Course Report AS7008 HT16

Respondents: 1
Answer Count: 1
Answer Frequency: 100.00 %

. Teacher

Teacher

Claes-Ingvar Björnsson

. Number of students who took the exam

Number of students who took the exam

7

. Number of students who passed the course

Number of students who passed the course

6

. Description of changes since the previous time the course was given.

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The trend towards less mathematical stringency and, instead, more emphasis on a physical understanding continued. The main thing that changes between the years is the area in which the projects are done. This year it was X-ray binaries with a few contributions from relativistic jets and fast radio burst (FRBs).

. What are the course's strong points according to the students (summary based on the numerical results as well as their free text answers)

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The emphasis on physical understanding in the lectures was appreciated. Furthermore, the projects were seen as well integrated in the course. The projects included both a written background essay and an oral presentation of a chosen scientific article.

. What are the course's weak points according to the students (summary based on the numerical results as well as their free text answers)

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Some felt they needed more detailed guidance through the book; for example, the relative importance of the various parts should be more emphasised and, also, more resources online.

. The teacher's analysis of the course

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There is a tendency towards a bipolar structure not only in the results on the exam/projects but also in the activity during lectures. To some extent this can also be seen in the course evaluation. Although the course prerequisites were judged as adequate, I'm not really sure what this means in practice. In general, the results from the projects were better than those from the exam.

. Conclusions as well as suggestions for improvements

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I think that the bipolar structure to a large extent derives from a varied understanding of the background material. It seems that many of the students are more keen on applying their new-gained knowledge than to actually learn the needed astrophysics. An important question to discuss in the future is therefore the balance between knowledge of specific areas (e.g., X-ray binaries) and a more general astrophysical understanding (e.g., radiation processes, plasma effects etc.)