



National and International Forest Policy SG0234, 30182.2324

15 Hp

Pace of study = 100%

Education cycle = Advanced

Course leader = Vilis Brukas

Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2024-03-12 - 2024-03-21

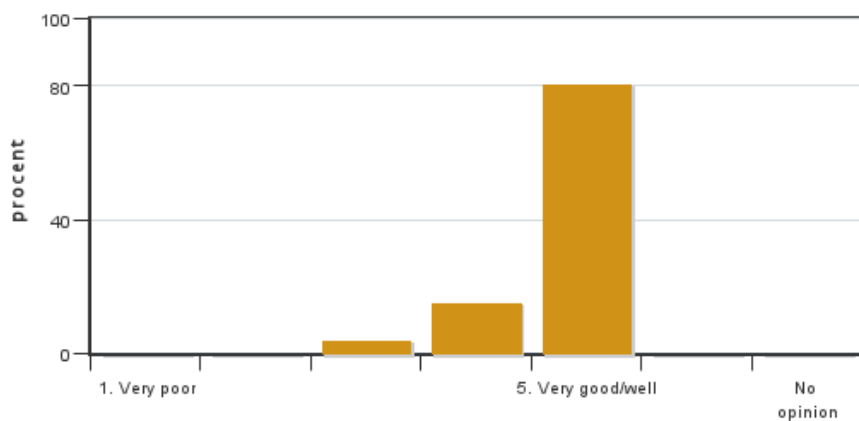
Answers 26

Number of students 27

Answer frequency 96 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:



