



Global forests and land-use decisions SG0277, 20113.2223

7.5 Hp

Pace of study = 100%

Education cycle = Advanced

Course leader = Purabi Bose

Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2023-01-08 - 2023-01-29

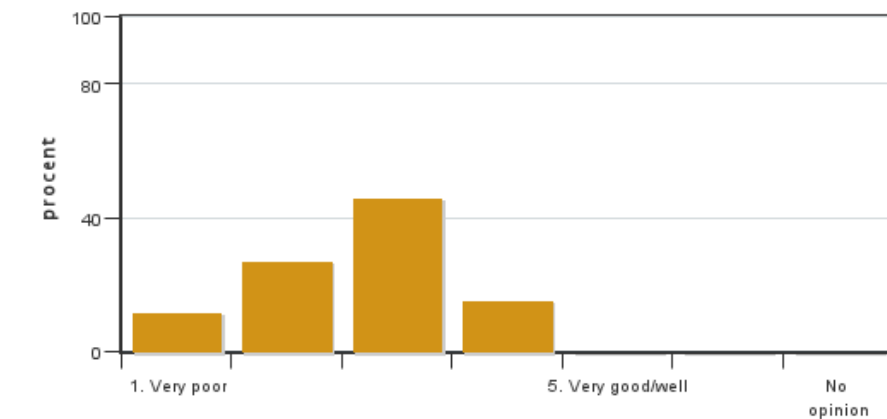
Answers 26

Number of students 26

Answer frequency 100 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:



