

Evaluation results: Biogeochemical Cycles in the Earth System - an Overview (November, 2016)

Course details

Goal of the module is an overview over the global Earth System, its major components (Atmosphere, ocean, land surfaces and cryosphere), their interactions through exchanges of energy, momentum and materials, and the major physical, chemical and biological processes controlling these exchanges. A special emphasis is given to the role of the global cycles of biogeochemical elements and their modifications in the context of global change. The course was taught by Martin Heimann. Detailed information is provided on the following webpage: <http://www.imprs-gbgc.de/index.php/Courses/OverviewCourse2016>

10 out of 15 participants filled in the survey by the end of 2016.

Survey results

Please assess the course in general.

The course stimulated my interest in this topic.

- 10% Disagree
- 10% Neither agree nor disagree
- 50% Agree
- 30% Strongly agree

I think that the level of difficulty of this course is appropriate.

- 40% Neither agree nor disagree
- 50% Agree
- 10% Strongly agree

I liked the structure of the course.

- 50% Neither agree nor disagree
- 20% Agree
- 30% Strongly agree

Overall, I am satisfied with this course.

50% Neither agree nor disagree

10% Agree

40% Strongly agree

Please assess the lectures.

The context of the lectures was clear to me (connexion to overarching topic of the course, embeddedness in general course structure).

20% Neither agree nor disagree

30% Agree

50% Strongly agree

The level of detail of the lectures was adequate.

50% Neither agree nor disagree

30% Agree

20% Strongly agree

I am satisfied with the contribution of the instructor.

20% Neither agree nor disagree

40% Agree

40% Strongly agree

Please assess the practicals.

The context of the practicals was clear to me (connexion to overarching topic of the course, embeddedness in general course structure).

10% Disagree

30% Neither agree nor disagree

50% Agree

10% Strongly agree

The level of detail of the lectures was adequate.

10% Disagree

60% Neither agree nor disagree

30% Agree

I am satisfied with the contribution of the instructor.

30% Neither agree nor disagree

50% Agree

20% Strongly agree

Evaluation of the module 'intro to soil science and mineral phase' by Beate Michalzik:

The context of the module was clear to me (connexion to overarching topic of the course, embeddedness in general course structure).

- 42% Agree
- 58% Strongly agree

To follow this module, my previous knowledge was adequate.

- 8% Disagree
- 17% Neither agree nor disagree
- 50% Agree
- 33% Strongly agree

The level of detail of this module was adequate.

- 8% Neither agree nor disagree
- 58% Agree
- 33% Strongly agree

I am satisfied with the contribution of the instructor to the course.

- 33% Agree
- 67% Strongly agree

Evaluation of the module on soil fauna by Markus Lange:

The context of the module was clear to me (connexion to overarching topic of the course, embeddedness in general course structure).

- 8% Neither agree nor disagree
- 50% Agree
- 42% Strongly agree

To follow this module, my previous knowledge was adequate.

- 8% Disagree
- 33% Neither agree nor disagree
- 42% Agree
- 17% Strongly agree

The level of detail of this module was adequate.

- 25% Neither agree nor disagree
- 58% Agree
- 17% Strongly agree

I am satisfied with the contribution of the instructor to the course.

8% Disagree

8% Neither agree nor disagree

50% Agree

33% Strongly agree

Please comment on the last course day, the presentations and discussions of the research questions on global change! Do you think the module was helpful?

- Questions were not clearly formulated
- helpful, yes. but the problems were too complex for the other people (who did not work on that problem) to fully understand during the presentations
- Less helpful, since the period between the course and presentations was too long, connection to other presented topics was partly lost by just presenting computed numbers
- I think these were the most helpful part of the course, and I would have gotten much more out of the course if these were the main focus.
- The module was interesting but not helpful since I am working in a completely different field.
- The gap between the course days and the presentations was too long. Furthermore I would have preferred if the presentations had not taken place in the middle of the day but rather in the morning/late afternoon.
- very helpful to get the overall impression and concept ideas of the importance of what we do
- Yes, they are very useful.
- Yes
- Overall the module was helpful in understanding the connections between the different topics that are regarded at MPI-BGC.

Which parts of the course were especially good (and why)?

- Introduction, historical background Strong focus on data and figures from actual publications
- paleoclimate topic because it puts our modern-focused research into perspective
- insight in modelling
- working on the research questions was the best part, because that's when your level of understanding is exposed
- The terrestrial part was interesting, since the processes they are tangible.
- There was nothing that particularly stuck out to me.
- the best choice was to have Martin Heimann as the lecturer; he can present very well and understandable and knows everything
- Question and answer part.
- climate change. It broadened my horizon.
- I liked the attempt to explain modeling with simple models. Still some more information would have been nice. In addition, the overall picture was always clear - maybe because all lectures were held by the same person.

Which parts of the course were not so good / not so fitting / not well enough presented?

- General introduction to ocean, atmosphere, etc.
- as a non-modeller: it felt like I attended an "overview on ecosystem modelling" course, but I expected an "overview on ecosystem processes" course with maybe a little modelling on the side
- other element cycles were not well presented/ discussed too short exercises done in the course were not evaluated
- I have no modeling background, so for me building equations for even a simple model is some kind of magic, this is what the exercises were focused on and what I would have liked more of during the lecture
- Some parts contained too much chemistry details which I did not find interesting and the level of complexity was too high (for those parts).
- I would have strongly preferred if the different climate models would have been discussed in more detail. Changes in global temperature are at first only numbers, but what the differences between 1 or 2°C actually mean for the planet were only slightly mentioned at best, but would have helped immensely in showcasing the importance of the subject.
- a bit more time for the practicals would be great
- not found
- For an overview course I feel pretty good.
- Some more information/help with the practical part would have been nice.

Do you have other suggestions for a future course?

- Exercises should be implemented right at the time when the topic is covered (e.g. after the lectures). Last day could be used for REFLECTION about each PhD's own research question and 1) how it fits into the general picture, 2) how does it serve the community, 3) what is not known and why is it important to be answered
- Martin was very relaxed during the course, which was great. I think it's very helpful to have a kind of laid-back atmosphere during such a course. There is enough competition and resulting stress in science already.
- do presentations after the corresponding course
- An update of outdated slides would be useful. The tasks should be done on the day on which the topic was talked through. Results could then be presented on the next day.
- more script practice on models
- no