



NATUR-
VETENSKAPLIGA
FAKULTETEN

KURSSAMMANSTÄLLNING

Datum 2019-04-01

Biologiska institutionen
Grund- och avancerad utbildning

Kursansvarig: Johannes Rousk
Antal studenter: 10
Betyg 2 Fail (U), 3 Pass (G), 5 Pass
w distinction (VG). After re-exam, the
two Failed students achieved G and
VG, respectively. Final results is 0
Fail, 4 Pass, 6 pass w distinction.
Sammanställt av: Johannes Rousk

Course analysis BIOR78 Soil and plant ecology, autumn/spring 2018

Summary of the course evaluation

Number of answers: 13. Overall the students were very pleased with the course (grade 4.1). We note that one student was either very displeased with the course or misunderstood the grading system, giving the overall course grade of 1 (all others gave 5 or 4). Since no comments were offered to qualify this outlier grade, it is difficult to evaluate, or in any way act on. If this outlier is disregarded, the average grade of the remaining students is 4.6, which matches that of previous years (2016: 4.5, 2017: 4.6). This overall grade was also validated by the students' evaluation of the teachers (4.5), teacher communication and course information (4.3), perceived level of the course (4.3), blend of forms of teaching (4.4), the students strongly felt that the course increased their subject knowledge (4.6). We also note that the level of the course was seen as high, with a heavy work load (on average perceived to be 40 h per week). However, combined with very high overall grades of the course, this can be seen and is seen as positive from the teacher team. It is an advanced course, which is perceived as challenging, but rewarding.

Comments from the teachers team

This course is perceived very well by the students taking it, it is seen as challenging, but engaging. The forms of teaching are perceived as varied, and both teacher and assistant teaching /

supervision are very positively perceived. A large priority within the course is a close connection to current research within the subject field, which is also recognized and appreciated by the students, which is seen as a success. Part of this is the extensive field work and laboratory components, the results of which are used by students for a large portion of the course to also engage with the theory of the field. This is seen as very positive, and will remain a priority. Other elements include a theme day (research frontiers), journal article discussion seminars, and literature projects, which mostly worked very well (see IV, below). It is noted by the teachers that the plant-and-soil ecology bits could still be better interlinked (although there are fewer notes about this by students this year). One possibility would be synthesizing the two fieldtrips, to more clearly include plant ecology and diversity aspects in the longer laboratory exercise.

Evaluation of changes made since the previous course

After Compared to the 2017 edition of the course, the initial “flipped classroom” seminars given as book literature seminars were restructured in response to the course evaluation comments. The reading assignment were seen as too extensive by the students for the first few seminars. In response to this, the material was split into smaller segments, with shorter seminars. These revisions seem to have worked well, with fewer comments noting heavy literature reading seminars, and much higher grades for them (also see IV). It is emphasized in comments that perhaps more teaching in seminar form is a possibility, which is seen as a validation that our attempts to change lectures into more interactive seminars has worked well, and can continue.

Suggested changes for the next course

We note from comments in the course evaluation that the literature project felt “rushed” toward the end of the course by many students. We will rearrange the schedule, to ensure that more progress is made earlier in the course. One possibility is to include another “checkup” meeting with the literature project supervisor between the outline feedback and final feedback, ensuring that more progress is made earlier. We will also more clearly introduce the upcoming literature projects earlier in the

course, to ensure that more time can be spent identifying interesting topics by the students. Although the literature seminars worked far better this year, it is still noted by some students that extensive reading was combined with short time to prepare. Next year, we will spread the seminars over a longer time period, and possibly alternate seminars with lectures in the early course. We will also consider if the field trips will be combined, and the two lab exercises can be better interlinked.

Other teachers

Pål Axel Olsson, Håkan Wallander, Edith Hammer, Lettice Hicks.