National and International Forest Policy
SV0061, 30281.2425

15 Hp
Pace of study = 100%
Education cycle = Advanced
Course leader = Vilis Brukas

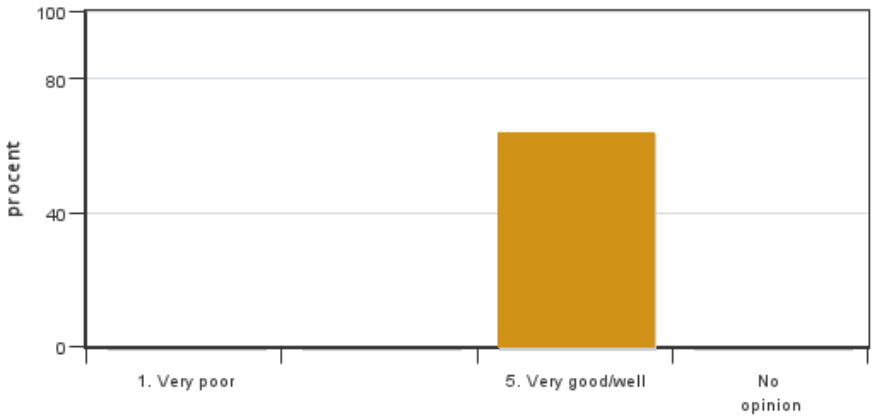
Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2025-03-21 - 2025-03-25

Answers	28
Number of students	29
Answer frequency	96 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:

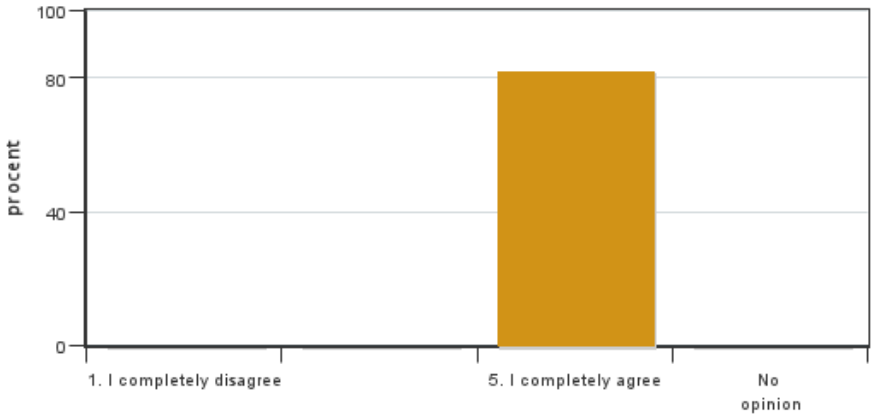


Answers: 28
Medel: 4,6
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 0

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

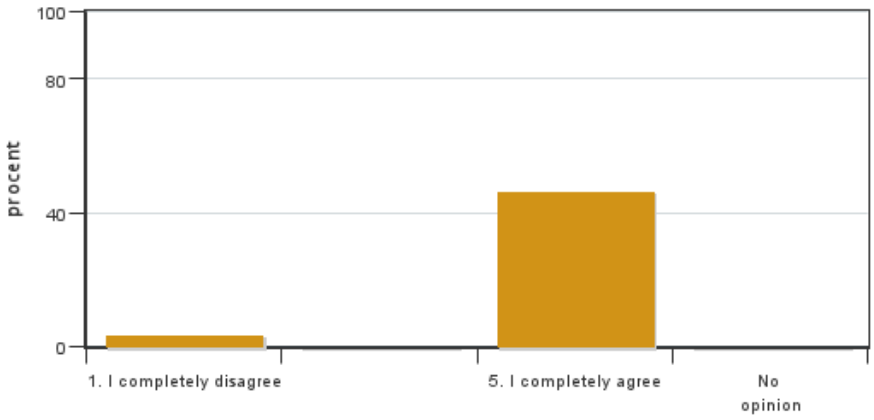


Answers: 28
Medel: 4,8
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 1
4: 4
5: 23

