



**University  
of Victoria**

## **UVic CES Instructor Report 201801 - John Volpe - TPCS:ECOLOGICAL RESTORATN - ES 382 - A01 (CRN 21512)**

### **UVic Course Experience Survey - Spring 2018**

Project Audience 45

Responses Received 27

Response Ratio 60%

#### **Subject Details**

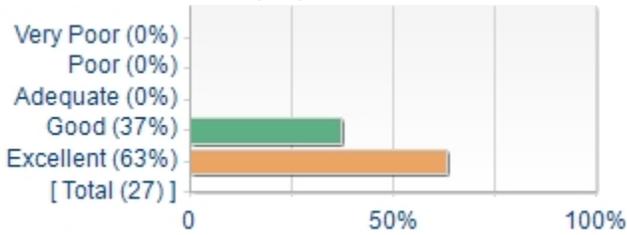
<b>CRN</b>	21512
<b>VNUMBER</b>	V00102225

**Creation Date** Mon, Apr 30, 2018



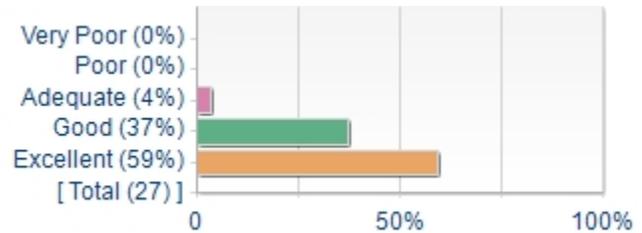
## I Instructor's Teaching - Students' Ratings on the Following Statements:

1. The instructor was prepared for course sessions



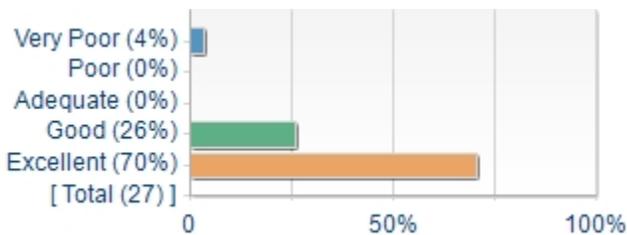
Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.63
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.49

2. The instructor's explanations of concepts were clear



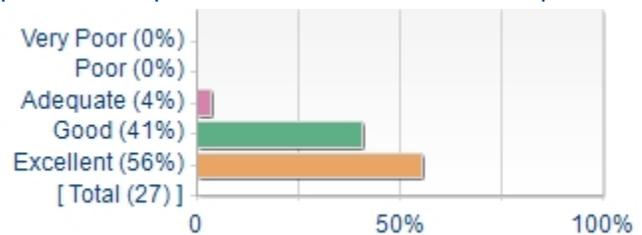
Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.56
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.58

3. The instructor motivated you to learn in this course



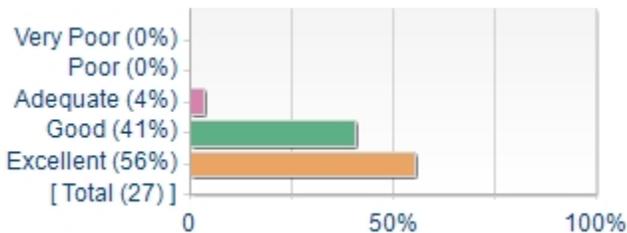
Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.59
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.84

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



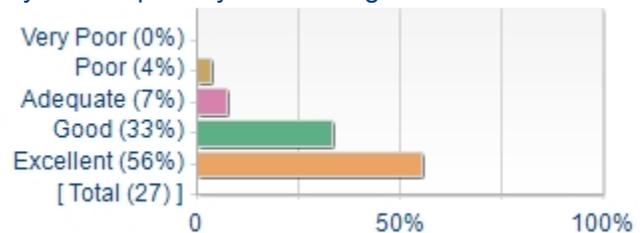
Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.52
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.58

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



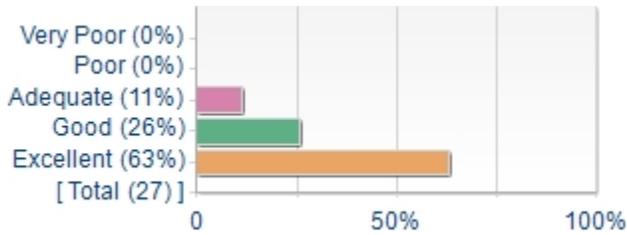
Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.52
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.58

