



## Soil biology and biogeochemical cycles BI1322, 30072.2223

15 Hp

Pace of study = 100%

Education cycle = Advanced

Course leader = Eva Krab, Karina Clemmensen

### Evaluation report

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**Evaluation period: 2023-03-14 - 2023-04-04**

Answers 10

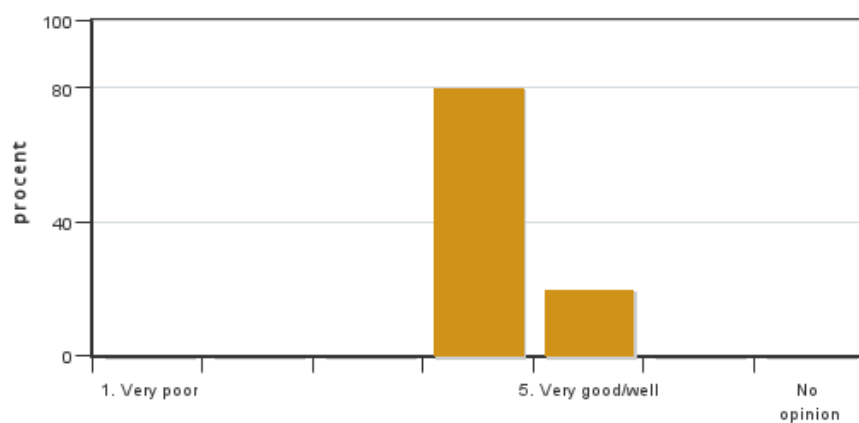
Number of students 19

Answer frequency 52 %

### Mandatory standard questions

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



Answers: 10

Medel: 4,2

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

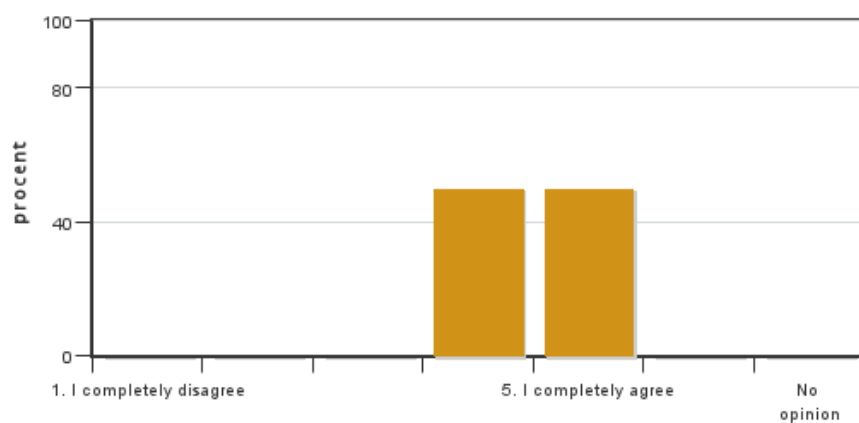
3: 0

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: 10

Medel: 4,5

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

