

Course evaluation ECON5200/9200B Fall 2022

Course responsible: Kjell Arne Brekke, Geir Asheim, Bård Harstad

This course has been given each fall since 2009. In the fall of 2022 Kjell Arne Brekke has replaced Paolo Piacquadio, but otherwise the organization of the course is unchanged from recent years.

Around 8-9 students have followed the lectures, a majority of which are PhD candidates. It is a rewarding task to teach the course, with a small group of interested students. On the other hand, the scope of subjects is large compared to the number of credits (15 ECTS for ECON5200 and 8 ECTS for ECON9200B), and the 26 lectures and seminars cannot cover all subjects at sufficient depth. Moreover, as shown by the course evaluation, the students have a large variation in their background, making it challenging to adjust the level of teaching to the needs and interest of the individual students. One should consider how best to solve this challenge. In their comments, some respondents suggest recording the lectures so that the less prepared students get a chance to revisit material that is challenging. In the fall of 2022, recordings will be made for lectures that collide with the compulsory PhD courses that the Faculty of Social Sciences organizes. One should seek to avoid such collisions in the future.

The course evaluation was held during the lecture on 11.10.2022. By this date, Kjell Arne Brekke has held all of his lectures, Geir Asheim half of his, while Bård Harstad had not yet started. Seven students responded (see attachment). On the scale from 1 to 5, their overall satisfaction is 3.3 (min: 3, max: 4), and the respondents find the course somewhat interesting, giving a score of 3.6 (min: 3, max: 5). The difficulty of the course seems appropriate, with a score of 3.3, but a large variance (min: 2, max: 5). The same conclusion holds for the workload, with a score of 3.1 (min: 2, max: 4). The score for learning outcome is 3.3 (min: 3, max: 4). Students are moderately satisfied with quality of the lecture, with a score of 3.3 (min: 3, max: 4), and find the teaching material and the use of Canvas adequate, with scores of 3.7 (min: 2, max: 5) and 3.9 (min: 3, max: 5) respectively. Seminars have been integrated in the lectures, and the responses were similar as for the lectures.

When being asked to provide any other comments on the teaching in the course, students point to the fact that their backgrounds are different. Some find it easy. One writes: *While the course is indeed interesting, a lot of it is repetition of already seen concepts (to me), and I have gotten the impression that is the case also for a lot of the other students.* Another writes: *Students start the course with very different backgrounds and therefore find different parts of the curriculum hard vs easy. For this reason (and several others), it would be helpful if all lectures are recorded. This enables students to rewatch the hardest parts, and skip the easier parts, based on their own subjective assessment.*¹ However, an opinion in the opposite direction is also expressed: *If it is possible, I would suggest to split the course into two semesters. Game theory is quite difficult and is better to be taught slowly in one whole semester.* There was also a comment to the effect that the use quizzes had been successful: *Parts of the course started each class with a quiz, which was very helpful for testing understanding, and which could be significantly scaled up.*

Geir B. Asheim, 11.10.2022

¹ There is another respondent asking for recordings, but for a different reason: *Recordings would have been nice as it is a bit difficult to catch up without lectures if you for some reason can't attend the lectures or seminars, in case of illness etc.*