Emneevaluering / course evaluation ISV

Navn / name

Solveig Hillesund

Emnekode / course code

PECOS4096

Semester

H22, V23

Emneevalueringen bør inneholde:
Egenevalueringen emneansvarlig: Evaluer hvordan undervisiningsopplegget fungerte. Vær konkret. Gjør spesielt rede for både det som fungerte godt, og det som ikke fungerte like godt.

Oppsummering av studentevaluering: Her fylles hovedpunktene fra tilbakemeling fra emnekontakt inn. Nevn hva som fungerte bra, hva som fungerte mindre bra, og kom gjerne med forslag til forbedringer.
Forslag til forbedringer: Gjør rede for hvordan emnet kan forbedres til neste gang det skal gis. Vurder i hvilken grad det er behov for større endringer.
The course evaluation should include:
Self-evaluation by the course convener: Evaluate how the course worked. Be specific. Describe both what worked well and what didn't work as well.
Summary of student evaluation: Here, the main points from feedback provided by the contact student(s) are included. Mention what worked well, what didn't work as well, and feel free to suggest improvements.
Suggestions for improvements: Explain how the course can be improved for the next time it is offered. Assess the extent to which there is a need for major changes.

Emnerapport / course report

My overall impression is that despite relatively low attendance (about half of the students do not come to any of the events), the PECOS students really appreciate the activities offered, especially the writing workshops and PECOS shut up and write sessions. The suggestions for improvements below (point 1) are based on my own reflections and feedback from a student evaluation form and meeting with student contact (see summaries at the end of the document, point 2 and 3).

Note that there is no formal requirement to evaluate this course at this point. The report is based on a memo prepared for the new course convener (Melanie Sauter) who will be taking over this fall. It is submitted as an evaluation following a suggestion from the administration.

1. Potential improvements for fall 2023 – spring 2024:

- New components, as agreed with Elin Allern
o Writing lectures: Lynn Nygård on "the writing process in general"; Academic writing center on "how to write an excellent introduction and literature review"
o Data management plan: not mandatory (at least not this year) but we want to encourage them all

to make one and make sure they know how. Some of this is covered in the new design seminar, but in this course we want to follow up on it. Talk to Elin Allern about (i) how best to do this and (ii) where the work on improving the data management plan template stands.

- Other suggestions for activities
o Lecture on how to write up the analysis (f.ex in March/April, with Jakob?)
o More information on MA defense in the spring semester?
o Intro lecture(s) in the fall and/or after Christmas? Practical info, motivation, how to structure a thesis etc. Most of this is probably covered in design seminar, but a reminder later on might be useful.
o An additional writing workshop before Christmas? This year the students organized their own, and quite a few first-years also showed up and commented
o A qualitative equivalent to the coffee and coding sessions? I.e., somewhere students using qualitative designs can come and discuss qualitative methods with someone other than their supervisor (in the spring semester).

- Components that will be dropped
o NVivo; will be covered in Elin's data course

- Suggested revisions
o More shut-up and write towards the end of the spring, perhaps separate PECOS sessions.
o Open the software demonstrations for first-year students. Ask Joakim to advertise to them.

- Follow up more on the supervisor side?
o At a minimum, send out an email about the activities the students are offered

- Practical suggestions
o Start scheduling rooms and lecturers as early as possible; maybe talk to Jørg/Joakim about adding the course to the normal scheduling system.
o Course convener should be added to the general PECOS email lists/canvas rooms
o Improve 'advertising'. Especially in the beginning of the year (in start-up meeting or similar)?
o Always make sure to have one qual and one quant member of staff in the writing workshops.

2. Feedback from student contact (28 April 2023):

- Overall positive; especially re. workshops and SUAW sessions

- For the people who do not show up for activities, the impression is that it is because they work, and weren't able to take time off for non-mandatory activities

- The timing of the activities generally worked well this year. Early February and mid-March might be the best time for workshops. (This year we did Feb and mid-April.)

- Re. writing course (not mentioned much in the evaluation forms): It was useful to have non-poli sci instructors (Academic writing centre). Very useful to get the practical tips and tricks for what to do to get started and when you are stuck.
o To make more people come, maybe this should be encouraged as part of a bigger package "you should really try to write one chapter before Christmas (usually intro/ lit review), and to help you with this, we have invited…." (see also suggestion about December workshop below)

- Other suggestions
o To get a 'refresher' after Christmas for some of the lecture topic from the design seminar would be useful (when the students have a clearer idea of what they are doing)
o Maybe a writing workshop before Christmas as well (the students organized their own this year), where people decide for themselves whether/what to submit. Perhaps divide into groups of 2 or 3 for discussion instead of presenting to the whole group.
o Shut up and write: more (PECOS-specific) sessions later in the last semester (March-May) (this year's students are organizing their own rather than go to the ones with poli sci)
o A qualitative equivalent to coffee and coding would be great; i.e., a drop-in methods chat with a couple of members of staff who have experience with the most important qualitative methods (f.ex text analysis and process tracing / comparative). E.g. in February?

- General feedback
o People really appreciate the coffee and coding sessions
o Jeremy did a great job in design seminars, to help people build their projects gradually
o Melanie gave great advise in the February workshop

3. Responses to student evaluation form (late April):

- Summary
o 6 responses, not representative of whole class. Most of them attended several activities and plan to submit on time.
o Reasons not to attend: Mostly work and other scheduling conflicts
o Positive: Several students respond that the NVivo lectures, shut up and writes sessions, and writing workshops worked well. The data management sessions and writing course are also mentioned. They provide little detail on why these activities worked well, however.
o Negative: When asked what we can do better, students responded that they would like more workshops, with more time for each student and written feedback (preferably in advance). One responds that the data management sessions were "really confusing". (Note that we also received a lot of negative feedback on the data management workshop held by the library last year.)