Research methods for business studies
FÖ0446, 30228.2526

7.5 Hp
Pace of study = 50%
Education cycle = Advanced
Course leader = Richard Ferguson

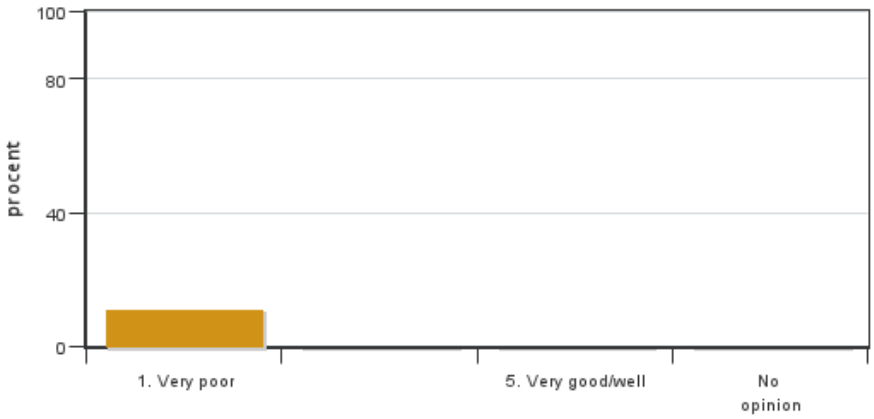
Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2026-03-16 - 2026-04-06

Answers	18
Number of students	34
Answer frequency	52 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:

