

Periodisk Emnerapport
JAP2501 Japanese Contemporary Society Through Film and Animation
Spring 2019

1. Eventuelle avvik

There were no deviations from the course content as described in the emnebeskrivelse. However, it may be wise to stress that although the course code has not changed, the title of this course started out in 2009 as 'Japanese Popular Culture', was changed to 'Contemporary Japanese Culture' in 2016, and now in 2019 has evolved into 'Japanese Contemporary Society Through Film and Animation'. In that sense it is best to look upon the latest reincarnation of this course as a completely new course, both in terms of content and format.

2. Kvalitative gjennomføringsdata

More than 75 students applied for this course, of whom 68 handed in their obligatory assignment. 54 students registered for the final exam (essay), of whom 40 passed, 6 failed, and 8 eventually did not hand in their paper. It needs to be noted that half of those who failed handed in a blank paper or a paper that was way too short, also suggesting that there were problems with time management on the side of some students. The assignments were generally more than satisfactory, and the final essays were even better, partly because of the feedback the students received. Most students received grade B. The results were quite similar to those of the years 2009 up until 2012, when I was also in charge of JAP2501. I am not aware of the marks in the years 2016-18.

3. Indikasjoner på særlig god kvalitet

There were 3 students who received an A-grade, but in general the students were inspired and the quality was up to standards. Because of the large number of students and the absence of teaching assistants, there is no way but to conduct this course in a lecture room, which is not always the ideal venue to get a discussion going, but in my opinion the course worked well nonetheless. Not all students attended the screenings, most of which were films that have not been distributed in Norway before. Some students hopefully were able to see the films through the net or in other ways. Those who attended the screenings were very grateful for this opportunity.

4. Indikasjoner på sviktende kvalitet

As mentioned above, JAP2501 in its 2019 variety of 'Japanese Contemporary Society Through Film and Animation' is a completely new course, both in terms of format and content of the classes, but also in terms of the content of the papers. Accordingly, one cannot easily compare the results with those of previous versions of this course. Nonetheless, the marks were relatively similar to the marks in the years 2009-12. It needs to be noted here that this course is open to students from other sections and faculties, and since the course is taught in English it also attracts a fair number of foreign students. All of them are most welcome, and their contributions from a non-Norwegian perspective to the classes are highly valued. However, some are clearly from institutions where they have not been trained in the writing of an academic paper. I have tried to solve this problem by taking some time in class to give a basic introduction on how to formulate a research question, how to find relevant sources, and how to structure and write an academic paper. Moreover, I give all the students feedback to their paper proposals, most of which are corrected and only pass on the second attempt. Also judging by the reactions

in the enquete I conduct by myself at the end of the course, it seems that this training is appreciated and helpful. However, the problem of a lack of training in academic writing was not in all cases solved within the limited time and guidance allotted to this course.

5. Utvikling av studiekvalitet / 6. Forslag for å forbedre emnet

As mentioned above, there are no previous data of this course in its present form, and accordingly one cannot yet discuss any developments in time. However, the marks, the overall satisfaction expressed in the anonymous questionnaire conducted by ourselves (response from 100% of active students), and the high evaluation of this course in the net survey conducted by the university (response from 25% of active students) seem to show that the quality of this course is solid. The lectures and the related readings and screenings were in general rated highly. Some students remarked that they preferred to have more time in between the screening and the class, in order to more fully digest the content of the film and thus be able to contribute more extensively to the discussion. There were also requests for a bigger venue for the film screenings and a smaller venue for the lectures/discussions. In the upcoming years we will endeavour to meet those requests, as far as time slot and venue ability allow. I also hope that I will be able to continue to engage external specialists in this course, in order to sustain the variety and the depth of the topics offered in this course.

Dick Stegewerns
August 2019