

Evaluation-form

Course-code: STV2235

Course title: Conflict and Human Rights in International Politics

Language: Norwegian English

Course convener's evaluation of the course:

In my view the following things worked well:

- Good collaboration with different lecturers on the different topics of the course
- Good student engagement in class and seminars
- Excellent turnout: 70 students registered, 55 took written exam & term paper + some postponed, so probably around 60
- Seminar focus on the readings instead of the term paper worked well. We also tried to integrate both the seminar assignment and the term paper to create synergies which also worked nicely: for the seminar, the students had to summarise a research paper and create discussion questions. They could then use the same paper as one of two other papers to discuss in their term paper.
- Multiple choice only as written exam, but only 30% of the overall grade, is a good choice that saves time and effort on part of the graders. Grade distribution looks fine (mean grade in the multiple-choice exam was B)

Things that worked less than optimal:

- In addition to the substantive topics, I decided to cover some basic study techniques, such as how to figure out if research papers student find online are a proper scholarly paper (finding a second paper on a certain topic was part of the term paper assignment), how to structure a term paper, or how to use Zotero. Ideally students would have learned them in another class, but a quick survey in class suggested that a majority needed these, which took away from lecturing time
- When I wanted to change some wrongly transferred exam instructions on Inspira, the responsible admin person was on sick leave and there was no information who was responsible as a substitution.

Summary of feedback from student contact-point:

Things that worked well

- Many students liked the topic and felt that it was good that such an important topic was covered by the department
- Diversity in lecturers who are experts on the respective topics is a strength
- The seminar setup with a clear focus on the readings is good
- The seminars/lectures also provided some information on how to write a term paper, but maybe not enough (see next section)

- Many students liked that the school exam was only 30% and the term 70% of the grade, since they felt this reflected a focus on skills AND knowledge rather than simply focusing on facts that they would forget soon anyway

Things that could be improved:

- Some students were unhappy that some of the readings were too complicated, but those were mostly students with a non poli-sci background
- We weren't able to discuss many examples questions for the multiple choice exam

Suggestions for improvements:

- Have a department-wide session for early-year BA students on how to write a term paper, how to use a reference manager, how to research a scientific article. That way the lectures and seminars could focus more on the readings
- Study groups were important for discussing the readings, so a suggestion was to facilitate the formation of study groups, e.g. through a thread in the discussion section in Canvas where students can form study groups
- Provide examples of good term papers/example exam next year (wasn't possible this year, because it was the first time the course was offered)