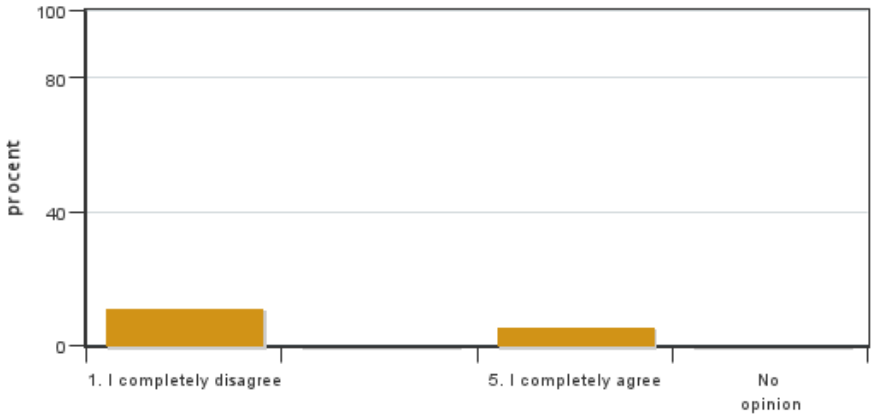


Answers: 18
Medel: 2,5
Median: 2

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

No opinion: 0

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

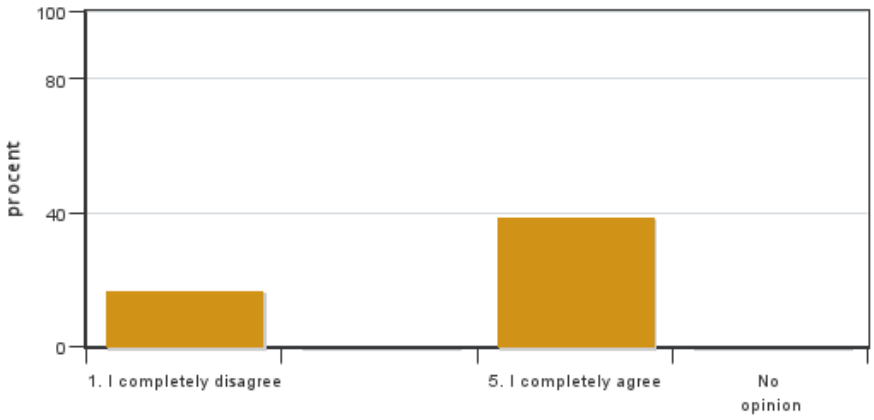


Answers: 18
Medel: 2,9
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 0

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

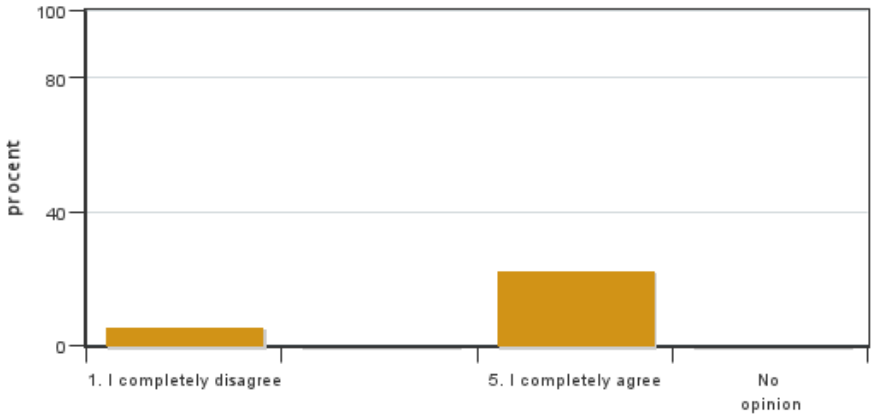


Answers: 18
Medel: 3,5
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.

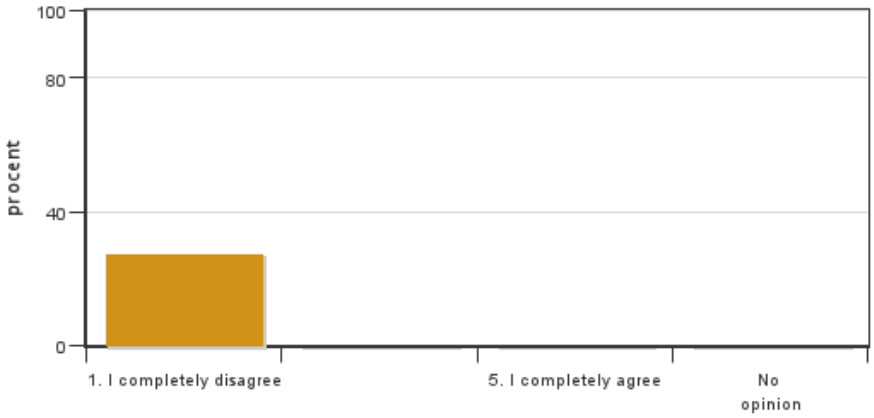


Answers: 18
Medel: 3,3
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 0

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

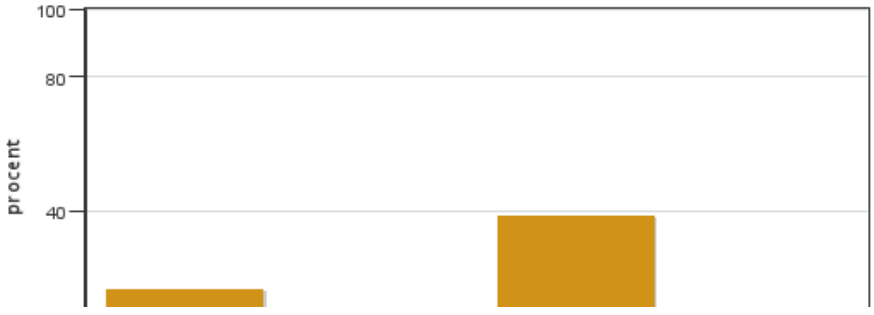


Answers: 18
Medel: 2,3
Median: 2

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

No opinion: 0

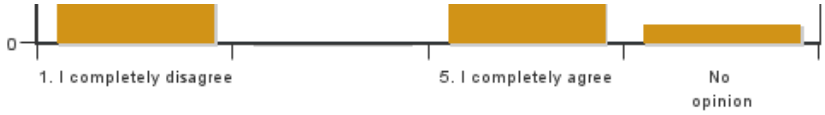
6. The social learning environment has been inclusive, respecting differences of opinion.



