

SOS4150 Reflection on students' feedback

Alexi Gugushvili

The master level course in sociology – Sociology of Social Inequalities (SOS4150) was delivered for the first time in the fall semester of 2021. Here I want to summarize the feedback received from students that was helpful to further develop the course for 2022-23 academic year. There were only limited number of students who responded to the questionnaire and provided feedback for SOS4150, yet the number of students still constitutes about half of all enrolled students in the course. After summarizing the students' comments below, I will briefly outline the steps I plan to implement to address the raised issues.

- In terms of format and the delivery form of the course, students liked a hybrid solution and some of them claimed that it was [1] “great for students who need flexibility due to chronic illness or other life situations;” and that they [2] “appreciate the option to have digital teaching”. Yet one student claimed that digital part made [3] “the dynamic in the physical lectures worse with less people being there.”
- The delivered lectures were evaluated overall as very good by three out of five students. Those who liked the lectures declared that lectures were [1] “...easy to follow and simple and understandable explanation for sometimes complex theories. Nice atmosphere.” However, another student suggested that [2] “The lectures were just a summary of the readings, which meant that if you had read the literature you didn't get much new from them. They were ok, and i think if the questions for the lecture would have worked then there could have been some good discussions in the classroom.”
- Students were satisfied with the quality of follow up and they did not want more of it from the teachers' side. Students got sufficient information required for their studies. One student asked to see “some examples of research questions for the essay.”
- The workload in terms of readings for the course was judged by one of the students as appropriate, they wrote that [1] “compared to other courses the syllabus is smaller, which is a good thing in my opinion because it makes it possible to read before every lecture.”
- Students expressed opinion that more illustrative cases for discussion had to be part of the syllabus.
- Most students in the survey agreed that the learning objectives were met.

The following are the proposed changes I plan to implement in the fall semester of 2022.

- Hopefully, in September 2022 the pandemic situation allows to move completely to physical lectures. This would imply a complete removal of digital component of teaching from the course. It will reduce flexibility for some students but will also reinvigorate discussion between students and teachers in the classroom.
- Although students liked the lectures, it was suggested that too much of lectures was the repetition of the materials given in the syllabus. To avoid repeating and give students an opportunity to learn to things, beyond the materials given in the syllabus, the lectures will be shortened and the greater share of time will be devoted to a discussion component.
- Student received sufficient information about the course but at least one of the students asked for more clarification related to the exam. In fall of 2022 the type of examination will be amended, and the detailed description of examination will be shared with students.
- Workload will remain approximately the same for each week.
- We plan also to add more materials about specific cases which will be discussed in the class.
- Learning objective will not be changed and most students agreed that they were met appropriately.