



# University of Victoria

## UVic CES Instructor Report 201709 - John Volpe - ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES - ES 240 - A01 (CRN 11653)

### UVic Course Experience Survey - Fall 2017

Project Audience 104

Responses Received 32

Response Ratio 31%

#### Subject Details

<b>CRN</b>	11653
<b>VNUMBER</b>	V00102225

**Creation Date** Mon, Dec 18, 2017



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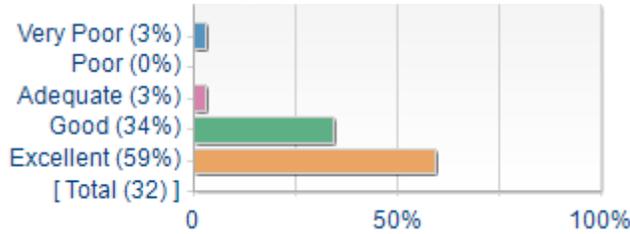
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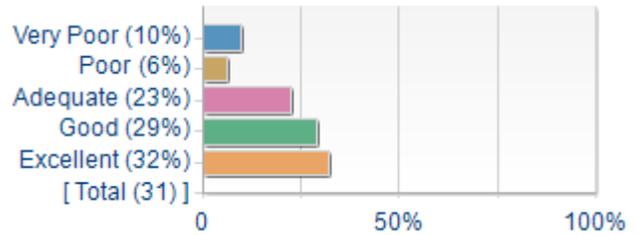
# I Instructor's Teaching - Students' Ratings on the Following Statements:

1. The instructor was prepared for course sessions



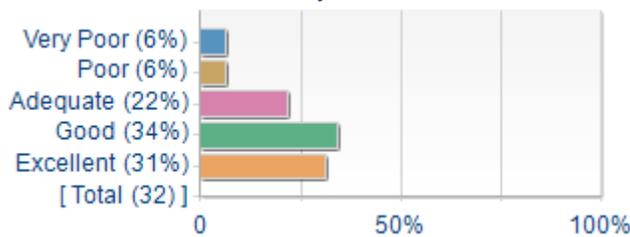
Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	4.47
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.84

2. The instructor's explanations of concepts were clear



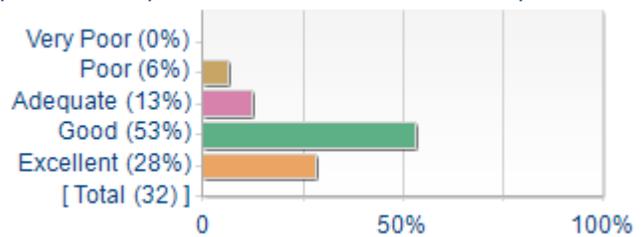
Statistics	Value
Response Count	31
Mean	3.68
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	1.28

3. The instructor motivated you to learn in this course



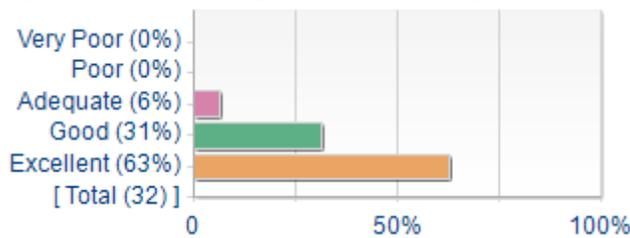
Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	3.78
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	1.16

4. The instructor was available to answer your questions or provide extra assistance as required



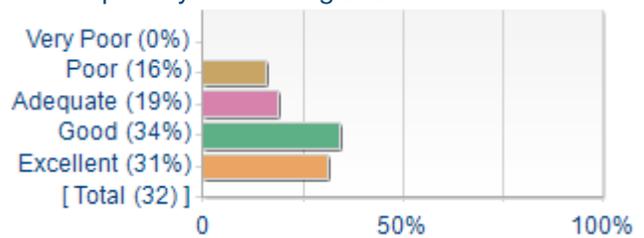
Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	4.03
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	0.82

5. The instructor ensured that your assignments and tests were returned within a reasonable time



Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	4.56
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.62

