



Forest and landscape ecology BI1386, 30100.2122

15 Hp

Pace of study = 100%

Education cycle = Basic

Course leader = Jaime Uria Diez

Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2022-03-16 - 2022-04-06

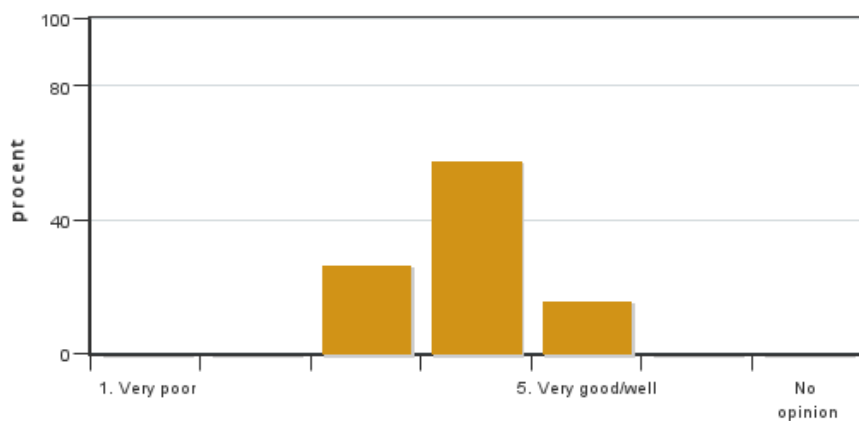
Answers 19

Number of students 27

Answer frequency 70 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:



