

Evaluation report for the course “Researching Global Challenges” – GOV352

Responsible teacher: Corentin Poyet

Semester: Fall 2023

As it is a new course, there are no previous evaluations.

Overview of the course

Learning outcomes

The course's main objective is to show students how to make a research design in political science. Thanks to this course, students know how to plan research, the different steps, the trade-offs, and the ethical requirements inherent to every research in social sciences.

Teaching method

The course was organized around the various elements constituting a research design. Each two-hour session was about one element (state-of-the-art, theoretical framework, etc.). One session was explicitly about designing an experiment and was delivered by Carlo Koos.

Each session followed a similar teaching method based on practice. Students were asked to read three texts in advance (article size) that we discussed during the first 15-20 minutes. Then, the teacher summarizes the main points of the sessions, and a round of Q&As is organized. During the second hour, students could practice what they learned in the readings and during the discussion.

For the practice part, students were divided into five groups (5-6 students per group) and remained in the same group through the course flow. Each group was assigned one topic (one “global challenge”) and asked to develop a research design by working step-by-step.

The goal was to provide training and the opportunity for students to ask questions, solve problems, and discuss issues directly “on the spot.” The goal was for students to get used to the practical problems while preparing a research design and discussing potential solutions. The teacher was mainly here to guide and help with grave issues or critical questions.

Assessment method

Students had to write a research proposal (about 5000 words) that includes all elements of a research design. Students could choose the topic (linked to global challenges), but the teacher eventually validated it.

Before the exam, students had to write and present a draft (about 1000 words) of the proposal at a seminar. This assignment was mandatory but was not graded (completed vs. not completed)

Teacher's evaluation

The content of the course was good even though two adaptations will be required:

- More literature dealing with global challenges as a way to illustrate the various steps of a research design. It would also help students better link the general process of a research design and its application to a study of global challenges. I expected students to do this translation independently, but more guidance would have been needed.
- Better explain how each step is connected and maybe work on specific articles and how they are constructed instead of only focusing on the “theory of research design.”

The main issue was time management and the number of teaching hours. Two hours per session was too short and strongly impacted how students could practice in class. Students arrived in the class very well prepared, meaning there were lively discussions that were longer than initially expected. As a result, the time left for practice was too short, and students regretted that their work had to stop before being done. Hence, the goal to have practice sessions at the core of the course was not entirely reached and should change.

The solution to this problem is twofold:

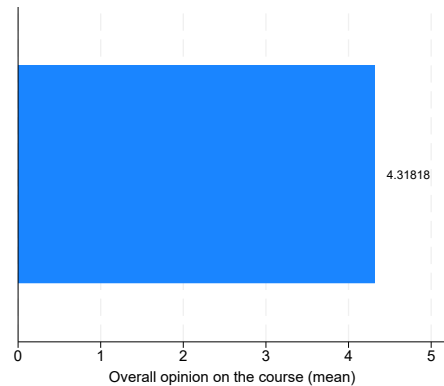
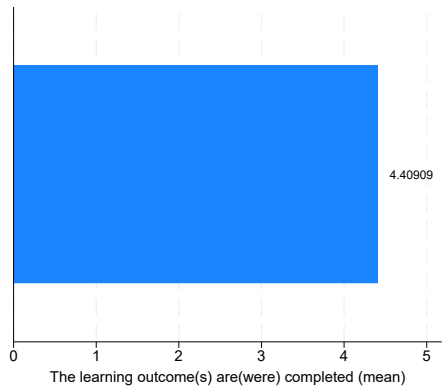
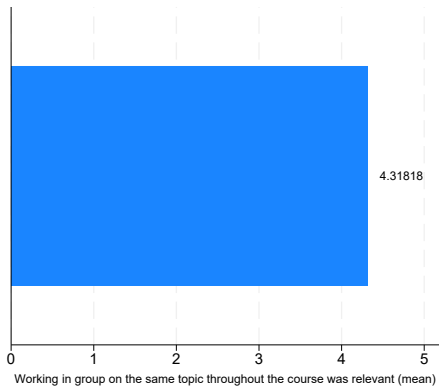
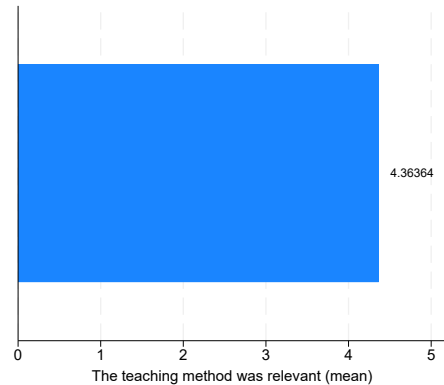
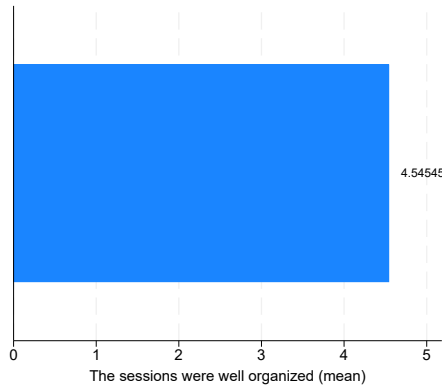
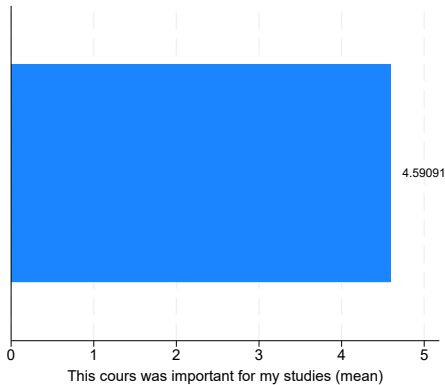
- Two-hour (1:30) sessions were too short to cover the whole program as planned. Adding one more period for 3hrs sessions (3x 45mn) will be necessary to ensure the best flow. The additional hours will be very useful for group work.
- As the number of ECTS should remain the same (10), the additional hour per session means that homework should be limited. The mandatory assignment would become a group assignment and be done in class. In addition, reducing the number of hours each student dedicates to the course would also give more value to the group work. Hence, the mock design groups in class would become the primary assignment instead of the draft of the individual research design.

These issues with time certainly had an impact on the grades. Some elements I took for granted were, thus, not necessarily detailed and discussed. Students may not have found the time to raise the questions. The time-management problem particularly impacted the sessions about state of the art and theories; a significant share of problems in the final paper (exam) were observed at these stages.

Finally, the last issue concerns the cohorts' differences in experiences and previous knowledge. Due to the differences in backgrounds, not all students already had experience with scientific research, and those who had may have learned to proceed differently, as it came out from the discussions. Adopting one model of a research design was thus sometimes tricky. If I do not intend to change the policy, it is an issue that will require some additional work, mainly if students read more empirical texts. One way to “correct” this is to have class table exercises.

Students evaluations

Below is the result of the anonymous evaluation made during the last session of the course. Opinions are measured on a scale from 0 (worst opinion) to 5 (best opinion)



**FS580.001 Resultatfordeling**

Eksamen: GOV352 0 O 2023 HØST

Researching Global Challenges - Research proposal

Karakterregel: Bokstavkarakterer

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	Totalt	Kvinner	Menn
Antall kandidater (oppmeldt):	26	19	7
Antall møtt til eksamen:	24	18	6
Antall bestått (B):	24	18	6
Antall stryk (S):	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Antall avbrutt (A):	0	0	0
Gjennomsnittskarakter:	C	C	C
Antall med legeattest (L):	0	0	0
Antall trekk før eksamen (T):	0	0	0

Karakter	Antall	Kvinner	Menn
E	2	2	0
D	2	1	1
C	9	6	3
B	8	7	1
A	3	2	1

