

# Report - AL2511 - 2022-11-23

Respondents: 1  
Answer Count: 1  
Answer Frequency: 100.00%

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Please note that there is only one respondent to this form: the person that performs the course analysis.

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**Course analysis carried out by (name, e-mail):**

Rebecka Milestad, claram@kth.se

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**DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS**

**Describe the course evaluation process. Describe how all students have been given the possibility to give their opinions on the course. Describe how aspects regarding gender, and disabled students are investigated.**

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A course committee was introduced this course round. Three students that volunteered were invited to have a meeting with the course responsible and the course assistant in the middle of the course. The students had collected views from fellow students before the meeting. The meeting was fruitful, held in good spirit and generated useful input to improve the course for the current and coming years. During the final seminar of the course, all students were asked to discuss their views on the course in small groups, and then present one thing they liked, and one thing they thought could be improved in the course. Many groups had similar input, but there were also examples of contradictory views (e.g. on the study visit). After the course, all students were invited to fill in a LEQ. 14 students out of 40 active students in the course answered the LEQ. This is a lower rate than previous years.

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**DESCRIPTION OF MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS**

**Describe which meetings that has been arranged with students during the course and after its completion. (The outcomes of these meetings should be reported under 7, below.)**

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One course meeting (see above) during the course.

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**COURSE DESIGN**

**Briefly describe the course design (learning activities, examinations) and any changes that have been implemented since the last course offering.**

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The course consists of two major parts: the first part of the course focuses on concepts and literature, while the second part is a practical application in the form of a group project work. Lectures and literature seminars are concentrated to the first part of the course, while the scheduled activities during the second part of the course concentrates on project workshops and group tutoring. A home exam concludes the first part of the course, after the first half of the time has been spent. Compulsory activities include the seminars and the project introduction. A major change since the last course offering was a re-make of the project work. A older handbook was exchanged to a web-based tool that the students had to work with. Also, the students were given topics and a folder with material about that topic to use for their projects. The instruction to the project work thus changed, as did the output we asked for from the students. Instead of a longer project report (where students previously put a lot of time and energy into finding data and information) we now focused their work more on assessments of the data, and asked for an extended power-point presentation.

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**THE STUDENTS' WORKLOAD**

**Does the students' workload correspond to the expected level (40 hours/1.5 credits)? If these is a significant deviation from the expected, what can be the reason?**

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The impression is that students this year spent somewhat less time with the course than previous years. At the same time, when asked, they thought that the workload was large, and especially heavy in the beginning of the course. Probably the new set up of the project work changed the amount of time students spent on the course. We specified in the schedule when the groups were to work together, which was also new this year.

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**THE STUDENTS' RESULTS**

**How well have the students succeeded on the course? If there are significant differences compared to previous course offerings, what can be the reason?**

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Students have succeeded similarly well as earlier years. We had no issues with plagiarism, and only one student got an Fx in the home exam.

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**STUDENTS' ANSWERS TO OPEN QUESTIONS**

**What does students say in response to the open questions?**

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Students were overall happy with the course and their open answers (and comments during the last seminar) are much in line with previous years. Students would like to have a less stressful start of the course, when we have a literature seminar only two days after the course introduction. While they appreciated the seminars and the literature in them, students commented on the last part of each seminar as being repetitive and not so useful (this is the part when seminar groups report back to the rest of the class). Some students also disliked the different set-up of each seminar, and would like similar structures for all seminars. Students also, like most other years, ask for more teacher-led time during the course. For example, they would like to have more project work workshops (this year we had two, which is more than previously). Generally, students also want more detailed instructions for the project work, and they thought it was a problem that the case folders had so many sources in Swedish.

One student, spending 3-5 hours/week did not think that the course was very meaningful, but could have been done with a two-day workshop. This comment stood out from the rest of the group, who thought the course was very useful.

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**SUMMARY OF STUDENTS' OPINIONS**

**Summarize the outcome of the questionnaire, as well as opinions emerging at meetings with students.**

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This year the number of answers to the questionnaire were lower than usual. We tried a new concept for the project work which went well, but needs some improvements for next year. Students commented on the project work set-up (they want more detailed instructions), and also on the large work load in the beginning of the course. The students answering the questionnaire generally spent a bit less time on the course than previous years. One reason for this could be the changed project work set-up, where we wanted students to spend less time writing a report, and more time making assessments and trying out a web-based tool - but it was not intended to be a reason for spending less time on the course.

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## **OVERALL IMPRESSION**

**Summarize the teachers' overall impressions of the course offering in relation to students' results and their evaluation of the course, as well as in relation to the changes implemented since last course offering.**

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The change of the project work set-up was a good thing that we will develop more for the next course offering. It needs more detailed instructions, and maybe an element of students' own choice of project, not being so centered on cases from the Stockholm region, and not relying so much on Swedish-speaking sources. The teachers need to be well informed about the web-based tool the students work with and if the schedule allows, we could include one more project workshop to see that all project groups are on a good path. We also have to work with aligning the grading criteria with the tasks we give the students. Overall, the students' results were good and grades were given in the whole range of the grading system. The group was, and always is, a very diverse student group, which makes it hard to make changes to the course that everyone will be happy with. We generally try to make the course useful for the Master program students, but we also have a number of Erasmus/exchange students who sometimes struggle with language and/or study technique.

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## **ANALYSIS**

**Is it possible to identify stronger and weaker areas in the learning environment based on the information you have gathered during the evaluation and analysis process? What can the reason for these be? Are there significant difference in experience between:**

- students identifying as female and male?
  - international and national students?
  - students with or without disabilities?
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Female students (majority) were remarkably more happy with the questions 4, 12, 20 in the LEQ. For most questions, the female students gave higher scores than male students.

International exchange students generally gave higher scores than international master students. The number of answers did not cover the other groups specified in the LEQ.

No student with disabilities answered the LEQ /could not be distinguished in the LEQ answers.

On average, all questions were scored higher than 4 for all questions. The lowest score was given question 20 (influence on course activities), and the highest score was given question 6 (open and inclusive atmosphere).

The difference between the students' study backgrounds makes it hard to make the course suit everyone in a perfect manner. Some have heard the concepts the course deals with before, and to some the concepts are totally new and challenging. Getting the scores we get, and the feedback we got during student meeting/seminar makes us believe that the level is about right and that we can make minor improvements as to clarity and communication during the course round.

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## **PRIORITIZED COURSE DEVELOPMENT**

**What aspects of the course should be developed primarily? How can these aspects be developed in short and long term?**

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We could re-design the first week of the course so that students feel a bit less stress getting into the reading. We need to use the book in a new way (as of now, most students only read articles, and do not have time for the book, which gives an introduction to the topic in a good way if students would have time to look into it).

We could also make a more detailed instruction for the project work and think about how projects could be described and set up.

We notice that the students have a lack of understanding of ecological systems, which is an important pre-knowledge for the concepts introduced during the course. We could change the content of one or two lectures that we offer in the beginning of the course to remedy this.

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## **OTHER INFORMATION**

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

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We have a lot of content we want to convey to the students, but it is hard to get started in the course since some students do not decide on what course to take until one or two weeks into the course. By then, students have missed compulsory elements that are hard to make up for. We can update the information in the course web to point this out to interested students.

The room bookings we got were systematically too small for the group of students we had in the course. This lowered the quality of the learning environment

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