Prospects and challenges for sustainable food systems LV0103, 10289.2425

15 Hp
Pace of study = 100%
Education cycle = Advanced
Course leader = Johan Karlsson, Pernilla Tidåker

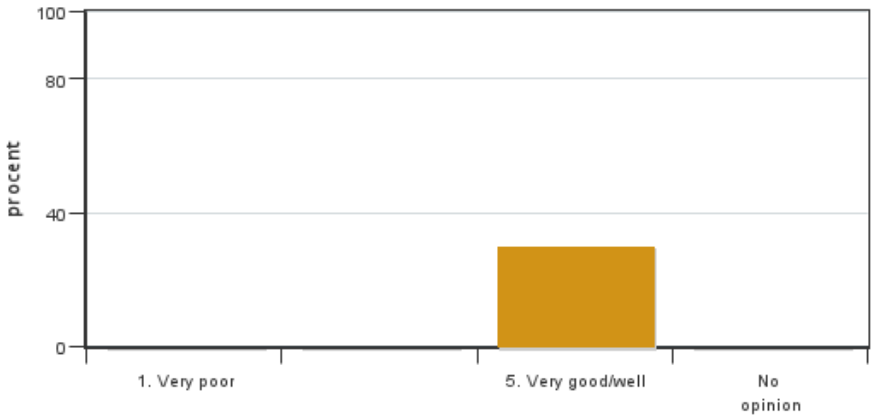
Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2024-10-24 - 2024-11-14

Answers	33
Number of students	35
Answer frequency	94 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:

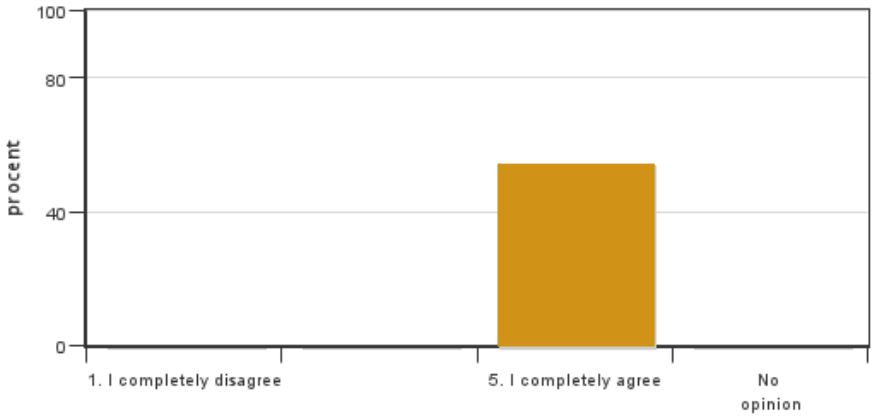


Answers: 33
Medel: 4,1
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 0
3: 8
4: 15
5: 10

No opinion: 0

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

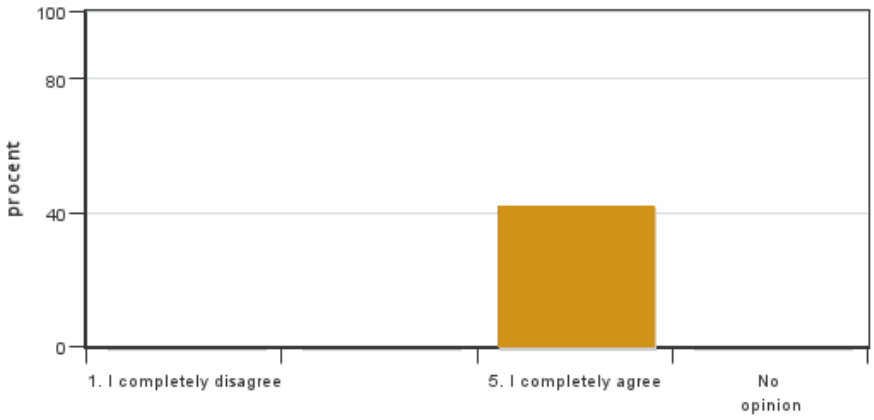


Answers: 33
Medel: 4,5
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 3
4: 12
5: 18

