![SLU logo]

Environmental Perception and Experience
MP0004, 10184.2021

 15 Hp
Pace of study = 50%
Education cycle = Advanced
Course leader = Elizabeth Marcheschi, Mats Gyllin

Evaluation report

**Evaluation period: 2021-01-10 - 2021-01-31**
 Answers   17
 Number of students 45
 Answer frequency   37 %

Mandatory standard questions

1.   My overall impression of the course is:
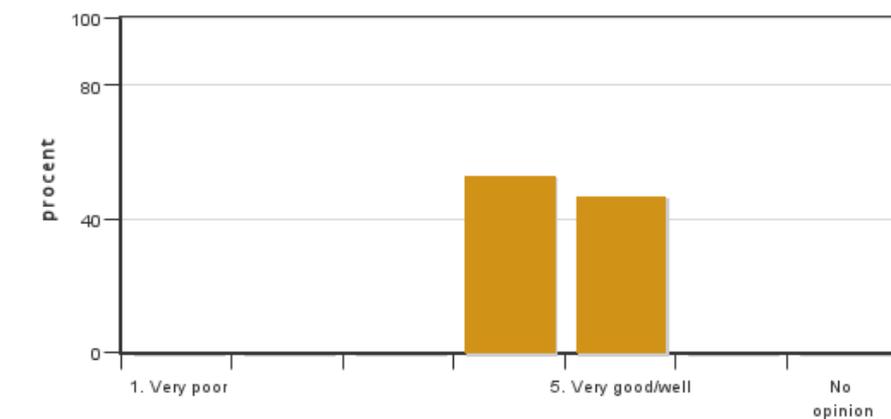
Answers: 17
Medel: 4,5
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

2.   I found the course content to have clear links to the learning objectives of the course.
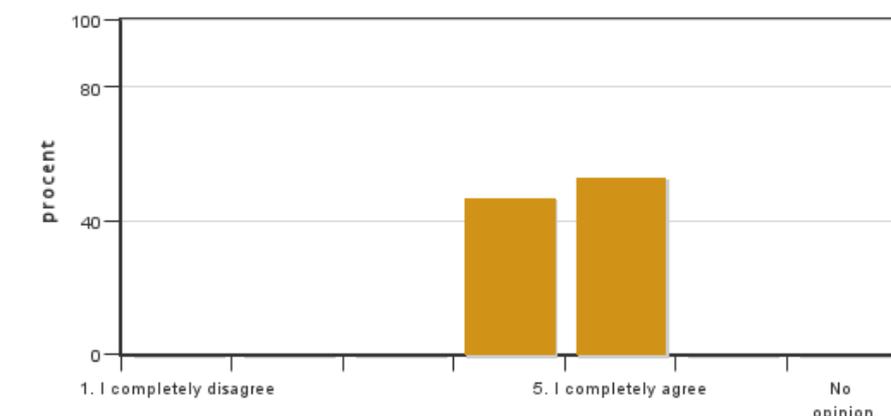
Answers: 17
Medel: 4,5
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 0

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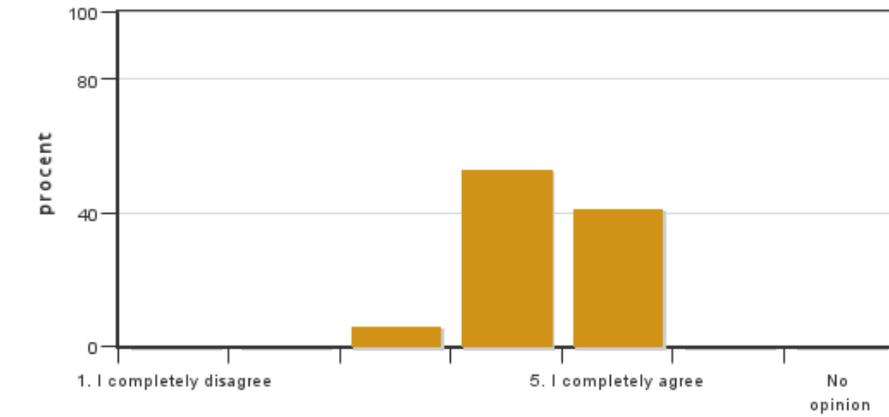

