

Course convener's evaluation of the course

This is a well-established course that has been given off and on since the 1980s. Theories of nationalism have always constituted the core, but otherwise, course contents as well as syllabus have changed over the years. A major revision took place in 2015, when we started to teach the course in English – in part to accommodate incoming exchange students. This has given us the opportunity to draw on examples from the students' home countries and to involve students more during lectures – a clear plus. In its current form the course 1) combines theories of nationalism with empirical cases (Norway, Central Europe) to shed light on why nations and nationalism emerged historically, and 2) brings in contemporary topics such as nationalist and populist political parties, the relationship between majorities and ethnic minorities (whether original or immigrant), and supranational identities.

The reading list comprises (parts of) two books and several downloadable book-chapters and articles. Teaching consists of 10 lectures. To qualify for the exam, students must hold an oral presentation alone or with another student. Attendance is compulsory during all student presentations. Because of few students this year, we did all presentations in one sitting. (We usually have two). Since 2023 the exam is a 4-hour school exam (down from 6 hours in 2022 and earlier). I therefore changed the format. Students get 4 questions to choose between and must answer 3.

This year I reorganized the empirical part of the course. Rather than holding one lecture on Central Europe and one on Norway, I covered the nation-forming process for all cases in one lecture and talked about examples of invented traditions in one lecture. I also made some changes to two other empirical lectures. This seems to have worked fine. Despite the low number of students, my overall impression that the course has worked rather well.

Summary of feedback from student contact-point

Because of few students, I only had one course contact, and he was generally satisfied with the course during as well as after the course. He found it exciting instructive, and well-structured. This applies to the Canvas-page and the reading guidelines, as well as the lectures. He liked that theories were presented before the empirical examples. Power-point slides were excellent, and it was a big plus that they were uploaded before the lectures. Student presentations were fine, and the exam fit the course well and was predictable, given the course contents.

While he found the examples from Norway and Central Europe interesting, he would have liked more examples from outside Europe, like Japan, China, India, Pakistan, Latin-America, and Israel – or perhaps even Africa.

Suggestions for improvements

I don't think it is necessary to make major changes to the course. It seems to work well as a whole. I will of course make some adjustments to the syllabus, as I always do, especially on the more contemporary topics, and I will consider adding readings on non-European cases. I still need to work

through a couple of the lectures. I will continue to plan for two sittings for the student presentations, because this works better when there are many students.