

COURSE EVALUATION SOSANT1300: ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY

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Based on the responses of 35 students on the *Nettskjema* I created, as well as on personal observations from class and informal interaction post-class and during seminars, what follow are reflections on the teaching and overall pedagogical experience of Economic Anthropology in the autumn of 2023.

I taught 8 of the 10 lectures, while Ståle Wig taught 2. I also taught 8 of 8 seminars for group 1, while Ståle did the same for seminar groups 2-4.

Few differences from last year exist in the curriculum and the general course design: Woodburn's classic text was added in the last week, for instance. However, for next year, I envision some important changes, not least due to the student feedback.

Very positive student evaluation makes me feel optimistic about this big course, which gathers on average about 120 students (this year a few less), from various departments. A 34.3% of the students argued they enjoyed the course "very much" (the highest grade available) and an astounding 60% that they "quite liked" it, an overall of almost 95% positive answers. The assessment of the lectures was also overwhelmingly positive, with the vast majority of the students finding them "inspiring", occasionally "eye opening", "helpful", "clear", "easy to follow", "poetic", "excellent", "fun", "with dynamic flow". There were, however, comments that can help me improve the lecturing style (e.g.: "I thought the lecturer could have been more concise at times", "could use some more concrete points from the curriculum", "A suggestion I would have is that sometimes some tangents can make me a bit confused and lose track of the "red thread" of the topic"). The assessment of the seminars was equally encouraging, with students finding them useful and relevant. Students appreciated our engagement with Canvas and over email, the fact we shared seminar questions in advance, as well as the extra seminar we gave, beyond the required 8 ones, as well as the reading groups that Ståle organized.

The results were not that positive regarding the textbook we use for the course, which gathered 0% excellent grades, only 14% "very good", 60% "good" and 23% "mediocre" assessment. This concerns the Hann & Hart book, which makes me feel I might need to substitute it with another for next year. According to informal student feedback over conversations in the seminars, a similar sense is prevailing about the course's monograph. Indeed, I would also argue that using the Seth Holmes book is by now tired. We have been teaching this book since I joined SAI in 2017, and it is not even an economic anthropology monograph – more an ethnography of migration and work by a medical anthropologist. Many articles on the reading list were very popular (Roseberry, Tsing, Taussig, Ferguson, Zaloom).

My main suggestion for improvement is that both the books, and especially the monograph, need to be changed for next year. Also, that the lecturing style can be slightly toned down with the lecturer speaking slower, and that we could focus even more on readings in the seminars, while we could also try to claim better seminar hours from central administration (one seminar was 8AM on Monday).

Theodoros Rakopoulos. October 25, 2023.