Course Evaluation, SGO2500 Autumn 2025

SGO2500 was evaluated by various means throughout the semester, and the results are presented below. Overall, students give positive evaluations of active and discussion-based teaching. They are content with the learning environment, the ability to influence and give feedback to the course and teaching, while a significant number of students found that there were too many ascribed readings. Moreover, the course could have benefitted from more emphasis on the common thread throughout the semester. The evaluation concludes with more general considerations of course design informed by the course feedback and pedagogical literature.

Design of SGO2500

Teaching in SGO2500 has consisted of 11 lectures and 6 seminars. The course is mainly a continuation from 2024, with the exception of one new lecture on electric vehicles and the adjustment of certain readings. A wide range of voluntary syllabus which had accumulated throughout precious semesters, but which was to a small degree read, was also removed.

Evaluation of Teaching

The most comprehensive evaluation came in the form of a survey at the end of the semester. Here, 55 answered an anonymous survey in Nettskjema during the last lecture of the course. Attendance was slightly down from last year and it is worth noting that the selection is of respondents was limited to those showing up to the last, non-mandatory lecture. Students could also provide qualitative feedback in open questions throughout the survey.

Quality of the lectures were deemed very good (18.2%), good (60%), neutral (16.4%), which was a slight increase from 2004. Half (52%) of the respondents partly found that teachers made clear how each topic fit into the subject as a whole: 27% fully agreed that this was the case while 20 % partly disagreed.

As last year, the panel of practitioners seem to have been a relevant and positive experience, with some describing it as a course highlight which allowed students to see various course topics

A vast majority thought students were given the opportunity to provide input on the content and arrangement in the course (85%).

36% of the students found the seminars very good, 40% good, 18% neutral and 5% found them unsatisfactory – but none used the category "bad". This is a major leap forward from last year in seminar evaluation. It seems that overall, opportunities to discuss amongst students were highly appreciated.

Overall, seminars feedback was the most positive amongst the teaching activities. There might at times seem to be a conceptual overload, and there was feedback from both students and seminar leaders that it could be challenging to discuss two topics in one seminar. Furthermore, some seminar groups had to discuss topics before they had been to the relevant lecture, which was reported to be negative for the quality of the discussions.

The seminars were also evaluated after each session with qualitative feedback via an anonymous Nettskjema. Here, the overall comments emphasized most students appreciating working and discussing in groups.

In general, there were some feedback from students suggesting that even more emphasis should be put on what the course fundamentally is about, what is most important, and what is expected from the student. This is a challenge that might be exacerbated by there being no single textbook for this course, leaving it to teachers to convey a common thread running through the course. One way to make this more explicit is to set aside more time for painting a broad picture of the course in teaching, and to reduce and rework the learning outcomes so that the ones remaining is deemed of higher value. Another alternative which was suggested was to reduce the amount of guest lectures to ensure more topical coherence. In addition, this could leave seminars with less ground to cover which could allow for more in-depth discussions of the remaining topics.

The overall feedback is very positive, and students and teachers have enjoyed the course. Overall satisfaction with teaching was at 80%, 56% of which was deemed "good". The findings were presented to the seminar leaders and discussed.

Concluding Discussion

The energy transition and its implications for North–South relations and sustainability is a vast, rapidly evolving topic which has been seen as highly relevant. In approaching such a field, it is important not to get lost in details and numbers but to nurture a critical understanding and ability to discuss complex issues and dilemmas. To do this in a meaningful way, it is also

necessary to understand certain wider social processes, and this understanding can then be applied to a world that will look different in the future. Therefore, it is important to strike a balance between approaching new theory and the discussion, elaboration and active use of theory. SGO2500 is a large course with students that come from different disciplines, geographies and with various levels of previous experience of studying. While this can be challenging, it also provides an opportunity for learning through student engagement and discussion. *Discussing* is also key in the current exam format, while it also plays a central role in the learning outcomes. To have an aligned praxis (Biggs 1996), learning activity could continue to facilitate for discussions in the future.

Peder Østring

Course convener SGO2500 Autumn 2025

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Reference

Biggs, John. "Enhancing Teaching through Constructive Alignment." *Higher Education* 32, no. 3 (1996): 347–64. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00138871.