Answers: 19

Medel: 3,9

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

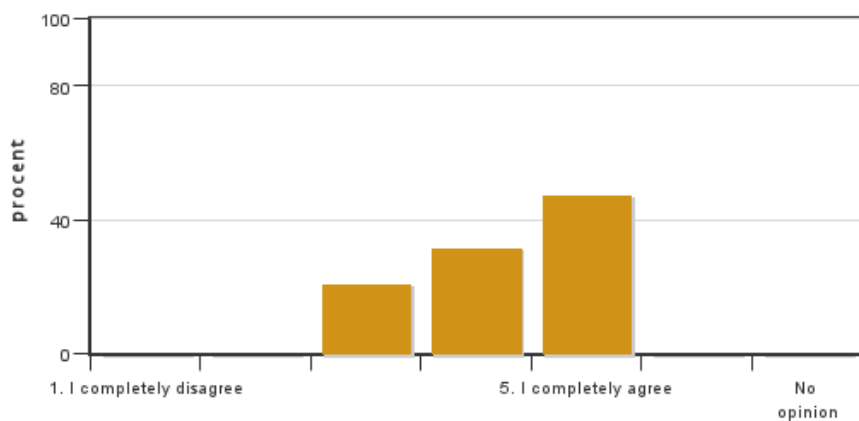
3: 5

4: 11

5: 3

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 19

Medel: 4,3

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

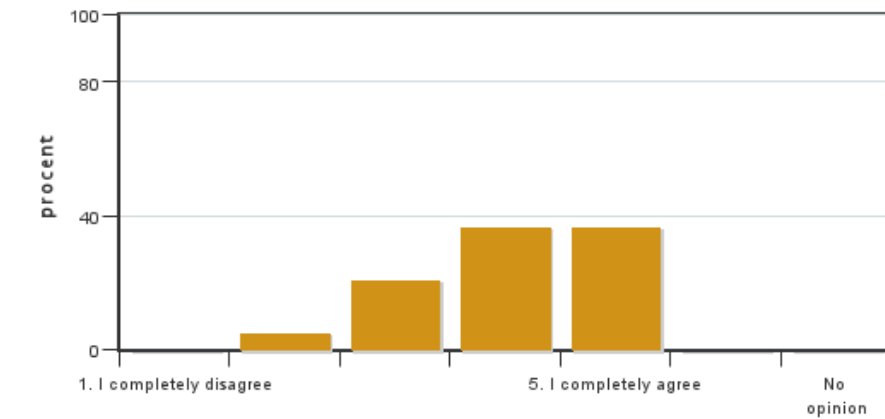
3: 4

4: 6

5: 9

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 19

Medel: 4,1

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 1

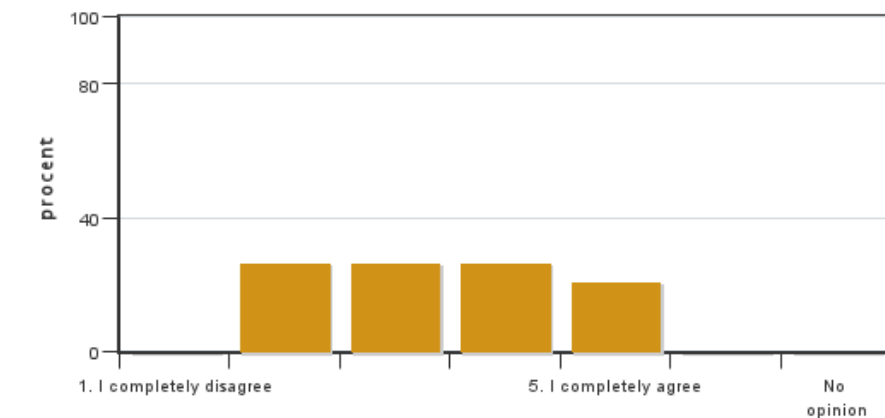
3: 4

4: 7

5: 7

No opinion: 0

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.



