



Economic Growth and Sustainable Development NA0167, 20124.2122

7.5 Hp

Pace of study = 50%

Education cycle = Advanced

Course leader = Rob Hart, Robert Hart

Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2022-01-09 - 2022-01-30

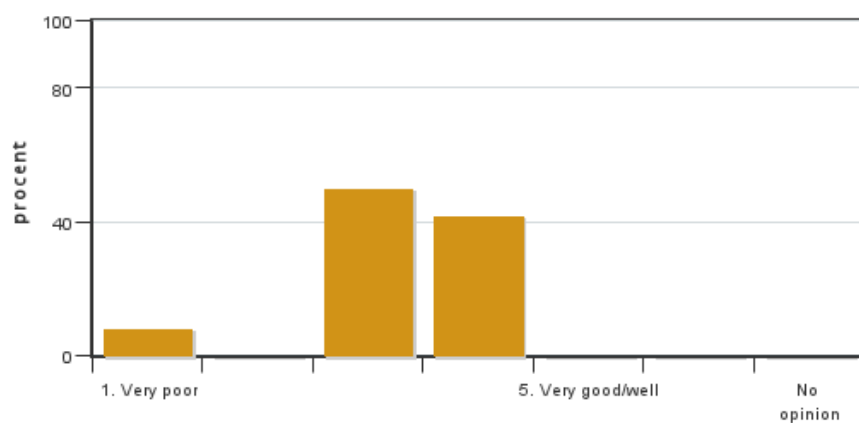
Answers 12

Number of students 19

Answer frequency 63 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:



Answers: 12

Medel: 3,3

Median: 3

1: 1

2: 0

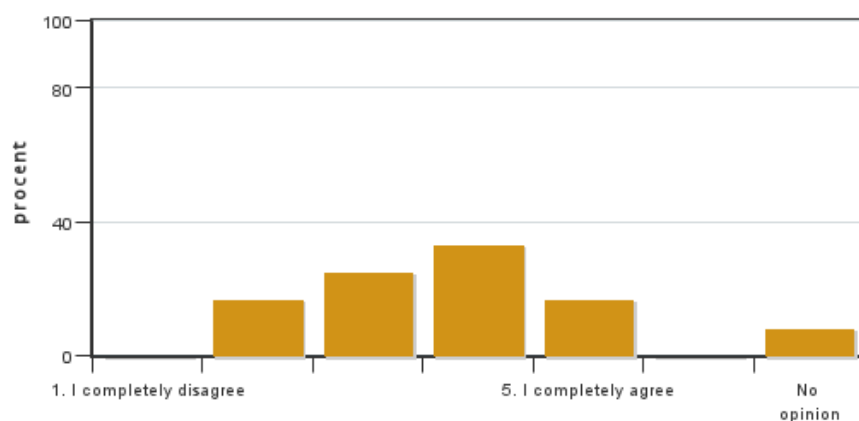
3: 6

4: 5

5: 0

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 12

Medel: 3,5

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 2

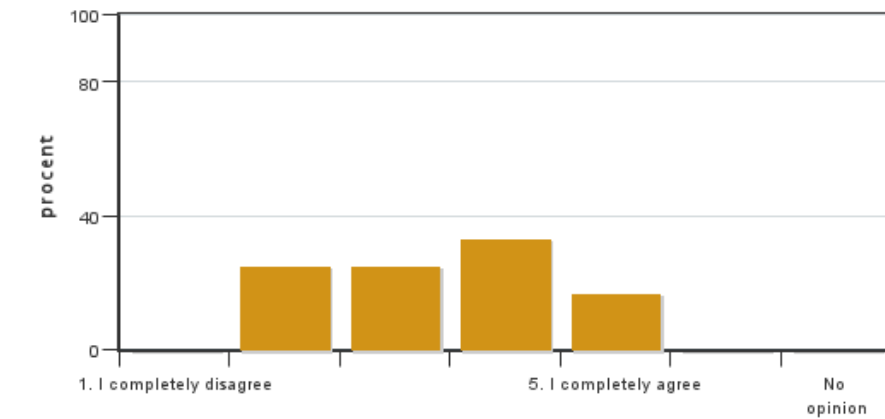
3: 3

4: 4

5: 2

No opinion: 1

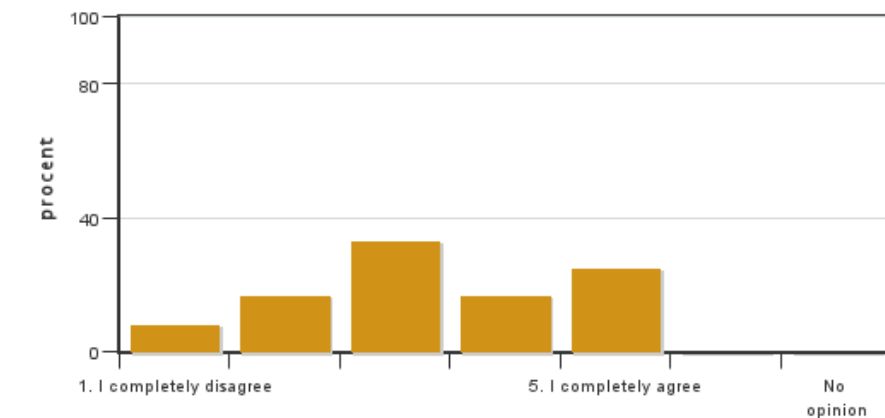
3. My prior knowledge was sufficient for me to benefit from the course.



Answers: 12
Medel: 3,4
Median: 3

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

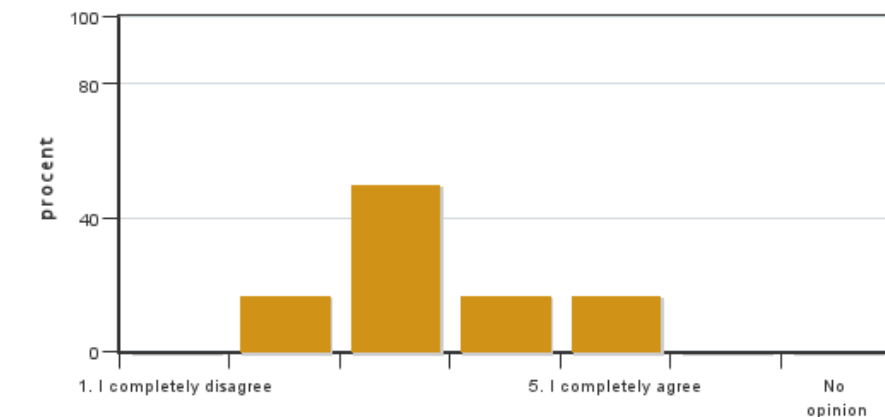
4. The information about the course was easily accessible.



Answers: 12
Medel: 3,3
Median: 3

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

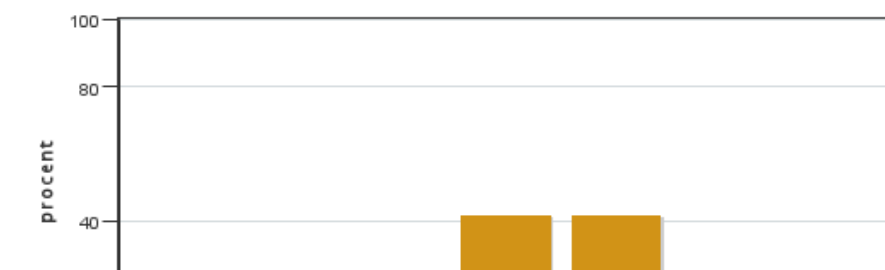
5. The various course components (lectures, course literature, exercises etc.) have supported my learning.