Answers: 26

Medel: 2,7

Median: 3

1: 3

2: 7

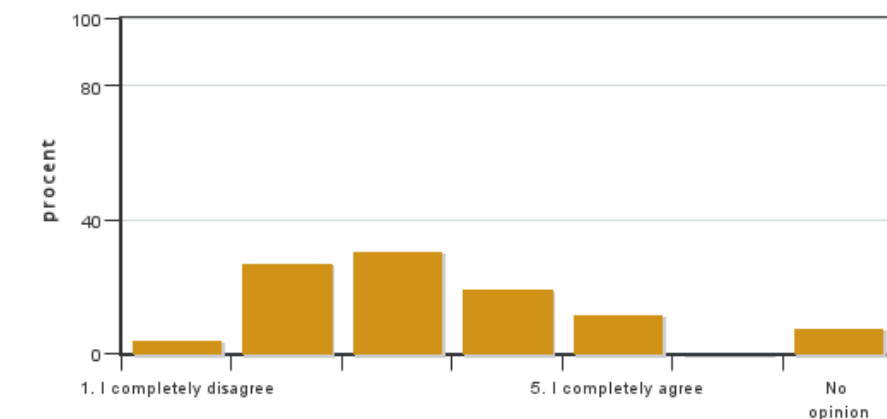
3: 12

4: 4

5: 0

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 26

Medel: 3,1

Median: 3

1: 1

2: 7

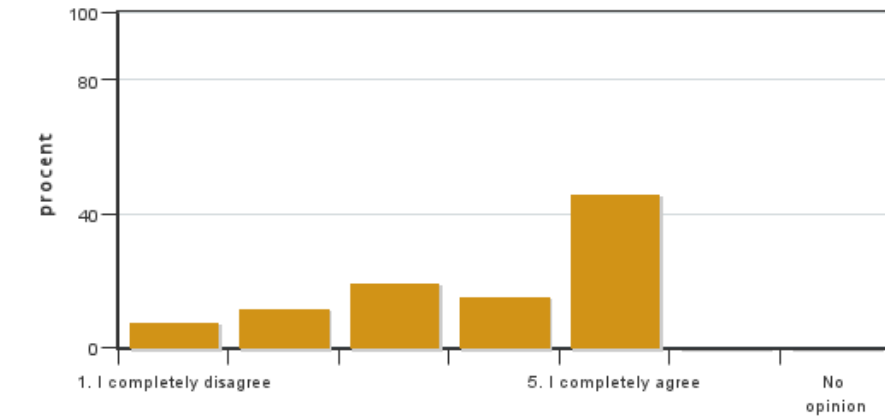
3: 8

4: 5

5: 3

No opinion: 2

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

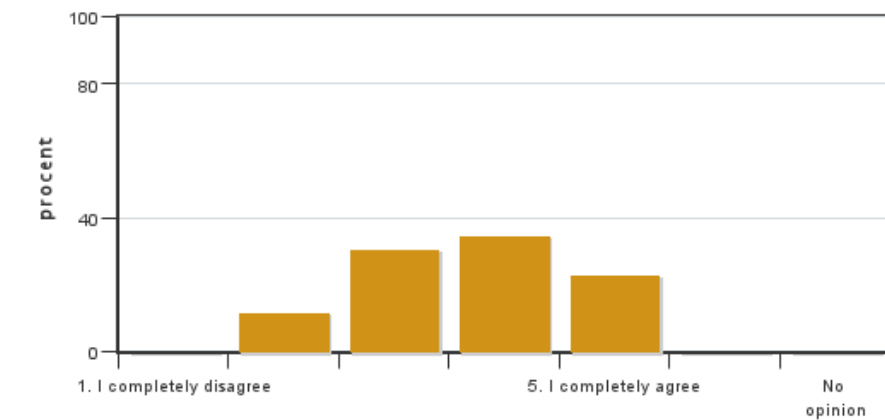


Answers: 26
 Medel: 3,8
 Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.