No opinion: 0

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

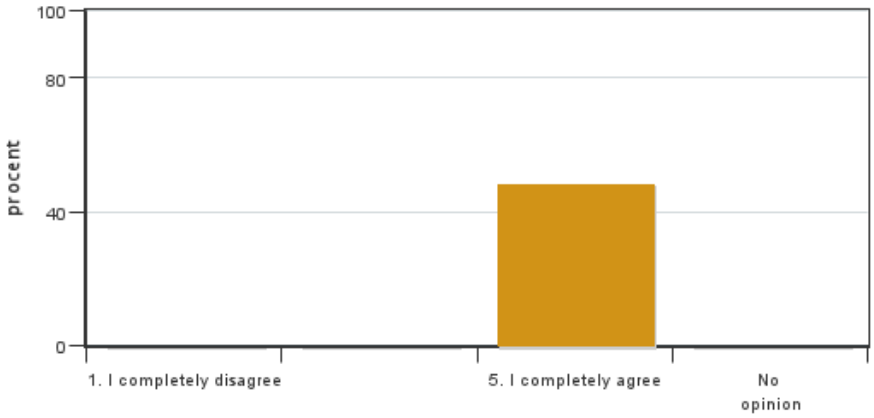


Answers: 33
Medel: 3,8
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 5
3: 10
4: 4
5: 14

No opinion: 0

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.

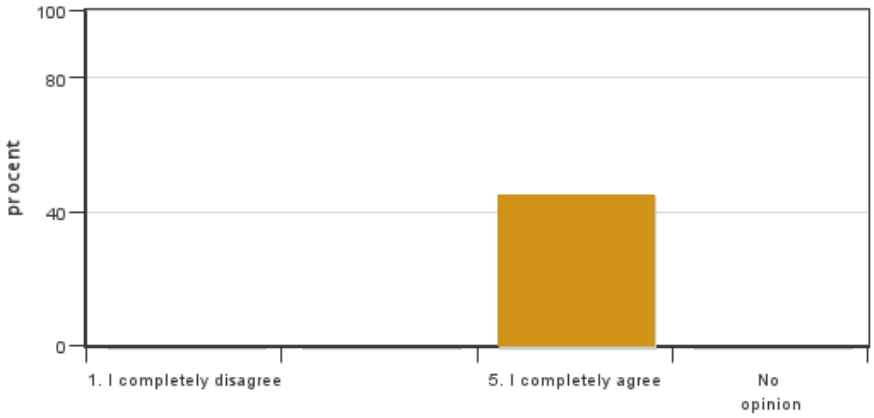


Answers: 33
Medel: 4,2
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 1
3: 7
4: 9
5: 16

No opinion: 0

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

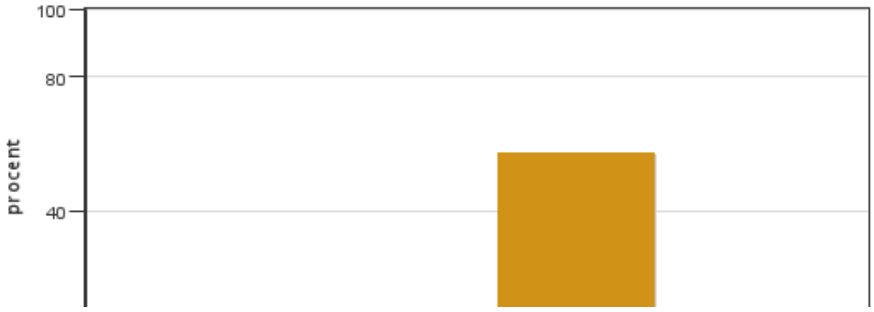


Answers: 33
Medel: 4,3
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 0
3: 6
4: 12
5: 15

No opinion: 0

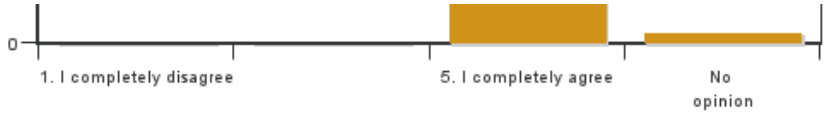
6. The social learning environment has been inclusive, respecting differences of opinion.