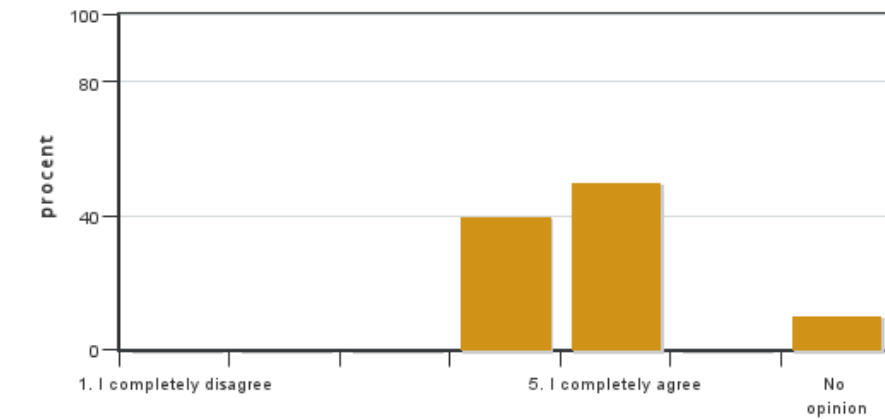
3: 0

4: 5

5: 5

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 10

Medel: 4,6

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

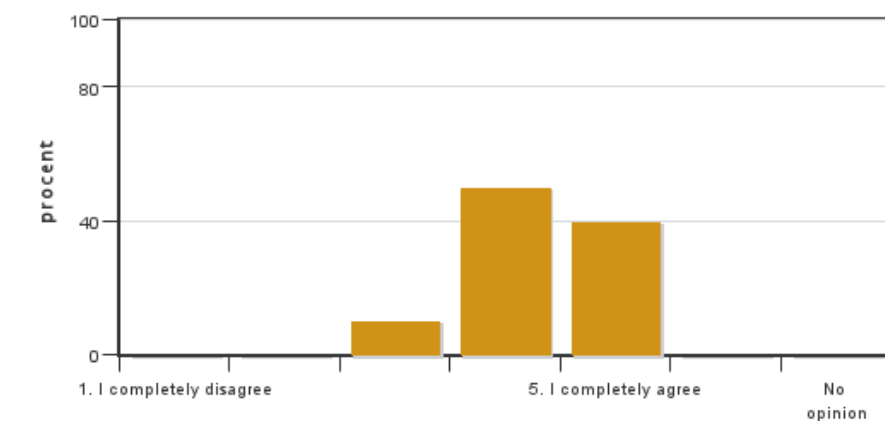
3: 0

4: 4

5: 5

No opinion: 1

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



Answers: 10

Medel: 4,3

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

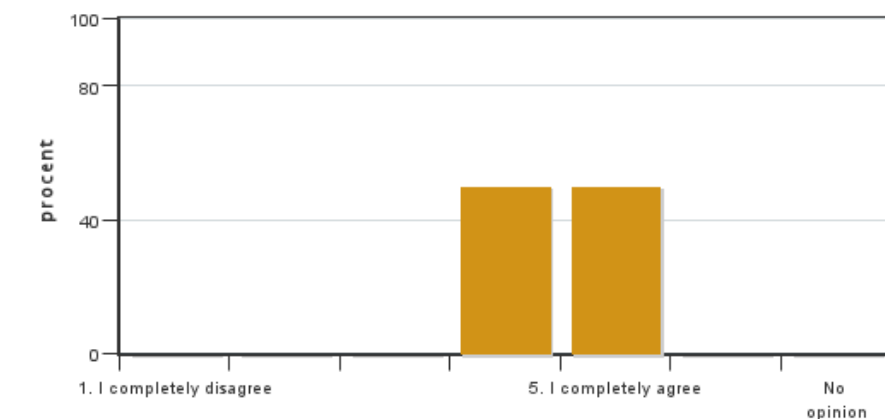
3: 1

4: 5

5: 4

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 10

Medel: 4,5

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

3: 0

4: 5

5: 5

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 10

Medel: 4,9

Median: 5

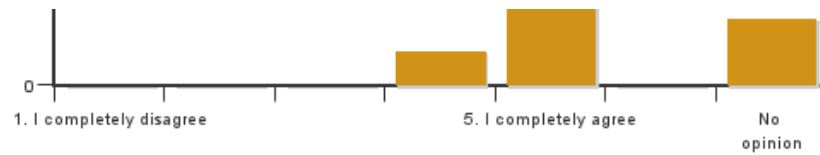
1: 0

2: 0

3: 0

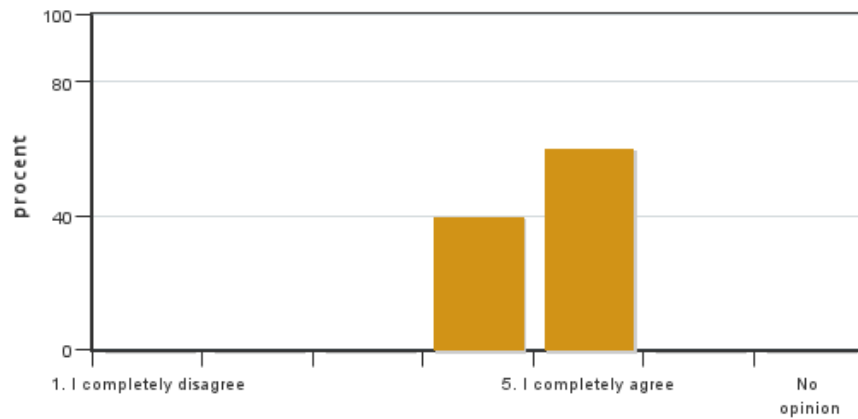