Answers: 19

Medel: 3,4

Median: 3

1: 0

2: 5

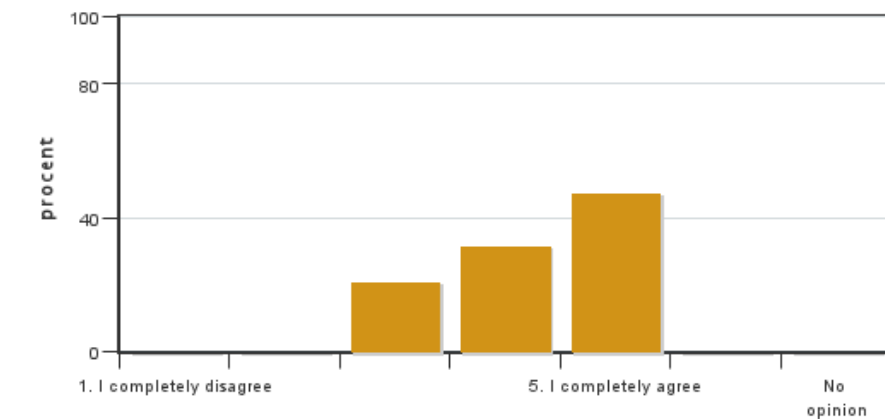
3: 5

4: 5

5: 4

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 19

Medel: 4,3

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

3: 4

4: 6

5: 9

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 19

Medel: 4,7

Median: 5

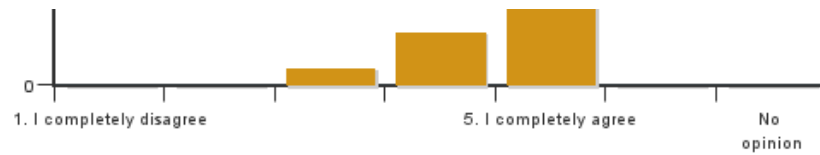
1: 0

2: 0

3: 1

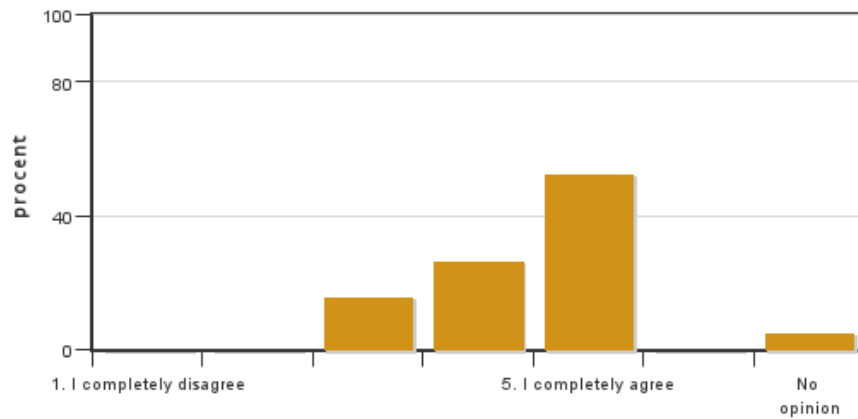
4: 3

5: 15



No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 19

Medel: 4,4

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

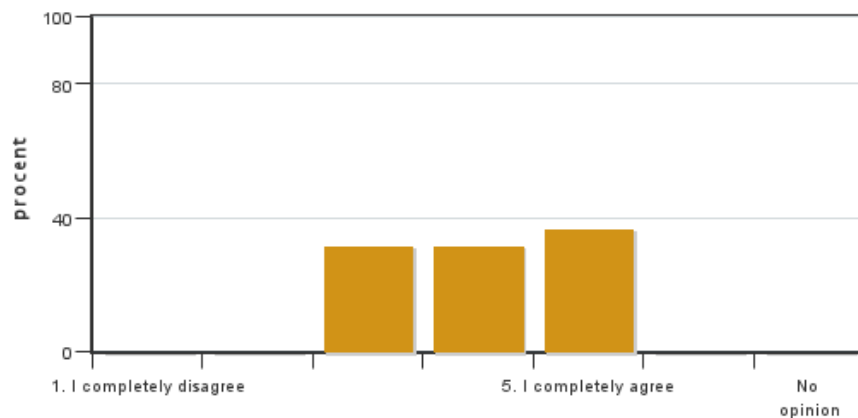
3: 3

4: 5

5: 10

No opinion: 1

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