Answers: 17
Medel: 4,4
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 0
3: 1
4: 9
5: 7

No opinion: 0

### 4. The information about the course was easily accessible.
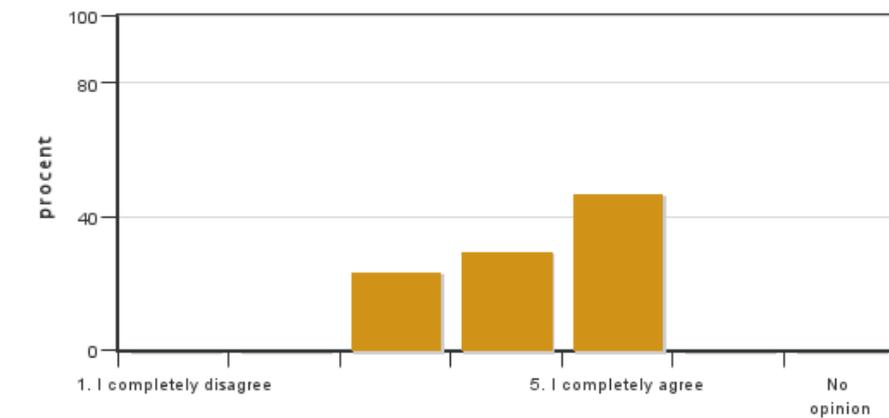
Answers: 17
Medel: 4,2
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

5. The various course components (lectures, course literature, exercises etc.) have supported my learning.
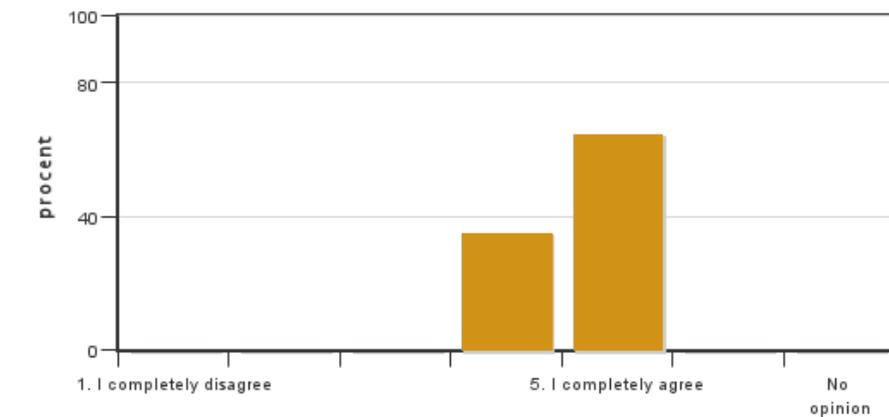
Answers: 17
Medel: 4,6
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 0
4: 6
5: 11

No opinion: 0

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


Answers: 17
Medel: 4,8
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 0
4: 3
5: 14
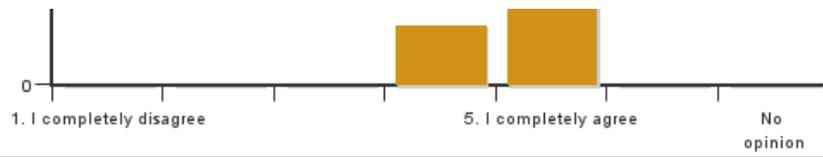
No opinion: 0

7. The physical learning environment (facilities, equipment etc.) has been satisfactory.
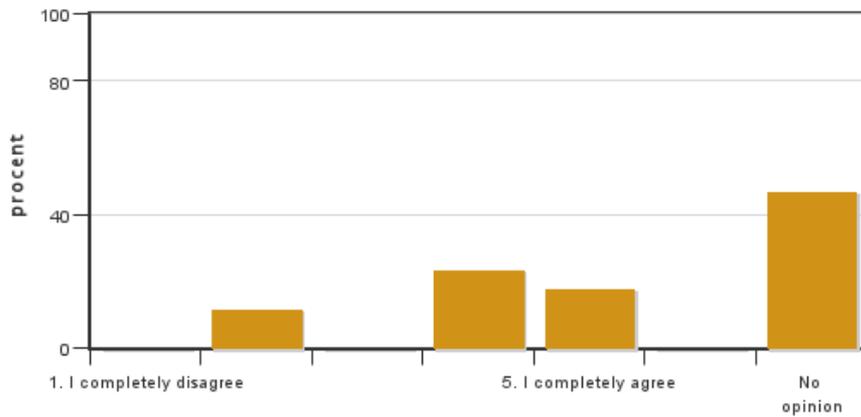
Answers: 17
Medel: 3,9
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 8