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



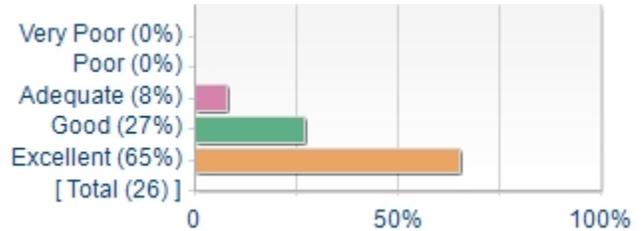
Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.41
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.80

7. The instructor demonstrated respect for students and their ideas



Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.52
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.70

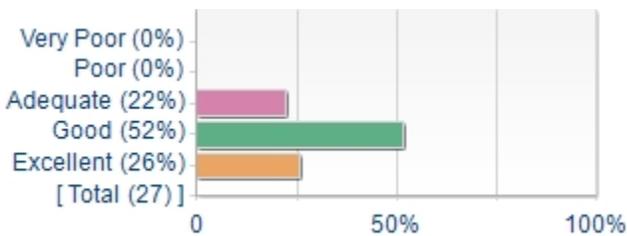
8. Overall, the instructor was effective in this course



Statistics	Value
Response Count	26
Mean	4.58
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.64

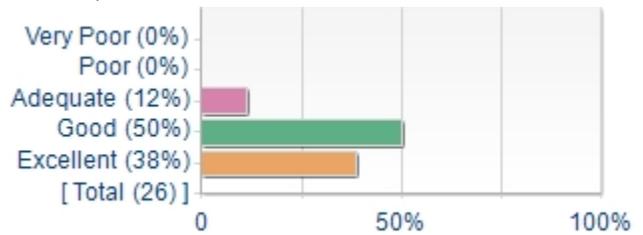
## II Course Design - Students' Ratings on the Following Statements:

1. The course structure, goals and requirements were clear



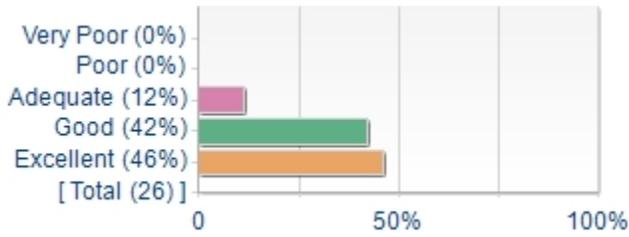
Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.04
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	0.71

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



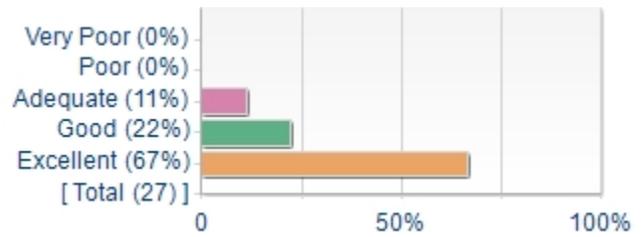
Statistics	Value
Response Count	26
Mean	4.27
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	0.67

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



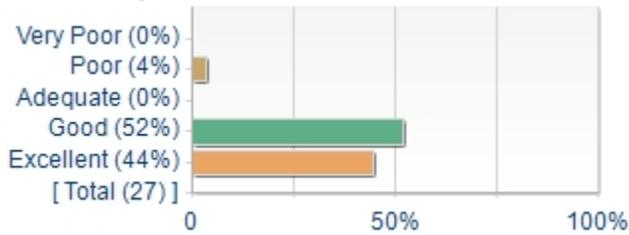
Statistics	Value
Response Count	26
Mean	4.35
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	0.69

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



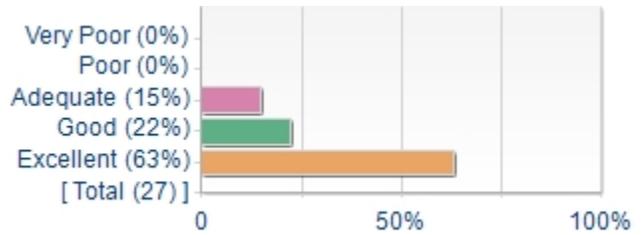
Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.56
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.70

