

Periodic course evaluation of ECON5200/9200

This course has been taught each fall since 2009, giving 15 credits at the master's level and 10 credits at the Ph.D. level. Until 2015 the teaching volume corresponded to a 10 credit course. From 2016 on, however, the teaching volume corresponds to a 15 credit course, with 2x29 teaching hours, being allocated to lectures and seminars.

In the fall of 2018, the teaching collided with the required Faculty courses in the first semester of the Ph.D. As a consequence, there were no candidates in ECON9200. The first semester Ph.D. candidates that do not already have ECON5200, will take ECON9200 in their third semester in the fall of 2019. We will avoid such a collision in the future.

In ECON5200 there were 7 students that took and passed the exam. Among those were 6 in SVM2-ECON and 1 other with right to study.

In connection with this periodic course evaluation information has been collected from the following sources:

- The three lecturers.
- Colleague feedback on teaching.
- Conversations with students.
- Statistics from the study administration.

There were no feedback on the 'nettskjema' in the fall of 2018 and only one respondent in the fall of 2017.

The teaching has followed the course description <https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/oekonomi/ECON5200/>, and the teaching plan for the fall of 2018 is available at <https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/oekonomi/ECON5200/h18/timeplan/index.html>

Comments:

1. The intention with the course is to give an overview over microeconomic theory, at a similar level as first year courses in high quality Ph.D. programs at foreign institutions, with Mas-Colell et al. used as text book. Usually, this is given in a course sequence that extends beyond one semester, amounts to 20 credits, and have a teaching intensity that is twice the one offered here. At institutions that follow the Bologna structure, such a course sequence is usually given in the first year of a 2-year research master. For the time being, this is hard to implement in our department.
2. As a consequence, the teaching in ECON5200/9200 presents all important parts of microeconomic theory, but goes in depth only for some of these topics. As expressed in 'Knowledge outcomes', the goal is for the students to "learn the fundamental methods and theories of microeconomics, and be provided with the basic tools and concepts required to understand scientific papers at the research frontier of microeconomic theory. The course cannot bring you to the frontier of all topics within

microeconomic theory, but will give you sufficient knowledge to read papers on the frontier and thus be able to acquire knowledge of the frontier of most areas in microeconomics.” Whether the students have succeeded in this is tested by a take-home exam, which by itself is meant to give the students in-depth knowledge on specific topics.

3. Based in the results of the home-exam, it seems like the course functions well and according to the intention. Results are good, with 4 As and 3 Bs in the fall of 2018.
4. Our most important suggestion for an improvement, namely to increase the teaching so that it corresponds to 15 credits, has already been implemented. A challenge that we face is to ensure that the papers handed-in for the take-home exam are written sufficiently independently. We suggest that the students may discuss the problems during the period of the take-home exam, to facilitate learning and augment productive interaction. However, sometimes it seems like students are cooperating also on the answers given, which is of course not the intention.