SGO2500 H23 – Course Evaluation Summary

Students were invited to an online evaluation in Canvas (announcement) and in the last lecture of the course. 64 out of 117 registered students responded (86 % of the respondents attended all classes, 13 % attended most classes). Many used the opportunity to write additional comments. The findings were presented to the students and discussed in class. The course conveners discussed the findings with seminar leaders.

The overall feedback is very positive, and students enjoyed the course.

SGO2500 was adjusted since H23 to reduce complexity and overlap with other courses (some new readings and lectures). Comments suggest that students now find the course comprehensive/**holistic,** and no one mentioned overlap. An overwhelmingly majority (47 out of 48) find the course **relevant**. In comments, students referred to relevance both in terms of understanding the world and in relation to their study program. In class, students also highlighted that the panel discussion with practitioners helped showing the link between class and practice (including work life).

A recurring comment appears structural: It is a 2000-level SGO-course, and it is obligatory for first year development students (UTV) in their first semester. Many of students comment that they find the course being conceptually challenging to the first year UTV-students. One **future suggestion** can be to move the course to second semester or second year for UTV-students, and/or lecturers should allow even more detailed time to explore and discuss (geographical) concepts.

A majority report problems finding their way in **Canvas**, which appears more technical than how teacher and seminar leader uses it.

Quality of teaching: A large majority gave positive feedback on teaching, and there was an improvement from 2023. 75 % found the quality of lectures “good” (40) or “very good” (8), 20 % “neither good nor bad” (13), while 3 % where unsatisfied (2). Nevertheless, individual comments point to potential improvements especially in terms of spending more time on key concepts and arguments from the readings. Some students said classes varied depending on individual lecturers.

Students were generally happy with follow up from teachers and seminar leaders.

Quality of seminars: 60 % of the students found the seminar good (30) or very good (8), 22% (14) were neutral, while 14 % were dissatisfied. In comments, most of the students describe the seminars as enjoyable, engaging and useful, and seminar leaders good. The course conveners and seminar leaders re-design the seminars. Previous semesters, it has been difficult to get students to hand in written assignments (not obligatory). In-stead, the pre-defined questions related to concepts and issues in readings, were discussed in class. The seminar leaders coordinated the seminar plans, and used varied forms of student activities. This seemed to work better than previous years. Some students suggested a more structured and efficient focus on the questions defined to guide the seminars, while it appears that some students expect seminar leaders to provide “answers” instead of facilitating discussions and peer-learning, despite teachers’ messages. Some said they could get better information from Canvas in advance of the seminars. Smaller groups appear more fruitful than large student groups to activate student. One seminar group ran parallel to an obligatory UTV-course, resulting in students switching from the assigned group so another group was overcrowded.

Overall, students found that **readings** were well covered in class. Most students found the size of the curricula good or very good (70%), and 30% felt it too much. At the same time, almost 90% felt (some of) the readings were too difficult, especially for 1st year students. In class, many said it would be

easier to have a book that runs through the course, but we have not been able to identify a suitable book. In 2023, the students asked for more cases and examples. This year, students generally describe that readings and classes used good and relevant cases. Nevertheless, a couple of students suggested other energy cases (nuclear) and geographies (Middle East) to be included. Especially the cases from the Middle East and Asia could be considered for 2025 to make the course more comprehensive and relevant for next year.

Future steps: In addition to the mentioned issues, the course conveners' contract runs out in 2025, and it is expected that another lecturer will take over. Houeland will be available to a detailed discussion and can share a detailed evaluation report with next years' course convener.