Answers: 26

Medel: 4,8

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

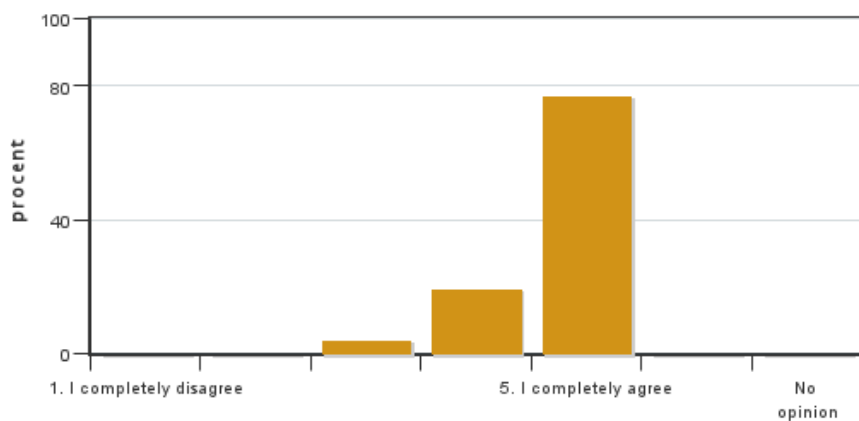
3: 1

4: 4

5: 21

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 26

Medel: 4,7

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

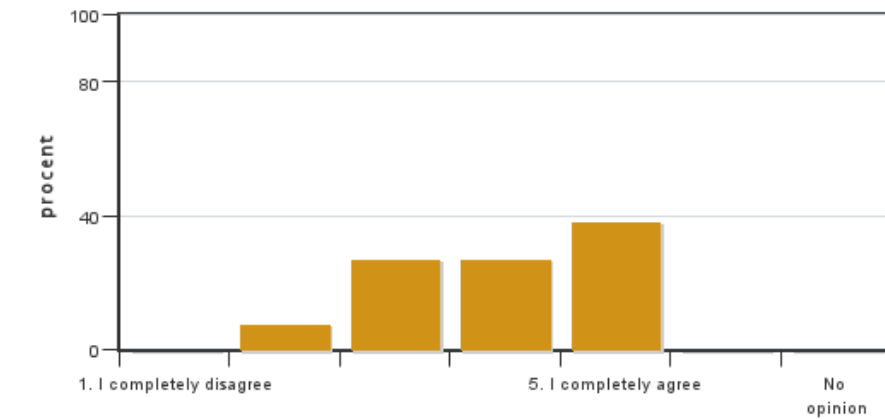
3: 1

4: 5

5: 20

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 26

Medel: 4,0

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 2

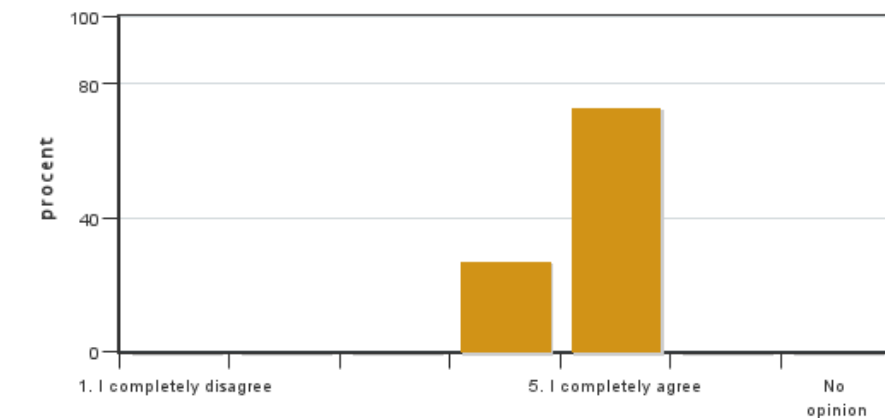
3: 7

4: 7

5: 10

No opinion: 0

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.