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



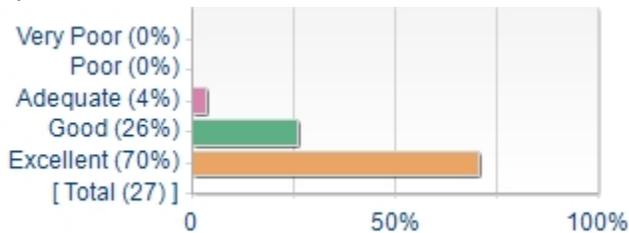
Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.37
Median	4.00
Standard Deviation	0.69

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



Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.48
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.75

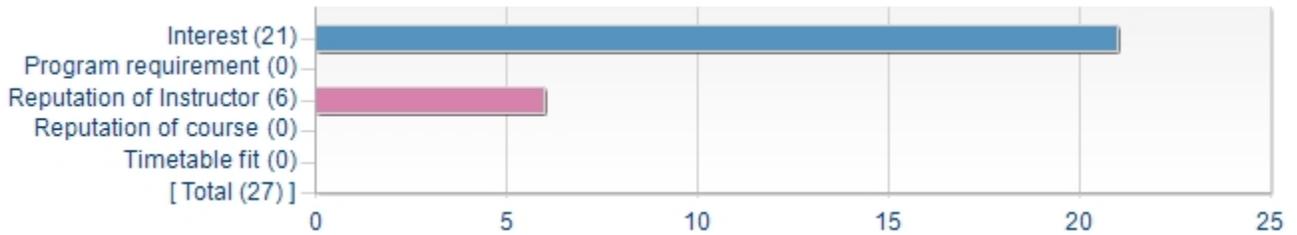
7. Overall, the course offered an effective learning experience



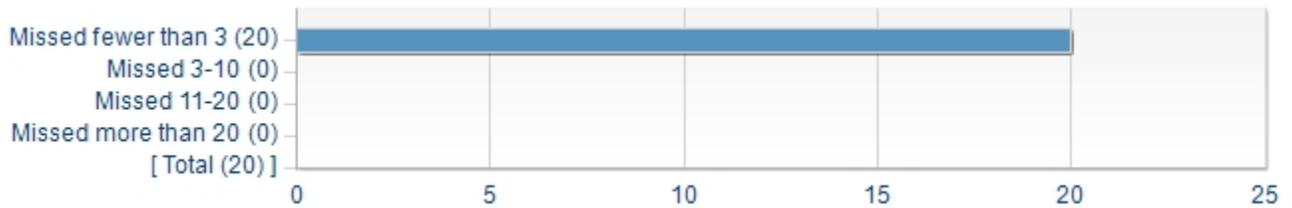
Statistics	Value
Response Count	27
Mean	4.67
Median	5.00
Standard Deviation	0.55

### III Statements About The Students:

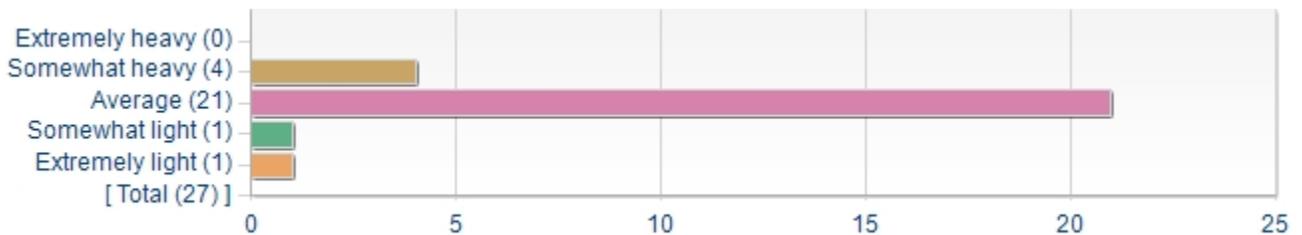
#### My primary reason for taking the course.