Answers: 12
Medel: 3,3
Median: 3

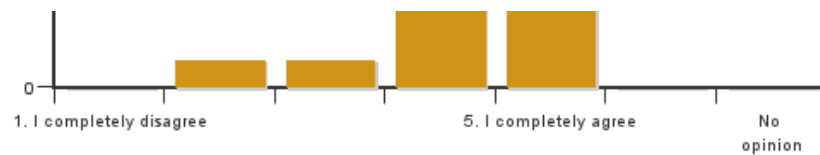
1: 0
2: 2
3: 6
4: 2
5: 2
No opinion: 0

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



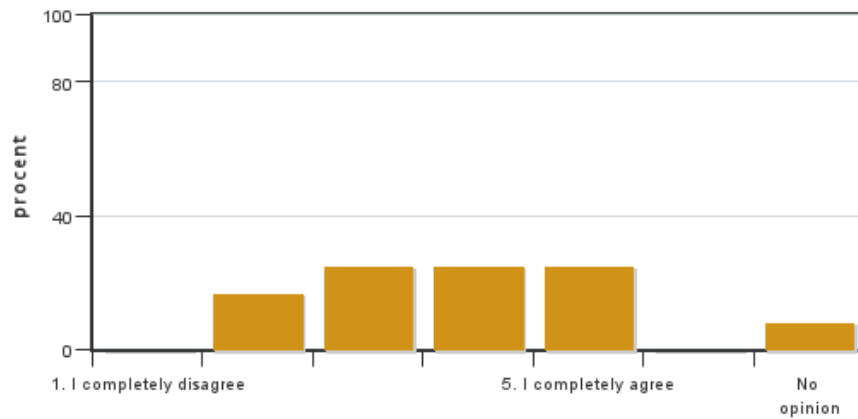
Answers: 12
Medel: 4,2
Median: 4

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



No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 12

Medel: 3,6

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 2

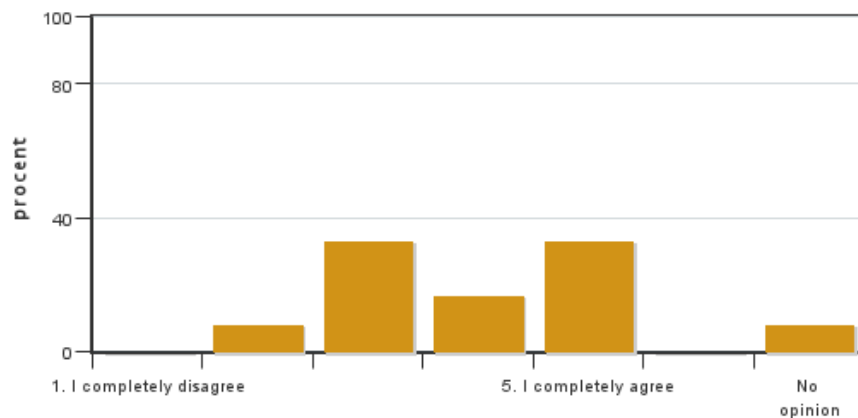
3: 3

4: 3

5: 3

No opinion: 1

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



Answers: 12

Medel: 3,8

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 1

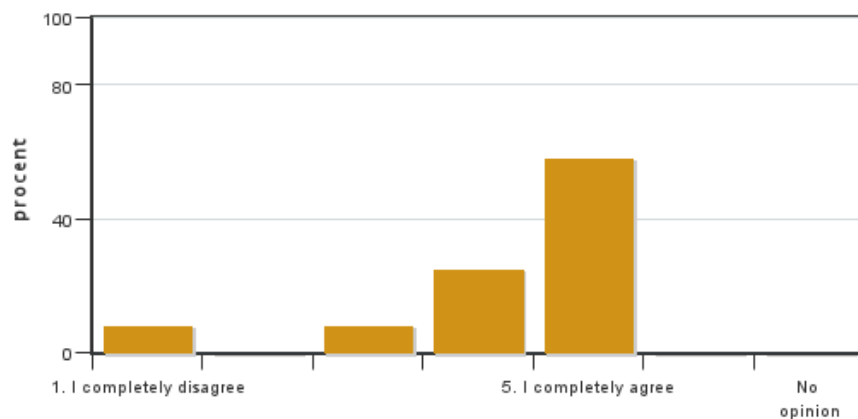
3: 4

4: 2

5: 4

No opinion: 1

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



Answers: 12

Medel: 4,3

Median: 5

1: 1

2: 0

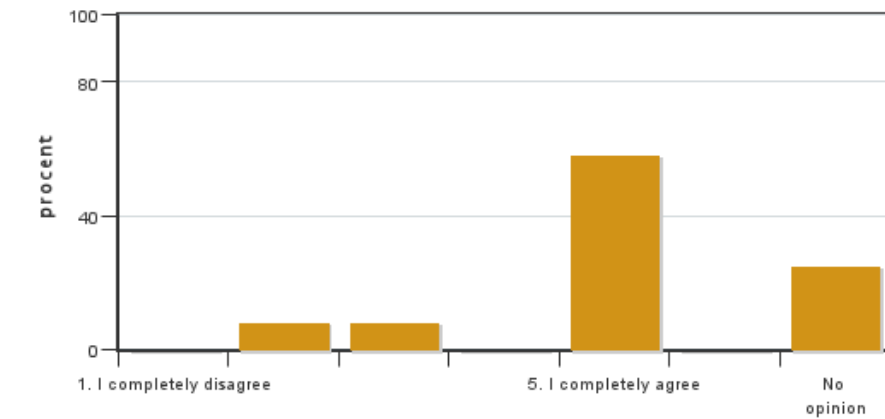
3: 1

4: 3

5: 7

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).