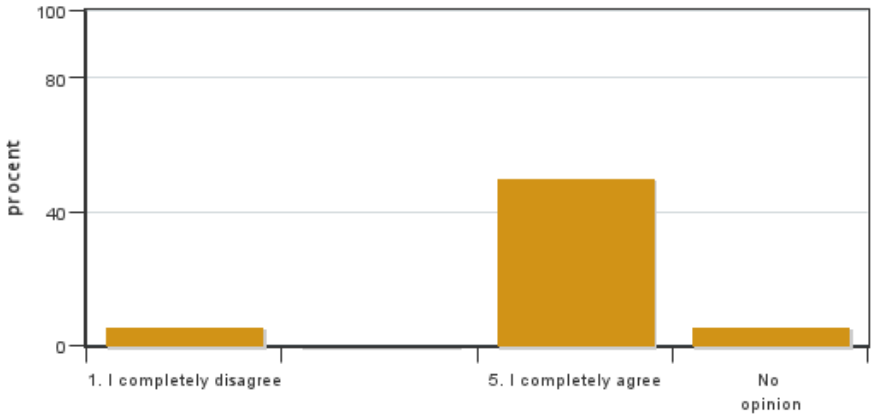
Answers: 18
Medel: 3,6
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 1



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

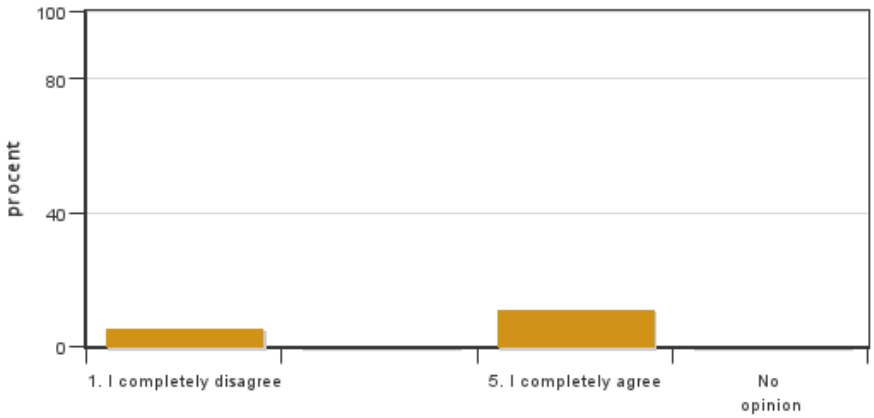


Answers: 18
Medel: 4,2
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 1

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

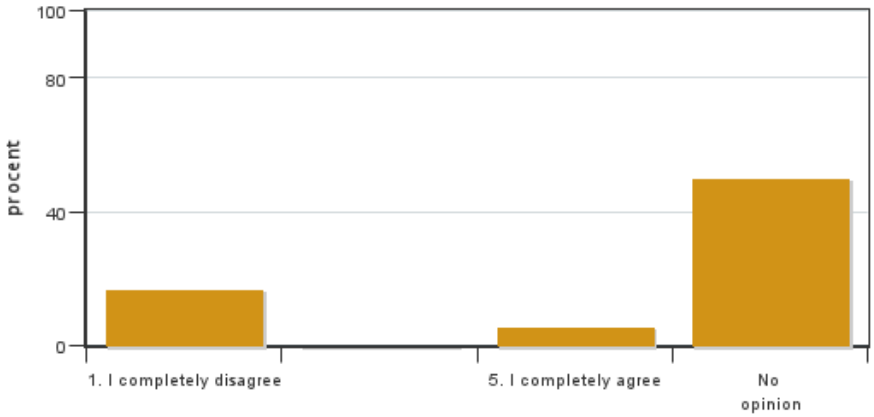


Answers: 18
Medel: 3,2
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 0

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

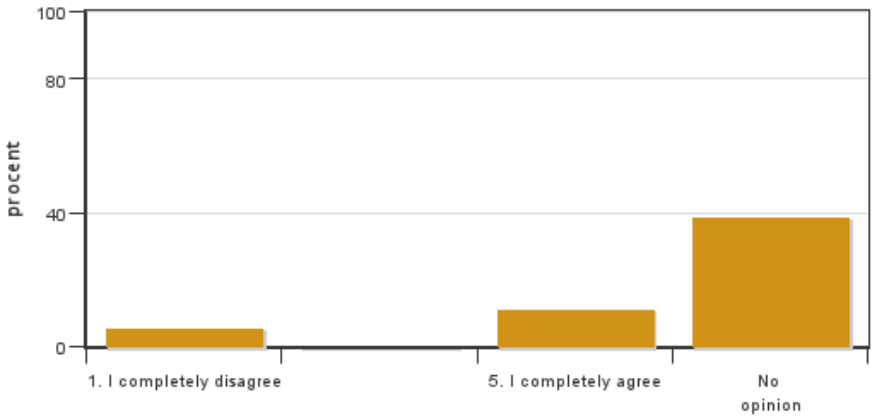


Answers: 18
Medel: 2,6
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 9

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).