Answers: 19

Medel: 4,1

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

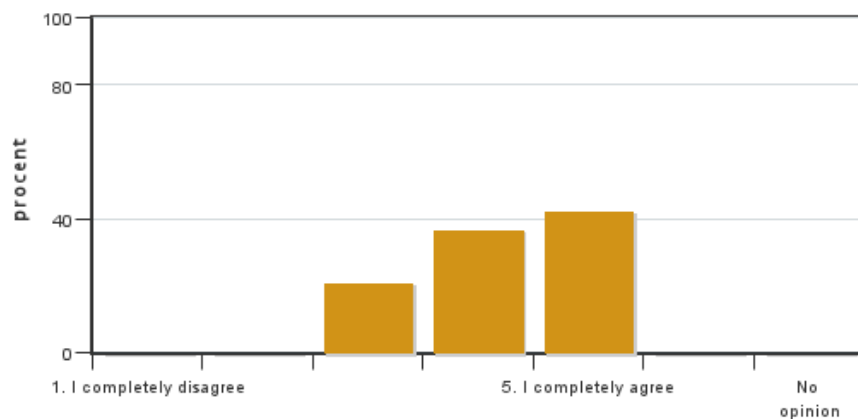
3: 6

4: 6

5: 7

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 19

Medel: 4,2

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

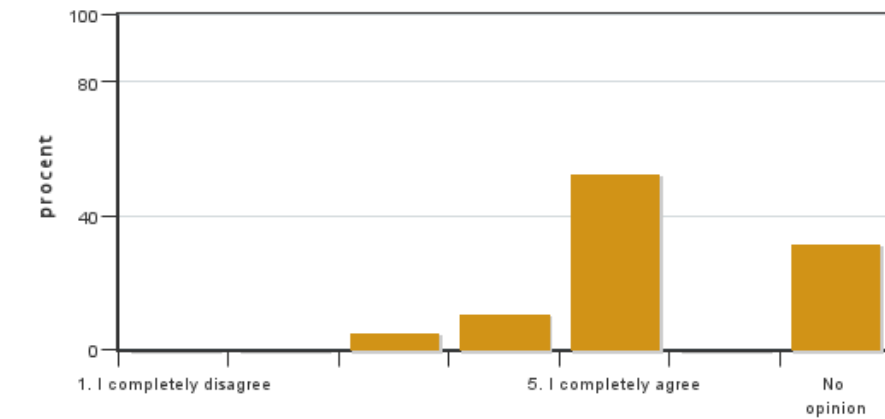
3: 4

4: 7

5: 8

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).

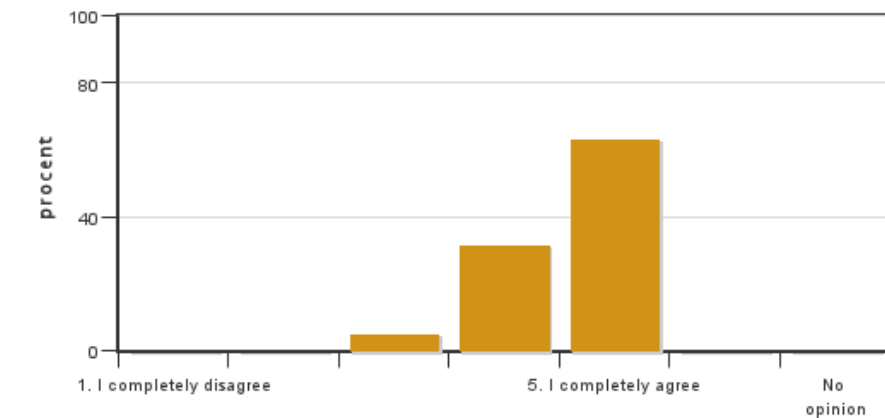


Answers: 19
Medel: 4,7
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 1
4: 2
5: 10

No opinion: 6

11. The course covered international perspectives.

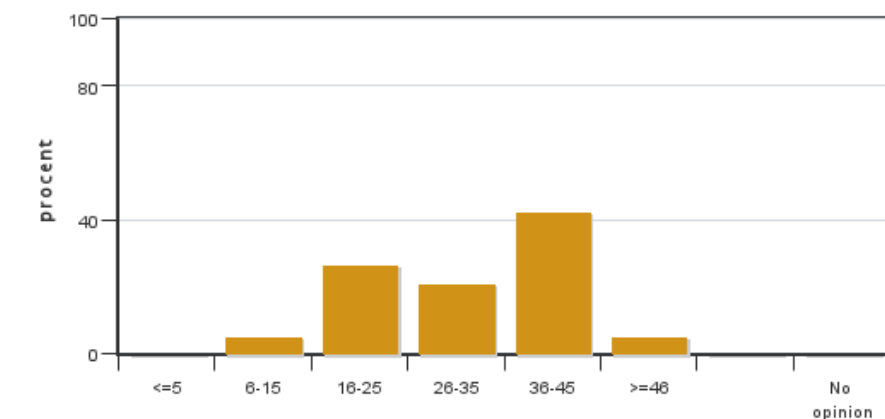


Answers: 19
Medel: 4,6
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 1
4: 6
5: 12