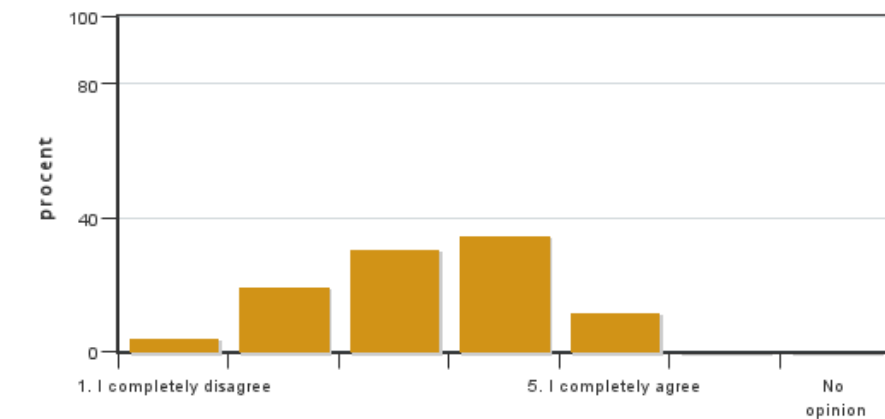


Answers: 26
 Medel: 3,7
 Median: 4

1: 0
 2: 3
 3: 8
 4: 9
 5: 6

No opinion: 0

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

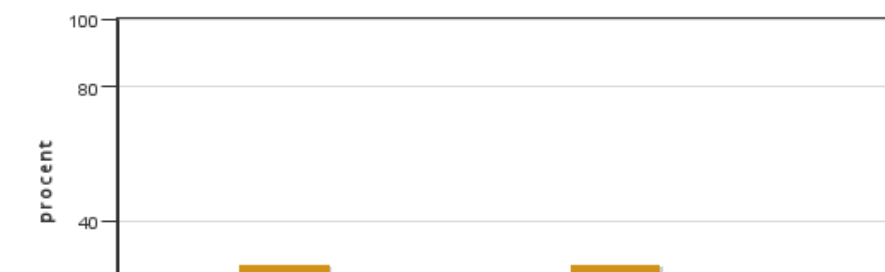


Answers: 26
 Medel: 3,3
 Median: 3

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

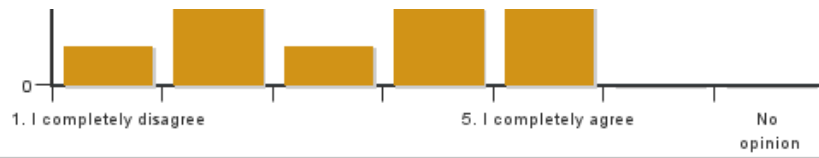
No opinion: 0

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



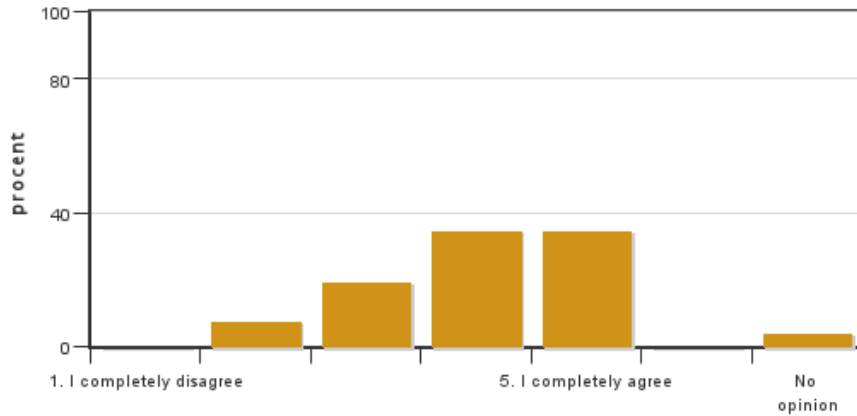
Answers: 26
 Medel: 3,3
 Median: 3

1: 3
 2: 7
 3: 3
 4: 6
 5: 7



No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 26

Medel: 4,0

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 2

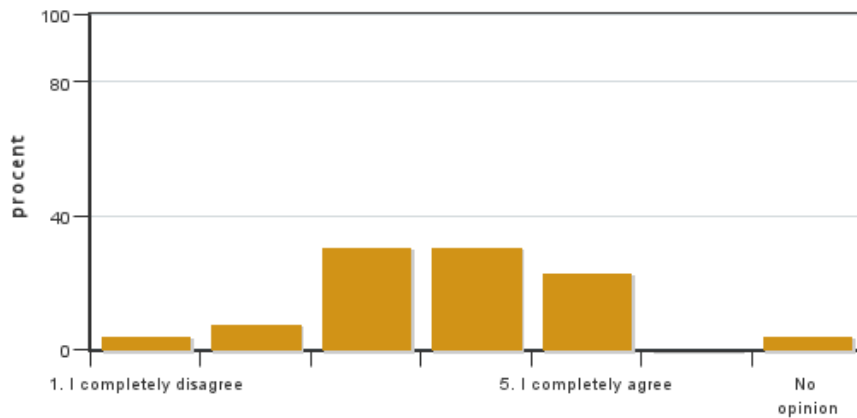