No opinion: 0

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

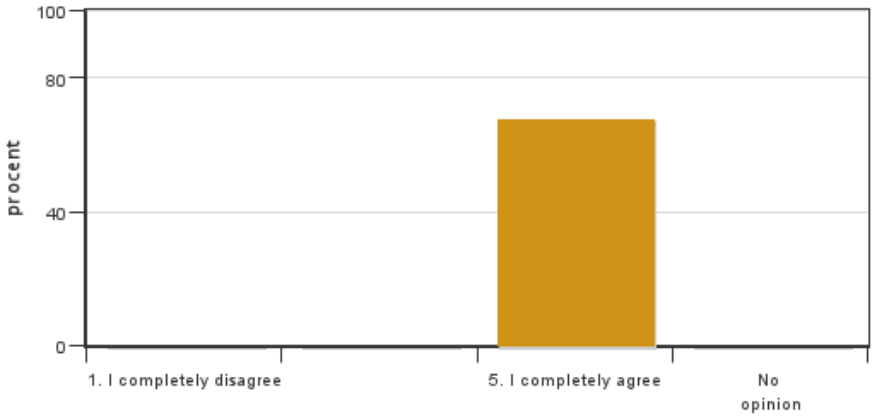


Answers: 28
Medel: 4,0
Median: 4

1: 1
2: 1
3: 7
4: 6
5: 13

No opinion: 0

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.

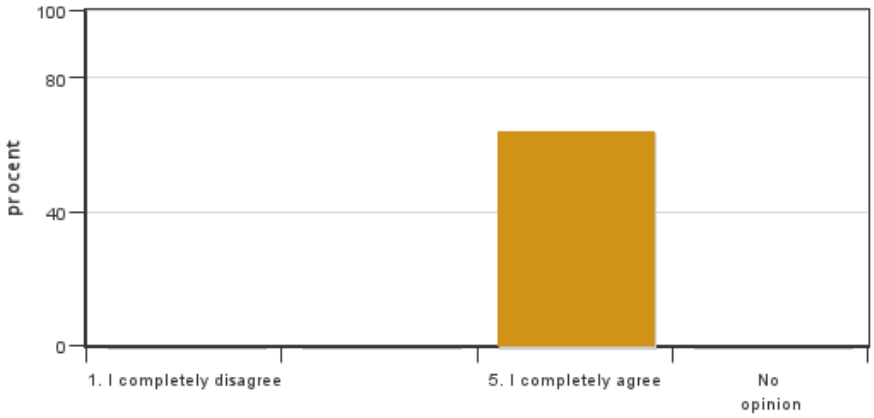


Answers: 28
Medel: 4,6
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 1
4: 8
5: 19

No opinion: 0

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

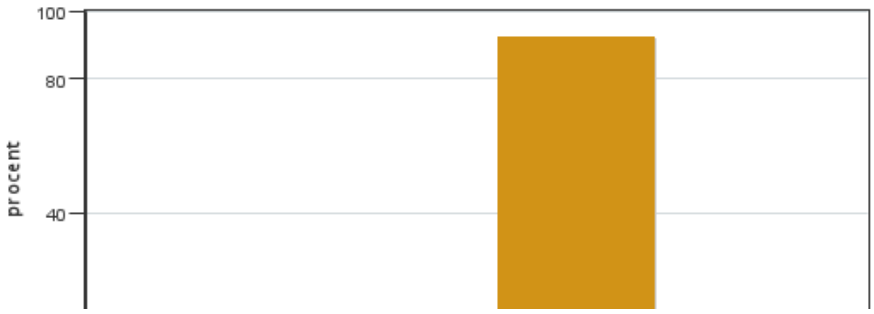


Answers: 28
Medel: 4,5
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 1
3: 3
4: 6
5: 18

No opinion: 0

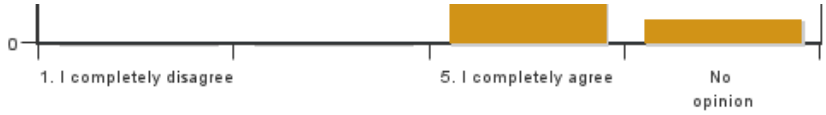
6. The social learning environment has been inclusive, respecting differences of opinion.