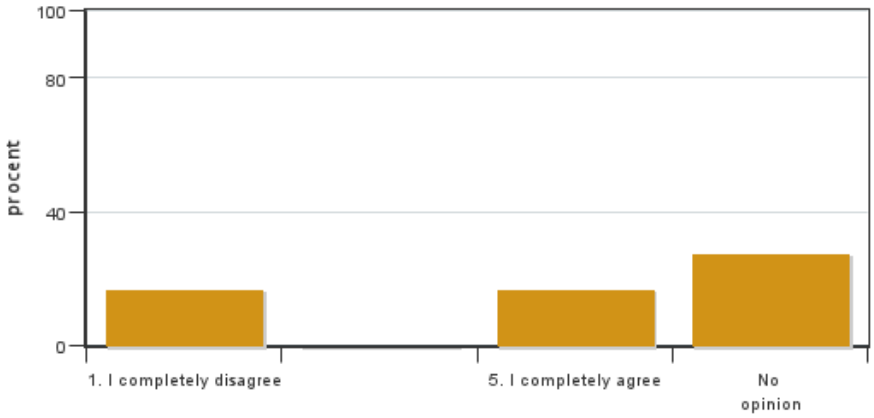


Answers: 18
Medel: 3,5
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 7

11. The course covered international perspectives.

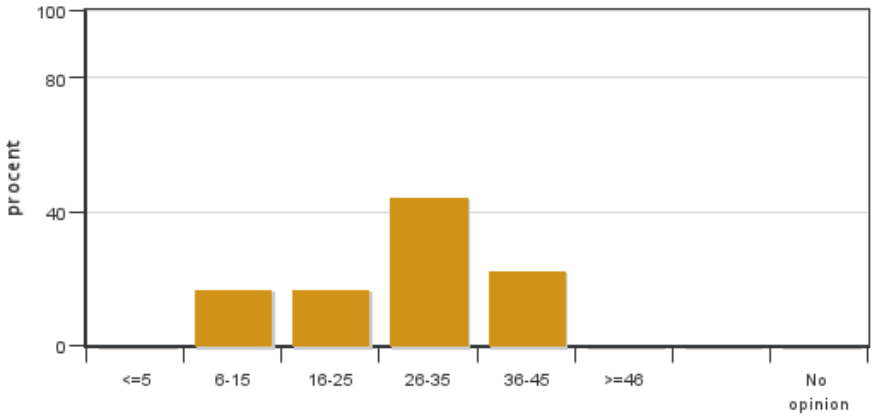


Answers: 18
Medel: 3,2
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 5

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



Answers: 18
Medel: 27,2
Median: 26-35

≤5: 0
6-15: 3
16-25: 3
26-35: 8
36-45: 4
≥46: 0

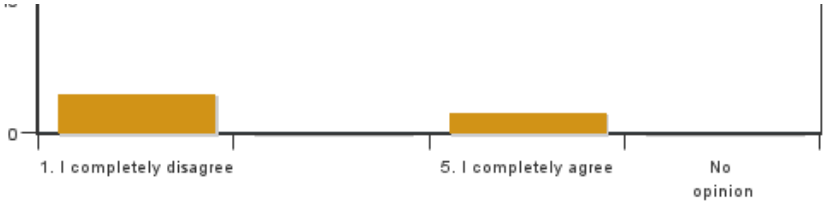
No opinion: 0

Additional own questions

13. The course's interactive and discussion-based format supported my learning.

Answers: 17
Medel: 2,5
Median: 2

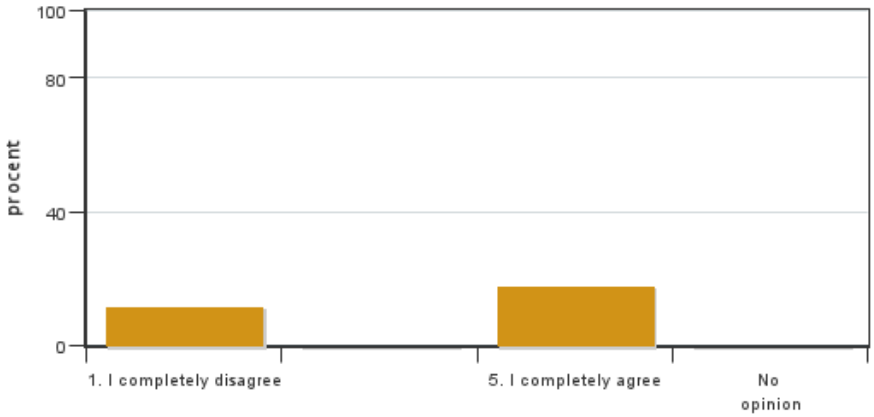
1: 2
2: 7
3: 6



4: 1
5: 1

No opinion: 0

14. I feel that my preparation before seminars helped me engage effectively in seminar discussions and activities.

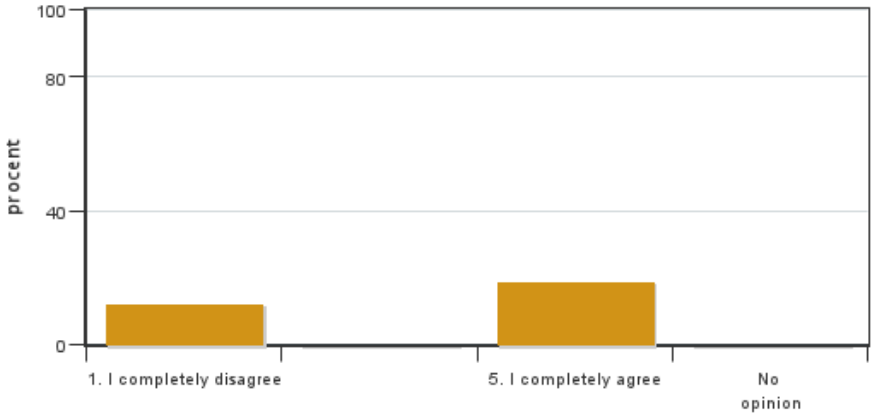


Answers: 17
Medel: 3,2
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 0