3: 5

4: 9

5: 9

No opinion: 1

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



Answers: 26

Medel: 3,6

Median: 4

1: 1

2: 2

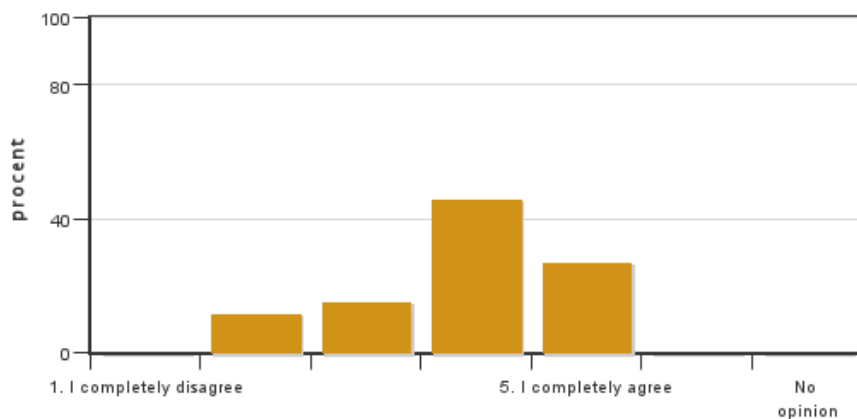
3: 8

4: 8

5: 6

No opinion: 1

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



Answers: 26

Medel: 3,9

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 3

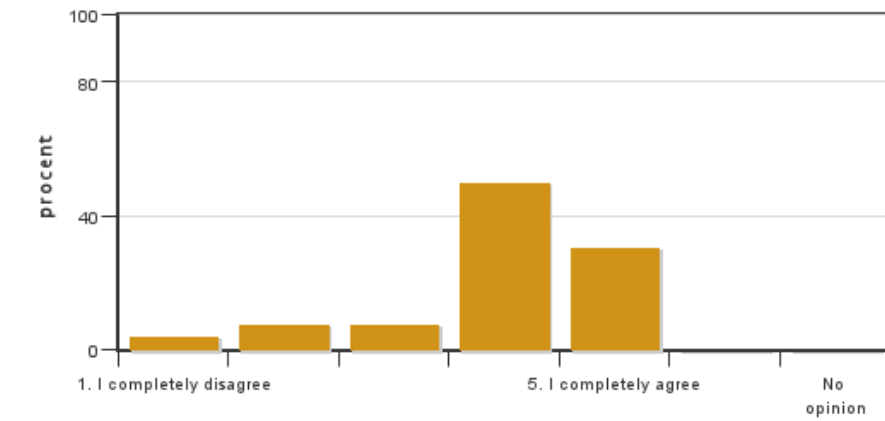
3: 4

4: 12

5: 7

No opinion: 0

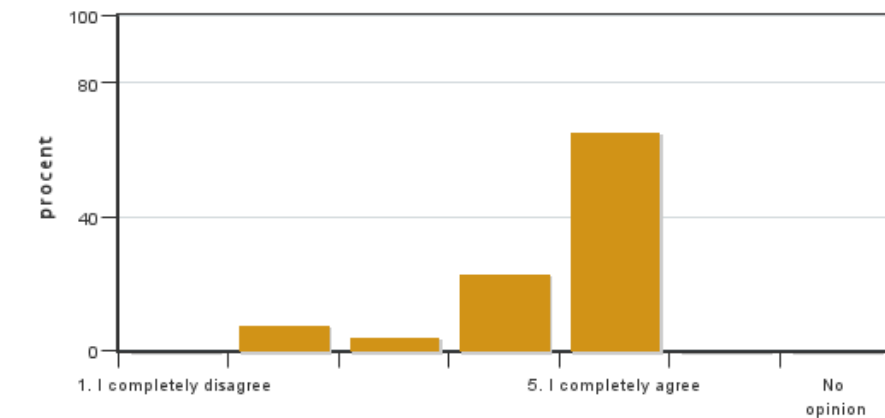
10. I believe the course has included a gender and equality aspect, regarding content as well as teaching practices (e.g. perspective on the subject, reading list, allocation of speaking time and the use of master suppression techniques).