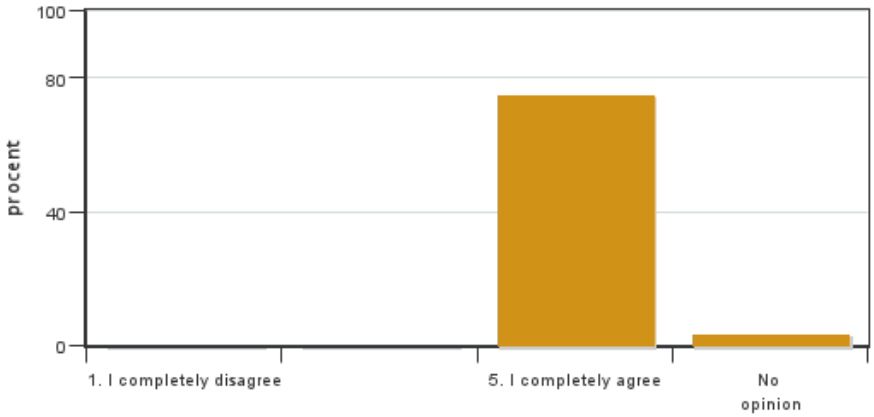
Answers: 28
Medel: 5,0
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 0
4: 0
5: 26

No opinion: 2



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

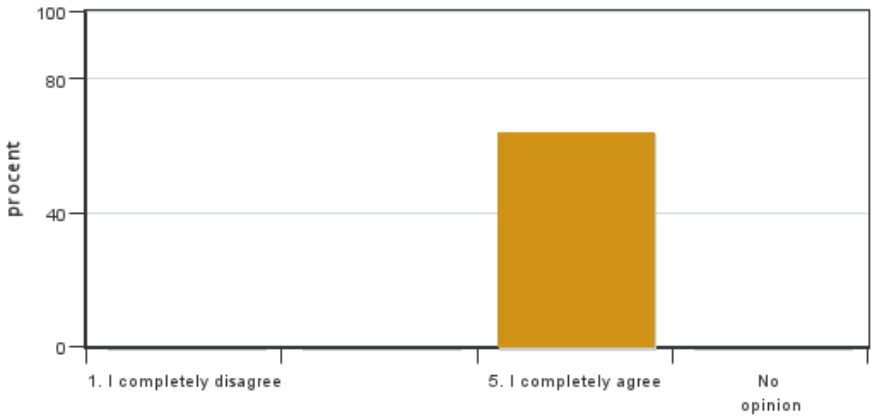


Answers: 28
Medel: 4,7
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 1

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

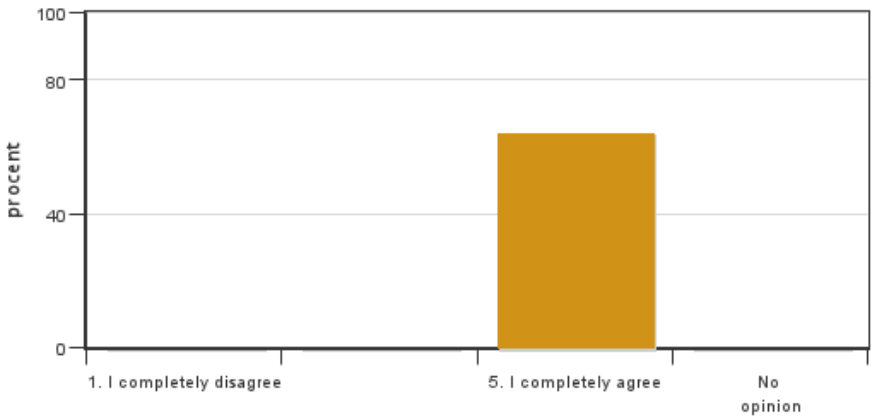


Answers: 28
Medel: 4,6
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 2
4: 8
5: 18

No opinion: 0

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

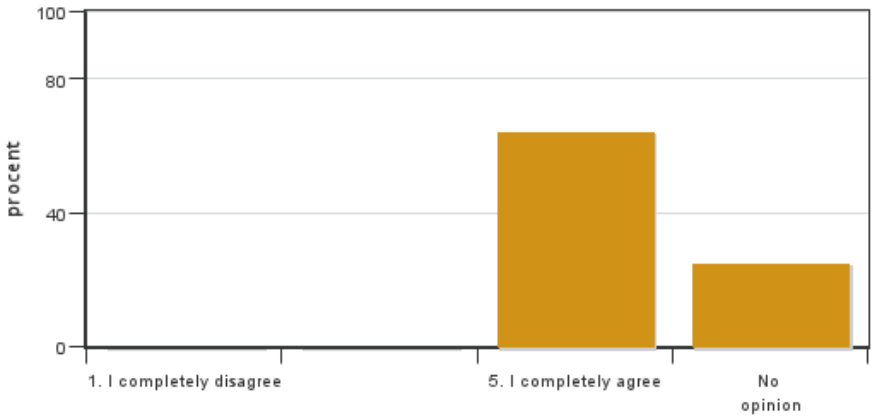


Answers: 28
Medel: 4,6
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 2
4: 8
5: 18

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).