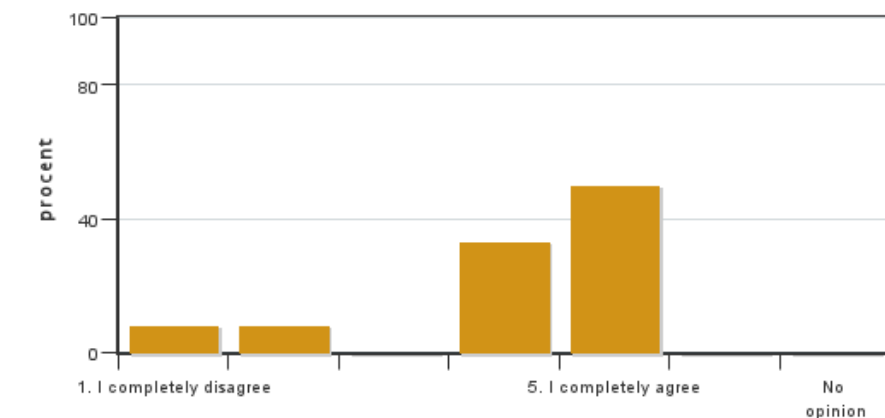


Answers: 12
Medel: 4,4
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 3

11. The course covered international perspectives.

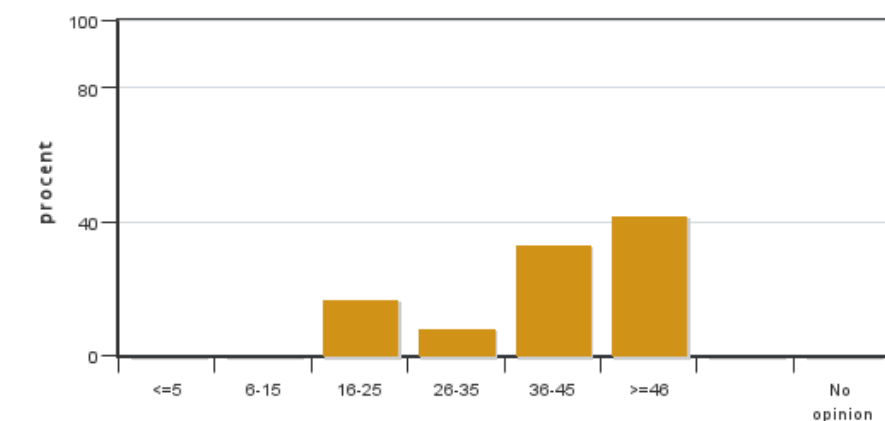


Answers: 12
Medel: 4,1
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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

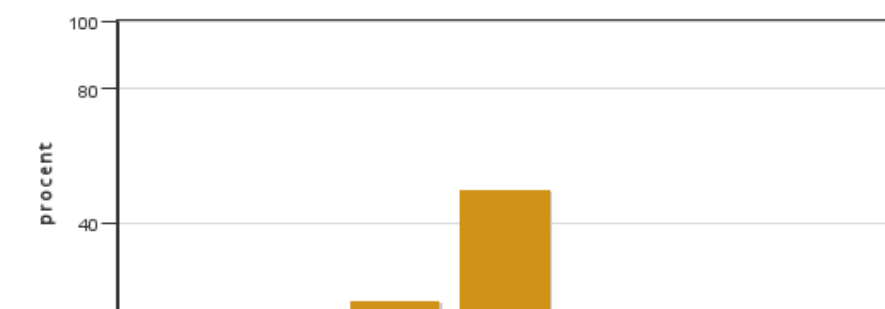


Answers: 12
Medel: 38,3
Median: 36-45

≤5: 0
6-15: 0
16-25: 2
26-35: 1
36-45: 4
≥46: 5

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 12
Medel: 3,5
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 1



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

First, thanks to everyone who filled in the evaluation, and especially to the student representative. Your efforts will help to make the course better in future years.

Regarding the course, this year has been exceptionally difficult for me as a teacher, and also for the students. This is reflected in the evaluation results, which are very disappointing but not entirely unexpected. Firstly, the overall satisfaction grade for the course is low (just 3.3) while the median hours spent on the course per week are over 46, which is of course completely unsustainable. Over the 8 previous years for which evaluations are available in Evald the average satisfaction rating is 4.3, rising to 4.5 over 7 of the 8 years, with one year where the rating was 3.0. Regarding time put into the course, the typical student most years has (according to these evaluations) put in between 20 and 30 hours per week, which is of course high but nothing like this year.

