

Course evaluation ECON4260, Fall 2023

Course responsible: Kjell Arne Brekke, Geir Asheim, Karine Nyborg. (Formally appointed course responsible: Karine Nyborg.)

This course was first given in 2006, and has for a many years now been taught each fall. The course is organized in three parts with four lectures on behavioural decision theory given by Brekke, four lectures on self-control and time preferences given by Geir Asheim, and five lectures on social preferences given by Karine Nyborg. The lecturers have been the same ones since 2006. The organization of the course has also been approximately the same since it was first given, with only minor changes in the curriculum. There is no textbook, and the curriculum is based on journal articles.

Student evaluations have been conducted in most previous years, sometimes through evaluation forms and sometimes by means of informal meetings with contact students. Over the years, minor changes have been made to accommodate wishes expressed by students and to update the course material. For the most part, students have expressed that they like the course; they find it interesting, are mostly happy with the lectures and seminars, and find the workload and the degree of difficulty reasonable. From the professors' point of view, the course is interesting to teach, and the students appear interested and engaged during lectures.

In 2023, fewer students than usual (about 10-15) have attended the lectures (as compared to maybe 20-30 in earlier years). This may be due to the time of the lectures (08:15 on Monday morning). For parts of the course, lectures were recorded. For other parts they were not, although some tutorial videos from previous years were made available. Attendance does not appear to have been substantially affected by whether lectures were recorded or not.

Since there was no meeting with contact students this semester, and only 4 students responded to the evaluation form (summary report enclosed), the material on which we can base the evaluation is limited. However, the feedback we do have is consistent with student views reported in earlier semesters: Overall, students are happy with the course. They consider it interesting, find that they have been taught how the theory can be applied, and are satisfied to very satisfied with the lectures. They also mostly find the degree of difficulty and the workload appropriate, although some suggest that not all articles on the reading list are equally relevant and that some of them may be omitted.

From this perspective, we do not see the need for any substantial changes to the course. However, Asheim is now retired, meaning that a new lecturer will have to take over Part 2 of the course for future semesters. This will of course have to involve some changes.