8. The examination(s) provided opportunity to demonstrate what I had learnt during the course (see the learning objectives).
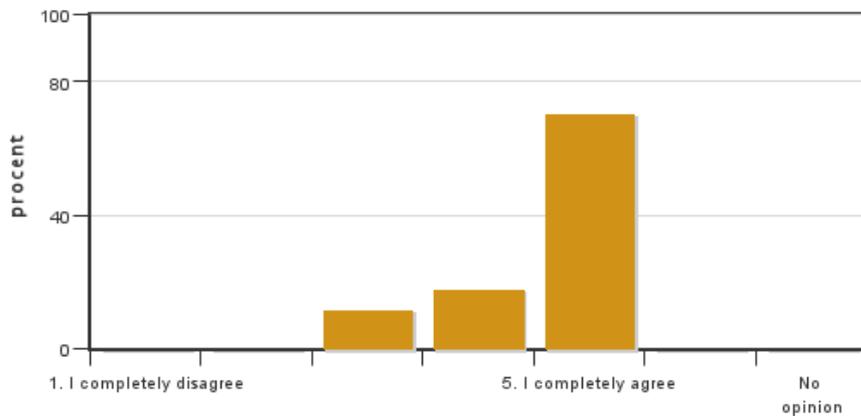
Answers: 17
Medel: 4,6
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 2
4: 3
5: 12

No opinion: 0

9. The course covered the sustainable development aspect (environmental, social and/or financial sustainability).
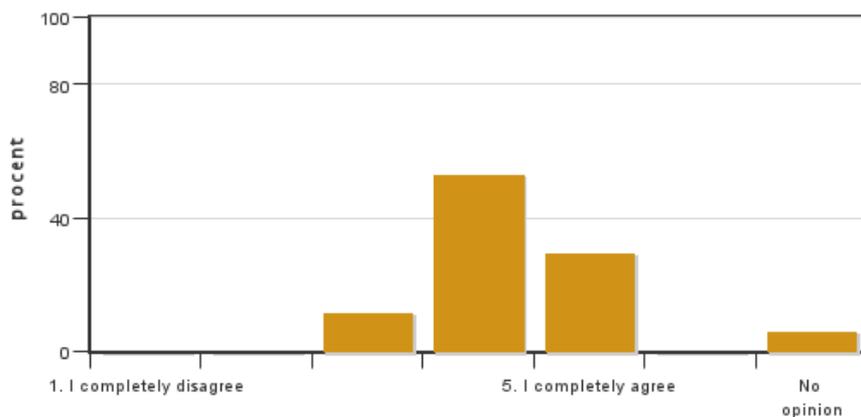
Answers: 17
Medel: 4,2
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 1

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).
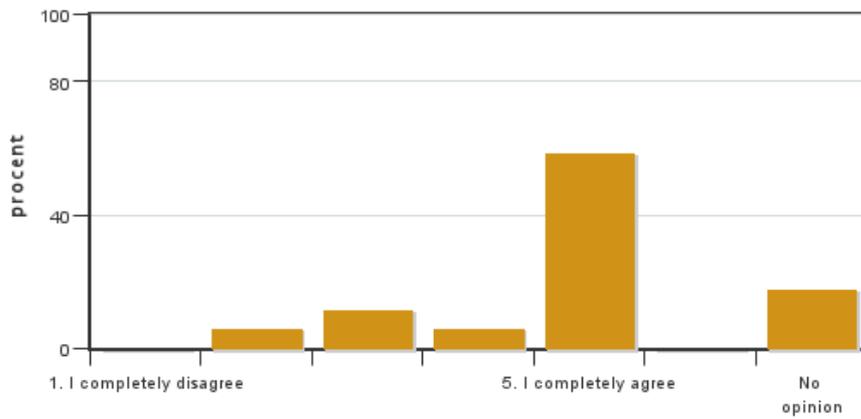
Answers: 17
Medel: 4,4
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 1
3: 2
4: 1
5: 10
No opinion: 3