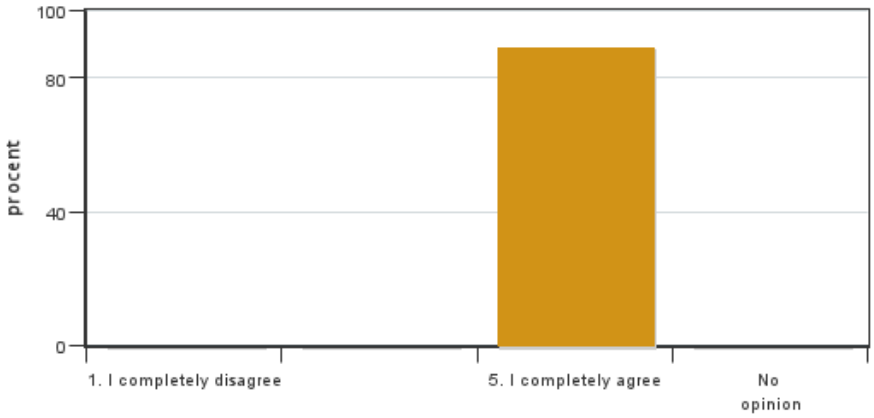


Answers: 28
Medel: 4,8
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 7

11. The course covered international perspectives.

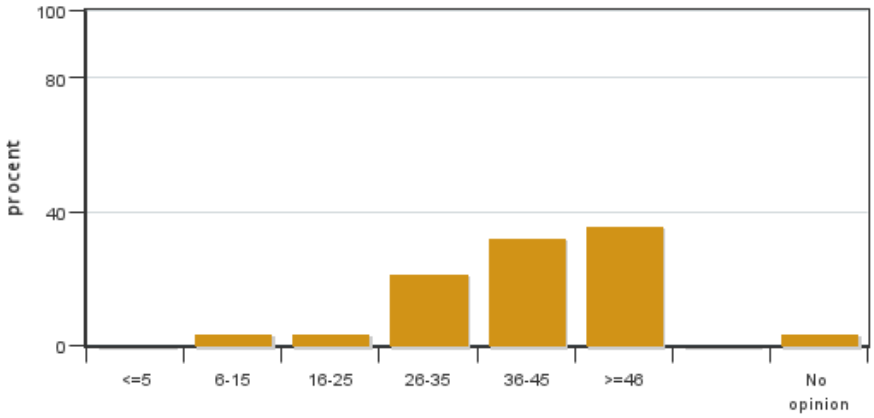


Answers: 28
Medel: 4,9
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 0
4: 3
5: 25

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 28
Medel: 38,1
Median: 36-45

≤5: 0
6-15: 1
16-25: 1
26-35: 6
36-45: 9
≥46: 10

No opinion: 1

Course leaders comments

FP2025, Course evaluation commentary

Comments on evaluation by the course responsible Vilis Brukas, Alnarp, April 5, 2025.

Student group

As always, our international class consisted from many nationalities. 29 students represented the following countries:

Sweden 8: (all graduates or still attendees of the Bachelor's programme Forest & Landscape, the 1st batch)

Other countries 22: Canada-Quebec 5, the Czech Republic 1, France 2, Germany 1, Latvia 3, the Netherlands 1 (F&L student), Poland 5, the USA 3 (2 from Georgia & 1 from Washington).

Evaluation set up and response rate

The evaluation questions were answered by 28 out of 29 students, thus the response rate is 96%. We also had a concluding oral discussion in the classroom that took about 1.5 hour.

Compulsory questions on SLUNIK

On 1 to 5 scale, the average overall impression is 4.6, 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 5.0 (for social learning environment).

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	10 years average	2025
Overall impression	4.1	4.9	4.6	4.4	4.1	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.8	4.8	4.52	4.6

Students on average put 38 hours for course work per week with a few outliers. The averages for years 2019-2024 were 36, 33, 35, 36, 39 and 33 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. This is in line with prevailing opinions in previous years.