Answers: 26

Medel: 4,7

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

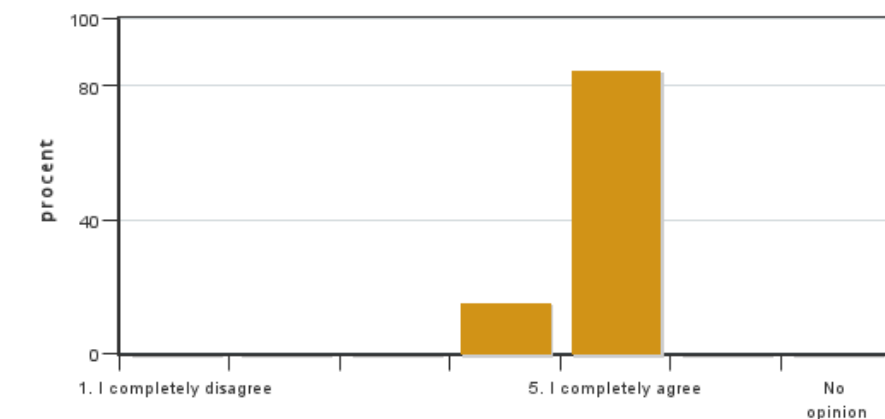
3: 0

4: 7

5: 19

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 26

Medel: 4,8

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

3: 0

4: 4

5: 22

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 26

Medel: 4,6

Median: 5

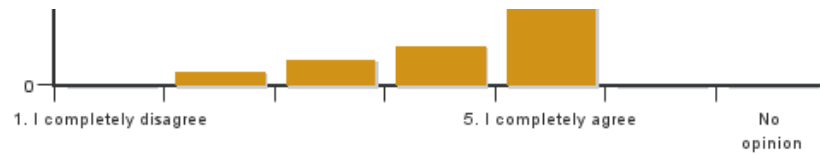
1: 0

2: 1

3: 2

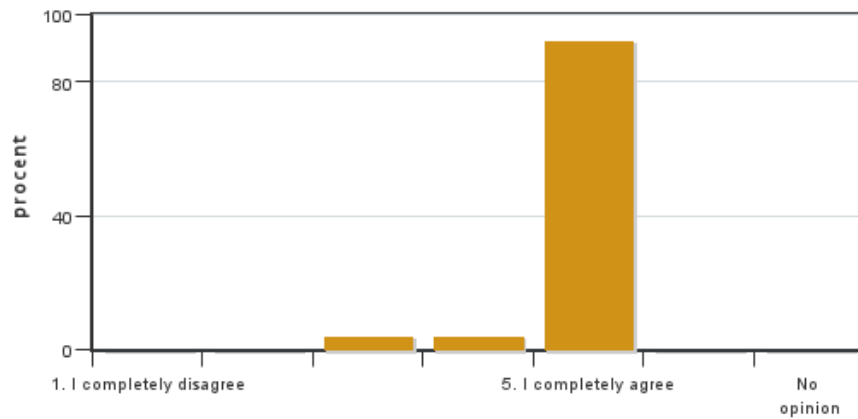
4: 3

5: 20



No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 26

Medel: 4,9

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

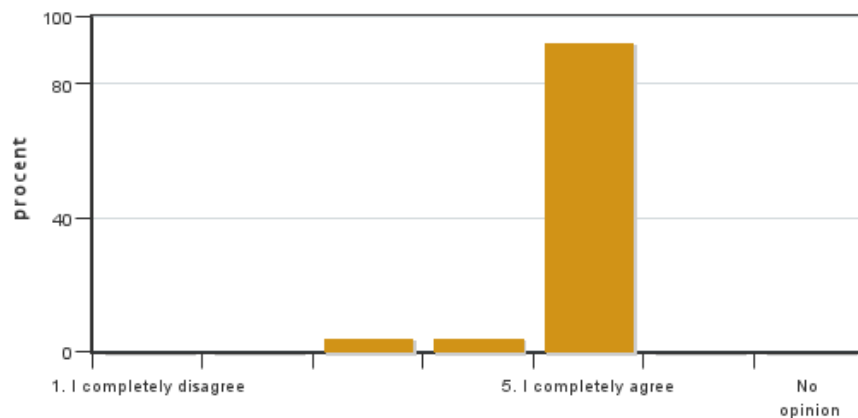
3: 1

4: 1

5: 24

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 26

Medel: 4,9

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

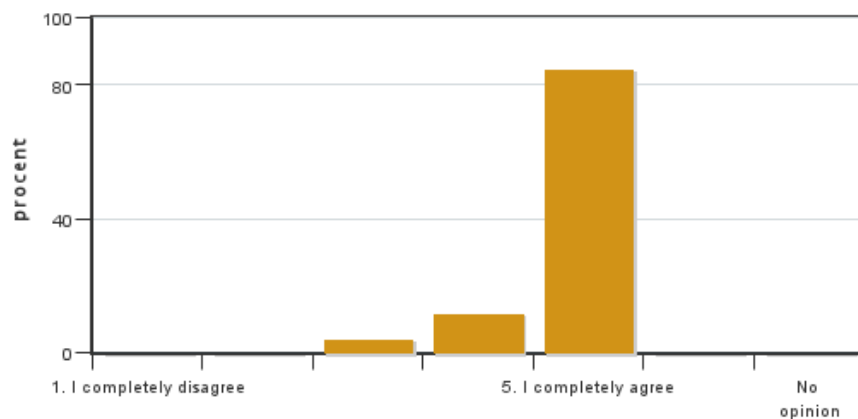
3: 1

4: 1

5: 24

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 26

Medel: 4,8

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

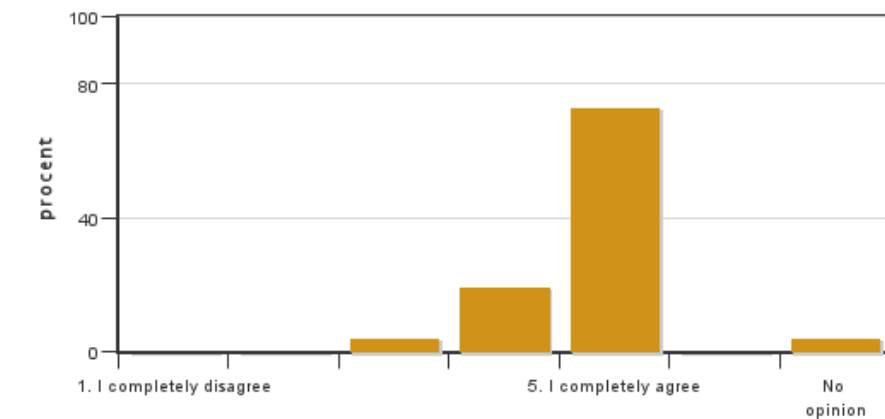
3: 1

4: 3

5: 22

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).

