

Evaluation of SGO 2200 Economic globalization and regional development

Bjørnar Sæther, autumn 2018

SGO 2200 Economic globalization and regional development has for many years been a popular course among students. It has been taught in English since the early 2000s and has attracted quite many international students. In the early 2000s, when debates on globalization were everywhere the course attracted about 100 students every year. The later years about 40 students have taken the exam in the course each year.

The successive editions of Peter Dickens's book "Global Shift" has been compulsory reading in the course. Global Shift has evolved into a very comprehensive text on economic globalization and has in many ways defined a field of study. It is updated regularly on trends in the world economy, includes a section with more theoretically oriented chapters on technological change and multinational firms. The last part discusses the picture in different industries and social and environmental consequences of economic globalization. In addition, a list of reading materials consisting mostly of published papers is included in the reading list. The course offers seminar teaching with 3 parallel seminars starting in late January and continuing into early April. The last three seminars are used to get the students started working on their exam papers.

When asking students to evaluate the course we get a wide range of answers. They can be categorized into:

- Students arguing the course is too difficult. More teaching is needed to explain more about technological change, multinational firms and globalization.
- The course is just fine with a lot of interesting material to read, nice lectures and good seminars
- About one third of the students registered for the course never shows up on lectures or seminars. By not meeting compulsory requirements for participation this group of students are not able to take the exam.

There are thus basically three groups of students, two of them take part in teaching activities and finish their exam. The pre-qualifications for especially our international students are however quite diverse. Some students have a very good background within human geography, sociology or economics. They finish the course with As or Bs. Other students are more or less starting from scratch, or they come from physical sciences or have some kind of background which is not a perfect match with SGO 2200. Some students are having problems when asked to discuss a question, either at the exam or during seminars.

This situation with a wide range of backgrounds among the students are something we have to live with. International students enrich teaching and very much welcomed both at SGO 2200 and University of Oslo.