Additional remarks

Since 2021, I chose to online evaluate course modules by weeks and not by separate pedagogic approaches. All course weeks scored high (3,9 being the lowest score per week), led by the study trip to Baltic countries, both earning 4.6. Concerning the pedagogic approaches, probably reflective journals get probably most attention due to the fact that this is a considerable component of the course and most students are not accustomed this approach to learning . 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. Among the few more sceptical students, the comments are that deep reflection could a matter of personal style, which is also difficult to assess and a few stated that journals per se did not contribute much to learning. Though agreeing on the complexity of assessment the teacher team think that the pedagogic benefits are superior to these concerns. Also, a bit surprisingly, were practically no complaints about the amount of course literature (in previous years it was sometimes complained about high amount of demanding readings), even though the amount of readings was roughly the same as in previous years.

Considerations for the next year

As the course works well overall, there is no need for any radical changes. However, some tangible considerations based on course experience, and written and oral evaluation.

Facilities

- Check possibility for installing multiple power sockets in the Silvicum classroom, so that students could charge laptops, when appropriate.

Forestry in Sweden week

- Ask the speaker from the SFA to add more of “Why type” of problematisation of current policy.

Role play

- Consider adding some information on the preconditions, such as the available budget for nature conservation.

Study trip:

- Information about student contributions for the study trip worked well, the amount of contribution could be rather shown in euro than SEK. This could prevent any “surprises” due to exchange rates. Also, it alleviates management to reduces administrative costs to collect money in cash while in Baltics, instead to transfers of minor amounts through the SLU system.
- Comment by student: Also my allergies were not taken into consideration when it came to the food which was a shame.
- Comment by student: The hostel in Lithuania was very nicely located but the matras was on the floor and thin so I had back issues for the last week and the showering facilities were not good. Maybe consider changing the hostel.
- It could be considered to shorten the programme of some days, especially indoors part.

Student representatives comments

Summary of Obligatory Questions:

Overall, the course was highly appreciated for its depth, structure, and engaging content. Students found it intellectually stimulating, offering valuable insights into forest policy and policymaking across different countries. It encouraged reflection, critical thinking, and the development of new perspectives. While the course was rigorous and at times overwhelming due to the intensity and volume of scheduled activities, the quality of teaching and group dynamics were generally praised. The course leader was seen as very engaged, and the mix of theory and practical knowledge was particularly valued.

The course was considered well-structured and clearly aligned with its objectives. Students appreciated how it built on prior knowledge and covered key topics through both lectures and materials. The teaching was praised for being clear and comprehensive. However, one student felt there was too much focus on general policy in the early weeks, with less emphasis on how policy directly influences forest management.

Students had varied levels of prior knowledge, which influenced their experience of the course. Those with a strong background in forestry or policy felt they could deeply engage with the material. Others, especially those unfamiliar with European forestry or specific topics like forest certification or forest economics, found parts of the course challenging. Several students suggested that additional background information or introductory explanations would have helped. Despite this, many still felt they gained valuable knowledge, even with limited prior experience.

Communication and access to course materials were generally good and well appreciated. Most students felt the course was well organized, with timely updates and responsive support from the teaching team. Materials were made available on Canvas early and were mostly easy to find. However, a few students noted some issues with the organization and clarity of the file structure, which made specific documents occasionally hard to locate. Some students also found the schedule difficult to read, as it did not include specific dates.

The course content and exercises were generally valuable and contributed to student learning, though the workload and specific assignments, such as the reflective journal, received mixed reviews. Many students praised the variety of learning approaches and found the exercises engaging and helpful. However, several felt that the workload was too heavy, particularly due to the number of mandatory assignments and group work, which at times impacted quality and motivation. The reflective journal was often viewed as unhelpful or too rigid, with some suggesting it added unnecessary stress. Overall, students appreciated the lectures and the teaching team's efforts, but some recommended a more focused and streamlined approach.

Comment not fully understood:
"In some aspects, I was unsure how a theory fits into today's context, e.g., New Public Management is a child of the 70s and 80s in my mind, and maybe a newer public management theory by a female scholar, like Professor Mazzucato, might be more fitting?"

Facilities and logistics were generally adequate, though some areas could be improved. The study trip was considered well organized, while feedback on the Silvicum classroom was mixed. Some students found it sufficient, while others noted issues such as poor air quality, an awkward layout, and technical difficulties with the presentation setup.

One student felt that their allergies were not adequately considered during the study trip and disliked having to sleep on a mattress on the floor.