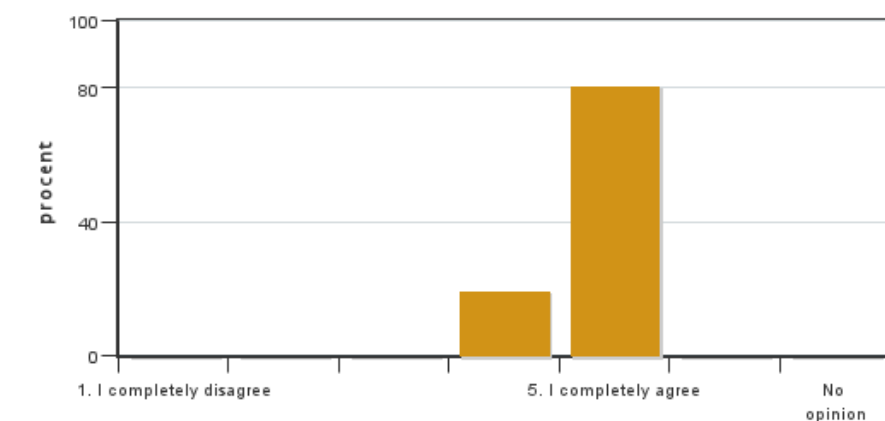


Answers: 26
Medel: 4,7
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 1
4: 5
5: 19

No opinion: 1

11. The course covered international perspectives.

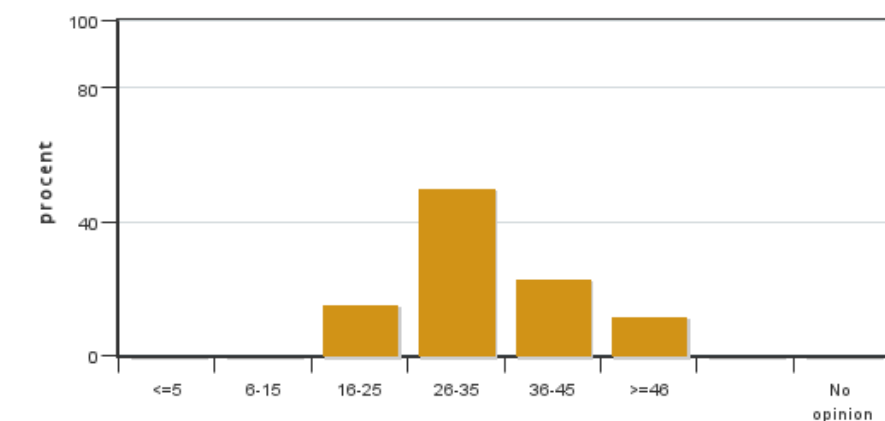


Answers: 26
Medel: 4,8
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 0
4: 5
5: 21

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 26
Medel: 32,6
Median: 26-35

≤5: 0
6-15: 0
16-25: 4
26-35: 13
36-45: 6
≥46: 3

No opinion: 0

Course leaders comments

Student group

As always, our international class consisted from many nationalities. 27 students represented the following countries:

Sweden 5: (4 jägmästare students from Umeå and 1 skogsmästare from Skinnskatteberg)

Other countries 22: Belgium 1, Canada-Quebec 2, India 1, Latvia 6, Nigeria 1, Poland 4, Portugal 1, Romania 2, Rwanda 1, Switzerland 1, Vietnam 2.

Evaluation set up and response rate

The evaluation questions were answered by 26 out of 27 students, thus the response rate is 96%. We also had a concluding oral discussion on Zoom that took about 1.5 hour.

Compulsory questions on SLUNIK

On 1 to 5 scale, the average overall impression is 4.8, indicating high satisfaction with the course. Students gave high scores practically for all general aspects in the SLU standard evaluation form, the scores ranging between 4.0 (for prior knowledge) to 4.9 (for physical learning environment and for examination).

Students on average put 33 hours for course work per week with a few outliers. The averages for years 2018-2023 were 46, 36, 33, 35, 36 and 39 hours per week. In the oral discussion of the course evaluation, many students pointed out high course intensity, especially on the first week of the course. However, students appreciated the intensity, highlighting that this was conducive to learning the subject.

Additional remarks

Since 2021, I chose to online evaluate course modules by weeks and not by separate pedagogic approaches. All course weeks scored high (4.3 being the lowest score per week), led by the participatory role play week and the study trip to Baltic countries, both earning 4.8. The week on international forest policy got relatively lower score (4.3), students being somewhat overwhelmed by large amount of information in this module of large thematic scope. But still it was higher than during previous years, likely due to more active student participation in discussions. Concerning the pedagogic approaches, probably the most satisfying outcome concerns the reflective journals. During several earlier course rounds the student group used to be very divided, some strongly liking and some strongly disliking this specific approach that demands a lot of writing. Last year most students were very positive about the journal, acknowledging its push for creativity, deeper learning and structuring of knowledge. The oral discussion disclosed the same opinions this year. The reasons for such positive attitudinal change are difficult to pinpoint it is probably a combination of preferences of "opinion leaders" in the student group and the great work by "journal leaders", Derek Garfield and Anna Karlsson. Also, a bit surprisingly, most people found that course literature was adequate (in previous years it was sometimes complained about high amount of demanding readings).