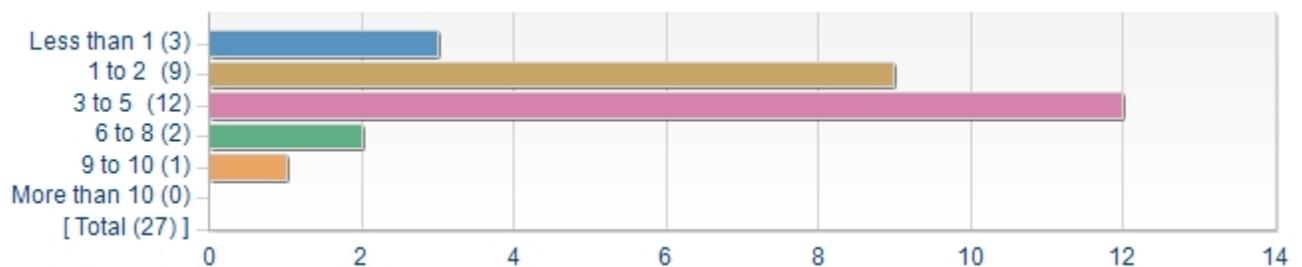
#### The approximate number of classes or labs that I did not attend



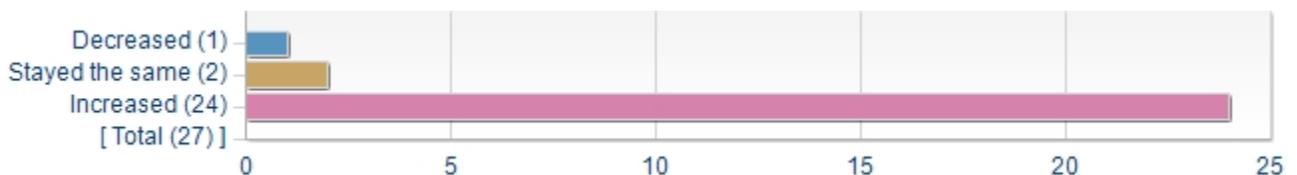
#### Relative to other courses I have taken at UVic, the workload in this course was



#### 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
Has a very creative way of explaining concepts. Even during a 3 hour long lecture he keeps you engaged.
the field trips were interesting videos were a fun 'non' academic assignment
This was the best class I've taken so far in university! Really challenged the way I think about food ecology and culture.
Engaging with real world applications of concepts was done really well both with lectures and field trips
Really good instructor for this course!!! So knowledgable and passionate about the subject which really kept me interested and engaged in the material and topics.
Great instructor for explaining things and keeping learning engaging. Really enjoyed the lecture talking about the history of chicken.
The field trips were a great addition to the in-class learning. It was nice to take an enviro course where we actually got to see the positive. I think in this program its very easy to get overwhelmed and lose hope and feel like there's nothing you can do- but hearing the actions of real people in the local community was super inspiring/ interesting/ motivating. Overall, it was a great course. Thank you!
I like his passion for food and I am engaged in his line of questioning
It was great that John was passionate about what he was teaching and did a good job of trying to engage the class with concrete, real world examples of concepts by organizing field trips with local food businesses
Dr. Volpe organized a lot of great field trips for us so that we could experience the science and culture of food in a hands-on way. His lectures were really interesting as well, and I liked how the readings were in different formats, between news articles and academic papers. He was also very accommodating to our concerns which was very nice.
excellent preparedness, super interesting curriculum, great field trips.
This was a great course! -lots of field trips were a really nice way to experience what we were learning, which made the concepts clearer and more meaningful. Having to pay the extra course fee was definitely worth it for all the memorable experiences we had, the food we tasted and the people we met. (I especially liked the visit to Foxglove Farm, and what Micheal Ableman had to say about philosophy.) -assignments allowed us to be creative and research what we were personally interested in -using historical stories in the lectures was engaging -lecture slides with explanations on them were super helpful -John clearly wanted us to be excited about the course -gave deadline extensions and changed criteria of assignments that were more in line with students' abilities
The lectures were some of the most well structured & interesting that I've had in my undergrad. Food, drinks, excursions and guest lectures were all very informative.
Great at integrating various aspects to apply to the course subject. The usual John Volpe remarks I hear from peers - great lecturer, ties in all the course material very well. Thanks for the new course! Having field trips were very important to solidify the course concepts or at least see it in a "real life" context. Would recommend this course to every ES class / good follow up to more food related ES courses.
Always available to discuss questions. Enthusiastic and infectiously passionate about the subject matter. Used great articles to connect to concepts. Put sincere effort into finding amazing experiential learning opportunities outside of class.
Making an effort to make lectures engaging, thought provoking and humorous, and providing amazing field trip experiences.
John is clearly passionate about the subject matter, and passes that passion on to his students. He encouraged us to think differently and food and culture, and our relationship to it. A lot of effort was put in to making sure we had experiential, hands-on experiences, which really made the course what