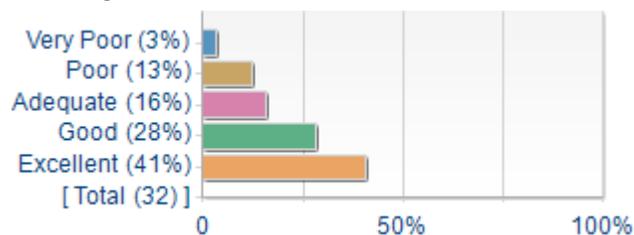
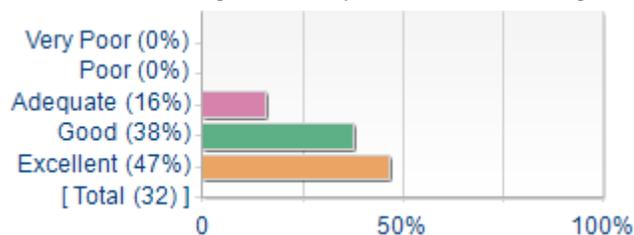
6. The instructor was helpful in providing feedback to you to improve your learning in this course



Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	3.81
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	1.06

7. The instructor demonstrated respect for students and their ideas

8. Overall, the instructor was effective in this course

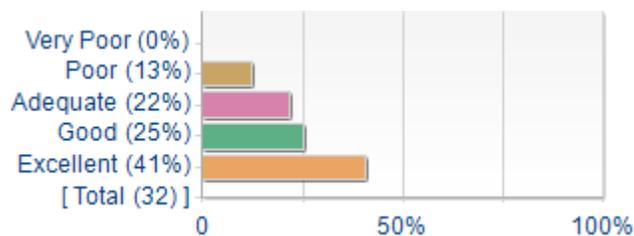


Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	4.31
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	0.74

Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	3.91
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	1.17

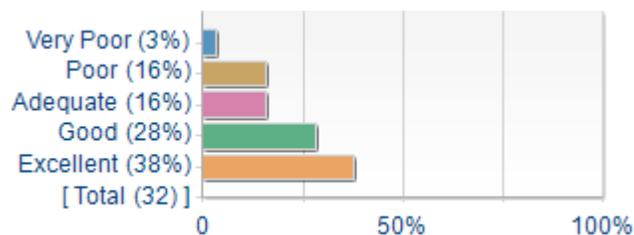
## II Course Design - Students' Ratings on the Following Statements:

1. The course structure, goals and requirements were clear



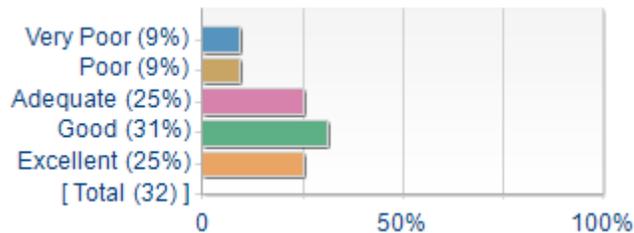
Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	3.94
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	1.08

2. The materials provided for learning the course content (e.g. handouts, posted material, lab manuals) were clear



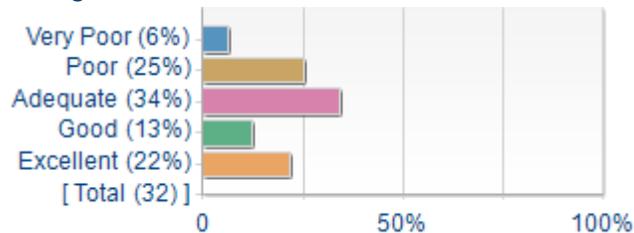
Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	3.81
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	1.20

3. The assigned work helped your understanding of the course content



Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	3.53
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	1.24

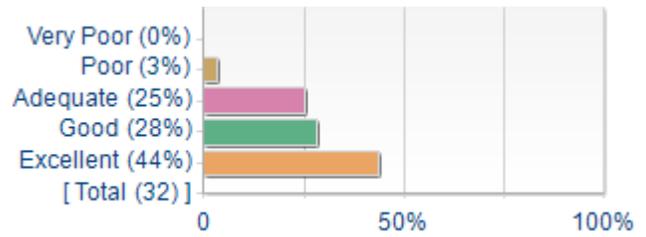
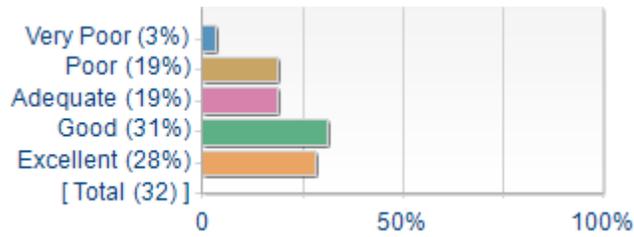
4. The course provided opportunities for you to become engaged with the course material, for example through class discussions, group work, student presentations, on-line chat, or experiential learning



Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	3.19
Median	3.00
Standard Deviation	1.23

5. The methods of assessment used to evaluate your learning in the course were fair

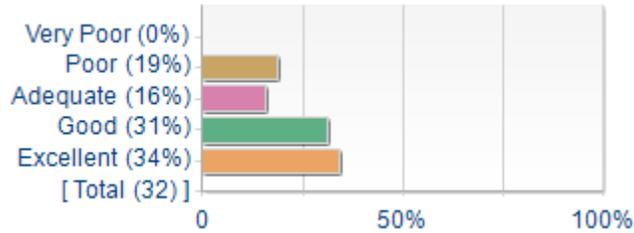
6. The course provided relevant skills and information (e.g. to other courses, your future career, or other contexts)



Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	3.63
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	1.18

Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	4.13
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	0.91

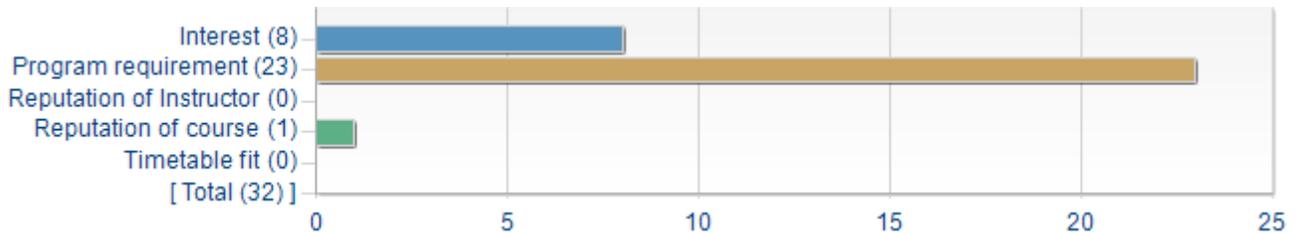
7. Overall, the course offered an effective learning experience



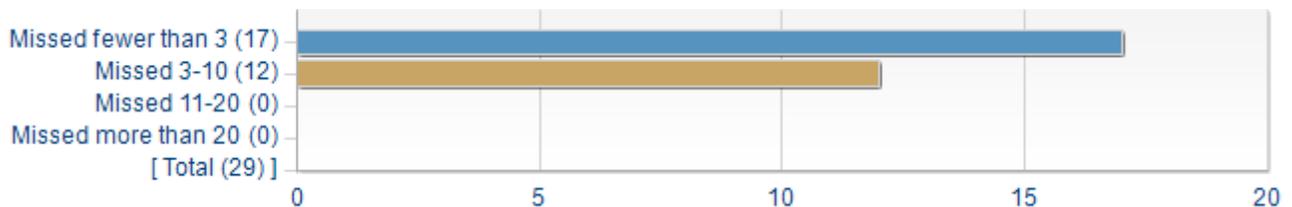
Statistics	Value
Response Count	32
Mean	3.81
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	1.12

### III Statements About The Students:

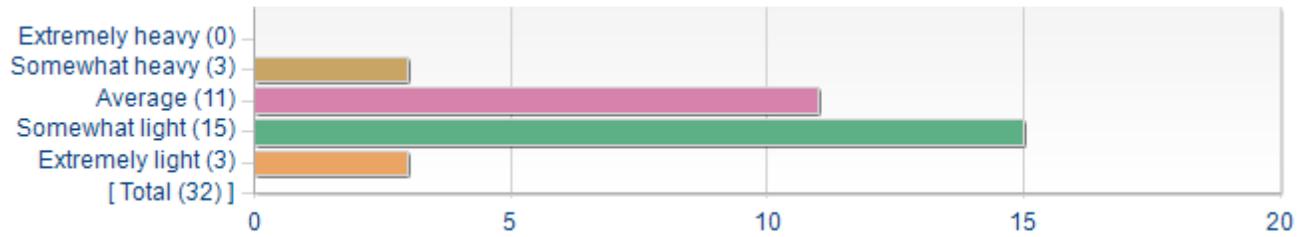
My primary reason for taking the course.