Answers: 26
 Medel: 4,0
 Median: 4

1: 1
 2: 2
 3: 2
 4: 13
 5: 8
 No opinion: 0

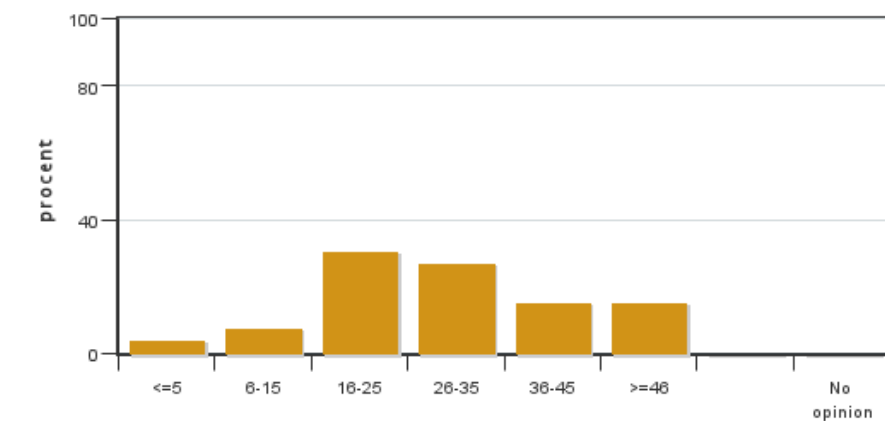
11. The course covered international perspectives.



Answers: 26
 Medel: 4,5
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 2
 3: 1
 4: 6
 5: 17
 No opinion: 0

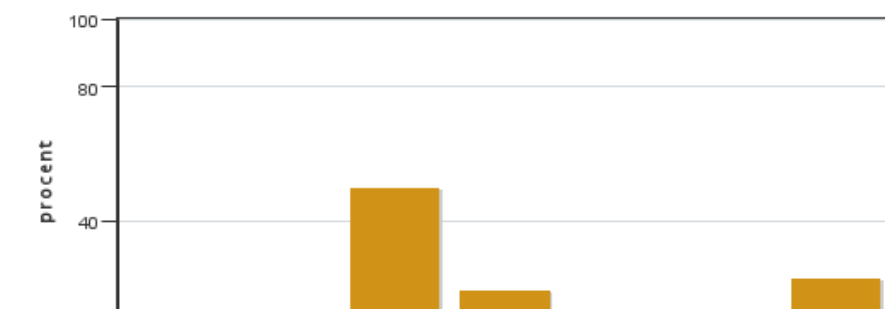
12. On average, I have spent ... hours/week on the course (including timetabled hours).



Answers: 26
 Medel: 28,3
 Median: 26-35

≤5: 1
 6-15: 2
 16-25: 8
 26-35: 7
 36-45: 4
 ≥46: 4
 No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 26
 Medel: 3,2
 Median: 3