15. The course helped me go beyond basic conceptual understanding and develop my ability to analyse and justify methodological choices.

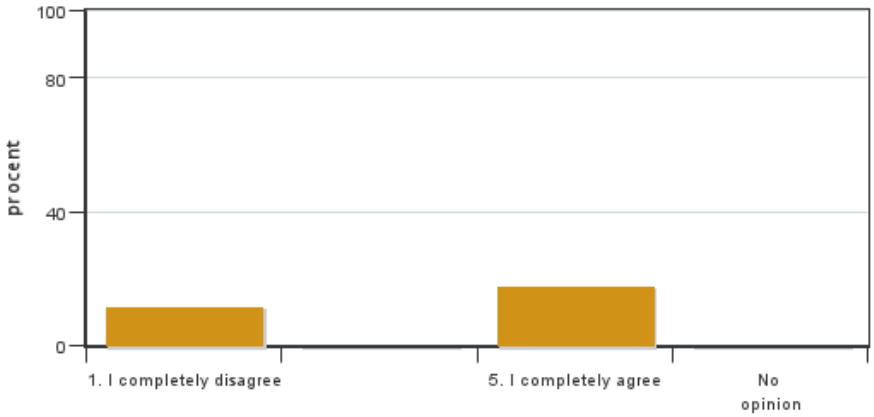


Answers: 16
Medel: 3,3
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 0

16. Working with course tasks and discussions required active participation, and this contributed to my learning.



Answers: 17
Medel: 3,3
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 0

17. Please give us your thoughts on which course activities or components contributed most to your understanding of research methods, and why.

17. Please give us your thoughts on which topic or activity you would have missed least if it had been given less time or removed, and why.

Course leaders comments

We thank the students who took the time to complete the course evaluation and to provide both positive and critical feedback. The evaluation offers important input for the continued development of the course.