11. The course covered international perspectives.
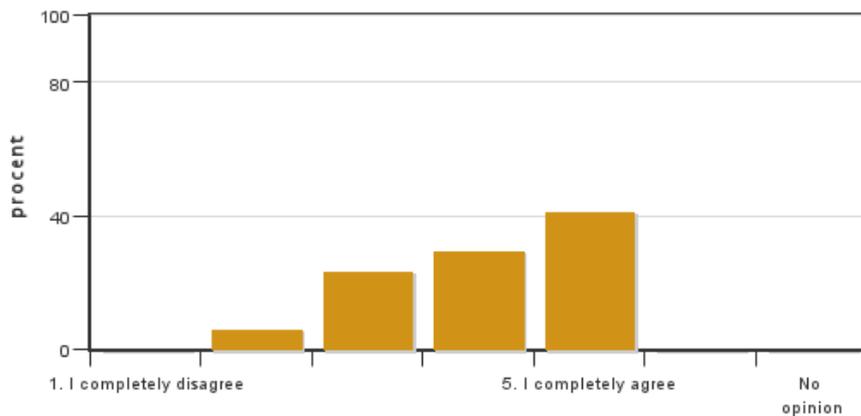
Answers: 17
Medel: 4,1
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 1
3: 4
4: 5
5: 7
No opinion: 0

12. On average, I have spent … hours/week on the course (including timetabled hours).
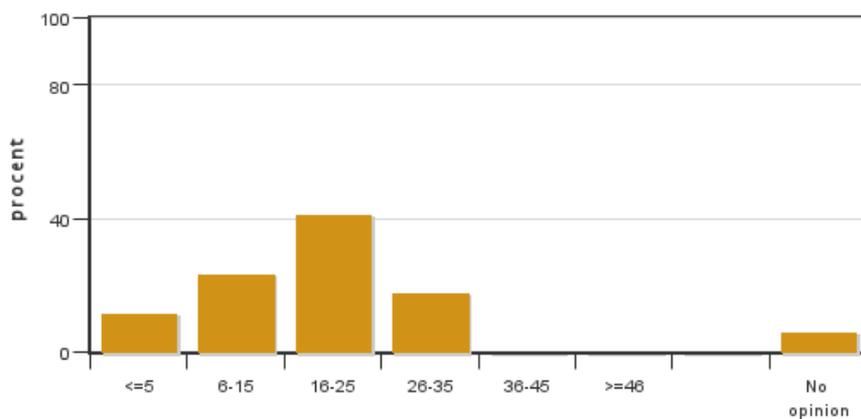
Answers: 17
Medel: 17,2
Median: 16-25

≤5: 2
6-15: 4
16-25: 7
26-35: 3
36-45: 0
≥46: 0
No opinion: 1

13. If relevant, what is your overall experience of participating in all or part of your course online?
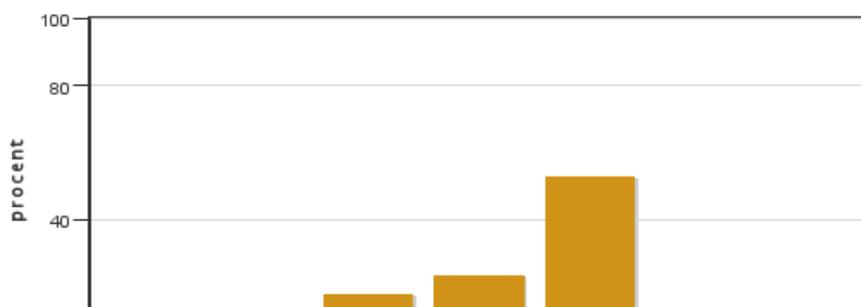
Answers: 17
Medel: 4,2
Median: 5