Although this year was exceptional, the time allocation in previous years suggests that the course as currently constituted is on a knife-edge: when things go wrong, as they did this year, the time pressure can become too great on both the students and the teacher, and the situation worsens. Meanwhile, the student view can shift from 'hard work but worth it' to 'too much'. My feeling was that this was what happened during the second half of this year's course. I therefore need to completely rework the course to remove some material and make it more manageable. We also need to look at the information about the course (and possibly the requirements for prior knowledge) to make sure that students who apply for the course have a sufficiently strong background in economics. Finally, I need to shorten the exam questions so that a student who understands the material has plenty of time to answer within 3 hours.

Another issue that needs to be tackled is the relationship between the lectures and recorded material. The contact time in the course is limited due to the very low budget allocated to the course. This means that lectures supported by videos might be a good solution. The videos were appreciated by many students this year, but at the same time there was a lack of integration between the lectures and videos, and this contributed to a feeling of disorganization in the course as a whole. My ambition is to create fewer, shorter videos which are made specifically to complement the IRL teaching, and which the students would be expected to watch prior to the relevant class.

One student who filled in the evaluation was deeply dissatisfied with the course, with the key criticism seeming to be that the course was unscientific because it built on the lecturer's own unpublished work. While it is true that the course builds substantially on my work, all of this work is in fact published in either the top field journals in environmental and natural resource economics (JEEM or JAERE), or other leading journals of similar or higher status (such as EER or JEDC), and this fact is made very clear through for instance the reading list. Furthermore, the course relates explicitly and regularly to key papers in the literature which are also on the reading list. I try hard to make this all clear; I guess I need to try harder.

From a historical perspective it could be argued that it is actually my work that builds on the course rather than vice versa, since much of this work has been inspired by the need to teach these topics and the gaps in existing literature. More broadly, a central aim of the course is to help students develop a critical scientific attitude to knowledge, not simply accepting economic models as 'true' because they were developed by a certain person or have been cited a certain number of times, but instead understanding how economic models work and how they can be used to better understand reality and make good policy, as well as how they can be misused.

A related criticism was that I gave credit to students who argue in line with my own ideas. I am very sorry if that is the impression that has arisen. It is very hard to mark the Gobbets in particular, but feedback I have had (especially after the course) has been extremely positive about this work. I try hard to mark according to the criteria (which have nothing to do with my own ideas) and furthermore I generally give a lot of credit to new ideas which are not in line with what we have gone through in class.

Student representatives comments

The course focuses mainly on macroeconomics models of economic growth and their relevance in explaining historical observations of production and resource extraction. A minor part of the course is dedicated to sustainability and covers predominantly issues related to emissions. The course is pure avant-garde and very captivating. The professor is enthusiastic, shows much dedication to the subject and makes students think outside the box. Students learn how to apply logic and reason behind data. The course is an eye opener and studying this topic gives an intriguing projection into the future.

In the beginning of the course it was clearly declared that the course will be on campus. Scheduled classes functioned properly and the professor made sure to regularly give the students breaks. Questions from the students asked both during lectures and during time out of class were comprehensively answered by the professor. However, time management was poor and for the most part the professor went over time during lectures. In spite of that, the class time was not enough to cover mathematical calculations and fundamental derivations of the models. In addition to the lectures on campus the students were referred to watch videos from previous semesters to acquire the necessary content. The course has been offered by the same professor for more than ten years, nonetheless it is an unfortunate fact that the course is not well structured. Lectures were disorganized and stressful. Important steps were often skipped and the professor jumped between explanations causing the students to become detached.

The course requires a disproportionate amount of work in relation to the amount of credit points it yields. The course includes too many assignments with tight deadlines that tend to cause a lot of stress rather than be fruitful for the students' learning process. Further, the grading criteria seems to be somewhat arbitrary and inconsistent across students. The possibility to collect bonus points on assignments existed, although the scoring was so strict that students only managed to attain a few of the available bonus points possible. The system of collecting bonus points was therefore rather disencouraging. The professor seems to put weight on students arguing in line with his own ideas and views within the subject rather than providing a general idea of the topic.

The course is mainly based on the professor's own work which is partially still in progress. The course book gives the students a good foundation about the material covered in the course and is useful for the exam preparation. The exam questions are in line with the material covered in the course. In any case, practicing the old exams gave good preparation and helped to get familiar with the exam format and how to solve problems. A drawback was that the time set for the exam was too short for students to think through and be fully able to write down their ideas.