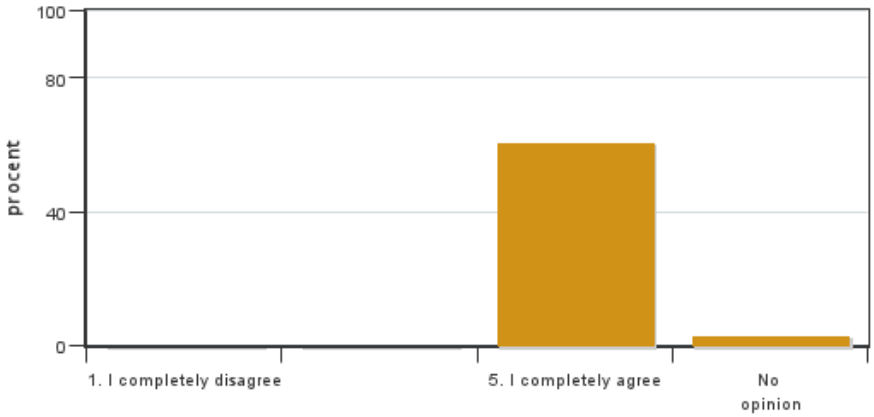
Answers: 33
Medel: 4,5
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 1
3: 2
4: 10
5: 19

No opinion: 1



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

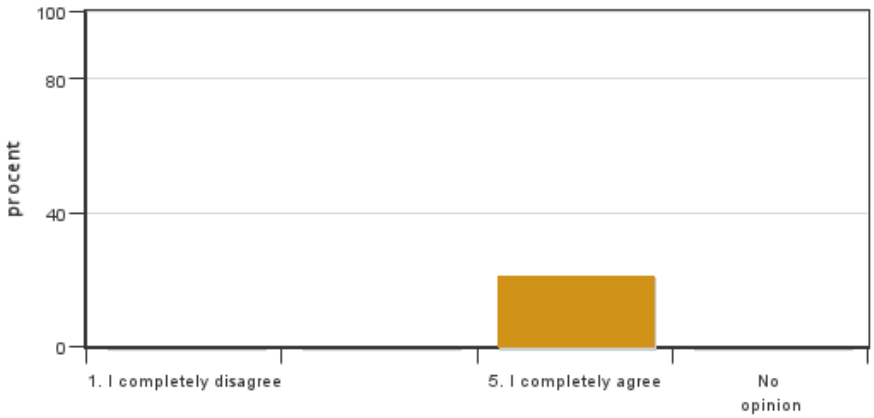


Answers: 33
Medel: 4,5
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 3
4: 9
5: 20

No opinion: 1

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

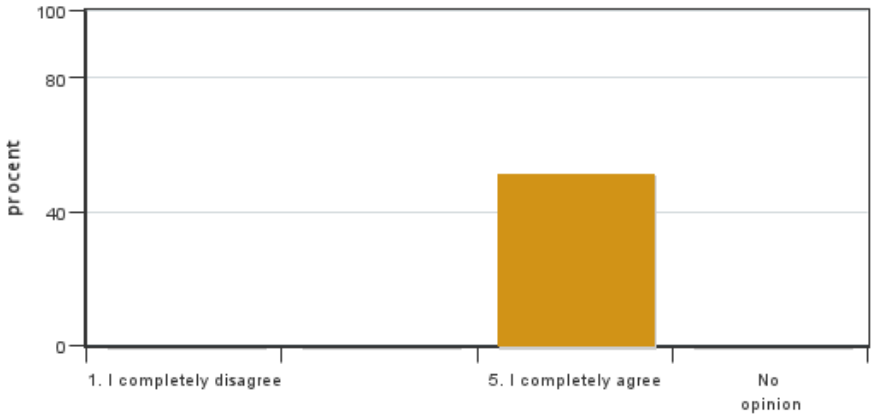


Answers: 33
Medel: 3,7
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 3
3: 11
4: 12
5: 7

