HGO 4011 Summary of Evaluation 2022

**Summary**

This course is the flagship introductory course of the MA program in Human Geography. It covers questions of philosophy and methodology of geography and introduces students to major current debates in the discipline. It is organised around the theme of ‘borders’ to provide a thread running across diverse topics. The course was coordinated by Andrea Nightingale with contributions from more than half of all permanent staff members covering: economic, urban, labour/development, political, environmental, and feminist and decolonial geographies. A final concluding session focused on ethics and the theme of borders specifically.

**Overall outcomes**

The course was generally well received. The response rate on the course evaluation was too low to be statistically representative (6 of 18 enrolled students), but showed overwhelming good or very good in terms of the quality of teaching in both lectures and seminars. The overall curriculum is considered challenging but appropriate. Students especially liked the diversity of topics and lecturers, even if that meant that the border theme was treated unevenly and the quality of lectures variable.

The course evaluation is done in the middle of the course which is an awkward time in terms of students feeling confident about this course. It is challenging and often more abstract than their undergraduate courses and thus takes most of the semester to fully digest.

Verbal feedback from a wide spectrum of students indicated that borders were well explained and integrated by the time the course concluded. Many used it in their course essays as well to good effect. In addition, all students expressed a positive attitude, appreciation for the course and confidence in their learning by the last session.

Course evaluation outcomes were fed back to the students verbally at the final lecture and seminar, and over Canvas.

**Conclusions**

1. Students find the beginning of the MA program to be very intense and required encouragement to keep engaging fully.
2. The curriculum is challenging but pitched at the right level.
3. There is a need to bring more consistency to the quality of lectures and treatment of core philosophy of science concepts.
4. Students would like more seminars. There may not capacity to add more, but we can think about designing student-led seminars. The student-led seminar added din 2022 was successful but we can consider adding another one.

**Changes to be implemented**

1. The theme of borders works, but students struggle to latch onto it mid-way through the course (when the evaluation was done). This was the same result as last year. A short lecture on borders will be organised for start of term next year.
2. The course organiser will continue to work with the teaching staff to ensure high quality lectures.
3. Students prefer recorded lectures so they can revisit them. This course had only a couple recorded lectures but we will endeavour to add more recorded lectures next year.