

Periodic evaluation of ECON4335 The economics of banking Spring 2010

Completed by Asbjørn Rødseth (course administrator) 5/11 2010

The course was given for the first time. 64 students signed up, 47 sat for the exam and 43 passed.

The students who sat for the exam came mainly from the two masters programs in economics.

The evaluation is based on information from

- A questionnaire that was answered by 15 students.
- Conversations with the two student contacts and students in general
- The other teachers (Bent Vale and Jon Vislie) and three external examiners
- Administrators related to the program (statistics)

The course description can be found at

<http://www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/oekonomi/ECON4335/>, the teaching plan and curriculum at <http://www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/oekonomi/ECON4335/v10/> . The course was conducted according to plan.

Judged from the exam results were not entirely satisfactory. Six students got A or B, sixteen got C, while 21 got D or E. One reason was the usual start-up problems. It was difficult for the teachers to give and for the students to find clear directions for their work. There were no previous exam questions to look at and not enough exercises available. It had been decided to start the course without much time for preparation. These problems will probably be reduced if the course is given again.

Students seemed in general to be satisfied with the quality of the readings. However, in the questionnaire none found them too easy while 40 per cent found them too difficult. The main text sets up some high hurdles and not all chapters are well structured. However, it is difficult to find a better alternative. The macro part of the curriculum, which was article based, became too fragmented. This should be revised next time.

Some students lacked the necessary preparation in undergraduate macroeconomics. The background requirements should be specified more clearly in the course description.

The exam had one highly structured technical part and one fairly open question that invited to a mainly verbal discussion. Average results were not very different between the two. However, it seemed from answers to the second question that some students might have benefited from more writing practice. We failed to organize this properly in the seminars.

Student activity in the seminars was disappointingly low. In these circumstances having two parallel seminars seemed a waste. One teacher could go through solutions to technical exercises for the whole group. The resources for the extra seminar could be used either for having more sessions like this or for offering students feed-back on short papers that they hand in on more open questions (not compulsory).

In my view the course is a valuable addition to our two masters programs in economics, and the students seemed to think the same.