Emneevaluering / course evaluation ISV

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Navn / name *

Navn til emneansvarlig

Victoria Finn

Velg kursnivå *

Masterkurs

Bare for Master: velg blokk

Blokk 1

Emnekode / course code *

PECOS4025

Emnenavn / Course title

Analytic perspectives on peace and conflict

Semester *

høst 2024

Emnerapport / course report *

1. Course
LEARNING OUTCOMES
Knowledge. Students will learn to:
1. apply the fundamental principles of research design and methods in Political Science
2. assess the validity of research design and findings
3. discuss ethical challenges in peace and conflict research
Skills. Students will develop the ability to:
1. identify and discuss different strategies for inference in political science research
2. distinguish between different kinds of research questions and strategies for inference
3. identify and tackle issues of bias in Political Science research
4. design and implement a research design in the field of peace and conflict studies
Competencies. Students will be able to:
1. create and improve a research design suited to answer their research question
2. think systematically about measurement, inferences, and explanation in Political Science research
3. engage in constructive assessment of research design choices and strategies for inference, especially in issue areas with limited or biased data
4. provide constructive feedback on research design to others and how to integrate such feedback into their own project

TEACHING METHODS, ORGANIZATION
This course contains 10 lectures and this year had 2 seminar groups. As such, it had 6 lecturers (Victoria F., Jana K., Jaime W., Jacob N., Imrana B., and Leonor T.) and 2 seminar leaders (Imrana B. and Leonor T., which was their third year doing this). Attendance is not mandatory. There is a final paper of 3,000 to 4,000 words that counts 100% of the final grade. This is on the student's topic of choice within PECOS and they present and gain feedback on a draft in the seminar. This year the seminar leaders corrected 80% of the papers and I took 20%; we debated any doubts and agreed on the grades. It was an average distribution.

2. Student Feedback
In the meeting, the student representatives presented a prepared report that they had compiled through informal talks and through sending a survey, which 44% of the students replied to (N=13). Their main feedback, in order of importance, was:
a. The most negative comment was on the discrepancy of seminar feedback received in seminar 1 versus 2. One group of students received more verbal plus written feedback on the paper draft whereas the other group received less and only verbal feedback.
b. There was mixed feedback about the placement of this course PECOS4025 as a heavily method course in this part of the curriculum (i.e., Fall semester, blokk 1). Many felt that this would have been better not as the first course. The reason was because of high variation in the background and familiarity of the variety of (especially international) students.
c. Despite an even distribution of grades, and more than half requesting and receiving feedback on their grades, there were still questions on received grades. A suggestion was to—in addition to the guideline for the paper—we also include a type of expectations of quality, to 'justify' what is expected under each category. And/or they could see examples of other good papers from prior years.
d. A slight comment on the lecturers (since there were 6 lecturers in 10 classes) being unfamiliar with the details of what other lecturers had precisely covered. They also mentioned the lectures could be in a different order, but were unsure what that should look like.
e. There was positive feedback on: the syllabus structure; the reading list; and the lecturers' topics and delivery.

3. Overall and future development
Overall the course went very smoothly. Attendance was good in the lectures, despite no attendance taken. I would keep similar topics and lecture style, as well as similar readings, since these were all well scored by the students.
Based on the student feedback, next year I would consider making the following changes:
a. Speak directly to the seminar leaders, before the seminars begin, to make sure we have a plan of how much feedback is expected verbally in the seminar and how much after in written form.
b. In addition to the final paper guide, I would also write a grading scheme with details of what is expected in each category. I may or may not include some example papers.
c. Ask the lecturers to please quickly review the other lecturers' slides (not just the title of the lecture) to familiarize themselves more with what has been covered before their lecture.
While I would also re-consider the order of lectures, the actual order primarily depends on lecturers' availability.
Finally, the Department should consider the placement of this course if it should continue to be in blokk 1 or later in the semester.

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