4: 1

5: 7



No opinion: 2

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



Answers: 10

Medel: 4,6

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

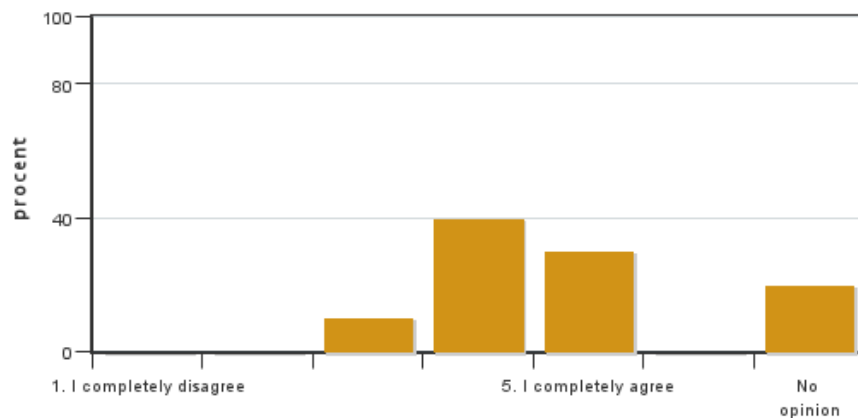
3: 0

4: 4

5: 6

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 10

Medel: 4,3

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

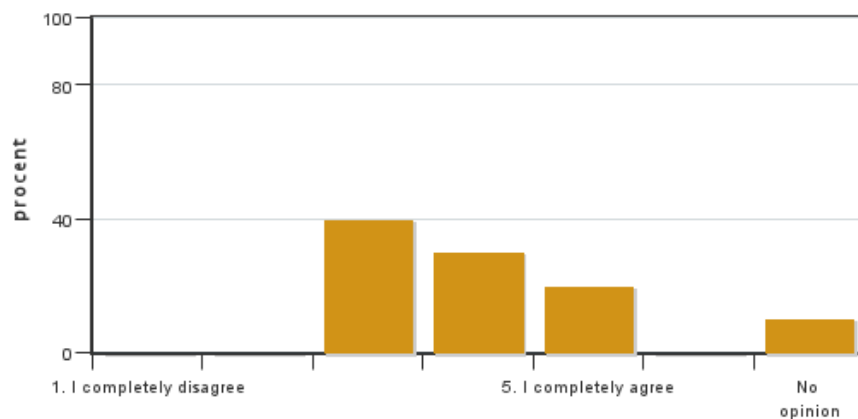
3: 1

4: 4

5: 3

No opinion: 2

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



Answers: 10

Medel: 3,8

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

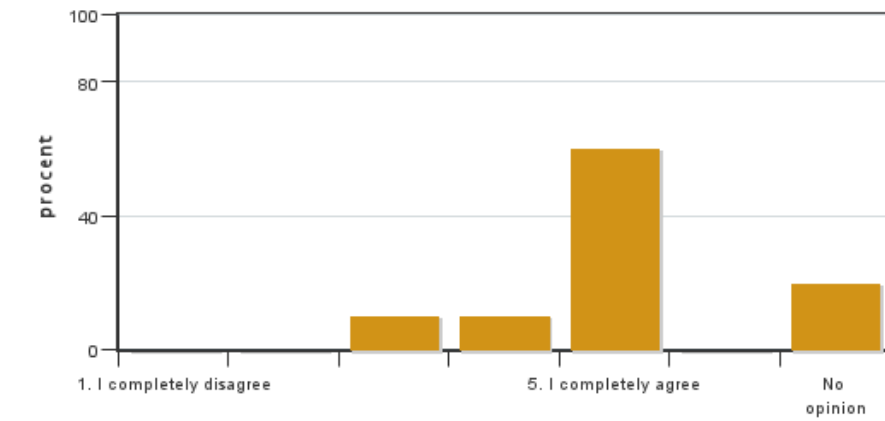
3: 4

4: 3

5: 2

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).**

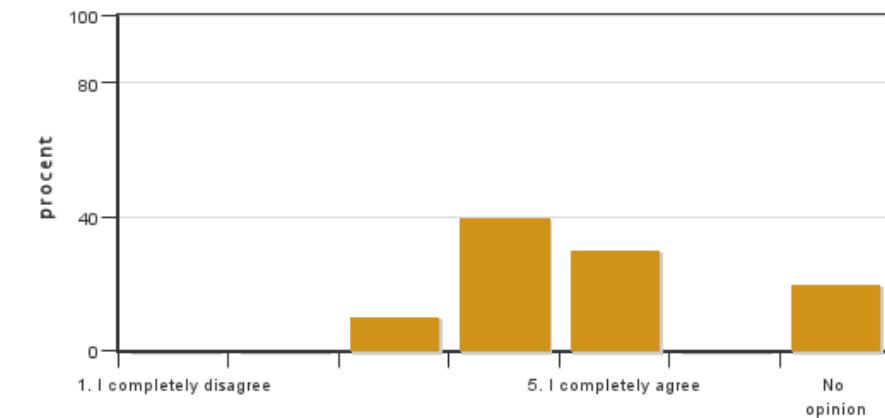


Answers: 10  