Comments
it was. It was definitely a memorable experience!
Well prepared, passionate, welcoming to questions
connection to material and infectious love for food! The field trips were amazing and I really appreciate all the work that went into coordinating all the various moving parts.
Volpe is an engaging and passionate professor that inspire his students to become involved in the material. Having experiential learning in the form of field trips and food the class allowed for students to fully understand and feel what Volpe was teaching.
John is an excellent speaker. His stories are very engaging and thought provoking. John did an outstanding job with regards to the experiential learning component of the course.
John invited many Guest speakers that make me learn a lot knowledge, and the field trips are very awesome! Interesting and helpful!
Absolute passion for tomatoes.
He was interested in the topic which made it more interesting
John is a great professor and lecturer. I always enjoy going to his classes. The field trips were really fun and exposed me to new information, ideas, opinions, and perspectives on food. THANK YOU FOR THE EXTENSION, much appreciated my good man.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-very knowledgable and interested in topics covered</li> <li>-put in a lot of effort to make this class interesting and engaging esp. in regard to field trips and guest speakers</li> <li>-made himself available and approachable both during class and outside of class hours</li> <li>-accommodating and flexible when it came to deadlines/projects</li> </ul>
Volpe is highly articulate, and his ability to story tell/ deconstruct course concepts actually helped me greatly to understand topics I otherwise might not have.
The fieldtrips were very interesting and helped to a have a hands on experience for the course content. Definitely increased my interest in the connection between food and the environment and will continue in this field of sustainability in my university degree.

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

Comments
n/a
John Volpe's lectures and learning goals were achieved during this course, however, the material being talked about was old stock and dull. The topics talked about in this class were not unique or distinct and seemed that they should have been discussed in a course like ES 200.
I really enjoyed the lectures, I liked the audio recording assigned reading especially.
The final paper should have a little more structure and direction from the instructor because it is worth quite a lot of the mark and was slightly unclear at times.
I feel like it would have helped to have more direction in regards to the paper. It was nice to have a choice as to what we wanted to write on but it was also challenging to understand the point of what I was investigating other than that people seem to be attached to their traditional food. Then again I never went to talk to the instructor about it. I feel like the word count was too high for this paper.
More discussion, less slide lecturing.
This may have not been the case with other students, but I did not receive a lot of feedback on my project proposal and would have liked to.
A little better organization, though obviously that's not all on Dr. Volpe.
made more small group discussions in the classroom instead of just pitching questions to the class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-for the proposal assignment, grades seemed to be based mostly off of the "paper outline" section. However, some students put a lot of effort into the other sections, and this didn't always seem to be worth it because of limited feedback on the marked assignment</li> <li>-making sure assignment guidelines and % of final grade they are worth are clear and consistent in all documents</li> </ul>

