

Course Evaluation, MPHIL, SANT 309

Conceptualizing Society: Applications of Anthropological Theory

Course leader: Vigdis Broch-Due

Lecturer: Hanna Skartveit

Seminar Leader: Lise Solvoll

The course evaluation report has been submitted to the Educational Committee (Undervisningsutvalget) at the Department of Social Anthropology, UiB.

Course structure

Form of teaching:

12 lectures of 2x45 min. 6 seminars of 2x45 min.

Mandatory work demands:

Attendance in all the lectures and seminars.

Examination:

Compulsory school exam (8 hours) following the course.

Summary of statistics/numbers

Students signed up for the exam

| | Course registered /registered for assesment | Attendance | Passed |
|------------------------|--|-------------------|---------------|
| Number of stud. | 19 | 19 | 19 |

Grades

| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Number of Stud. | 11 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Passed: **Failed:**

Evaluation of the course

Forms of evaluation:

- a) Processual evaluation: contact and dialogue between lecturer and seminar leader(s) throughout the course. Lecturer visits seminar group(s) at the beginning of the course.
- b) A questionnaire: handed out at the penultimate lecture. Central issues in questionnaire are; the functioning of seminar groups, students' participation in discussions and their perceptions of learning outcome.
- c) Contact between course leader and students throughout the course: through discussions in class, conversations in breaks and after lectures and communication via e-mail.

Syllabus:

According to the questionnaire, most of the students were satisfied with the syllabus and agreed that it provides relevant examples of the course themes. One student thought the syllabus was too broad, and that in some cases original texts should replace what is referred to as "secondary sources".

Lectures: Attendance is mandatory. Most students were well prepared for the lectures and seminars, and participated actively in discussions. However, because of partial overlap in time with the submission of project proposals, some students said they did not have time to prepare as much as they would have liked. The lectures were structured in a way that permitted both standard lecturing and discussion with the students. Questions could also be directed to the lecture during class. Relevant documentaries were sometimes used, in order to amplify and contextualize the topics of the lectures. Generally, the students stated that they were well or somewhat prepared for the lectures, and most of them found the lectures important for their understanding of the course syllabus.

Seminars:

Attendance is mandatory. During the initial seminars, the seminar leader mailed the students questions about selected articles, which were discussed in groups at the subsequent seminar. At the end of the seminar, the groups met to discuss the topics in plenum. However, approaching the exams, the students' requested that the articles be discussed in plenum instead of in groups. There was an emphasis in the discussion on relating the different articles to each other. The students reported that the prepared questions were good to work with. Most of the students were well prepared for the seminars and actively engaged in the discussions.

Perceived learning outcome:

The size of the group (19 students) and the lecture room allowed for lectures and seminars where with close and continual contact, discussion and dialogue between the lecturer/seminar leader and the students. Discussions also frequently continued into the breaks, revealing a group of students who were engaged, prepared and interested. This course has an ambitious and broad specter of topics, which expands beyond the conventional field of anthropology and into fields like the

history of science, philosophy and literature. Some students found this challenging in the beginning, but discussions with them revealed fast progression in terms of understanding and independent thinking. The great majority of the students reported to have been taught concepts and perspectives that will benefit them in the ensuing fieldwork and writing of thesis.

Aspects to be followed up:

Consider a more fixed work distribution between lecturer and seminar leader, so this will not be so much up to the individuals teaching the course. Consider a better organization of students' study groups in the preparation for seminars.