Medel: 4,6  
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 2

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

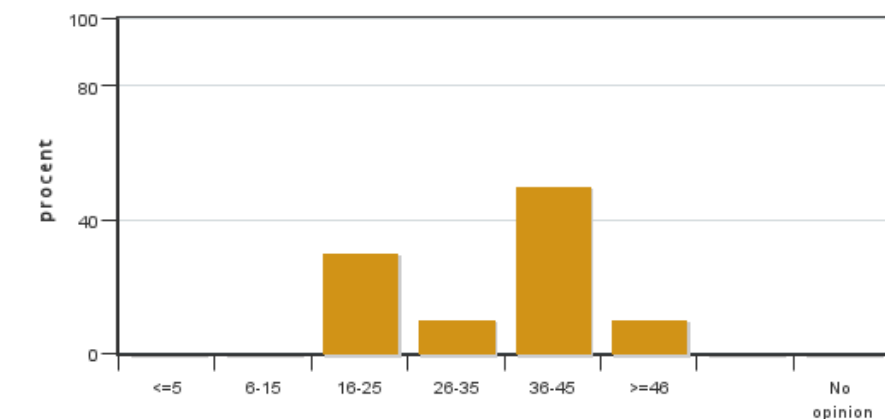


Answers: 10  
Medel: 4,3  
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 2

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

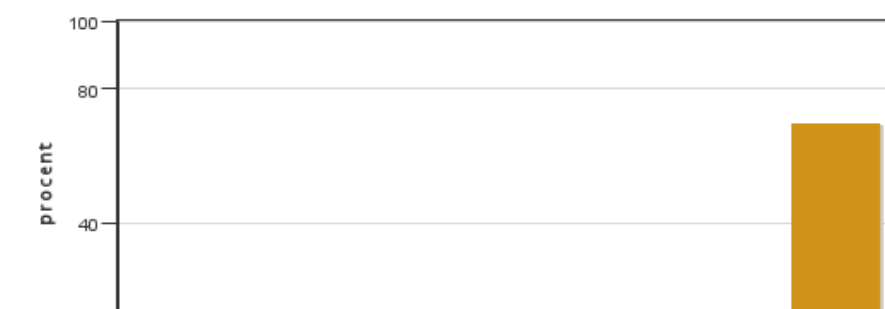


Answers: 10  
Medel: 33,6  
Median: 36-45

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

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 10  
Medel: 4,0  
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 7



**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

Course leader comments to evaluation of BI1322, Soil Biology and Biogeochemical Cycles 2023, spring term.