One point of concern is that one of course students with strong environmental profile felt that her questions were not welcomed and she was even ridiculed, especially by some speakers during the study trip in Latvia. This is in contrast with majority of students who found that the study trip in Latvia was conducted very professionally and engaging strong speakers. While this can be due to particular case of students composition and factions of certain interests, the matter needs explicit consideration for the coming years.

Student representatives comments

General Commentary on Compulsory Questions

The course evaluation was answered by 96% of the group, which is quite a large portion. Many of the students wrote additional comments and provided varied perspectives and insights, similar to what occurred during the in-class discussions. The general response to the course was overwhelmingly positive, with students praising various course components, examinations, and provided international perspectives, which were ranked very highly. However, the lowest score was received for the question regarding whether prior knowledge about the course was sufficient for the respondent to benefit from it. Many pointed out that they lacked a lot of information beforehand but could compensate for it with, for example, the course literature. This issue can also be tied to the comments made in class, particularly regarding how people from outside of Europe or the Baltics specifically were at a disadvantage, especially when writing the essay about Forest Certification in the Baltic region.

Positive Remarks

The overwhelming majority of comments about the course were positive. Students described the course as eye-opening, highly involving, and an amazing opportunity for self-development. The dynamic structure, including modules with different lecturers and diverse perspectives, was highly praised. Two aspects of the course stood out among others: the roleplay, which allowed students to put into practice their newly gained knowledge about participatory processes, and the study trip to Latvia and Lithuania, where students were able to apply their knowledge and exercise critical thinking skills while exploring the characteristics of the two countries. Surprisingly, at the end of the course, the majority of students were very pleased with the applied methods of evaluation and the necessary workload, especially appreciating the reflective journals as an opportunity to form their own opinions and think critically about the course material. Another thought-provoking exercise where students got to practice their writing skills was the essays and their grading, which turned out to be a positive experience for many. Finally, the

engagement, enthusiasm, and willingness to help from the course leader, Villis, greatly contributed to the participants' satisfaction with the course, with some eventually admitting with surprise that it was fun.

Negative Comments

The biggest criticisms of the course concerned the lack of some perspectives during lectures and the study trip. Students found the course lacking speakers from ENGOs and the often-antagonized "green" side of policymaking. During the study trip, it was highlighted that some participants did not feel safe to ask certain questions to people we met with because they mostly represented the perspective of forest industries and expressed negative opinions on movements prioritizing nature conservation and biodiversity-oriented management. Even though the excursion itself was a highly rated course component for everyone, many were dissatisfied with scheduling issues, the group often being late and finishing later. During the second week of the study trip, the absence of the course leader Villis Brukas impacted the experience, his knowledge and insight was greatly missed. During the lectures students also noticed the lack of representation for the global south, as it was often mentioned but lacked direct perspective from there. Surprisingly, many felt the German perspective was lacking as well, as the speakers from there did not discuss their own country's policies. During the week when forest owners were discussed, some felt the representation from the owners was lacking, as they were not very traditional and their livelihoods were not strictly forest-dependent, they also operated on a quite small-scale. Some organizational issues were brought up, such as not enough information about the money we had to prepare for the study trip, which caused trouble for some participants. Another practical issue was the lack of electrical outlets in the classroom. The most difficult part of the course mentioned was the workload, with many pointing out that it was positive and necessary for the full experience we received.

Improvement Suggestions

The evaluation from the students also contained some suggestions for improvements. An important one was the suggestion to write the exam on computers, with special anti-cheating software, as with the exam being this long, many found it physically challenging and an issue that we couldn't go back and improve what was written before. The experience of writing an essay might have been more positive if we were given more time for the first try, especially challenging for people with no forestry background and those from outside of Europe, as they had to conduct a lot of extra research. During the roleplay, some felt that the roles should have been administered differently, randomized, or by some other method than the in-class list, and there was also dissatisfaction with how the moderators operated. Some would prefer that during the study trip, the rooms were assigned beforehand, as it was chaotic during the arrival at the hotels.