Course evaluation report – ECON4330 International Macroeconomics

Semester: Spring 2026

1. Respondents and scope

The evaluation received 21 responses through Nettskjema. Respondents were drawn mainly from the two-year master's programme in Economics (13), with smaller numbers from the five-year programme Samfunnsøkonomisk analyse (6) and from other programmes (2). Reported workload was concentrated at 5–10 hours per week (12 respondents), with 6 reporting 10–15 hours and 3 under 5 hours.

This report comments on the results and gives particular attention to the free-text answers and the seminar evaluation, which are not included in the automatically generated Nettskjema summary. The numbers below should be read as indicative rather than precise given the modest response count.

2. Summary of quantitative results

Item (1–5 scale)	Mean (n)
Overall satisfaction with the course	4.5 (21)
The course was interesting	4.5 (20)
The course was demanding	3.7 (21)
Workload relative to credits	3.7 (21)
Learning outcome from lectures	4.6 (19)
Quality of the lecturer	5.0 (19)
Lecturer's ability to engage and communicate	4.8 (19)
Usefulness of feedback on the term paper	3.0 (21)
Quality of the seminars	3.7 (10)
Usefulness of the seminar problem sets	4.2 (10)
Social/academic environment	3.9 (21)

Note: for "demanding" and "workload" a higher score reflects a heavier course; for all other items a higher score is more positive.

3. Overall assessment

Overall satisfaction was high. Nineteen of 21 respondents rated their satisfaction 4 or 5, and the course was rated as similarly interesting. Students found the course moderately demanding (mean 3.7), with workload concentrated around the middle and upper end of the scale; no respondent indicated the workload was too light, and only two placed it at the top. Taken together, the course is perceived as substantial but not unreasonable in its demands.

4. Lectures

Lectures are the clear strength of the course. Attendance was high (19 of 21), the perceived learning outcome from lectures was strong (mean 4.6), and ratings of the lecturer were near the ceiling: quality 5.0 and ability to engage 4.8, with 18 of 19 respondents giving the top score for quality.

Free-text comments reinforce this. Several students described the lectures as among the best they had taken and singled out the mathematical appendices as exceptionally useful for preparing the underlying theory and derivations ahead of class. Students also valued the lecturer's openness to questions and willingness to adapt the teaching during the semester.

Two consistent points for improvement emerge from the comments. First, individual slides and worked examples were occasionally hard to follow: variables in equations were not always defined, and the purpose of a particular diagram or axis was sometimes unclear. Second, while the appendices were praised, their length made it harder for some students to judge what to prioritize when revising for the exam. Clearer signposting of core versus supplementary material would address both points.

5. Seminars

Seminar attendance was split: 10 respondents attended and 11 did not. The most common reasons for not attending were that the seminars felt slow-paced, that they overlapped with material already covered, that the written solutions made self-study sufficient, and ordinary timetable clashes. The guided written solutions were repeatedly described as high quality and were, for many students, an effective substitute for attendance.

Among those who attended, the seminars were rated moderately (quality mean 3.7), while the problem sets themselves were rated more highly (mean 4.2). The seminar leader, Gaute Hjerpaasen, was generally seen as prepared. Students particularly valued how the problem sets were framed: questions demanded economic intuition and understanding rather than mechanical calculation, which several said made them more effective for learning.

The main criticisms concern volume and structure. Several respondents found the problem sets too long, with too many topics covered each week, which made it difficult to identify what was most relevant for the exam. A few noted that seminars could feel unstructured, making it hard to reach the parts students wanted to discuss. One detailed suggestion was to shorten the sets, split each seminar into a problem-solving part and a more reflective discussion part, and make full sets with solutions available for self-study. These suggestions are worth considering for next year.

6. Term paper feedback

Feedback on the term paper received the lowest score in the evaluation (mean 3.0, evenly spread across the scale). The free-text comments clarify this result: students noted that individual feedback on the term paper was limited, but that the detailed model solution provided afterwards largely compensated. The score therefore reflects a preference for more individualised feedback rather than dissatisfaction with the assessment itself. Communicating in advance what form of feedback to expect, and whether a model solution will be provided in place of individual comments, would help manage expectations.

7. Academic and social environment

The social and academic environment was rated moderately positive (mean 3.9). Comments attribute the positive aspect mainly to the lecturer's openness to discussion during breaks and after class, which several students said improved the atmosphere and encouraged questions. One respondent reported no sense of social environment, which is consistent with a course where a large share of students work largely independently.

8. Curriculum

A recurring theme in the free-text answers was the textbook and curriculum. Both students and the lecturer noted that the assigned textbooks are dated, and some content was felt to be stale relative to current macroeconomics. Students recommended updating the syllabus with newer textbooks and recent empirical research, incorporating current debates in the field, and adding topics such as the interaction between the macroeconomy and the environment. Several respondents explicitly acknowledged that the syllabus was inherited and predates the current course responsible. This is the clearest content-level recommendation arising from the evaluation.

In response to this feedback, the curriculum and syllabus will be revised for the next iteration of the course. The revision will replace the dated textbooks and update the reading list to reflect more recent research and current debates in the field.

9. Recommendations for next year

1. Update the syllabus (planned): the curriculum is being revised for next year to replace the dated textbooks and add newer empirical research and current topics, including macroeconomics and the environment.
2. Improve exam signposting: indicate which appendix and lecture material is core versus supplementary.
3. Tighten slide clarity: define all variables in displayed equations and state the purpose of each diagram.
4. Reconsider seminar design: shorter, more focused problem sets and a clearer seminar structure; consider separating problem-solving from discussion.
5. Clarify term-paper feedback expectations in advance, including whether a model solution replaces individual comments.