NETTSKJEMA

Emneevalueringsrapport / course evaluation report ISV

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Alle våre evalueringsrapporter publiseres på UiOs nettsidene etter at programrådet har godkjent dem, og er da tilgjengelige for allmennheten. Språkbruk må gjenspeile det.

Navn til emneansvarlig *

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Semester

Høsten 2025

Velg kursnivå *

Bachelorkurs

Emnekode *

STV2380

Emnenavn

Between Authoritarianism and Democracy in the Post-communist Region

Emnerapport

1. Studentenes tilbakemeldinger *

Oppsummer de viktigste tilbakemeldingene fra studentene.

We recruited one student from each of the three seminar groups as course contacts. Only two of these took part in the midway evaluation meeting. In addition, we asked all students to fill in a net-based survey after the exam was held. 18 of the 51 students who were qualified to sit for the exam did. In the end, 47 students took the exam.
The general impression is that the students were well satisfied with the course as a whole. They found the guides to the readings helpful and thought it made sense to group countries the way we did. The combination of theoretical knowledge and examples from the region made it easier to remember concepts.
Lectures: well-organised, informative and helpful, especially if syllabus was read beforehand. Concise and organised slides facilitated learning. One of the contact students mentioned that an overview of electoral systems might be useful as a background for country lectures. (This could perhaps be part of the first lecture). Some of the students (rightly) complained that two students were talking too much during lectures.
Syllabus: there is a lot to read, and it felt overwhelming in the beginning, but became easier after a while, and lectures really helped. One of the contact students suggested looking for textbook chapters and emphasised that articles/chapters should be compatible with reading tools.
Seminars: the students liked the variation in format, and the seminars reportedly worked well even if not all students were very involved in discussions. However, some of the seminar meetings had too many presentations. There should be no more than 4–5 presentations per seminar meeting to allow for more discussion. This applies to seminar meetings 2, 3, and 5 in this iteration of the course (see below). As for the mock debate, expectations should be made clearer.

Survey: the survey confirms that the students liked the course. 83% answered that they learned ‘very much’ or ‘a lot’; the remaining 17% learned ‘a fair amount’. 78% answered that lectures helped them understand the topic to a ‘very large’ or a ‘large’ extent. 61% said the difficulty of lectures was ‘about right’, with 28% rating them as ‘somewhat difficult’. A majority of 83% found lectures engaging. Students found the lecture on oligarchs most interesting, and the lecture on nationalism and the far right least interesting. According to free text comments, the latter lecture felt detached from the rest of the course.
A majority (78%) found the difficulty of the readings to be ‘about right’, and 50% found the amount to be about right; however, a large minority (44%) found them excessive, which is a decrease since 2023. The students were also asked to mention readings they found particularly helpful and readings that should be replaced. We have noted the answers and will take them into account when we revise the syllabus.
Students were most satisfied with seminar meeting 4 (mock debate on Ukraine’s EU membership), but a majority answered “very good” or “good” (1 and 2 on a 5-point scale) for all seminar meetings.
The exam was a little too early this year, with little room to prepare for the exam after the last lecture. In the end the students were satisfied with the exam. 94% found it easy to understand the questions, and 61% found the difficulty to be about right. However, one free text answer suggested that some students ran out of time on the third exam question. (They were asked to answer 3 of 4 questions).

2. Helhetlig vurdering av emnet *

Gi din faglige vurdering av kvaliteten på emnet. Inkluder en refleksjon over læringsutbytte, undervisningsformer, særlig studentaktive undervisningsformer, og andre relevante temaer i lys av instituttes strategiske mål for undervisning.

The course combines insights into six specific cases with a comparative take on some key political issues in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe: political trust, support for and satisfaction with democracy; democratic backsliding; the influence of oligarchs and grand corruption; the international context (EU and Russia), and populist radical right parties. The course was held for the fourth time in 2025.
Teaching consists of 10 lectures and 5 seminar meetings. This year we were three lecturers sharing the lectures between us. In addition, three other people were involved in seminars. We tried to vary the format of the seminars: presentation of country cases with slides and summaries (seminar meeting 2); literature review style paper (with presentation) of contributions on democratic backsliding (seminar meeting 3); mock debate on whether Ukraine should join the EU (pros and cons, with students representing the EU, Ukraine, Russia, and Hungary) (seminar meeting 4), and review of a selected far-right party, group, or movement in the post-communist region (seminar meeting 5). This seems to have worked well also in 2025 (see above).
The last time I was responsible for the course (in 2023) the seminar groups were too big; this year we had three groups, which was about right. However, the distribution of assignments between seminar meetings was not optimal. Based on the experience from this year there should not be more than 4–5 presentations in one meeting.
The overall impression is nevertheless positive. Students were interested, they generally showed up for lectures, and the results were quite good.

3. Justeringer siden forrige gjennomføring *

Beskriv eventuelle justeringer som er gjort basert på tidligere evalueringer, samt endringer som er implementert i løpet av emnet.

I was not involved in the course in 2024 due to sabbatical, and neither was the other main lecturer. The 2024 iteration of the course was quite different from this year's edition as well as from the 2023 edition, especially in terms of the countries covered. Compared to the 2023 edition, the main change in 2025 was an update of the syllabus and a reduction in the number of lecturers from four to three (one of the lecturers only held one lecture). The number of seminar groups increased from two in 2023 to three in 2024 and 2025 in order to make more room for discussion.

4. Forslag til videreutvikling "Action points" *

List opp muligheter for videre utvikling av emnet til neste gjennomføring.

We do not think it is necessary to make major changes to the course. The course seems to have worked rather well as a whole in its current form, but we will of course update the syllabus. Three seminar groups clearly works better than two, but we should still strive to increase student activity in the seminars. There should be no more than 4–5 presentations per meeting.

5. Behov for oppfølging gjennom programrådet *

List opp eventuelle behov for oppfølging gjennom programrådet som følge av evalueringen.

None