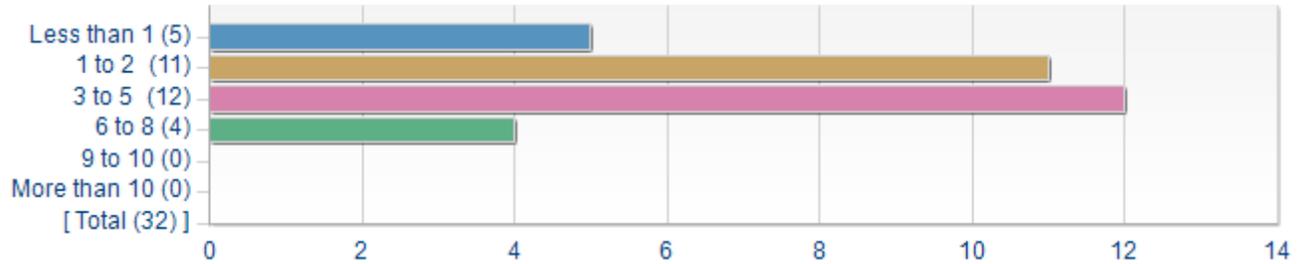
The approximate number of classes or labs that I did not attend



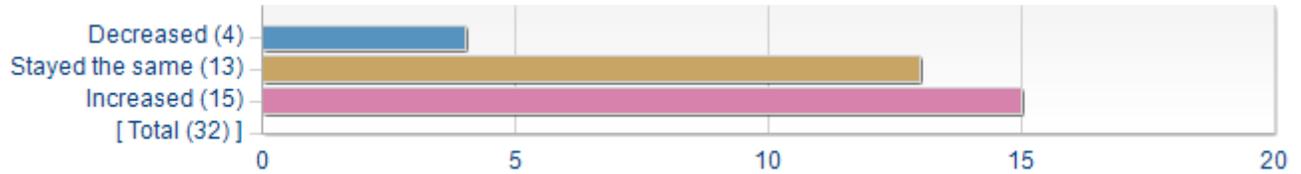
Relative to other courses I have taken at UVic, the workload in this course was



**The approximate number of hours per week I spent studying for this course outside of class time:**



**As a result of my experience in this course, my interest in the material:**



## **IIV Student Comments:**

## What strengths did your instructor (**John Volpe**) demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?

### Comments

confidence on all subject matter, always knew what he was talking about and made sure the students did as well.

well organised lectures and slides

The most effective and knowledgeable/ helpful professor I have had during my academic career.

More articulate slides, preferably with not spelling errors plaguing every slide.

very knowledagble

Good fun lectures

Enthusiasm

Strong presenter. John Volpe made the content interesting. He loved it when students participated and he had a good sense of humour.

quizes

– He was passionate about the topic

– Has a bunch of knowledge

Good lecturer, keeps them fairly entertaining and easy to follow.

Very informational in his lectures, clearly cares about what he is teaching

He understood that this is more than a pure science course and that not all students are in the faculty of science. He had clear learning objectives and good study questions. The testing related to what we were doing in class.

Passion for subjects

brought up controversial topics, or topics with multiple solutions that really made you think

He was really passionate about what he taught and was extremely knowledgeable.

He seemed very organized and engaging, but I often found his explanations more confusing than clarifying.

Very passionate, knowledgeable, answers questions well

Dr. Volpe is very passionate about what he teaches and demonstrates this through his fun, engaging lectures.

Explained material very clearly

John did a wonderful job instructing this course. He provided the class with a surplus of information that he presented and explaining thoroughly throughout the term.

John is clearly passionate and interested in the subject he is teaching.