No opinion: 0

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

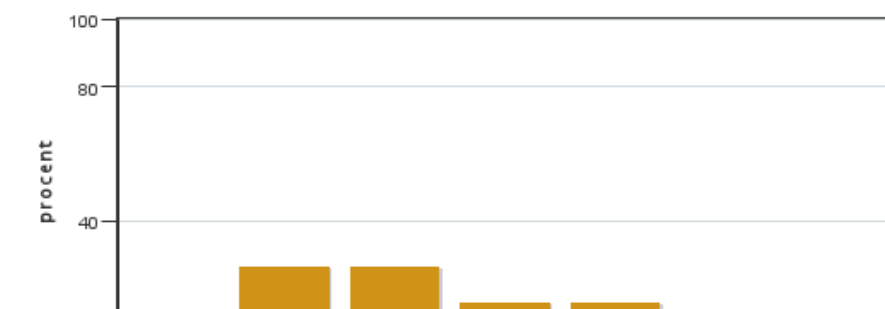


Answers: 19
Medel: 31,4
Median: 26-35

≤5: 0
6-15: 1
16-25: 5
26-35: 4
36-45: 8
≥46: 1

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 19
Medel: 3,1
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 2



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

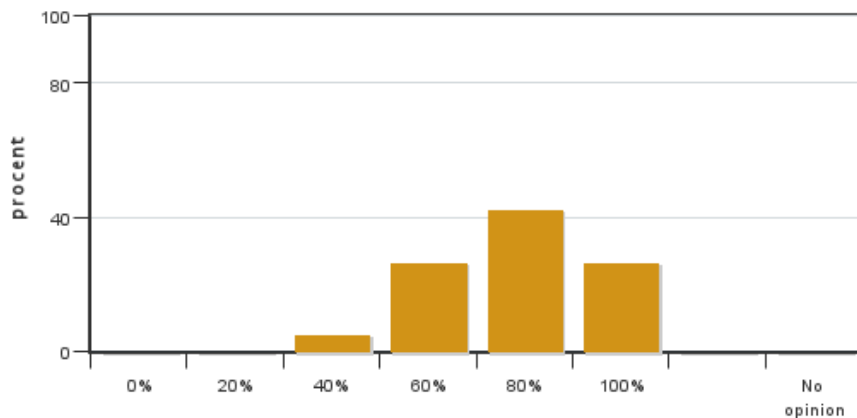
Additional own questions

16. Please share how the course structure (modules 1-3), information (announcements) and communication (from course leader and teachers) worked when participating in the course. What was good and what can we improve?

16. Did the course align with your overall expectations? If not, what did you expect the course was about?

16. Did the course skim or skip over any particular subject you hoped would be focused on more?

16. Did the lectures make you feel adequately challenged by the subject of the course?



Answers: 19
Medel: 77,9
Median: 80

0%: 0
20%: 0
40%: 1
60%: 5
80%: 8
100%: 5

No opinion: 0

17. How is the experience with the WAC initiative? Was the feedback you received on your Written Assignment - Decomposition Experiment constructive and helpful?

Course leaders comments

This year offered several challenges to run for the first time the course in Forest and Landscape Ecology at the new F&L program. One of the main challenge was during the first weeks being a 'hybrid' course of classroom and distant teaching because of certain recommendations from the university. In addition, some students and teachers asked for that option due to the situation, and even like this some students and teachers got infected. That last issue affected the original schedule in short time notice, making us to modify the schedules by cancelling lectures and recovering them later on during the course. That creates more tight schedules during some weeks and modify the planned assignments. I understand that having for the first time R-session online could be a challenge. Next year we will make them on computer rooms. Overall, the course turned out rather good, despite the suboptimal conditions and the majority of student felt that course aligned with their overall expectations. Students spent an average of 30 hours a week on the course. This course is designed to be an introductory course in ecology where students learn the basic concepts of ecology, to be able then to jump over forest ecology and later on to landscape ecology. This is setting the grounds to the subsequent courses in F&L. It has been a good challenge to work with a group of students

