

PERIODISK EMNERAPPORT – NORAM 2321/ 4321: American Public Life

1. Beskrivelse av og kommentarer til eventuelle avvik fra og endringer i emnebeskrivelsen

Med avvik menes forandringer gjennomført etter undervisningsstart pga uforutsette omstendigheter. Med endringer menes forandringer som er gjennomført og annonsert før undervisningsstart.

This is the first time this seminar has been offered in ILOS; I created the seminar specifically for NORAM but based on a somewhat similar course I taught in the U.S. As the course I taught in the U.S. was based in literary studies and the one here based in American Studies, I limited the literature to a couple of plays and focused mostly on non-fictional texts and academic/ theoretical articles and book chapters. I also chose to cover a variety of topics instead of looking in-depth at a few issues. In addition, I limited lecturing and mostly used discussion based pedagogy. Based on the informal evaluations I had the students write at the end of the semester, both choices were viewed quite positively. There were very few complaints about the pensus texts; in fact, the only criticisms were minor. This means that if I were to teach the course again, I would make few changes on the pensus. I would perhaps change a couple of the weekly themes, if only for the sake of discussing issues that I am interested in or are particularly relevant at the time the course is taught. There were a few students who would have liked a little bit more lecturing, although I did explain my pedagogical intents at the beginning of the course, so I'm not sure I would add more lecturing.

2. Kommentarer til kvantitative gjennomføringsdata på emnet (karakterer, stryk, frafall)

Gjennomføringsdata fremskaffes av studieadministrasjonen ved hjelp av FS-rapport 754.001. For emner med mer enn 10 studenter anbefales det at karaktergivning og stryk kommenteres i forhold til gjennomsnittet på faget og fakultetet. Når et emne har vært undervist to eller flere ganger siden forrige periodiske evaluering, kommenteres også signifikante endringer i løpet av rapporteringsperioden.

2000-level: 12 students completed the course. I used an A to F grading scale, and the lowest grade was a "C." Overall, I thought the students did a very good job on their term papers. This reflected, I believe, the unusually high amount of student participation in the class. However, in the future I would spend a little more time explaining the assignment to the 2000-level students, as the assignment asked for argumentative writing; while most students did include some argumentative rhetorical style, they definitely privileged reporting "research" or "facts."

4000-level: 11 students completed the course. I used an A to F grading scale, and the lowest grade was a "C." Again, the papers were generally very good and relevant to the course material.

As this is the first time this course is offered, there is no basis for comparison to previous reports.

3. Er det indikasjoner/eksempler på særlig god kvalitet? Hvordan er de fulgt opp?

Her beskrives spesielt vellykkede grep i organiseringen av opptak, undervisning og prøving som andre kan ha nytte av.

The students in general were very engaged with the course material, evidenced by the excellent class discussions each week and the high quality of semester term papers.

Informal evaluations give evidence of some of the aspects of the course that were of good quality. Here are a few comments that illustrate this:

“Good organization, very good atmosphere, time efficient, good drive, good mix of teacher talk and student contribution, good sense of humour used productively and not just for fun. Good depth and good overview of the different topics, and a great motivation to read more on specific topics.”

“I really liked the open format in class and the interesting debates...It is a very good thing with a teacher that seems genuinely open/ interested in the input from the students.”

“I really enjoyed this course. It has been very interesting and a number of students have actively participated. This is the first seminar at UiO where I have experienced that...It challenged me to think critically about established fact, and your questions were good.”

So it seems some of my particular skills are to be able to get students to talk, to be critical, and to keep things interesting. I introduced them to writers who are critical of American culture and quite patriotic at the same time, so they were able to get interesting perspectives on American public life.

4. Er det indikasjoner på sviktende kvalitet? Hvordan er de fulgt opp?

Her beskrives ev. mindre vellykkede grep i organisering av opptak, undervisning og prøving som andre kan ha nytte av å kjenne til.

Not really – although I wish I could offer more than 10 seminars; many of the students also wanted more teaching. See also my comment on 2000-level paper preparation (pt. 2)

5. Hva er det fokusert på i denne perioden mht utvikling av studiekvalitet?

Her beskrives oppfølging av forbedringstiltak fra forrige periodiske evaluering og ev. andre relevante tiltak i årsplaner og lignende fra institutt og fakultet.

I try to give students a classroom experience they will both learn from and enjoy; I believe I succeeded in that. I also think it fits in well with a focus on multicultural issues, something the institute needs to develop in greater earnest in the future.

6. Forslag til tiltak for å forbedre emnet

Hva er det viktig å fokusere på i fremtiden for å forbedre kvaliteten på emnet i lys av beskrivelsene ovenfor?

I think that the course was extremely successful. I simply need to keep current on American culture and politics and choose topics that are relevant and interesting for the students.

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