

Emnerapport – Vår 2018

SANT 285-1: The Anthropology of Oil

Emneansvarlig: Marianna Betti

Forelesere: Marianna Betti/Iselin Åsedotter Strønen holdt én gjesteforelesning. Tord Austdal intruduserte en film. Edvard Hviding holdt en kort presentasjon om Stavanger.

Emnerapporten er blitt forelagt for og behandlet i Undervisningsutvalget ved Institutt for sosialantropologi.

Emnets oppbygging

Undervisningsform: 8 lectures (2/week), group presentations (of course material), excursion to Mongstad in the second half of the course, 1 guest lecture, two short films, one long documentary with introduction by guest. 10 credits.

Obligatoriske arbeidskrav: Participation to excursion to Mongstad, group report (max. 3 pages).

Eksamensform: Home exam 1 week/3000 words

Andre obligatoriske: 75% deltagelse (max 2 fravær)

Oppsummerende statistikk

Vurderingsmeldte studenter

	Undervisnings-/vurderingsmeldte	Møtt	Bestått
Antall studenter	31	27	27

Karakterfordeling

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Ant. Stud.	10	8	7	2	0	0

Strykprosent: 0

Evaluering av emnet

Evaluatingsform:

a) Prosessuell evaluering: The course coordinator gave an oral evaluation of each group presentation.

b) Midtveisevaluering: The course coordinator provided a short written evaluation of each group report.

c) Et spørreskjema. The evaluation questionnaire was distributed at the sixth lecture (6 of 8).

Antall respondenter: 28

Pensum:

Overall, the students thought the syllabus was rich and varied. They liked the regional breadth and they thought it fit with the topics of the lectures. A few students thought there was too much reading for a 10 credits course. The students had one monograph and another book in addition to the articles. A few students thought two mandatory books were too much. Nobody complained about the difficulty of the readings, but the majority thought the readings were clear. The students thought the required reading reflected a good mix of theory and empirical material. The students appreciated the viewing of two short films and a longer documentary on the Dakota Access Pipeline.

The course coordinator is satisfied with the structure, the variety and the content of the syllabus. If the course had been larger (15 instead of 10 credits), there would have been room for more topics (like oil, religion, and the symbology of oil) together with more interesting case studies. The course coordinator would still keep two mandatory books (one theoretical and one ethnographic) in addition to the article-based syllabus, because a comprehensive anthology on the anthropology of oil is still missing.

Forelesningene:

The students were satisfied to very satisfied about the lectures. They thought they were well organized and well presented. They liked how the topics progressed and they thought they were relevant. There were no negative comments. The students also liked the possibility of working together in giving a short group presentation on a selected article. There were students who had no background in anthropology or even in any other of the social sciences; they also thought the lectures were clear without being too banal.

Many students however stated that they missed more time for discussing the material. Because of the nature of the course, a very intensive course with only eight meetings (plus a one day excursion to Mongstad), the lecturer did not have time to make room for seminars. The course coordinator agrees that an even better outcome would have been achieved if the course had been 15 instead of 10 credits with a teaching assistant and group seminars in addition.

Seminarene:

See above. The course would have benefitted if there had been a possibility of attending seminars. This could be made possible if the course is upgraded from 10 to 15 credits. If such an extension of the course could be made, the course coordinator suggests that there should be a 75% mandatory attendance to the seminars too.

Opplevd læringsutbytte:

The students learned a bit about the scope of anthropology as a discipline (although the course did not focus on this) and also learned a bit about ethnographic fieldwork (by taking the Mongstad excursion as a chance to conduct fieldwork). The course was open to anyone. A very few students complained that some of the readings were somewhat demanding because of their lack of prior exposure to anthropology. The students felt they have learned: broadly the history of the oil development in several parts of the world (Saudi Arabia, South America, USA, some African countries, the North Atlantic and Russia), some of the geopolitical major historical issues related to the development of the oil-based economy and technology, many case studies on the effects of oil development in politics, economics, indigenous rights movements, resistance, environment, health, poverty, inequality, violence, war and conflict. These themes were discussed through a broad geographical spectrum. Moreover, the students have learned the basic of the oil industries: from the organization of the oil corporations, to the meaning of oil cartels, to the phases of oil development, to the oil markets, the oil legislations, to the petrochemical industries and the post-oil phase.

	Stemmer godt (4-5)	Stemmer mindre godt (1-3)
Useful and interesting lectures	28	0
Mongstad excursion was informative, relevant and made the course more interesting	28	0
Reading for the course were accessible, relevant to the course themes and varied	27	1

Sluttkommentar:

- None of the students complained about the mandatory 75% attendance. Of the 33 students who signed up for the course, five never showed up, and only one missed the chance to take the home exam due to too many absences. The course coordinator believes that part of the reason why the course produced a better than average grade (B instead of C), is due to the mandatory 75% participation.
- The students were excited by the perspective of the fieldtrip to Mongstad. They were extremely satisfied and performed very well in the group report that they wrote after the excursion. The fieldtrip to Mongstad was fundamental in giving them an opportunity to conduct a mini ethnographic fieldwork, and to reflect on issues we had discussed in the course up to that day. The fieldtrip to Mongstad moreover was one of the offers of the course that attracted a larger number of students. Lastly, the fieldtrip has been a very good way for the students to socialize and mingle. The atmosphere in the course has always been friendly and serene. One of the students wrote, "The fieldtrip was truly eye-opening! It did help change my opinion however slightly. As such, this course offers something most other courses at UiB lack. Real world experience." Another student wrote "Feltturen: endelig! Veldig interessant og godt initiativ. Burde være noe liknende på flere antro-fag".
- The course "The Anthropology of Oil" should be held in English because of its general nature and because it has attracted many international students from all over the world.
- The average final grade in the course was B, which is above the usual average (C). The course coordinator has been favourably impressed by both the capacity of many students in using advanced theoretical perspectives in combination with varied case studies in answering the questions. Some of the students (both Norwegian and foreigners) were very enthusiastic about the course and came to the course coordinator after the course ended asking for tips for writing a master's thesis on the topic of oil. One student even submitted an article to a peer reviewed journal (*Extractive industries and society*) based on what s/he learned from the course.
- The students agreed that "The anthropology of oil" is a course of high relevance and actuality in Norway. Some of the foreign students expected such a course to be taught in Norway. Norway offers many resources at the academic, institutional and business levels

for supplementing and enriching this course. The lecturer has used Mongstad and the Equinor availability to combine the teaching with an excursion. Nevertheless, there are many more possibilities, like taking the students to another short excursion to the gas processing facility of Kollsnes, or even taking them for one-day trip to the Oil Museum in Stavanger. In addition, there are many possibilities for having them conduct different kinds of fieldwork and to have them produce original research. "To the extent this is possible, I believe this should be implemented in other courses at the institute, at least on the 200-level" said one student.

- The course helped many of the students to start thinking critically about issues that touch their daily lives. "I realized the dependency on oil, oil shapes people's lives", wrote a student in the questionnaire. Another wrote "Great course with great content, it has really opened my mind". In addition, a third: "It has allowed me to learn a lot about the oil market and to have a reflection on the oil impact in our societies. It was intense but very dynamic and interesting." The course coordinator is very proud of this accomplishment in making the student interested, curious, critical and self-reflecting.