1: 0
 2: 2
 3: 13
 4: 5
 5: 0
 No opinion: 6

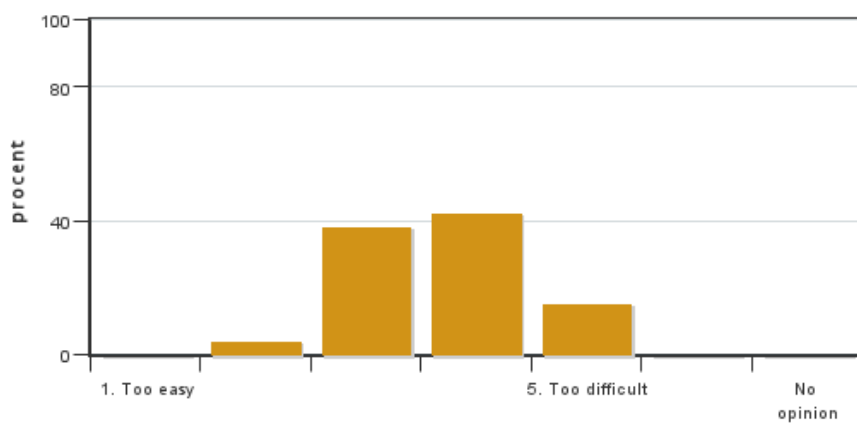


14. If relevant, please share what worked well when participating in teaching on distance

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

Additional own questions

16. How would you rate the lecture series - the invited guest lecturers and the content?

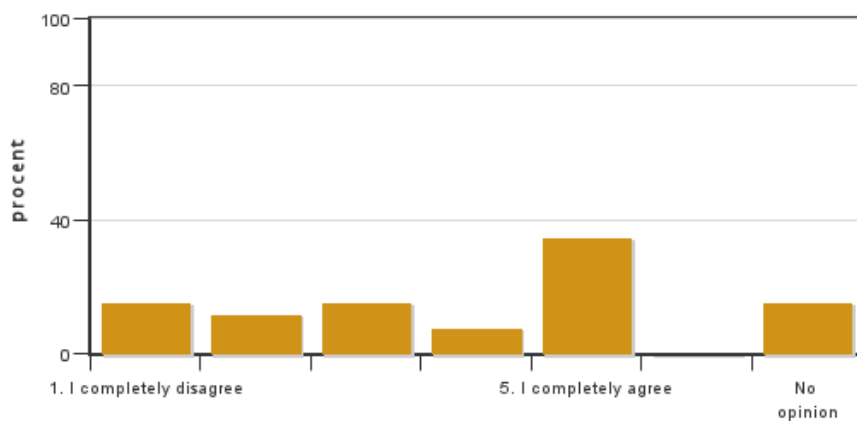


Answers: 26
 Medel: 3,7
 Median: 4

1: 0
 2: 1
 3: 10
 4: 11
 5: 4

No opinion: 0

17. Did you gain additional information that was not planned in the course, for example, career choice related to this course?



Answers: 26
 Medel: 3,4
 Median: 3

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

No opinion: 4

Course leaders comments

Student comments

A new course of 7.5 ECTS in 03 weeks with an introduction to the Global South

The course leader was invited by the Southern Swedish Forest Research Center (SSFRC) department of Forest Faculty to introduce a new course with the objective to introduce how the forest is managed in the Global South. In the natural science EUROFORESTER Masters Programme that purely focuses on European forestry, the purpose of this course was to orient students about forest governance 'outside Europe' using a multi-disciplinary approach.

The SLU, particularly Forest Faculty, has traditionally always had white male or female course leaders, which made this course even more special and an 'unconventional' bold step to bring a colored woman from the global South to lead a course. This could be regarded as a positive step in 'internationalization' at SLU.

DIVERSITY OF STUDENT GROUP

The students nicely represented geographical and gender diversity. The students from tropical countries shared their experiences, which enhanced classroom discussion.

THE BOTTOM-UP PARTICIPATIVE APPROACH OF THE COURSE

The bottom-up participative approach was introduced for teaching with an emphasis on critical thinking. Most students understood the course instruction which was reflected in their high-quality group work presentations using learnings from lectures – both conceptual and communication tools.

Some students found the democratic approach of the course leader unacceptable. Their opposition had a direct impact on other students who wished to actively participate in the course.

As one of the students wrote:

“the course leader is overall a good teacher, although perhaps the way of how she is dealing with certain situations in the classroom could be changed - some “difficult students” shouldn’t be listened to if they are the only ones who make problems as an example.”

Another student wrote:

“I think the course leader tried hard to involve the class but sometimes a more top-down approach is needed to be more clear with decisions.”

COURSE EVALUATION SETUP AND RESPONSE RATE

Overall, 26 of 27 students completed the final evaluation via the online Evald form.

In addition, the course leader had a survey to get feedback from students on whether they were reading the literature. A majority of the students did not read any literature from the reading list provided to them before the course began. About ten students had read one or maybe two papers either from the literature list or the one provided by the guest lecturer(s).

This course had mandatory time for evaluation in the schedule. Many students compared with other course leaders who did not have a mandatory evaluation in the course schedule. This course leader followed what was instructed by the SSFRC Department. Comparing teachers is inevitable if no minimum standards are maintained by the Department, which only confuses the students and backfires for a diligent course leader.