with diverse background. Students had different starting levels of natural sciences and biology. It made it difficult for some students to grasp the concepts/information taught in the different modules, this will need to be taken into consideration next year. Canvas was difficult to navigate for some students – it's very new and students require repeated instruction and practice. Communication throughout the course needs to be improved and consistent. Students had for the first time the written exams in their program to test their knowledge on the different modules. This need to be improved for the next year as the information about TimeEditExam and the Swedish systems with it owns formalities were not clear for some of our students and especially for the internationals. The Tea-Bag experiment was run in connection with "Trees: structure and function" course, where the students set an experiment about soil ecology and decomposition. We failed in the design, so this will be modified for next year. This experiment was linked to one big writing assignment linked to the WAC experience that they found again to be helpful, useful and constructive. There were some complaints about the effort on this special writing assignment. Next year the course will have 3HP dedicated to this particular writing assignment (WAC related). There is a suggestion from the students to have more excursion to see real examples of ecology. I will try to include more excursion in the last period of the course. Overall, I am happy that the students seem to consider the course being relevant for their education.

Student representatives comments

1. Overall Impression of the course:

Most of the students had a good impression of the course, with ratings varying from 3 to 5 out of 5. The excursions were thought to be good and interesting. However, the organization of the course was pointed out as a problem, a trend that will be addressed further with the other questions of the report. It was also thought that the course might be too ambitious, ecology being such a vast subject. Others pointed out that too many teachers were involved, and that it would have been good to focus on two or three teachers, namely Jörg and Joan, in that specific case.

2. Content has clear links to the learning objectives of the course The students agreed on saying that the course's contents had clear links with the learning objectives of the course. They thought the literature fitted well with the lectures. One minor setback they pointed out was the chronology aspect: some lectures had them jumping back and forth between chapters, which can be slightly confusing. But overall, the results regarding the learning objectives are positive.

3. My prior knowledge was sufficient to benefit Most of the students thought their prior knowledge was sufficient to benefit, even if a few doubts remained by the time of the study. Some topics posed some problems and took a lot of reading to understand, such as soil for instance, but it was also pointed out that some of the notions that were introduced in the first module helped smoothing things over and helped in the learning process.

4. The information about the course was easily accessible The opinions varied greatly when answering that question, with equal results varying from 2 to 5 out of 5. The main issue the students addressed was the scheduling, which constantly varied on very short notice. This was seen as greatly inconvenient to the students: the schedule would sometimes vary greatly from the initial one, and they were often notified less than 24 hours before the initially planned lecture. Communication through canvas was not lacking but disorderly. This gives the overall impression of a lack of organization/professionalism, a feeling that is very difficult to erase once it takes grip in one's mind. Therefore, it is advisable to communicate way ahead of schedule for students to feel considered, and for them to see that the people in charge are in control. More on canvas: some students felt it was regrettable that there was no continuity in the way teachers from different modules would use it. They would prefer it if all modules were organized on canvas the exact same way. It would represent a gain of time and effort that could then be spent on learning. In addition, students would have liked to find more hard copy of the module's study book available at the library, since it is not available to download from canvas.

5. The various course components (lectures, course literature, etc) have supported the learning The answers were mostly positive (3 to 5 out of 5, with a 5 out of 5 majority). Some concerns were still raised, especially towards the credits repartition. For instance, the final writing assignment, which consists of writing a scientific essay with references, is worth the same number of credits as a small assignment that could be wrapped up within 20 minutes. This can lead to a loss of motivation for involving oneself deeply into such a big assignment that involves a totally different workload. It is even more distressful when one considers the previous modules, where the writing assignment held most of the credits to pass the modules and were highly emphasized. That pressure to do well allowed the students to be bolstered and take the writing seriously. The lectures were thought to be good, and it was appreciated that they were precisely related to the course literature. It was also appreciated that some teachers labelled their lectures with the most important points to be remembered. Some lectures however, such as the R exercise lecture, were criticized: this lecture was conducted on zoom, and as a result did not bring much knowledge to the students, who would have preferred a physical classroom to directly show their problems/results to the teacher.

6. The social learning environment has been inclusive, respecting differences of opinion Straightforward yes as an answer here.

7. The physical learning environment has been satisfactory Zoom has been satisfactory, except for the R session as mentioned earlier, which should definitely be planned in a physical classroom for next year. In addition, some pointed out that the rooms in articum were too cold (!).

