



FACULTY
OF SCIENCE

COURSE ANALYSIS

Date 2021-04-01

Main Teacher: Johannes Rousk

Number of students: 10

Number of answers: 6

Grades: U:1, G:5, VG:4

Department of Biology
Education- Bachelor's and Master's
level

Course Analysis: BIOR78 Soil and plant Ecology”, spring 2020

Summary of the course evaluation

As the previous year, the number of answers to the course evaluation was low (6/10). This was followed up, and it turns out that many student never received the link (most of those not using the student.lu email address). To ensure that we receive all responses for next year, the course evaluation will only be sent to student.lu emails.

The overall course grade was 3.9, which is unusually low (last three years around 4.6). The evaluation of teacher motivation, feedback and help was also 3.9 (with a large variation), which is also lower than previous years (last years around 5). From reading individual comments, it seems like unclear assignments, and an uneven workload (and associated stress) may have contributed to the lower grade that the 60% of students that responded reported. The balance between analytical treatment of obtained results (in the lab) and practical time in the laboratory also could be better balanced in favour of analysis and discussion.

A good outcome is that the students' felt that their subject knowledge improved substantially (4.7), with a reasonable workload (4.1, equivalent to 40 h work).

The “flipped classroom” style of teaching that much of the course now uses, was appreciated and will be maintained.

Comments from the teachers team

It is a great shame that this and last years' course evaluations has relatively low answer frequencies (60%), which must be improved to ensure that developments match requirements. However, this year a major issue with the interface for course evaluation was identified (students that did not use lu-email did not receive the invitations!), and can thus be improved for next year.

This year was unusual. Although many students felt that the Pandemic situation had not affected this rather small course so much, which is good. However, a careful read of many of the responses to course evaluation questions were associated with communication. Earlier years, this has worked better, via informal presence of both students and teachers between scheduled events (seminars). This has made it possible to clarify assignment communication, and identify missing bits of information, that seemed to have been lacking this year.

However, there is a need to revise the ILOs of the large laboratory segment of the course, and maybe to modularise it, to better keep track of the aims. This would also enable more chances for student to catch-up (and for teachers to assist). Such a revision could also balance practical and analytical work in favour of the latter.

Evaluation and changes made since the previous course

An intended improvement was a better integration of Plant-Soil aspects of the course. Since no comments came up highlighting any further need for improvement, this integration seems to have

worked well, which was implemented in a revised “flipped classroom” set of seminars during the initial 2 weeks.

The splitting of lit. seminars into smaller segments seems to have worked well, and improved from last year.

Another implemented change from last year was a major rearrangement of the literature project with a clarification of ILO, and a rubric defining how lit project would be evaluated. In addition, they we also introduced earlier, and more feedback sessions were included in the schedule to decrease the stress in the late course. While improved, the time-planning did not work as intended, and will need further revision.

Suggested changes for the next course

However, there is a need to revise the ILOs of the large laboratory segment of the course, and maybe to modularise it, to better keep track of the aims. This would also enable more chances for student to catch-up (and for teachers to assist). Such a revision could also balance practical and analytical work in favour of the latter. This would also increase the opportunities for communications during the progression of the laboratory segment.

There is a need to further revise the literature project time planning, avoiding overlap with the laboratory segment, which was distracting (and caused stress).

Other teachers involved in the course

Edith Hammer, Per Bengtson, Pål Axel Olsson, Håkan Wallander, Juan Pablo Almeida, Lettice Hicks, assistants.