

Evaluation-form

Course-code: STV4550

Course title: Topics in Autocratic Politics

Language: Norwegian English

Course convener's evaluation of the course:

This report is written by one of the course conveners (CHK), who held two lectures, but draws on experiences communicated by the other convener and lecturers previously. This was the first iteration of the course, involving multiple lecturers and related coordination between the lecturers. We spent a lot of time thinking through and discussing the structure of the course and the relationships between the lectures on beforehand, and one concern initially was the coherence of a course with so many lecturers.

However, the course functioned quite smoothly once up and running, with good communication and coordination between the different lecturers and TA, and we were, overall, very satisfied with the execution of the course (and especially the ability to make the course a coherent whole). The structure of the course seems to have worked well, with a mix of general (early) and specific (later) topics, student participation in lectures was good (though we would have wanted even more of the students to attend the lectures), and the students also seemed to digest and learn a lot from this (fairly difficult) course. Contact with students via Canvas and mail, plus meeting with the Student contact, went smoothly, and the addition of a TA was really helpful to ensure that the course ran as planned and without experiencing technical or practical hick-ups.

In sum, I'm very satisfied with how the course went, and plan to keep many of the same solutions and overall structure for the next iteration (while of course looking for improvements and smaller changes)

Summary of feedback from student contact-point:

The contact student presented mainly positive feedback, and provided indications that we should keep many of the same solutions and structure in place for the next iteration of the course (wrt examination form, topics, lecturers, etc.). The potential issue of coherence of lectures/topics with different lecturers was not perceived as an issue, and the feedback was positive both wrt the coherence of the course as well as the quality of the lectures. Feedback was also generally positive on the reading materials, although the student contact referenced that several students would like to see a few more qualitative case studies of autocratic politics. The course conveners recognise this as a pertinent point, as the reading materials were tilted towards theoretical and especially quantitative-empirical studies.

Suggestions for improvements:

Go through the readings list, especially with an eye towards substituting a few articles with other relevant ones including qualitative case studies (from different autocratic contexts). Streamline and publish information about the term paper and other course-relevant information a bit earlier than for the first iteration of the course (was good, but could still be improved a bit in the second iteration)