

Minutes MITRA Programme Council Meeting October 10, 2018

Council members present: Daniel Maul, Toufoul Abou-Hodeib, Hanne Hagtvedt Vik, Odd Arvid Storsveen, Magne Olav Rønningen, Siri Aamodt, Ragnar Holst Larsen (secretary)

Student council members: Lena Kelle & Anja Birkelund Torheim

Absent: Hilde Henriksen Waage

Time and place: October 10, 2018. 14.15 – 16.00

Place: 4th floor Niels Treschows building, meeting room NT424

Orientation items:

1. MITRA4400 & MITRA4450: Internship and History Project

Student Advisor Ragnar Holst Larsen addressed the council about the status for the internship course MITRA4400 and the work that had been done so far to prepare it and to follow-up the students on internship. Lena Kelle informed that some of the students felt pressed for time working on a paper and doing regular work tasks at the same time. Some students had more time to write the paper than others, and some had a more research-oriented internship where the paper is more integrated into the work week. Kelle suggested that the paper could be more report oriented in the future and be directly connected to the tasks from the contractor. Larsen suggested that there should be an evaluation meeting after the course was done to discuss these matters with the students and then look at possible structural changes for the future. But it was underlined in the meeting that some differences would be unavoidable with internships and that all students and contractors have signed an agreement about setting aside 12-18 hours per work week for studies. Larsen suggested reminding the students about letting UiO know if there were any issues with students not getting enough time per week writing the paper and working on MITRA4040. Kelle also said that most of the feedback from the students has been positive and that was also Larsen's impression after contacting each student, except a few smaller issues raised. Maul also oriented the council about the supervision regime and that the supervisors would not grade their own students but instead grade each other's students.

2. MITRA nominated to Utdanningskvalitetsprisen for høyere utdanning 2018

Maul told the council the good news and we should expect the announcement of a winner sometime in November.

3. Application process and statistics 2018

Larsen spoke about the application process and that in the end 15 students accepted the offer and attends the programme, with one of these being an international student. The council discussed the

current measures for attracting international students and the early sign for the applications are positive. Siri Aamodt suggested that the programme should try to attract international students that are studying in Oslo for a semester/one year, and Hanne Hagtvedt Vik suggested that the history staff should be more present at the International Summer School. The council agreed that this was something that should be pursued. Kelle also suggested that old fashioned black boards could be effective and Daniel Maul said that we should try to attract students applying for the MITRA programme in Aarhus, since they now prioritized national students instead of international students.

4. Teaching Plan MITRA spring 2019

Daniel Maul talked briefly about the teaching plan for the next semester. There are no major changes, but for MITRA4300 Einar Lie would have to be replaced. Vik suggested Espen Ekberg at BI as a possible replacement for Espen Storli (IAKH will be able to use Storli, but it is a question of flying him in for one session in light of the environmental aspect). Maul suggested that Ada Nissen might be able to replace Einar Lie's lecture.

Larsen also noted that the reflection paper for MITRA4010 will now be part of the compulsory assignment and Maul noted that the reflection paper would be a more integral part of the course. For MITRA4030 a compulsory assignment will be added next semester, where the students are required to present and comment project description drafts. For MITRA4001 (autumn 2019) and MITRA4011 (spring 2019) they would both require the students to write 4 extracts to ensure more writing training.

Discussion items:

1. Evaluation of courses – MITRA4010, MITRA4011, MITRA4030, MITRA4300 (attachment 4 - 7)

Daniel started the discussion with pointing out the need for more writing training and the measure to add more of this in MITRA4001 and MITRA4011. In the evaluation of MITRA4300 Maul pointed to Kim Priemel's comment that there had been a mismatch between the enthusiasm in class and the results of the exam papers, and concluded that the students should have more writing training in the first semester. Maul also noted that the "supervisors" in MITRA4300 should not assess the papers from their students in the future. Although it is very limited supervision, only on the exposé, it would be better to use the model from MITRA4400/MITRA4450. Larsen would talk to Tor Egil Førlund about the extent the "supervision" in this course can help the students beyond the exposé. Larsen also suggested making it absolutely clear to the staff about the limitation of the supervision to avoid discrimination.

Then the council discussed MITRA4010 and to what extent the focus on methods and theory related to each student's master's thesis was a beneficiary focus. There council agreed that the students should benefit from thinking about methods and theory relating to their own project, but also make sure that the students reflect critically on the use of these potential methods and theory, and reflect on why the syllabus might not be relevant or useful for their own project. Kelle also noted that the students worked on the project description in MITRA4030 in the same semester, and that fact gave the students a positive synergy effect.

Toufoul Abou-Hodeib also commented on the oral exam and the use of a reflection paper. She had been an assessor for the oral exam last semester, and thought it would be a good idea to specify what the students should think about when writing the reflection paper prior to the oral exam. Maul said that the oral exam would be evaluated, but it would remain the examination method for now.

2. Items from the students: - Expectations and assignments for MITRA4020 - Availability of readings and the late start in MITRA4421 - Disconnect between readings and assignments in MITRA4001

Anja Birkelund Torheim talked first about MITRA4020 and she said the students lacked direction and clear communication from the teachers on what they expected the students to do, and what they would learn in class. Maul will talk directly to the teachers. The students thought MITRA4421 started too late in the semester and that the course was quite intensive in a short period of time. Torheim also noted that two of the books in the syllabus were not available at Akademika or anywhere else. Larsen will ask the syllabus consultant about this issue and address the students when the solution is ready. Lastly some of the students remarked that MITRA4001 were dealing with 1968 more broadly in class than in the specific assignments. Daniel would ask Doug to specify to the class why he had chosen to do it in this manner.

Closed session without students:

1. First review of exam-questions for MITRA4000 & MITRA4421, syllabus coverage and assessment guidelines.

The Council members discussed the exam questions.

12.10.2018

Daniel Maul
Head of MITRA

Ragnar Holst Larsen
Student Advisor