SGO2500 H23 – Course Evaluation Summary

SGO2500 was completely revised, and H23 was the first time of the revised course, with new readings and new lectures. 43 out of 155 registered responded to the evaluation, not all 43 answered all questions. The overall findings in the evaluation as well as discussions with students in the last lecture pointed to general and concrete issues to improve for next year.

Quality of teaching: Half of students (21 (of 39) of survey respondents) were (very) content. 10/39 was neutral, while a worrying 8 were dissatisfied.

There was positive feedback on relevance, engaging and interesting topics and lecturers. Some pointed out that even though there was overlap in topics with other courses, the specific angle of the course provided different/new perspectives and made it valuable.

Some of the negative comments to note were:
- Some indicated that lecture quality varied depending on the lecturers.
- There were comments that lecture content does not follow the curriculum.
- There are a few comments about things moving too fast and/or being confusing.
- Some students were struggling to connect the different lecture topics, while others pointed at too much overlap and repetition.
- Some complained they couldn't make sense of the slides, which appears to be students who were not in class to take notes.

When opening for more details and further comments in class, students suggested that some topics were off mark in terms of being too basic or generic relative to other courses and classes. Several indicated that especially the case-based lecturers were interesting and easier to relate to.

Quality of seminars: 22 (of 33) were very content or content, 3 were neutral while 8 were dissatisfied.

The comments about the seminars were mixed, some were happy about challenging, useful and interesting discussions, while others commented that the seminar discussions felt irrelevant to the course. Some of the comments seem to come from an unrealistic idea about seminars, and seminar leaders' roles (as note takers who should summaries insights and discussions). As much as we asked students to prepare answers to pre-presented questions in written in advance of the seminar groups, it has been difficult to follow up in practice.

Other issue: *Students were generally happy with the readings (pensum) in terms of content, cases/examples, and level of difficulty, and less suitable for this class than journal articles.*

Future steps:
SGO2500 will again undergo a revision for Autumn semester 2024.

Re readings and lectures:
- Reduce complexity of course. There may be too many core ideas and concepts (development, sustainable development, energy transitions, global South, geography etc) on the one hand, and too much overlap with other courses on the other. Since the course recruit students from different disciplines, there is unavoidable overlap on basic concepts (in development and geography). However, there is potential for focusing the course even more on global South experiences and perspectives.
- Coordinate with other courses to avoid overlap, especially on sustainability in general and energy SGO 3200 (Sustainable transitions, innovation and social change) in particular.
- Consider collapsing or cutting some lectures, and adding new (more case studies?)
- Consider new readings

Re seminars
The responses in 2023 are similar to the comments in 2022. We will consider for 2024:
- Clarifying again the role of the seminars and seminar leaders (in writing, in class and in first seminar). In this, we will underscore (again) the link between the seminars and the expected competences to be achieved through the course.
- A clearer task for the students in seminars: consider that all students will be given tasks at the beginning of the semester:
    o present (written or oral) at least once a response to a question in seminar group
    o peer review/comment on another students' presentation