1: 1
2: 0
3: 3
4: 4
5: 9
No opinion: 0
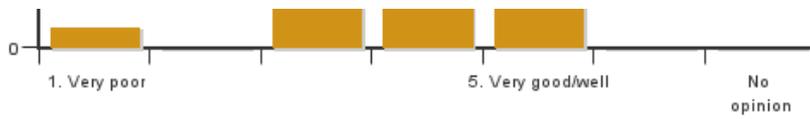
14. If relevant, please share what worked well when participating in teaching on distance

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

Course leaders comments

It seems that overall most students were pleased with the course, but that some effort should be put on structure, so that the logic will be clearer. The biggest challenge seems to be the online format and we should adapt the course more strongly to an online format, perhaps in combination with (voluntary) campus meetings. As it was this time, we decided to keep everything pretty much as it was when we had campus meetings. There were some complaints about the length of the sessions, for instance. And we could use pre-recorded lectures to a much higher degree and at least partly use the time instead to seminars/workshops.

Thanks for the very valuable input!

Mats (& Liz)

Student representatives comments

Summary of students' evaluations based on the questionnaire

17 out of 48 students responded to the course evaluation, which translates to a 35% response rate. The majority of students who responded to the course evaluation have a very well overall impression of the course.

All respondents assess that the course content has clear links to the learning objectives of the course, and that the various course components (e.g. lectures, course literature, exercises) have supported their learning to a high or very high degree. Furthermore, they experience that the social learning environment is inclusive and respects differences of opinion.

16 out of 17 respondents answered that their prior knowledge was sufficient for them to benefit from the course, while 1 felt neutral.

13 respondents had no difficulty in accessing most of the information about the course, while the remaining 24% experienced some issues.

7 respondents answered that they were to a high or very high degree satisfied with the physical learning environment (e.g. facilities, equipment). There is, nonetheless, a clear contrast with other response criteria. 2 students had some troubles with the technology (e.g. internet connection, Canvas design) and 8 opted for "no opinion".

15 respondents acknowledged that the examinations provided an opportunity to demonstrate what they had learnt during the course to predominantly a high degree, while 2 felt neutral.

14 respondents are in the opinion that the course covers one or more aspects of sustainable development (environmental, social, or financial sustainability) to mostly a high degree, while 2 students to some extend and 1 opted for "no opinion".

12 respondents concur that the course covers international perspectives, while 4 are neutral and 1 disagrees.

11 respondents reckon the course to have included aspects of gender and equality, both in content and teaching practices (e.g. perspectives on the subject, reading list, allocation of speaking time), 3 to some extent, and another 3 opted for "no opinion".

13 respondents rated good or very good in their experience of participating in distance teaching, while 3 to some extent and 1 had a very poor impression.

Additionally, the respondents spent an average of 17.2 hours per week on the course (e.g. scheduled hours,

self-study).

Summary of students' evaluations based on the open-ended survey and various discussions

What has emerged in the open-ended survey in this course evaluation and other evaluation occasions is, above all, the clear structure of the content, balanced distribution between theoretical and practical parts of the course, the course content itself, prompt and meaningful responses from lecturers and course leaders on Canvas and via email, as well as constructive feedback that were also delivered within the promised time from course leaders for each examination (including the final grade for the course).

A clear majority of the students are positive about the course and many have explicitly stated that they find it useful in learning the MP0004 Environmental Perception and Experience course at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). Most students particularly appreciate that the examinations gave them sufficient freedom to explore the course with respect to their own individual interests or expertise, while also enabling them to improve their learning process and their understanding of the course literature. A few students, however, revealed that it took a lot of effort for them to follow the course as they had no previous knowledge in the disciplines of behavioural science, environmental science, nor landscape architecture. A few others state that they feel a strong need to learn more aspects of sustainable development within the course because of their prior background in sustainability.

Most emphasize the benefits of distance learning, such as how they feel very safe not having to travel to a physical location due to the ongoing pandemic situation, and how online learning helps them adapt to their individual learning environments which have contributed to the improvement of their own learning process. Many find it much easier to focus during distance lectures/seminars as they can listen to Zoom through their mobile phones and walk around instead of sitting down all the time. Some even highlighted that they would not be able to take the course if it was not held entirely online. Many appreciate the lecturers and course leaders who seemed to be trying their best to adapt to online learning due to the ongoing pandemic situation. Some have also strongly encouraged the Department of People and Society to make the course entirely available on the distance even after the pandemic has ended. These students argue, if that is the case, the course will be accessible to more international students around the world. A few students, however, prefer to socialise with fellow classmates in a physical setting, and a few others wish there were more contacts with the classmates during breaks between lectures via Zoom. Some students also experienced troubles with the university's course webpage which often had technical problems and could not be found.

