NETTSKJEMA

Emneevaluering / course evaluation ISV

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Navn / name *

Navn til emneansvarlig

Olav Schram Stokke

Velg kursnivå *

Bachelorkurs

Bare for Master: velg blokk

Ikke besvart

Emnekode / course code *

STV2250

Emnenavn / Course title

International Environmental and Resource Politics

Semester *

Spring 2024

Emnerapport / course report *

This course includes 10 lectures and 5 seminars. The three seminar groups had different leaders – Daniel Goldstein, Ari Mamshae and Tora Naterstad. As course leader, I gave all the lectures and coordinated the seminars by means of (1) a kick-off meeting with the seminar leaders going through a streamlined procedure; (2) a list of research-question leads the student could use as a basis for specifying the research question of their term-paper; and (3) a discussant guide the students should use when serving as main opponent to a term-paper draft prepared by a fellow student. The final revised seminar term paper formed a part of the exam, counting 40 percent, a form of exam that was introduced in 2021.
I conducted a mid-term evaluation with one of the course contacts. The second course contact was scheduled to participate in the end-of-term digital evaluation meeting involving also the head and the secretary of the program committee but a misunderstanding or technical problem seems to have interferred. However, I had circulated web-based evaluation forms covering the main topics that are drawn upon here to complement the feedback received mid-term. The evaluation form concerning the syllabus and the lectures received a decent response rate (around 40 percent), that on the seminar only around 15 percent.
The bullet points below begin with my notes from the mid-term review, uploaded on Canvas after the event; the subsequent, italized text report student responses compiled from the evaluation forms:

- Syllabus: Praise for the textbook (Morin et al) for its pedagogic qualities, including the glossary, critical-thinking questions and the quizes found in the online resources. Student responses confirmed satisfaction with the learning outcome of the syllabus, especially the textbook.
- Also the articles on each topic were commented on approvingly. The total number of pages has been reduced by 10 percent from last year to allow more indepth work on each contribution. Student responses: a clear majority still found the workload excessive.
- My notes on the syllabus, posted a week or so before every lecture, also received some thumbs up. Those notes aim partly at making your reading more active than it would otherwise be and partly at complementing or filling out what I plan to say in the lecture. Student responses too praised the pre-lecture syllabus notes on Canvas.
- Lectures: Sometimes a bit demanding to follow, especially when time has not permitted full reading of the syllabus list. Student responses confirmed both parts of this feedback: High learning outcome but also that lectures are demanding; although a clear majority graded their learning outcome from lectures as ‘large’ or ‘very large’, the a relatively large minority reported that lectures could do a better job in helping to understand difficult material.
- Some of the slides are too short on keywords compared to my oral comments. I try to keep the number of words on slides down to minimise competition for your attention between myself and the screen – but I take this comment as indicating that slides should nevertheless be a bit more self-explanatory and also that I should make sure to refer back to those keywords in my comments. Student responses, including the open-response fields, confirm that the keyword format of my slides does not work well for all students, especially those who find the material difficult. Next time I will therefory simplify the structure of the slides, making them more self-contained by replacing keywords with a smaller number of full sentences.
- More generally: Please intervene whenever concepts I explain or points I make strike you as unclear or in need of more explanation. Like most lecturers, I am delighted to be interrupted! And I will invite questions more actively in the remaining four lectures. End-of-term lecturer comment: Relatively active group, responding positively to the 3-minute small-group discussion breaks (summe-minutter) I inserted in roughly half of the lectures. Next time I will raise the frequency of such breaks.
- Praise was given for the explicit linkage I make to the term-paper format and the discussant guide when going through some of the syllabus articles – eg, Bailey in lecture 4 and Tallberg today. My idea here is to combine presentation of articles with a rubbing in the discussant guide on how to think about academic texts – one’s own and those of others. Student responses confirmed satisfaction with this in-lecture demonstration use of the discussant guide.
- Seminars: Some students would prefer to know in advance when they will be given the role of main discussant in order to prepare better for that special occasion. I appreciate the argument but the benefits of not knowing are in my experience even bigger: the preparation each of you make to be ready for the main-discussant role helps to expose each of you to more drafts, thus providing more opportunities to learn from your fellow students – and the presenters of drafts receive a broader set of feedbacks in the general discussion after the exchange between the presenter and the main discussant. A majority of the (few) student respondents agreed to a ‘large’ extent that the seminar gave them valuable training on most aspects of term-paper writing – formulating a research question, developing a conceptual framework, writing an academic text, presenting a work in progress and providing constructive feedback. Unlike in previous years, moreover, a majority also reported that the seminars supported their work with the syllabus. While not a major objective for the seminars, such support is hardly surprising since the question leads link up closely to important topics in the syllabus and we encourage student-group participants to choose different leads in order that the draft discussion also provide syllabus exposure. The small number or respondents suggests caution when drawing implications from this positive feedback and the same applies for the negative scores and the critical comments made by a few students – few, but still comprising a significant proportion of a small sample of the students.

The course is given every spring semester. Here is a summary of the changes I plan for next year:

- Partly because of the Department’s policy of restraint regarding mixed exams and partly because our ability to disclose excessive AI use is limited, I have decided to go for school exam only next year. If the program council agrees, the seminar paper will thus return to the status it had up to 2021, with submission of a revised post-discussion version accepted by the seminar leader being a condition for taking the exam.
- Seeing that a relatively large portion of the students are either exchange students or enrolled in university programmes outside our department, I will spend more time in the first few lectures on the generic theories in the international relations field – to make it easier for those students to follow the application of those theories to issues of international resource and environmental politics.
- I have mentioned the review I plan of my slide format, looking for ways to simplify their structure of the slides and replacing keywords with a smaller number of full sentences.

8 August 2024
Olav Schram Stokke
Course leader

Emneevalueringen bør inneholde:
1. Vurdering av emnet
· Læringsutbytte i emnet
· Undervisningsformer og organisering
· Andre relevante temaer som læringsmiljø, studentenes arbeidsinnsats og eventuelt vurderingsformer
2. Studentens tilbakemelding
· Oppsummering av studentenes viktigste tilbakemeldinger
3. Helhetlig vurdering og videreutvikling
· En samlet vurdering av kvaliteten på emnet
· Justeringer som er foretatt som følge av evalueringen.
· Muligheter for videreutvikling av emnet

The course evaluation should include:
1. Assessment of the course
· Learning outcomes in the course
· Teaching methods and organization
· Other relevant topics such as the learning environment, students' effort and possibly forms of assessment
2. Student's feedback
· Summary of students' most important feedback
3. Overall assessment and further development
· An overall assessment of the quality of the course
· Adjustments made as a result of the evaluation.
· Opportunities for further development of the course