Thor O. Thoresen, 4 June 2026

Course Evaluations – Spring 2026

Summary

More than 30 students took the exam in ECON3620 and ECON4620. Given that, the response rate to the course evaluation was disappointingly low, with 4 responses from ECON3620 and 8 responses from ECON4620: a total of 12 responses (with not all respondents answering all questions).

The feedback was largely positive. 10 of the 12 respondents rated the statement "All in all, I am satisfied with the course" as either 4 or 5 on the five-point scale, while one respondent selected 3 and one selected 2. Similarly, 11 of the 12 respondents rated the statement "I find the course to be interesting" as either 4 or 5.

Overall, students viewed the courses as academically demanding, with workloads that were largely considered appropriate for the level of study. Most students reported spending between five and ten hours per week on coursework, although some devoted considerably more time. Learning outcomes were generally rated as good, suggesting that students felt they acquired valuable knowledge and skills despite the challenging nature of the material.

What is working?

The lectures were positively received. Students highlighted the lecturer's strong subject knowledge and appreciated the opportunity to engage with current research and policy-relevant topics. Comments reflected appreciation for opportunities to connect course material to practical policy issues and real-world applications. 8 of the 11 respondents rated 4 or 5 to the question "What do you think about the lecturer's ability to convey the material?".

Students who participated in seminars evaluated them positively. 8 of the 11 respondents 4 or 5 to "What do you think about the quality of seminars." The seminar leader was seen as being well prepared, facilitating discussion, and helping students understand both theoretical and empirical material. Problem sets were also regarded as useful and relevant to the course content.

The social environment was generally assessed positively. While relatively few comments were provided, there were no major concerns raised, and respondents who participated in campus activities described the learning environment as satisfactory.

In summary, the evaluations suggest that students value the quality of the course, the expertise of the teaching staff, and the contribution of the seminars to learning.

What is not working?

Some respondents expressed a desire for greater structure and clarity in lectures. Common suggestions included providing lecture slides earlier, clarifying the most important parts of the syllabus, and offering more explicit explanations of difficult concepts and research papers. Some students also noted that lecture slides could be difficult to use as a standalone learning

resource and would benefit from clearer wording and more detailed explanations. For mathematical derivations, students suggested that working through them on the board would make them easier to follow than presenting them exclusively on slides.

A recurring theme across the evaluations was the challenge of navigating a large and complex syllabus. Some students found it difficult to identify which concepts, models, and readings were most important. Others noted that parts of the curriculum, particularly research articles and empirical methods, could be demanding without additional guidance. Suggestions included clearer communication of learning objectives and stronger links between course materials, seminars, and assessments.

Students also emphasized the importance of ensuring that prerequisites and expectations are clearly communicated, particularly when advanced empirical methods form part of the course content and assessment.

What can you do to improve the course?

1. Examine the curriculum to see if there is potential for reduction. I believe it is.
2. May look at some smaller changes in the lecture plan: make space for corrective taxation (e.g., environmental taxes) and tax evasion?
3. Provide the slides for the lectures earlier. That is easy!
4. Take another look at the prerequisites and see if they fit the course.