From a teacher's perspective, one of the main challenges in the course has been the heterogeneous knowledge of the students. Some students enter the course with prior training in research methods, while others encounter several of these concepts for the first time. In addition, some of those with prior exposure have studied methods previously in Swedish, whereas this course is taught in English. An important ambition in the course design has therefore been to create a structure that both supports students who need a clear introduction to key concepts and simultaneously challenges students to develop a deeper, more analytical, and independent understanding of research methods and methodology.

This ambition has shaped this year's design of the course, where we used “Flipped classroom” interactive lectures, discussion-based seminars, a thesis club, and a mock thesis proposal. Our intention was to help students actively work with methodological questions rather than only hear them in lecture form. The overall pedagogical rationale has been to strengthen students' preparedness for the master's thesis, where they are expected not only to know concepts, but also to analyse, justify, and defend methodological choices.

At the same time, the evaluation shows clearly that this overall balance has not been fully successful for many students. Several students appreciated the thesis-related elements and the opportunity to work actively with methods, while others experienced the course as too demanding, too discussion-based, and not sufficiently structured or teacher-led. This reflects, at least in part, the underlying challenge of designing a single course for students with different levels of prior knowledge and different expectations regarding how methods should be taught.

Many students also indicated they felt that the course workload was high in relation to a 7.5 credit half-time course, and that the links between literature, lectures, seminars, learning objectives, and the exam were not always sufficiently clear. This is important feedback. Even when there is a clear pedagogical rationale behind the course design, that rationale must also be visible and manageable from the student's perspective. We will therefore revise the course with particular attention to the balance between active learning and teacher-led instruction, the overall workload, and the clarity of the course structure.

We would like to emphasise that the course was intentionally designed to promote active engagement, methodological reasoning, and individual accountability, as preparation for thesis work. Our conclusion is therefore not that this broader pedagogical ambition should be abandoned, but that it needs to be implemented in a clearer, more balanced, and more accessible way to better accommodate a student group with varied prior backgrounds.

Student representatives comments

The course is relevant and useful, particularly in preparing students for their master's thesis, even though many students experienced it as overly demanding, a bit stressful, and differently structured compared to the traditional classroom style courses, especially in the first few weeks of the course. The general impression was that the course attempted to include too much content and too many tasks for a 7.5-credit half-time course, especially because it was taken in parallel with another course. The teaching format was for the first three weeks based only on the "Flipped Classroom approach", which helped spark some valuable discussion, which always felt constructive and respectful, but at the same time, it was sometimes received as a little too abstract by the students who didn't fully understand the home reading.

Some other issues were related to the "Quantitative" part of the course; this part needs some minor adjustments in terms of more time assigned, especially considering the importance that it had on the final exam. Another adjustment could be fewer mandatory activities done in parallel with the final examination of the parallel course. We wish that the courses had been structured in a way that the mandatory things had not been closed to each other, because that also adds to the stress of the students. Students have also identified several strengths. Information and materials were mostly accessible, and the physical learning environment was rated positively. The mock thesis proposal was generally felt as the best way to connect the theory learned during lectures and practical work, especially in preparation for our own master's thesis. The lecture and seminar activities done during the second part

of the course were frequently described as the most valuable and concrete, probably for the same reason aforementioned.

Personally, as a student representative I can say that I generally agree with this evaluation; this course is not perfect, and it has its perks and cons, but the teachers always felt really passionate and receptive, as they even adopted a more direct teaching style later during the course, when they noticed that the discussion was not as working for everybody as they required preparations beforehand and not everybody was prepared. I' persoanlly consider this course challenging but of a good level for a master's level degree, but if I can give some personal suggestions, I'll probably skew the amount of workload more towards the first couple of weeks with more traditional lectures that clearly introduce key concepts, explain the readings, and provide a stronger theoretical framework and the latter part could focus more on discussions and seminars.

Finally, I would also like to highlight that overall, the course was composed of two student groups: one that had previous knowledge of the methods, and one that had never had a methods course before. I am part of the latter. I personally think that this created some friction because the first group felt that their prior competence was somewhat sufficient, while the rest seemed to think that the course needed a little more guidance. I think this heterogeneity needs to be taken into account for future course design.

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