No opinion: 0

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

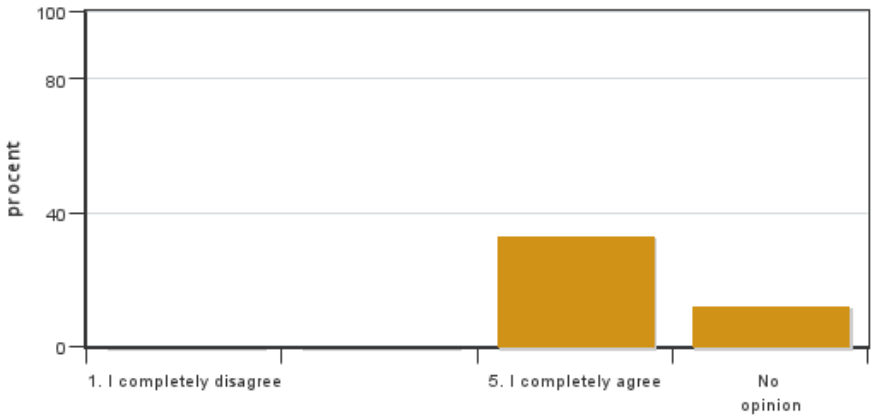


Answers: 33
Medel: 4,2
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 1
3: 7
4: 8
5: 17

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).

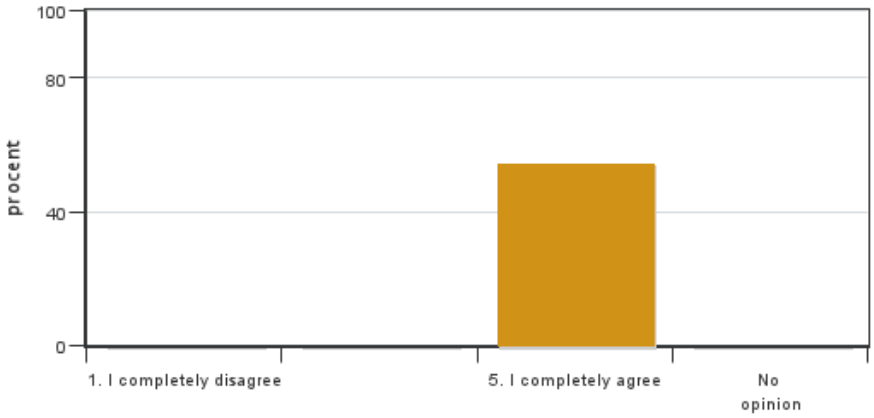


Answers: 33
Medel: 4,1
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 1
3: 6
4: 11
5: 11

No opinion: 4

11. The course covered international perspectives.

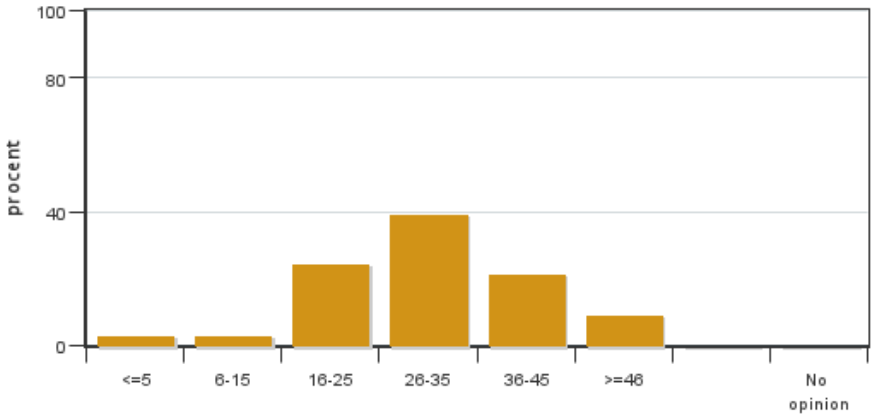


Answers: 33
Medel: 4,4
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 1
3: 4
4: 10
5: 18

