## Appendix I

Comparative overview of courses studied

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| Course title | Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation (CCIAM) - Autumn 2015/16 | Global Environmental Management - Autumn 2015/16 | Fieldwork: Ethnography and analysis - Autumn 2014 |
| Course description | An online course offered by the University of Copenhagen with the aim of providing a solid understanding of climate change impacts and the knowledge and tools to devise effective strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation on a global, sectoral and local scale. | A Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) offered by the Technical University of Denmark on the Coursera platform which explores how the globalized world manages environmental problems, with a focus on technical solutions. | An online course offered by the University of Copenhagen for Anthropology students embarking on ethnographic fieldwork. Students participate in the course while abroad at their selected field sites, and are thus supported in learning the craft of fieldwork. |
| Discussion description | The two discussions from this course are from two distinct student teams discussing the impacts of climate change and variability on human health. | The two discussions from this course are student-initiated topics about managing hydroelectric reservoirs during drought, and implementing solutions to environmental problems. | The four discussions from this course are two discussions from two distinct student teams: one peer-feedback discussion on a submitted assignment per team, and one discussion from an informal chat space per team. |
| Role of discussion in course | Participation in the weekly asynchronous discussions is the primary learning activity in the course, accounting for approximately one-third of the final grade.  | The discussion forum provides a space for students to start their own discussion threads or contribute to existing threads. There is no limitation on topic, and participation is encouraged, though not required to pass the course. | Through peer-feedback on assignments students get inspiration seeing how peers have dealt with issues of fieldwork and they exchange analytical ideas. The informal chat thread serves to lessen feelings of isolation, it offers a place for ‘letting out steam’ as well as offering moral support |
| Time frame of discussions analysed | Week-long discussion (week 8 out of 15) | During the 6 weeks course | Peer-review discussion: week-longInformal chat: semester-long |
| Number of students (in course/in team) | Course: 53Team A: 14Team B: 13 | Course: 2736 (of which 75 were paying students on Coursera’s “Signature track”)“Management” discussion: 5“Solutions” discussion: 6 | Course: 25Team 1 peer-review: 3Team 1 Cafe SoFa: 5Team 2 peer-review: 6Team 2 Cafe SoFa: 4 |
| Team diversity taken into account? | Yes--heterogeneous teams are formed on the basis of equally distributing students of the same: academic background, current study program, nationality and gender. | No--students are not assigned teams in this course as they are in the other two courses. Discussions are joined by students who find the topic of discussion interesting. | Yes, but mostly at a practical level. Teachers form teams considering students’ willingness to engage (in the online activities) and preferred language of discussion (Danish or English). |
| Discussion mandatory? | Yes (minimum 24 discussions out of 30) | No | No |
| Degree of facilitation/structure | Highly structured; facilitated by teachers and teaching assistants | Unstructured; students initiate discussion threads and topics of their own | Semi-structured; facilitated by a teacher in collaboration with PhD students |