Comments
The proposal assignment was a little unclear. Better explanations for what was expected in each section would have been helpful.
Maybe incorporate a couple group questions to fill in the long lecture time. Mostly to get people thinking or for a change of pace.
Breaks were good enough for me, if you still wanted to get through the lecture and then have students discuss about the whole lecture rather than particular bits without certain information.
Maybe one or two smaller assignments to get more feedback instead of one massive one.
I understand the value of allowing us to come to our own conclusions and making our own connections, but I wish there was a little more clarity from the beginning of where to look for those connections, and particularly clarity at the end to verify that those connections were in fact made. I feel like in the very last minutes of the very last class it kind of all came together for me, but now that I want to verify those connections with you and my peers, and in some cases challenge them, but the class is over. I feel like you built a compelling narrative and gave us the pieces throughout the semester to guide us towards conclusions about real food and its role in our culture. However I felt like it took us, or at least me, too long to get there, and then we didn't get the opportunity to really scrutinize and challenge those conclusions.
Found lectures a little dry and did not feel comfortable engaging in discussion in the class format. Often class discussions were prompted with some exasperation on the part of the instructor, like we weren't being engaged enough, and I always find this to be discouraging. I understand the frustration, but that room was really awful and not conducive to conversation.
All of the course marking material were heavily weighted to the end of the course; it would have been easier for me personally to apply myself better to all of the assignments if a couple of them were earlier in the semester. Having a huge final paper due just over a week before our final exam is extremely daunting especially when other assignments were due just before the paper.
Have small group discussion. Instead of a final exam, weekly blog post would be an interesting way to engage students on the material (field trips, lectures and readings)
Connect concepts across classes more; I felt like all the stuff we learned about carbs in an early class was left in that lecture and not connected to other material. Besides the fact that "everything is made of corn".
could make some of the major concepts tie back together in some ways the course felt unconnected
Not applicable.
Professor Volpe has really helped aid my academic experience in Environmental Studies and is a large reason as to why I am inspired to pursue my ES degree. My only suggestion was, towards the final paper due date, he should initiate a more thorough discussion about confusions/clarifications for all students in the future. When we did ask questions it felt a tad rushed and I still am confused as to what exactly we were supposed to write about in our paper because it appeared to be open ended, but then not?
Perhaps having a midterm in the middle would have helped to have known what to expect in the final

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

Comments
More marks near the beginning/ middle of course so we can have feedback on our work. Too much of the work was at the end of the semester.
I was REALLY looking forward to this course and it turned out to be my lease favourite course of the semester (possibly my least favourite ES course as well) — I would not recommend this course to fellow students based on the following reasons;
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The material was boring, the topics touched on in the course could have easily been learned on my own time by reading a few academic articles or watching a youtube video</li> <li>2. I have taken Dr. Volpe's classes before and actually enjoyed them, however, I felt like he was generally uninterested in the course material and not really fully there during lectures</li> <li>3. Extending the assignments was ridiculous, this was an upper level class with only two 'real' assignments that had been assigned since the beginning of the term, if people were unable to complete them that is TOTALLY on them, I sacrificed studying and preparing for other courses because I was under the assumption that paper would be due on the real due date — extremely frustrating</li> </ol>

**Comments**

Maybe my discontent with this class was a "me" issue, however, this classed seemed like a chore and by the end of the semester I found myself dreading Wednesday afternoons

I wouldn't have minded more smaller projects throughout the course.

Should have a midterm instead of a final during exam period because most of the lecture and concepts are covered in the first half of the semester whereas the second half is more hands on experience. The second half of the semester could involve mini-assignments or responses to engage with the field trips.

I loved the field trips, they were ALL really good, engaging and helpful with applying course concepts to real life. More field trips!!!

Also, the idea suggested in class of this course being a week-long intensive is a really good idea and I would have loved the opportunity to take this course over a reading break or in the summer.

I found a three hour class was very hard to sit through... maybe having two days a week instead of one?

I found the field trips to be more effective for this class than the lectures. So maybe more field trips for next time. Also, spreading out the weight of grades would be nice. Doing a small reflection for a few of the field trips and connecting it to the course could be a good idea.

I didn't like how heavily it was weighted to the end of the course. I found at the beginning I wasn't as engaged in the course and wasn't putting that much time into the course, by the end I was getting engaged but was spending too much time on the course. It would have been nice to have evened this out.

I found that John did not directly engage the class with assigned weekly readings and sometimes it was unclear how they fit into the lecture presentation. Also, I think the proposal and recipe should be due earlier in the course so that assignments are not all towards the end of the semester. Another suggestion for this course is a field trip to the UVIC Campus Community Garden as they are close by and do organic farming and workshops.

Again, more organization for the course would be great. The video project was really awesome and a great highlight of the course. Keeping the field trips coming would be amazing! I don't really think a final exam is necessarily appropriate for this course though as a lot of it is experiential and I think it's hard to test that. Maybe changing the weight of the assignments to be more fair?

take about 15%–20% to away from the paper and final exam and distribute them over short reading responses throughout the course, to take some of the heat off the paper and even out the workload.

–The end of the semester is very busy for everyone, so making the video assignment due at least 2 weeks earlier would decrease stress and need for extensions.