Clear, gives examples, knows a lot upon the subject and more

The instructor's lectures were really engaging, and I always got the sense that he cared about the material he was teaching, making the class much more interesting. Some of the lectures and they way he talked about ecology really inspired me and made me much more interested in the material. Sometimes sitting in class I would feel really lucky to be there learning from someone who cared so much, and he really made me passionate about some of the material while he was teaching.

Engaged and well-spoken.

Volpe is extremely knowledgeable about the subject and clearly very passionate, making the class much more enthralling. His sense of humour also made Monday morning classes more bearable! I also appreciated the mixture of subjects, he included a little bit of history in ecology classes, which made a lot of sense! He also suggested books and extra readings which was also appreciated. Mainly, I liked the fact that Volpe took into consideration our current grades when trying to plan the midterm.

He has so much experience with the concepts being taught so everything that was taught was very interesting and kept me engaged.

John is clearly very passionate about the topic he is teaching which makes the topics really interesting. He also wants his students to do well.

A very high understanding of the topics discussed and resources for understanding.

lots of real life examples to help understand your learning

## Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor (**John Volpe**) could have helped you learn more effectively.

### Comments

Increased information on slides.

**Comments**

N/A

Not very clear in terms of giving a concept and then explaining the concept. Broken up explanations, not clear on importance of main concepts/ the concepts that should be most important.

none, he did well by us.

more engaging activities

Sometimes he would just reread the definition of something in a different tone of voice as if he was further explaining it.

More assignments that are weighted less heavily.

– Explained the concepts in more simple term– less tangents

– Explained how the readings connect with the course/where they were applicable (i.e what reading should be done for each class)

– Had more hands on aspects like conversations in groups

Overall good prof. Would take a course with him again.

I think that when a student is answering questions that other students might not be able to hear it would be helpful for Dr Volpe to reiterate their point especially when it is relevant to course content.

Clarity of concepts. Make sure you don't contradict yourself.

A lot of the vocabulary used in the lectures was heavy and unnecessarily complex that it made it hard to follow along in his lectures. I was finding myself getting lost mid way through his sentences because it was taking me a little longer to even compute what is was he just said let alone understanding the concept. The quiz and exam questions were tricky and I knew the material and knew it well but I would get caught up on the wording most of the time.

Better powerpoint slides.

Could've gone over online quiz questions and answers to ensure everybody understands why the right answer is right

He's just too smart and uses such big words all the time. Other than that he is absolutely excellent.

I have no suggestions on how John could improve. Thanks for a wonderful semester!

John often used large 'ten dollar' words when simpler language would have sufficed. Sometimes these words or other complicated ideas were simply used incorrectly, or in a contradictory fashion. Would sometimes pass off what are in fact controversial opinions as obvious aspects of ecological theory. It felt sometimes like he was bending the parameters of the course to fit what he wanted to say in. Because of this, I would say he was often guilty of overreaching with the things he would say.

On the first day of class, the instructor recognized that there are students from many different faculties in the class, but then throughout really seemed to cater to the science students, not explaining some of the more difficult concepts as well as he could have, as some science students already knew them. In class, multiple times I found the instructor would work his way up to an idea really well, and then ask multiple students to supply the answer, but when a student would get the correct answer, he sometimes didn't repeat it to the rest of the class. This was difficult because sitting at the back I cannot always hear what some students at the front are answering, and the slides do not always contain the crucial information to look back on if you miss a concept in class.

Was effective, as is.

There are none!

I think John is a great guy but it would have been more effective for him to define a concept AND THEN go into his examples, he typically explains his examples then brings in a new concept which can make it very confusing and overwhelming. Also some aspects of his lecture you didn't really know what the point was...

With reference to the above question, he seemed to hold his intelligence in high regard, meaning that much of the time his explanations were hard to understand or keep up with as far as the way he explained things. The language he used was hard to understand and seemed to be more on the side of jargon than anything else. This especially came through with the questions in exams and quizzes, I found much of the time that I got a question wrong it was because the question was expressed in an extremely complicated way and the answer was quite simple, therefore I had misinterpreted the question and given the wrong answer. It seemed that throughout the whole course many of the questions asked, even in class discussions, were trick questions.

have more notes on slides for reviewing material before quizzes and midterm. Sometimes I couldn't write down everything he said and there was not always notes to look back on in the slides

**Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.****Comments**

assignments other than quizzes or tests

tutorial.

