
Medel: 4,1  
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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

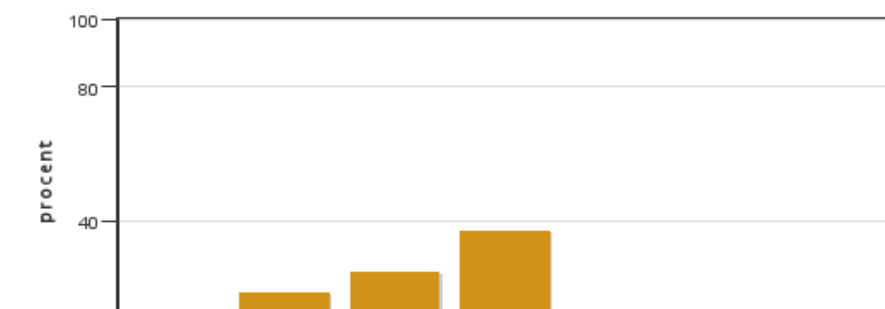


Answers: 16  
Medel: 31,4  
Median: 26-35

≤5: 0  
6-15: 0  
16-25: 4  
26-35: 7  
36-45: 3  
≥46: 2

No opinion: 0

**13. If relevant, what is your overall experience of participating in all or part of your course online?**



Answers: 16  
Medel: 3,1  
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 0



**14. If relevant, please share what worked well when participating in teaching on distance**

**15. If relevant, please share what worked less well when participating in teaching on distance**

## Course leaders comments

**Comments from Course leader on the course 'Agroecology and sustainability of production systems (LB0109)' evaluation, 2020-2021**

### General remarks and reflections

The course had more than double the number of students taking part in this year compared to previous years. Sixteen students out of 34 took part in the online evaluation. On the last day of the course, we also had an elaborate oral evaluation via zoom with all 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 in almost all of the online questions clearly reflects their positive impressions. I also sincerely acknowledge the main criticism by the students about the problems relating to online teaching and changes of schedule and lecture place this year. From the beginning, it was envisaged to have a mix of online and physical meetings/teachings, but due to evolving covid-19 situation, plans had to be changed from time to time. There were plans for various out-of-classroom activities such as farm visits and study tours. The sharp increase in number of students from 15 in last year to 34 in this year coupled with the (un) availability of farms/organizations due to covid-19 was a big challenge to handle and sometimes require changes with short notice in canvas. However, the students have been very understanding and many of them communicate these changes (classrooms, teacher's absence, change of farm interviews or group work/formation) through Facebook groups and other means, which is highly appreciated by the course team. There is criticism about lack of clarity on instructions for individual assignment and this will be improved in the upcoming semester (2021-2022).

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. It has been a recurring comment that certain lectures could be at a more advance level. As students taking part in the course had varying level of interest, knowledge and educational background, it's been a big challenge for teachers to respond to everyone's need. In spring 2020, a meeting with all course teachers was convened to address this challenge, and we agreed to include different levels of complexity in the teaching to respond to the different needs. This issue will again be brought up in spring-summer 2021 to all teachers. We all also dedicate more hours in peer-based learning sessions to respond to this.

Students mentioned in the online evaluation that they learned about subjects relating to the course from each other to a great extent. Peer-based learning session was introduced 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). We still think this as an important and interesting learning activity, and we will develop ways for better 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 and will take place before the winter holidays.

There were comments that the course had too many group works, and sometimes the group did not work very well due to sub-optimal group interactions. However, group-tasks have been appreciated in previous years. We think that having group works in zoom (online platforms) in this year could be a big factor for this comment. We plan to continue to have group works and discussions in the whole class and in smaller groups, to complement each other and important for more inclusiveness/participation of all students.

It was a bit surprise to know from students that there were more male teachers than female. We will look into this matter for the next semester.

### Additional plans for improvements for the next course

- Improve instruction for various group works and individual assignment
- More time for discussion during student- organized seminars
- Trying to organize more joint lectures and excursions with other courses
- To incorporate specific information from on-going research projects in lectures

- To have lectures on research and case studies from different parts of the world
- To inform teachers for interactive lectures (especially when taking place online)
- Include one more lecture on political aspects
- Be well-prepared for teaching activities to deal with covid-19 restrictions

## 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 by understanding lock-ins, identifying transition pathways and using agroecological approaches e.g. ecological intensification, increase production and ecological services with less external inputs, etc for sustainable agricultural development. The course's strong contributions to educating sustainable development is also evident from the numerous students from different programmes and educational backgrounds joining the course.

## Student representatives comments

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Student representative report on the course: 'LB0109 Agroecology and Sustainability of Production Systems' 2021

There were about 34 students participating in this course evaluation, the overall impression of the course from the students showed that they genuinely appreciated the content of the course covering both natural science and social science aspects, however, many wished that some components of the course were more challenging as a few had the prior background to the main subject of the course.

The sustainability development aspect of the course including having various guest lectures and discussion rooms were also appreciated by the students however the Agroecology part when thoroughly focused on was repetitive for some of the students with an agricultural science background. Many of the students with a natural science background did not find the course to have developed any more knowledge for them but students with other related science backgrounds found a lot of new things introduced to them and sometimes challenging. The course literature and articles were very much appreciated by the students, many felt they gain more insight into them and found them relevant and useful, however, the lectures were mentioned as not in-depth enough on the main subject as many wished to have delved further into it. The group works were plentiful, and many wished to have less short group work that they had little time for and instead group work with more time concentrated on it. Some group work as TAPE was thought of as to be given as a lecture instead of group work. The students complained of having to use personal time on the weekend to finish off group work assignments as they were not given enough time during the week. However, the seminars were highly praised for providing more depth into the assignments and lectures. The assignment that was significantly thought of as truly enriching was the individual assignment. Many of the students found it to be the best part of the course as they got the opportunity to work with something more specific to their interest and could really research and use the literature as they pleased. The international mix of the class and lecturers was something seen as positive to the students. The students felt like it added to their knowledge and provided international perspectives on their course work. The amount of time spent varied a lot between the students, some felt like they had to use a lot of extra time especially for the group works while others felt the time during the week was suitable enough and ranged between 26 to 35 hours per week. Another point that was noted by a lot of the students was the few female lecturers during the course, they wish to have a more diverse representation when it comes to the gender of the lecturers. When it comes to the technical aspect of the course, that is using ZOOM as an application, PowerPoint, and structures of scheduling and assignments.

The structuring and scheduling of the lectures, seminars, and assignments were found to be confusing that many students were forced to rely on other platforms like Facebook for communication. ZOOM as the platform for lectures and group discussions addressed as difficult and sometimes proved as a barrier in concentrating during lectures however the breakout rooms that were organized during discussions were appreciated as it made more organized and easier to communicate. Distance learning still comes up as not a favorite however the students believed the application ZOOM works apart from the occasional technical hiccups that come along. In conclusion, the course content was appreciated however there is a wish to have more communications between lectures and students. The individual assignment came up as the most rewarding whilst some group work as TAPE and SAFA came out as difficult to conduct using distance learning and unappreciated as there was too little time to go into details.