Suggestions for improvement from students:

Add a speaker's podium for presenters (a minor change). Make some technical improvements to the IT system that presenters use to plug in their computers. Provide a "how-to-plug-in-your-computer" guide at the front of the classroom. Include more breaks or find a way to improve air quality in both the Silvicum classroom and the discussion table in Lithuania.

Most students found the quizzes to be a positive way to demonstrate their knowledge and thought they were well designed. The structure—where only two out of three quizzes or journals were counted—was appreciated. Some suggested that the questions could be more open-ended.

The course addressed key sustainability aspects, though some areas could be strengthened. Some students appreciated the coverage of financial and environmental challenges linked to policy. However, others felt the environmental dimension was underrepresented or that the course leaned too heavily toward production forestry. Suggestions included dedicating more time to complex topics like LULUCF and ensuring a more balanced focus across social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

Gender equality received a rating of 5 from most students or no specific opinion.

From an international perspective, this was seen as one of the strongest parts of the course, although it was mostly focused on Europe.

Students spent on average between 26–46 or more hours per week on the course.

Summary of Own Questions:

During the first week, some students found the course to have a strong start with a lot of information. Students especially appreciated the financial aspects, such as discounting. The country presentations were also highly appreciated, though some students felt it was unfair that certain individuals had to present alone.

Several students found the first weeks of the course overwhelming, citing a high workload, dense content, and tight deadlines—particularly for the journal seminar and country presentations, which some said required over 50 hours of work in one week. While the content was valuable, the early intensity made it difficult to absorb and reflect on the material.

There was also feedback that the course introduced economic concepts too quickly, and that a broader policy overview might have served as a better entry point. One student noted an imbalance in the workload, with an intense start followed by quieter weeks.

For those who were not sick during Max Krott's week, reactions were mixed. Many found it too lecture-heavy, with little room for discussion, too much reading, and a narrow focus on his perspective. One student specifically criticized the lecturer's generalizations about hunters, which led to scepticism about the material and a preference for independent study. However, others really appreciated his lectures and found the exercises even better.

Students thought Norbert brought a broad scope and rich international context. Many appreciated learning about multi-level governance, international struggles in forestry, and mechanisms like the EUDR. Norbert was seen as knowledgeable and kind, and his topics were often considered engaging and insightful. Still, several students felt the lectures were too long and dense, with too much information presented at once, especially on the slides. This made it difficult to reflect, concentrate, and retain key concepts, and may have contributed to lower exam scores in that section. A few students also noted feeling disconnected from certain topics or overloaded by the amount of material.

Many students really liked the Swedish forest policy segment, especially the visit to the private forest owner. However, some Swedish students found it repetitive and felt the visit was more generally informative rather than focused on forest-related issues.

The participatory process was generally well received. Students thought Derek facilitated an engaging process. Yet some felt it was the week they gained the least from, having done similar activities in their undergraduate studies. Some also felt the class did not fully embrace the roleplay.

Forest certification was very well received. Students felt they learned a lot from this part, especially from grading other papers. The debate was also appreciated as a learning tool that helped students form their opinions.

The study trip was considered fun but exhausting. Students felt there was too much scheduled each day to properly reflect on what they were learning. It was generally well organized, with good lunches, accommodation, and varied lectures. Students appreciated that they didn't have to worry about logistics (e.g., always taking the same bus together, having a leader of the day). Overall, the trip was seen as excellent but too intense to fully process all the content.

Summary of What Was Worst About the Course:

Students thought the early workload was too heavy, with a lack of clarity and purpose in some activities until later in the course. The mandatory lecture schedule felt overwhelming. There were also issues with assessment, particularly around the reflective journal. The schedule was sometimes unclear. Language barriers were noted—both among students not used to courses in English and from some presenters during the study trip. Some students found the excursions repetitive. Roleplay realism was considered low, and peer feedback was seen as unfair, as some felt peers were not qualified evaluators of their work.

Suggestions for Improvements:

Space out assignments and readings more evenly. Clarify the purpose and learning outcomes of each activity early on. Offer more flexible time for reading and reflection. Reduce lecture density and allow more interaction and discussion. Reconsider peer grading and offer more timely feedback. Include more diverse voices in guest lectures (e.g., more women in forestry).

Summary of What Was Best About the Course:

Students appreciated the active learning throughout the course. The exercises were engaging, the course had a strong international perspective, and students gained many new insights. The study trip to the Baltics, the supportive teaching team, the course content, and the structure were all highlighted as positives. Many students also felt they grew personally, as the course challenged them in meaningful ways.