EVALUATION COMPULSORY AND ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS IN LADOK

What stands out is the exceptionally high score for the following questions:

- the examination(s) provided the opportunity to demonstrate learning (4.0 on a 5.0 scale);
- the course was easily accessible (4.0 on a 5.0 scale);
- sustainable development (4.0 on a 5.0 scale), and
- the course covered an international perspective (5 out of 5 scale).

On a 1.0 to 5.0 scale, the overall impression of the course is 3.0. This is not a surprising rating given that it is a new course introduced in the Master's programme that primarily focuses on the European forest, and in an exceptional format of 7.5 ECTS in three weeks of teaching period during the holiday period. In addition, the individual assignment given during Christmas break influenced the way students did their overall rating.

The additional question on LADOK about the Lecture Series received a 4 score on a 5 scale.

LECTURE SERIES AND THE COURSE CONTENT

The course evaluation of the lecture series was appreciated. Some students thought in-person meetings with external guest speakers would work better than online.

One student mentioned:

“the extensive use of charts, posters, films, and videos helped show what I have learned. I would suggest this continues”.

The students were divided about their opinion of the course content. For example, for some the 'communication lecture on films' – was mixed reaction.

One student wrote:

“how to create a film could have been elaborated more than just one lecture”

While another student wrote:

“the course should focus on the course topic, instead of how to use the video”,

Yet another comment mentioned :

“The use of different ways of communication was reached, but could have been broader than just on films”

ENTRY-LEVEL AND MIXED GROUPS OF STUDENTS

This was a mixed group of students with a minimum level of understanding of the course ranging from one end where some students were familiar with concepts like 'equity', and 'tragedy of commons' while another extreme of a continuum were students unfamiliar with these terminologies. Those who knew these concepts expected the course to deliver advanced knowledge of frameworks related to forest and land use decisions.

A few students expressed that the course leader's 'nationality and ethnic background' is a factor in introducing non-Swedish teaching techniques such as (a) critical thinking, and (b) a participatory 'bottom-up' approach. It might be true that no courses within Euroforester Programme use these techniques, which made some students uncomfortable adapting.

CRITICAL INCIDENT

The student's way of underestimating the course leader's knowledge about the rules is a sad incident. A lecture was scheduled on Wednesday due to constraints in the availability of the guest lecturer. This was discussed and agreed upon in class in advance, but later opposed to the extent that the lecture had to be dropped.

In the future, the course leader will follow the rule – if a course is on the schedule that has been mutually agreed upon by all students in the classroom, then it remains in the schedule.

THE ETHNIC IDENTITY & CITIZENSHIP OF THE COURSE LEADER MATTERS!

There were a couple of students who used the course leader's identity to target the course content and for not being authoritative. These students' remarked to the course leader that she was an immigrant, lacked knowledge of Swedish culture, and the reason for giving an assignment during Christmas was she did not celebrate Christmas. This subtle verbal confrontation was surprisingly reflected in the course evaluation's written comment. This is a 'red signal' for the SSFRC department and SLU to take necessary measures in the future.

CHANGES TO CONSIDER FOR THE NEXT YEAR

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs): A 7.5 ECTS should be taught in 6 weeks period. This course has 3 weeks of teaching time due to Christmas and New Year. Clearly, the Professor who formulated the Learning Outcomes was over-ambitious and failed to calculate five ILOs cannot be delivered in three weeks. The course leader suggests that the number of learning outcomes is reduced and edited to adapt to the 3-week time.

Christmas assignment: The course leader was told by a couple of students that 'being an immigrant from India and unaware of Swedish culture' was the reason the assignment was given to them during Christmas. The Euroforester Coordinator should lower the expectation for assignments so students can enjoy their holidays.

Logical planning: The course leader suggests that the European focus should be removed if the course has to be taught in three weeks. It should be Global South focus, which is logical for a three-week course.

Preparation budget: The course leader was not provided with any preparation time budget for this new course.