This year we had 19 students following the course. For the first time in 3 years, the course could be fully run on campus, and distance teaching was kept to the absolute minimum. About half of the students filled in the course evaluation in Evald. The course was well evaluated with an average score of 4.2 out of 5 for 'overall course impression'. Students felt like their prior knowledge was sufficient to benefit from the course (4.6), suggesting that the access criteria too be able to join the course fitted the course content. Most students spent about 40 hours per week working on this course, which agrees with the 100% study speed. However, the students also indicated that sometimes the pace of the course was a bit uneven, starting with a very fast pace in the start of the course and then slowing down later on.

The students also liked the variability in course components supporting different ways of learning. The theoretical build-up of the course was particularly noticed by students, they appreciated that the different course elements (e.g. lectures, labs and project) tackled theoretical knowledge in different ways, but in logical order during the course. The social atmosphere in the course scored very high 4.9/5, probably because we (finally) could be on campus instead of on distance again. The students also indicated that the extensive use of peer review gave them the idea that everyone was working together to improve their learning, which contributed to a good atmosphere. Students had a positive feeling of their performance on the course 4.6 and gave them relevant knowledge and skills for their future career (4.9). The course developed the students' skills in scientific writing particularly (4.7), and oral presentation and critical thinking to a satisfactory extent (4.0 for both). Some students have been critical about the large part of the course that is assigned to group work and thought there was a bit too little individual work. What was somewhat less-well evaluated was whether the course covered sustainability development aspects (3.8/5).

Below we list course aspects that worked particularly well and aspects that will be improved next year. The lists are based on i) the student evaluation in Evald including free text parts, ii) an in-person evaluation session where almost all students participated, and iii) reflections by course leaders.

- Lectures: The course has 20 lectures covering the theoretical content of the course. Most lectures were highly interactive implementing time for discussion and questioning. As in earlier years, the level and quality of the lectures was highly appreciated by the students.
- The exercises were highly appreciated by the students, and these will be kept.
- Project work in groups: Project works were generally highly appreciated, although some students would have appreciated more individual work. Project supervisors (PhD's and postdocs) helped a lot in deepening understanding in selected subjects and to improve writing skills.
- The oral presentations by all project groups worked well to expand the topics covered in the course, and students appreciated this day. Several teachers attended and many good discussions were raised.
- Lab practicals: These were appreciated by the students and complemented theoretical work well. The lab-report format using a template in which the students build up information sequentially from the 3 labs (getting feedback in between), works well now.
- Exam: the exam has a part A and B, for pass and for higher grades, respectively. This setup works well and will be kept next year.

Aspects that will be improved next year:

- We will look carefully on the planning and content of the first 1-2 weeks of the course to allow more time for students to settle into study routines. Many exchange students arrive just the day before course start and there are many practical things to solve during the first week. Maybe some course parts should be started later
- The field trip to Norunda was not as well attended as the previous (corona-free) years. This was mostly because the excursion was not mandatory this year and because the program was a bit too busy in the first two weeks of the course. We will probably move the excursion to later in the course in the coming years. This will probably also give the students a bit more theoretical background during the visit that could improve the experience overall.
- We will develop the journal clubs on human impacts further, discussing environmental, social and financial sustainability (e.g. by actively using sustainable development goals) to improve the sustainability aspect of the course. Perhaps a new teacher with specific expertise on this should be attracted.
- We will urge lecturers during the course to add their course literature in the right place in Canvas to improve accessibility of the course literature.

Thank you for a great course atmosphere to teachers and to students!

## Student representatives comments

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Generally, students had a positive impression of the course and its teaching. Björn Lindahl's lectures in particular proved to be helpful for students with their well-organized and structured PowerPoints and sequential delivery. In general, lectures were given in an order that made sense and aided us in learning, but supplementary literature focused more on biogeochemical cycles than soil biology, while we would have preferred a more even balance between both.

The literature project and laboratory portions provided us with ways to work with classmates with potentially different opinions, which proved to be very helpful for learning. In addition, they helped us with learning practical skills such as academic writing. With that said, the exam was a bit stressful, especially for English language learners, due to the high standards in place for a pass mark and the long written portion.

In future lectures, we would appreciate more of a focus on presenting the topic than purely literature, although it was nice to see the inclusion of studies done in the field.

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