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 33
Medel: 29,7
Median: 26-35

≤5: 1
6-15: 1
16-25: 8
26-35: 13
36-45: 7
≥46: 3

No opinion: 0

Course leaders comments

Overall, the course with the varied themes and tasks was appreciated by many students although several found the course stressful. For details regarding the students' comments on the different themes and activities, the description by the student representative provide a very good overview. Based on this overview as well as the scoring and comments provided in the course evaluation, the course leaders have planned to make some adjustments for next year.

1. Several students rasised that the group works were too demanding with too many presentations, and more detailed discussions were asked for. Based on this, the course team is planning to replace at least one group presentation (e.g. task 2) with a seminar focusing more on discussions on key sustainability aspects.

2. The LCA exercise was considered by some students as challenging. The course team will make an overview of the instructions and reduce the number of tasks and questions to be answered. Reducing the complexity of the task

will hopefully give more time for individual reflections.

3. We will go through the content of each of the lectures and make sure that they are not too broad and that overlaps are avoided.

Pernilla Tidåker, course leader and examiner

Student representatives comments

Overall

The response rate for this year's course was very high, with 94% and an overall average rating score of 4.1, which is slightly lower than in the past year (4.4). Students liked the variety of topics and the mix of teaching styles, such as lectures, seminars, and field trips. They appreciated being able to choose topics they were most interested in, which made the learning experience more personal. Overall, the course is expressed to be a great start when wanting to learn more about sustainable food systems. More precisely, the course lectures are perceived to contribute to learning about sustainable food systems (more so than the literature, which was perceived as too much or duplicated with lectures). The course was perceived to create a welcoming and inclusive environment, which provided many opportunities to discuss and express thoughts. Moreover, the organisation and communication through one platform via Canvas were appreciated.

Highlights

The mix of practical activities, like field trips and interactive seminars, stood out as a highlight. It was mentioned that the field visit on sanitation solutions was particularly great and gave valuable real-world innovation insights. The global perspectives offered in the course were also appreciated, with a suggestion to include more non-Western examples. The teaching team received positive feedback for being enthusiastic, approachable, and supportive, which made the learning environment enjoyable and engaging.

Areas for Improvement

Group work was seen as valuable but sometimes too demanding, leaving less time for individual reflection, discussions and studies. A slight score decrease in the sufficiency of prior knowledge for this course from 4.3 to 3.8 can be observed compared to the previous year. Students noted here the lack of natural science and differing sustainability topics in previous studies. The additional questions regarding the specific assignments received scores ranging from 3.6 to 4.3, with the LCA exercises reaching the lowest score and the food production chain and another field trip the highest. Some perceived the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) exercises as challenging and raised concerns about the level of guidance provided. Some students noted that the assignment was too complex for the allocated time, making it harder to engage with the task and fully meet expectations.

Suggestions from Students

Students mentioned that the workload could benefit from a better balance, with group projects taking up too much time before exams. Regarding grading, some students felt that the high weight of the exams in the overall grade reduced their motivation to invest effort in other assignments. It was expressed that the effort required for these assignments did not align with their relatively low contribution to the final grade, leading to a perceived imbalance in how coursework was evaluated compared to the exams. Additionally, some lectures were described as too broad and could benefit from more detail. Group work also had unequal participation and distribution issues, and students suggested adding individual grading to make it fairer. Some students would have liked more detailed discussions about key sustainability issues, like trade-offs, and clearer guidance for assignments, such as the LCA task. Earlier deadlines and clearer instructions were also recommended to make the course easier to manage.

Livia Kastner / Course representative