

# ”Ett annat perspektiv på teknikutvecklingen och vår plats på jorden”

## Technology, power and future of humanity 2014

### Fewer student than anticipated

26 admitted students  
13 registered students  
9 active students

We assumed that the number of active students would be the same as previous years, which was not the case. The course was planned for a larger group of students but we managed to adapt the course after the new circumstances.

Although we did find many advantages with a smaller group, it would have benefited from more participants. With a bigger group it might be easier to get the discussion going without us continuously interfering. However, a lot of the feedback from the students showed the opposite, that they did appreciate a smaller group.

### Objectives

The course structure changed a lot from the previous year. We changed it so it would suit our interests and what we wanted to highlight this year. Apart from the course goals we decided to work out our own goals:

- Creative pedagogy and focus on good seminars and workshops to engage students in the course content.
- Move away from already covered topics such as nuclear power and instead focus on recent technological development.
- Increase the diversity amongst the working group members and lecturer.
- Provide different perspectives on technology and technological development. Avoid creating an either techno-pessimistic or techno-positivistic atmosphere.
- Create an acceptance of different opinions in the classroom.

Our own goals made the process more fun to work with. By doing this we also made sure we had the same idea of what we wanted the course to be like.

### Experimenting with learning methods

#### Seminars

The seminars were divided into different themes depending on which topics had been covered. We took the advice from the last year's coordinator and planned the first seminar to be a bit more challenging with the purpose to set a high standard from the very beginning. The outcome was a rather traditional seminar with questions from the literature directly asked to the students. This did not suit us and proved to be a bit too serious for our taste. Therefore, we changed the design of the coming two seminars whereas the discussions were based on the students' interests, which turned out much better. If you missed a seminar the students meet up and recorded their discussion and sent it to us.

#### Workshops

We created two experimental workshops with the purpose to go beyond the traditional learning environment and further encourage discussions. In the first workshop *The fight for the future* we worked with dialogue and debate. In the second workshop *The Robot Factory* focus was on creativity, analytic tools and risk assessments.

#### Literature

Elective books: *The God Species - Saving the planet in the age of humans* by Mark Lynas and *Abundance - The future is better than we think* by Diamandis & Kotler. Mandatory book: *Technology matters questions to live with* by David E. Nye. The elective books have a very positive view of technology and technological development. We complemented these books with more critical and analytical papers in the course reader. We chose to have fewer books so the students would be more encouraged to read the course reader. We also emphasized the importance of the course reader.

#### Lectures

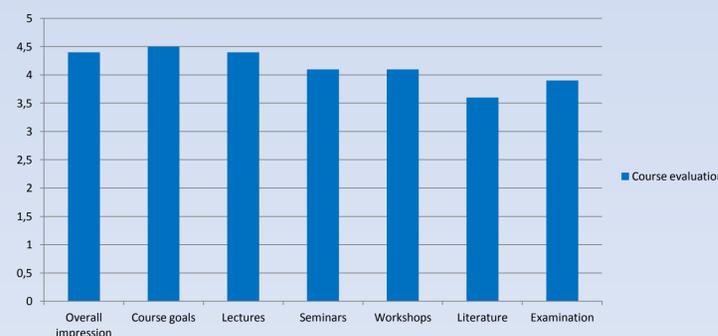
We had a lot of new lecturer this year and the vast majority was appreciated. The only problem was that the active students were few so sometimes there were only three students attending a lecture.

#### Examination

We had three written assignments. *Experiment Earth*, imaginative assignments were the students had to take on an extraterrestrial approach and look on the technological development from another perspective. An analytic book review of the elective book and *The future we choose*, an essay on 500 words on the topic which were published online on a blog. <http://framtidenvivaljer.blogspot.co.uk/>

### Results

Course evaluation



#### Comments from the students

“Intressanta diskussioner”  
“Workshops har varit kul och intressanta! Nyttigt med diskussioner!”  
“Gör alla gästföreläsningar obligatoriska, mycket intressanta”  
“Kul kurs, intressant och givande, många bra diskussioner”  
“Det var en bra kurs!”

### Conclusions

Technology, power and the future of the humanity 2014 were characterized by a lot of discussions in class. We had discussions after almost every lecture, during workshops and seminars, which turned out to be a good way to interweave the topics. The discussions between the coordinators were also plentiful and turned out to be a successful ingredient.

This year we put greater focus on technology in everyday life and the interaction between people and technology. A wide range of different perspectives and an acceptance of different opinions characterized the course.

### Advices

- Make your own course!
- Correct the final assignment together with the examiner
- More critical thinking and why we need it! Especially together with *Abundance* and the god species.
- The need for oral exams
- Make up assignment if you miss more than 75% of the lecturers
- A short meeting with the lecturers in the planning phase is a good idea
- Allocate time for discussion between the coordinators and in the class
- Remove David E. Nye's book from the course.