Racism: During the course, the course leader maintained dignity despite a few 'difficult students' using her identity (ethnicity, religion, nationality) to make comments. One of the students mentioned her nationality in the written format of the course evaluation! The course leader finds this not normal and has declined to teach until the SSFRC department assures in the future to handle difficult student(s) and act against racism in a work environment.

Student representatives comments

GENERAL SUMMARY

ABOUT THE COURSE

The Global Forests and Land-Use Decision was a new course, and it was for the first time delivered from the 2nd of December 2022 to the 13th of January 2023 including two weeks of winter break.

WHAT WORKED WELL

The overall impression of the course is okay as the course covered most part of the learning objectives. The prior knowledge of the students on international forestry helped them to integrate well into the course. The course also provided an opportunity to enjoy the wealth of experiences from internationally recognized and renowned scholars which were inclusive in totality. Many of the students also appreciate the nice 'fikas' (coffee with cake) provided by the course leader during the lectures which helped to get along with the course.

The final assignment on case study preparation was very nice as the diversity of the topics showed how different countries approach their land use and forest management issues, which was adequate and in line with the intended learning outcomes of the course. The use of charts, posters and films helped during the exam as it was used during the presentation of the case study by some students.

The course clearly covered the area of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It touched on agroforestry systems in the global south but a comparison with the global north will be very good. The course literature was quite helpful and the exercises could be further improved to match with some lectures.

In many ways, the students were of the opinion that the course was inclusive and differences in opinion were respected. The course incorporated gender and equality aspects as related to the field of forestry. The inclusive nature and the freedom to ask questions worked well and the opportunity to gain knowledge from people who are far away from normal classes. Many think being in the classroom in real and joining online lectures was good because it generated interest and kept concentration which might be lost if the course was taken online at home.

The course leader provided an extra lecture on career guidance and links that reiterates the prospects of being a student of this course, Global Forest and Land-use Decisions, and highlighted options for the future career.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED

Here are some of the few things that the course could further be improved:

From the student's perspective covering this course content, as a 7,5 ECTS in three weeks was challenging. The number of guest speakers should be reduced so the course leader can teach compulsory topics related to forestry and land use decisions. The invited speakers should ensure their lectures covers forest and land-use problems, the strategic decision part of the course and how decisions are made using the lens of global context. The guest speakers must also have a clear grasp of the English language for easy communication and proper understanding. Guest lecturers should check and improve their online sound quality by ensuring they have a high-speed internet connection and testing the audiovisual equipment before a presentation. For the resource person, having a recorded lecture may prove useful if internet connectivity is a challenge. The online lectures and in-person students – a hybrid format - were not ideal. Therefore, the suggestion is either to invite guest lecturers to attend in person or make it an online course for the student to join from anywhere. The university rule book should be strictly followed when making a schedule for the course in the context of organizing a lecture on 'free' Wednesday afternoon, to avoid any confusion.

One of the Intended Learning Outcomes clearly states that the course would be about the Global South with some focus on Europe. Some views were that this learning outcome should be broadened to the global context, and not limited to the Global South. The financial aspect of SDGs was not part of the intended learning outcomes, but the economic aspect of sustainable development could be incorporated into the course.

Evaluating students or group work should be done anonymously or utilizing the canvass to communicate to the individual students and not in groups or in class as many believed it's very unlike the Swedish culture. The Canvass page should be well-designed to have a folder for each subject matter. The teacher should take firm decisions on important issues rather than be democratic in matters important for the learning outcome of the course. The majority aired their view that suggestions or opinions should be treated anonymously rather than calling out names in the open.

Most students expressed that they spent more time on the course. Also, the hours spent on the last assignment to write the case study were seen to be too high. Hence, the final individual assignment was suggested to be given out earlier before the Christmas holidays in the course to give enough time for the preparation.

The final individual presentation for the case study should be fine-tuned such that all students do not have to sit the whole day listening to every student's presentation. It is recommended that students present in small batches only.

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