Emneevaluering / course evaluation ISV

Navn / name

Staffan Kumlin

Emnekode / course code

STV4313

Semester

Spring 2023

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

STV 4313 The Welfare State: Policies, Politics, and Feedback

Evaluation Spring 2023

Staffan Kumlin

Remarks from the course convenor

About 14 students followed lectures and 13 ended up doing the exam, all of which passed. Approximately two-thirds of students signed up were women and one-third men. Moreover, in previous years around one-third of the group were international exchange students. By contrast, there was only one exchange student/non-Norwegian speaker this year. Despite this, half of the students wrote their exams in English, which is similar to observations I have made in other courses. The group size in question is very suitable at this level; large enough for the lectures/seminars to feel like meaningful events allowing a multitude of contacts and input. But not too big so as to overload the seminars. In contrast to previous years, where the number of students was sometimes around 20-25, I decided that one seminar group comprising all the students was enough this year. Still, I feared that this might make seminars stressful and give each person too little time. However,

this year's group was unusually skilled and disciplined and things worked more than fine as I see it. In general, the seminars worked well from my point of view. Students had prepared, stuck to the topic, and asked each other questions. Their presentations were useful for me when making connections to broader points discussed in lectures and the literature. For the most part, we had plenty of time for all the presenters. The student efforts in seminars and in lectures suggested that students were engaging with the reading.

Student feedback

There were two meetings with student representatives. One half-way and one at the end of the course. Both meetings revealed that the students were "very satisfied" the course and liked the lectures ("entertaining", "not dry"). They thought the seminars worked well, although the first one came a bit early. I can understand this feeling but I think it's important to get started early. Also, there were calls for connecting seminar tasks with concrete, perhaps individually chosen, real-world examples. I agree with this.

Possible reforms

All in all, the 2023 version of the course was a nice finale to an interesting six-year run. I look forward to updating and improving the course even further. After next-year's sabbatical it is due for a major overhaul along the following lines.
•General update of all topics with recent research, in particular the second edition of the Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State.
•More explicitly work "automation"-related welfare state challenges into the course.
•A bit more focus on recent crises Europe (financial, refugee, covid), at the same time as the long history welfare state politics is still crucial.
•Work more concrete examples into the seminar tasks. Maybe there could be two seminars (not three), but with more time spent on a short memo analyzing a recent welfare state reform, similar to the term paper task used in previous incarnations of the course. This could be combined with a presentation and/or canvas peer review.
•Possibly change the course name to "Comparative Welfare State Politics: Citizens, Parties, and Policy."