–Having a midterm or short assignment in February would help us know what style of questions to expect for the final

–Course readings weren't always mentioned during the lecture, so sometimes it was difficult to connect the 2

–Having class discussions would be a good way to engage with the concepts more. Most people have personally experienced a lot of what was said in the lectures, so it would be nice to see people's personal opinions

–Having a lecture about the social aspect of food (how food is usually a shared meal and is an important part of cultural ceremonies...) would add another interesting dimension to the course's topics. Since most of the people in the class have already taken ES 240, maybe the first 2 lectures could be condensed into one lecture, so there would be space for this topic.

Separating the projects up a bit more would have helped with the final course load. Having the proposal due in the first week of February and the film due a bit earlier would have been easier to manage as a student. I really enjoyed doing the film, it was an interesting project and I would like to do more of those in future classes. I wasn't able to attend Saltspring Island that late in the semester so having it earlier may have been beneficial. Overall really interesting class that I would recommend to other students.

Midway through after the proposal, make a rough outline of the research/reflection paper due, or

Definitely getting the students to talk about their paper with each other during class time. Something to get them to vocalize their ideas out loud because of the unexpected numbers in the course, not everyone gets a good chance to do this in a whole group setting.

People can be unsure of what ideas they would like to express or just simply being confident in the research paper / don't know how to fill in the content or level of detail required / having them address subquestions for their research paper.

Shifting the course weight from the end of the course to be more spread out. Overall, this class was incredible and was amazingly engaging. I would recommend this course to everyone, and I wish I could take it again.

More field trips! Also, this would have been amazing as a smaller class (maybe offer it each semester and cap at 30, rather than one giant class for one semester...)

This course should not be listed as "Special topics in Ecological Restoration"! John made it clear in the first class that it

Comments
was not what the course was going to be about, but it was still a misleading title. I probably would not have taken the class if it had been labeled accurately, because it is not at all relevant to restoration work (although I'm happy I did! It is relevant for life and stuff!)
One of my favourite courses! The field trips were so enlightening and I loved the variety of people we talked to. A course that I definitely feel I got my money's worth.
3 hour lecture seemed gratuitous and incongruous with other experiential format of class. It seems like a class such as this could be field trip focussed with discussion-based lectures on the side. Definitely would recommend a smaller class size in future. This course material has a lot of potential, and Professor Volpe is the right instructor for the job, but the large group was a detractor.
NO FINAL EXAM. This is a course that should have a take home final. We should be able to take time and reflect on the topics in this course. A final exam is NOT an appropriate method of examination on this type of material. I think it is important to have class discussions on the readings. Without a discussion, it is difficult to stay motivated to do them and I get much more out of a course where students can engage in the material together.
Awesome content, but could improve with a different structure. My advice is: since the course content is mostly in the first half, have a midterm instead of a final to evaluate understanding of core concepts. Then, to ensure that attendance continues and that students engage with field trips, have multiple smallish writing reports to reflect on field trip/guest lecture content. I think this would be beneficial because a lot of the second half was very informal and we all had different experiences. I found that worrying about a final exam during field trips detracted from my enjoyment of the experience because I felt pressured to retain facts rather than free to immerse myself in the experience. The final paper and video was nice though, they allowed some good reflections on course content in a more personal and personal-interest context.
I think there should be a mid-term because a lot of the lecture material is in the first half and a lot of the grades are weighted to the end of term. I think instead of a final exam there could be a reflective synthesis maybe 4 pages that are prompted by the last lectures and the feild trips and teking into account some of the major concepts from the first half.
The Salt Spring trip could have been earlier on in the semester when people aren't going through hell trying to get their final paper down. I didn't go because of timing. This course would be cool as a field school like somebody in class had suggested.
All of the course grade came from projects/exams at the end of the course. Maybe spread it out and have a few more assignments worth less to break it up a bit. It still worked out well though.
Directions regarding our course assignments need to be much clearer and more accessible! It took me a long period of time to even find the youtube link and become the manager of the recipe page. Having a more thorough outline/essay instruction would have helped me to avoid plenty of confusion, especially since the class is weighted towards the end of the semester where there were several other projects occurring.
The structure of the class was excellent otherwise, and I think that field trips were coordinated appropriately to match the course concepts we were learning at the time.
more fieldtrips, a midterm

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

Options	Count	Percentage
Yes	2	8%
No	24	92%
Does not apply (online course, field course, etc.)	0	0%