8. The examination provided opportunity to demonstrate what I had learnt during the course The students were mostly satisfied, with positive answers, although some concerns were raised. They thought the exams were a good

tool to test their knowledge, and followed what we had learned through the module. Some thought that three exams were too much, and led to a very high paced module, with a lot of stress involved. Some others thought that the questions should be phrased more accurately. There was also disparity in the way the questions were written: some questions were highly specific, some others more random.

9. The course covered the sustainable development aspect Yes answers overall. No particular comments to be pointed out.

10. I believe the course has included a gender and equality aspect, regarding content as well as teaching practices Almost all students voted 5/5.

11. The course covered international perspectives Again, most students considered it as a yes. Some students were asked to bring personal perspective from their home countries, and it was interesting for instance to learn about tropical forests and not just Swedish forests.

12. On average, I have spent.... Hours/week on the course The working time varied between students. They also said that their working time varied between weeks. They appreciated having individual study time in order to read the chapters.

13. What is your overall experience of participating in all or part of your course online? Again, the R online has been pointed out as bad. Otherwise, most of the students are happy with the option to follow the class from home in a hybrid mode: physical class with the possibility to follow on zoom. This is probably a good mix when dealing with lectures that specifically relate to book chapters.

14. 1. Please share what worked well when participating in teaching on distance Several aspects were pointed out. Here are some of the most relevant:

- The ecology lectures in hybrid mode with Jaime worked quite well. He managed to have both the people on zoom and the people in the classroom interacting.
- Easy to be on time. No displacement needed
- Good to have the option if sick
- The teachers were good and familiar with zoom and knew how to use it. They have also been good at seeing questions and answering them.
- Online teaching works well when the lecturer captivate the audience, and when the lecture is more interactive, something that Igor tried to do.

14. 2. Please share what worked less well Some points:

- Staying engaged was difficult, and asking questions was hard.
- Maybe not all teachers are aware that breaks are needed also when working in zoom. They also tend to give very short breaks when on zoom, usually we get 10.15 min in class and often just 5 min on zoom.
- R lectures, not appropriate
- Staying focused
- The teachers were great, enthusiastic and involved.

14. 3. Please share how the course structure, information and communication worked when participating in the course. What was good and what can we improve? Overall, most improvements should be made on communicating better with the students, taking better care of the whole module's organization.

- It would have been better to use just one way of communicating, rather than having emails or messages on canvas, or canvas announcements. Lack of consistency in the way of communicating.
- There was a lack of consistency in the announcements, regarding the timings of exams for instance. Overall, the communication must be enhanced.
- The last minute changes were an issue.
- More information regarding the Ladok exam registration, especially considering that some international students are not used to the Swedish system.
- Classrooms for the exams were not provided. Communication.
- Some students did not get any answers to their queries.
- Maybe some more activities during lectures and not just focusing solely on the book chapters.
- A clearer overview of the module from the beginning would have been appreciated (assignments, lectures, readings, exams dates, registrations).

15. Did the course align with your personal expectations? If not, what did you expect the course was about? Most of the students thought that the course had met with their expectations. Some additional remarks: some students thought there should have been more excursions to better illustrate some specific chapters, and some others wished for the course to include Urban Ecology.

16. Did the course skim or skip over any particular subject you hoped would be focused on more? There was a specific comment regarding intraspecific population dynamics, and another regarding trees, which should feel more central due to the nature of the entire course. Another student mentioned that the ecology module should be split in two courses: some topics and lectures were a bit rushed, and there were a lot to cover.

17. Did the lectures make you feel adequately challenged by the subject of the course? The global answer was yes, with some students mentioning that some lectures were not engaging enough while others were. They all praised

the fact that a lot of content was new and interesting to learn!

18. How is the experience with the WAC initiative? All the students agree that the WAC initiative was helpful, useful, and constructive.

Kontakta support: support@slu.se - 018-67 6600