

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.

In addition to the LEQ, two meetings have been held with student representatives of the course (the first meeting roughly a month after course start and the second at the end of the course). During these meetings the students have an opportunity – and are encouraged to – raise any issues related to the course (critique/suggestions etc.). Taking part in the meeting are course responsible teachers. Comments and issues brought up at the final meeting are corroborated with the answers from the LEQ. Aspects regarding gender and disabled students (JML) are not specifically addressed but included in the LEQ.

DESCRIPTION OF MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS

Describe which meetings that has been arranged with students during the course and after its completion.

See above.

COURSE DESIGN

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

Lectures (~10): some more directly related to the course literature and some more open but within general focus of the course.

Literature assignment (LIT1): seminars and written essay (analysis of one of the course books).

Project work (PRO1/PRO2): individual (part1) and group (part2) with written reports for each part and a presentation of group work. Part 2 builds on part 1.
Focuses on sociotechnical systems and planetary boundaries.

Written examination (TEN1)

Possibility to get Pass with distinction (P+) on the individual examinations LIT1 and PRO1. One (or two) P+ will raise the final grade of the course with one (or two) step(s).

Changes implemented since last course: no specific changes were implemented – the focus 2020 was to give the (main part of the) course online due to Covid-19.

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?

The LEQ answers suggest that the workload is slightly over what should be expected. However, the students did not confirm this during the meetings and did not indicate that it was a matter of concern. One reason may be that the course literature is rather extensive compared to more technical courses, which some students finds challenging and time consuming.

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?

TEN1: Ok, and evenly distributed (A-E).

LIT1/PRO1-2: Ok. A general expression is that when it comes to the written reports the varying background of the students leads to problems for some of the students with writing reports (both format and content) and how to handle references. Two recent changes of the course might have addressed this: (1) Implementation of goal oriented grading criteria in an informative matrix have made the tasks clearer and (2) the implementation of Pass with distinction (P+), which might have spurred the students into an extra effort in writing the reports. Next year a clearer linkage to the parallel course taken by these students – Research Methodology and Theory of Science and where scientific writing is included - will be added.

FINAL GRADE: given the implementation of P+, there is a tendency towards higher final grades on the course (though this pattern is not completely clear).

STUDENTS' ANSWERS TO OPEN QUESTIONS

What does students say in response to the open questions?

Lectures: Varied critique but in general the students like the lectures and see value in them. A suggestion is to align the lectures more directly towards the course literature. As we see it this is a balance as we would like the lecturers brought in to the course to have a rather large degree of freedom in relation to their specific field of expertise and research.

LIT1: Overall very positive critique.

PRO1-2: Positive, but mixed, critique. One aspect brought up, which has also been discussed during the course development during previous years, are that the topic selected for the project work i.e. what kind of sociotechnical system (STS) that the group choose to focus on, make the assignment more or less “easy”. Since some STSs are easier to relate to the specific planetary boundaries, perhaps an idea would be that the teachers of the course would have a list of “suitable” STSs. This is however a balance in relation to what the students are supposed to learn on the course.

Assessment templates: the students like the templates and think that these are a very useful part/tool when working with the different assignments. On the negative side, templates at the same time opens up for a more strict (less flexible) evaluation of the assignments where “one size has to fit all”, and this is also something brought up by some students.

Course literature: the students like the course literature.

TEN1: positive comments, but some think that 4 hours is not enough, which seems to be related to the fact that the exam was online. More than one bring up the suggestion of changing the current written exam into an open book exam. Which is under discussion and evaluation.

Administration: Very positive comments.

Covid-19 situation (the main part of the course was held online, including the written exam, instead of on campus. What worked fine/worked less well/did not work?): overall, the students think it worked out ok, though many raise the issue that having seminars online works but they definitely would prefer to have them on campus. Group work was also challenging, especially when the students did not know one another prior to the course.

SUMMARY OF STUDENTS' OPINIONS

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

Overall positive comments (regarding all parts/aspects of the course). What stands out as a challenge is the diverse background of the students and how to address this.

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.

Overall positive (values between 5.4-6.7). The students seem to appreciate the course (former students have commented on the value of this course in later courses on the program). However, in 2020 the LEQ values are in general lower than previous years which we assume is related to that the course due to Covid-19 to a large degree where given online.

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 be? Are there significant differences in experience between:

- students identifying as female/male?
- international/national students?
- students with/without disabilities?

LEQ: 12 questions. Answers: 18/42 (43%)

Stronger/weaker: the response to the questions is rather evenly distributed ie no part that stands out.

International students seems in general to be more content with the course compared to the national students. Which is a pattern we have seen previously. A plausible explanation is the varying background of the students and to have the lectures/seminars on a "balanced" level (some think it is too basic, others think it is perfect). Which is a challenge for several courses of the program. No major differences between female/male or for students with disabilities.

PRIORITIZED COURSE DEVELOPMENT

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

- Ongoing discussion whether to replace the current written exam with an open book exam +possibly in combination with a Quiz on more basic knowledge (to be held mid-term).
- Analyze the course from a gender and equality perspective (aid from colleague at SEED and from KTH Equity Office.)

OTHER INFORMATION

Is there anything else you would like to add?