## Comments

Clearer explanation of the material and course requirements more comprehensive than a weekly online quiz would be nice. Didn't feel like this class was worth the money or the time. I wasn't encouraged to interact with the material, apply it, or go indepth. This course was simply checking a requirement box

make the online quizzes have less weight overall.

more engaging activities

Overall I really liked the course. If it was not at 8:30AM on a Monday I am sure more students would attend lecture/ be engaged during lecture.

– A tutorial or lab would help to synthesize the material! Just the lecture format was not helpful

– The quizzes should be worth less, maybe have more to do this. 50% of your grade is comprised of 60 questions (all the quizzes combined) which is a lot of pressure/is the most effective learning style for all people.

Found quiz questions were rather tricky and slightly frustrating, despite being prepared for them.

I really enjoyed this course overall.

Carnivorous plants don't use insects for energy, only nutrients. Incorrect information in the lecture made it hard for me to engage in this course.

The quizzes were weighted pretty heavily at 10% each. I wish the midterm was worth a little more

I felt the assessment of learning was extremely unfair. The online quizzes had so few questions that all it would take is you for you to get a few wrong and your grade would be drastically effected. I didn't care for how heavily the quizzes were worth, in that it was unfair how 12 questions were worth 10% of my grade. nearly 1% per question. There is a chance it would have been better had we been assigned a project or assignments throughout the year as well. Or I would have even preferred written tests over online. I found myself making common errors when reading the question which is not something I struggle with when it is written. Having the entire graded coursework be online is unconstitutional for a university class. There is a reason I am not taking this course online, I struggle when it comes to that style of learning and my grades unfortunately reflected as so.

I was very disappointed with the course. The 4 lines provided as a description for the course is far from adequate and I am sad that I wasted my credits on this course. I was expecting a focus on environmental problems, but we mainly spoke about basic ecology – something that I know already.

Maybe an assignment to put some of our ideas into effect...although I suppose the final exam essay will do the trick.

NA

Some of the quizzes took some really obscure material and I think perhaps could do more with the core facts that obscure questions

This is a wonderful course although the method of evaluation is not fair. Completing online quizzes within a very short time frame is not a good judgement of a students' understanding. I am disappointed that the lab component of this class was removed because I believe I would have been able to learn and demonstrate my understanding better in a lab.

Simpler, more direct language in lectures. Try and see opinions for what they are, and leave them out of the material as much as possible. Or, if you want to give an opinion, be clear about the fact that this is what you think, and that other people's opinions differ on the matter.

More readings review ?

The slides did not seem to be up to date at all, as some of the slides said "you will learn this in your tutorial" and there were no tutorials for the class, therefor we didn't go over that material. The course syllabus said that we would cover topics that were never even mentioned in the course, and failed to give an adequate timeline or summary of any material. For example, it says we will do a case study on ancient Rome. The lecture slides, and correlating readings and study questions sometimes had different names and it was sometimes hard to know what readings to do for what section. Similarly, some of the study question sheets had completely different names that the readings or lectures. This was maybe because a TA was in charge of the online portion, while instructor was in charge of the in-class stuff. One of the questions on the first quiz, asking "Terrestrial plants often have defensive structures or compounds to repel grazing by herbivores. Why are such features generally rare in marine plants?" was a short answer, and then we didn't learn about it until two weeks later in class. Found material just needs to really be updated and ensure online material, course slides, readings, syllabus, and quizzes all correlate to each other.

No improvement needed.

It could have a wider variety of ways to test the knowledge of the student, like essays Other than that, it went really well.

Short assignments throughout the semester so that our grade does not strictly depend on doing well on the quizzes, midterms, and final.

If the online quizzes could be posted right after class and not at 12. Students that have a break after class would have enjoyed being able to do the quiz earlier rather than later. Also he didn't hand the take home final out till 12 so left my morning wasting time for it to be posted.

I know that they had previously had a tutorial and had taken it away due to course feedback but I believe that I would have benefitted from a tutorial and the ability to discuss topics and lectures in smaller groups and with TAs as I am often not one to approach people to create a study group.

**My Instructor gave time in class to complete this survey.**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	6	19%
No	23	74%
Does not apply (online course, field course, etc.)	2	6%