

Course evaluation: Course name

Course code: GLODE301

Name of course coordinator: Haldis Haukanes

Year and semester: Autumn 2020

Brief summary of the course with a focus on the need for adjustments:

The course is the foundational course of the GLODE programme (20 ECTS), where students are introduced to relevant development theories, including perspective on health promotion and gender in global development. Students can choose to go more in depth into one of three key issues in development (migration, climate change, education). The course uses several students active learning methods such as PBL and Students Led Lectures (SLL), and the elective parts of the course is mostly carried out through these methods.

Students have the following compulsory assignments: An individual presentation of a development-related topic, and compulsory participation in all activities related to PBL and SLL.

The exam is a portfolio composed of two papers, one of which is supervised.

Overall the content and organisation of the course is good. However, we find that some more time is needed for the theory part of the course, as this part appears a bit rushed in the current setup. We will thus will expand this section somewhat for the next cohort of students. There is also a need to reorganize the activities related to the SLL a bit (see below).

Has the course been evaluated by students? How was this done, and what did the students say?

Evaluation of the course was done as group discussions (one online group and one on-campus) carried out by our student representatives. The student representatives did a summing up of the discussions, which was forwarded to the course leader.

The evaluation showed among others that the students enjoyed the focus on critical reflection that course offers, its global content, its interactive nature, the writing of the papers, and the (written) feedback received. In general, they found lectures to be of good quality, although a few were characterised as “unfinished”. They would want more in-depth teaching around theories and more foundational texts to read; a comment was made about the course moving too much on the surface. Some also felt that there should have been more lectures and that the PBLs and the SLL took too much of the course time. However, they also recognized the value of working together with student colleagues, and the relevance of PBLs and SLL for their learning outcome.

Was there anything that did not work well enough? Is it necessary to make adjustments or take action to improve the course?

Corona related challenges:

A significant part of the course was taught on campus, with some students present online, although we went 100% online for some weeks during lockdown. Carrying out “dual” teaching simultaneously

(i.e. both online and on-campus) is quite challenging, and the learning outcome of those present digitally only is not always as good as that of those present physically. However, we strived hard to include the digital students in the teaching sessions, and think that we got better at it as we got more familiar both with the situation and the technology in use.

Other:

Due to sudden illness of a key staff member, quite a bit of reorganizing had to be done in the beginning of the course. This implied among others that the current course leader took over responsibility for the course on a short notice, and she had to assign some lectures to new teachers (which may be a reason for students' comments on some lectures not being "fully developed"). As mentioned above we agree that some more time should be devoted to part of the course dealing with development theories. As for the PBL and SLL, we will retain those. Even if students may feel that they "struggle on their own" in these activities, the learning outcome is often greater than what they get from attending lectures; in their exam papers we could for example see clear manifestations of the efforts put into the SLL. However, we propose to adjust the organization of the SLL to support the students in their learning activities; among other we plan to have "mini-lectures" on a few of the topics now included in the SLL.

What is your overall assessment of the course?

In spite of the challenges that we faced due to unforeseen circumstances, we managed to run the course almost as it was planned. The overall (exam) results were very good; a clear indication that most students have had good learning outcomes of the course.

The overall structure and content of the course are quite good as it is now. Some adjustments of pace, depth and content are needed, but this does not involve changes in the course plan.