Most of the students consider Zoom to be a user-friendly application that has provided excellent opportunities to learn, regardless of the ongoing pandemic situation. They also revealed that group discussions in the Zoom's breakout rooms worked very well, although some hoped that there were not too many students in the breakout rooms, such as during the Semantic Environmental Description assignment where there were nearly 30 students in each group. These students feel they could have learnt much more effectively if the group size was much smaller.

Some students explained that the content and teaching practices were adequate as they also needed their own individual time (e.g. to read the course literature, prepare for the assignments, explore some ideas, find more readings within their own interests or expertise). Many, however, highly recommend the course not only to focus on the Western world, especially Europe. These students feel that there should be a wider perspective within the field of Environmental Psychology, including in this course.

While many cherish a compact schedule (e.g. full 2.5-day lectures/seminars per module rather than spreading them out over several weeks), some students recommend having more breaks from one lecture to another as well as more short breaks within a lecture. They argue that it is truly a challenge to focus during the tightly scheduled lectures and look at the computer screen all day. In addition, many emphasize the importance of lecturers in making lectures more interactive which was lacking throughout the course, as well as the significance of course leaders in presenting all the mandatory assignments during the course introduction which was not the case.

There were many attitudes that were highly appreciated by the students, including that the course was well-organised with a clear time frame, a positive atmosphere was continuously maintained with a good balance of both course leaders, and the course leaders made it possible for completely anonymous evaluations by not having a discussion led by them.

Suggestions for improvements

Provide course literature, lectures, and examples that do not only focus on the Western world. Since this course is one of the mandatory courses within the international Master's programme *Outdoor Environments for Health and Well-Being*, there should be a balance of learning material from broader international perspectives.

Offer optional relevant readings that touch on more aspects of sustainable development. One of the university's environmental policies states, "SLU contributes to ecologically, socially, and financially sustainable development", and therefore, more students will be particularly interested in delving deeper into these aspects related to course content. Also, provide some optional readings on more basic knowledge of course content for students with no previous knowledge in the disciplines of behavioural science, healthcare, education, design, environmental science, landscape architecture, gardening, nor forestry.

Identify all the mandatory assignments and examinations during the course introduction (first day of the course). This

can help students familiarise themselves with what to expect for the final grade. Further details (e.g. citation style, font size) can be added as the course progresses.

After the course introduction meeting, send a link to students with multiple options (e.g. via a Doodle poll) if some of them want to be in a certain Zoom's breakout room between one lecture to another where they can have the possibility to socialise with classmates who have the same desire.

As soon as the evaluation link is available, remind students regularly (e.g. once a week) to help respond to the course evaluation. The student representative has already reminded the students through at least 3 different occasions on her own initiative, such as by announcing it at the last course meeting and via Canvas inbox to each student. The course leaders have also sent out one reminder just before the last day to access the link. Yet, the response rate is still low. When sending out the reminders, it should be mentioned that the course evaluation is anonymous and that more responses are needed to improve the course even though it is not mandatory. More students appear to be participating in course evaluations when anonymity is guaranteed and the students may feel they are contributing even though they are not obliged to.

Allow students to have a longer deadline for completing the course evaluation, at least a few days after they have received final grades and feedback on examinations. Examinations are part of the course. Those, consequently, should be included in the course evaluation (e.g. whether the students feel they have received constructive feedback or not).

Discuss with the Department of People and Society the possibility of making the course available completely online even after the pandemic has ended.

Set up optional drop-ins via Zoom with the IT department for students who need help acquainting themselves with technical matters (e.g. Canvas, Zoom, VPN). Although detailed instructions have been provided via the SLU webpage, it can be more helpful for these students to video chat with the IT staff (e.g. via Zoom's sharing screen). Also, the SLU website updates should be done when most students do not visit the webpage (e.g. during certain hours, on public days in Sweden).

Kei Nilsson
Student Representative for MP0004 Course
Autumn semester of 2020