

Dealing with colonialism, diversity and inequality; Resources for developing course curriculum

Background, mandate and intentions:

Programrådet has overarching responsibility for the implementation of the Department's study programs (BA and MA in Social Anthropology). This includes ensuring adaptation to student's needs, overall quality assessment, and ensuring that the courses together constitute unified whole (*'faglig helhet'*). In practice, this is done through formal decisions on proposed changes to course content and course curriculum. (see [Programrådet - Sosialantropologisk institutt \(SAI\) \(uio.no\)](#)).

Ongoing debates regarding decoloniality, diversity and gender balance have prompted the need to address such concerns. In order to ensure that these considerations are taken into account in *Programrådets* quality assessment, and as a resource for lecturers and *emneansvarlige*, we have developed a set of questions to guide these processes.

The aim of this document is to help to expand the range of texts, authors and perspectives that students encounter in their degree programme rather than to prescribe or remove particular perspectives or authors.

Reflection Questions

The following questions are intended primarily as resources for the development of course curriculum for the BA and MA level. Such concerns must always be balanced in relation to learning outcomes within the single course. Yet, it remains an overarching aim that they are reflected in the totality of readings that the students encounter during their BA or MA degree. (Questions are dynamic and subject to future revisions.)

Representation – balancing voices and positions

Seeking a fair and balanced representation of authors, voices and positions in the course curriculum, we invite considerations as follows:

Gender:

Research on citational practices suggest a general bias towards prioritising male authors. It is important not to solidify this bias when representing anthropological scholarship to students.

- Is there is a motivated and thought-through gender balance regarding authors in your curriculum?

Positionality, diversity and voice:

Situated knowledge makes a difference. Positionality matters. Depending on the topic and course, various positions come to matter in different ways. For example, a regional course would be expected to have more authors from that region than a general course. Some topics warrant specific considerations. Please consider the overall representation of authors in relation to your course, in relation to the following key dimensions relating to diversity, positionality and voice:

- ethnic background
- regional background
- race and whiteness
- indigeneity
- religion
- minority/majority positioning
- class
- gender and sexual orientation

Nordic Coloniality

As an anthropology department situated in the Nordic region, we have a special responsibility for making visible the colonial heritage and indigenous presence in this region, and for ensuring that such indigenous and minority scholars are given a voice. This concerns especially the Sámi, but other minority and immigrant groups are relevant too. This is particularly important for Nordic regional courses, but also for the BA and MA curriculum as a whole.

- Can a colonial perspective relevant to the Nordics be included in your course?
- Could an case example concerning Sámi or other minority-majority relations of relevance to the region support the general learning?
- Is there a space for including Sámi or other less represented authors?

Language matters

While English is dominating the field of anthropology, anthropological discourse exists in many languages, and anthropological theory is partly founded on scholarship originally written in e.g. French and German. In order to make our students aware of the variety of scholarly traditions that exist, to sustain the linguistic diversity among staff at our department, to sustain Norwegian as an academic language, and to encourage multilinguality (*flerspråklighet*) among our students, we invite *emneansvarlige* to consider the following:

- Have any of the texts you suggest been subject to translation? If so, could you make other versions available to students? (Many anthropological classics were translated into Norwegian, i.e. [Sosialantropologiske grunntekster. 9788241706677. Innbundet - 1996 | Akademika.no](https://www.akademika.no/produkt/Sosialantropologiske-grunntekster-9788241706677) . Other classics were originally written in French or German. The teaching admin may help you out.)
- Specifically for the BA program:
 - Are there texts in Scandinavian languages relevant to the course topic that could be included? Are there texts in Scandinavian languages that could enhance the students' ability to translate analytical terminology between relevant languages, or expose the challenges of translation early on?
 - Regional courses: Have you included texts written in languages relevant to the region of choice? If so, they may be made available *along with* the texts in English or Norwegian as an extra resource for teaching. This includes texts in languages that would only be read by a small number of our students, such as Sámi, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish and more. Making them available will not only serve students with language competence beyond English, but also make visible the presence of other regional scholarly traditions to the students.
 - Regional courses: Are texts written by regional scholars included?
- Specifically for the MA program:
 - Are there relevant texts in other-than-English languages that could enhance the students' ability to translate analytical terminology between English and the language they are more familiar with? If so, they may be made available *along with* the texts in English. This includes texts in languages that would only be read by a small number of our students. Making them available will not only serve students with language competence beyond English, but also make visible the presence of other regional scholarly traditions to the students.