Emnerapport Autumn 2015 DIKULT 301 Research Methods and Master's Project Development in Digital Culture

Lecturer's assessment of course implementation

Practical implementation: Classroom meetings and lectures took place under supervision of the instructor. Teaching took place in 12 three hour sessions. Students were responsible for 11 short written assignments, each week during the semester as an aspect of the obligatory activity. These assignments were discussed during class time and not separately evaluated. One difference this term than previous terms was that the first half of the course was dedicated to shared readings and to breaking down and analyzing research methods in professionally produced scholarship from several different methods and disciplinary orientations, while the second half was focused more directly on student's project descriptions. This gave students more of a shared platform and background in research methods before embarking on their own project descriptions The end goal and result was the development by each student of an annotated bibliography and detailed MA project description. 7 students enrolled in the course, and 6 students completed.

Grade distribution: The course was graded approved / not approved. 6 students completed the course with approved project descriptions.

Course information:
Access to relevant literature: Students were required to purchase three books which were available at studia. Two additional reference books were optional and available at Studia. Other readings including articles online, independently researched articles from the library and online, and reading and responding to other students' work.

Teacher's assessment of teaching context:

Room and equipment: Teaching took place in a small seminar room. Because the course was discussion-oriented little equipment was required. The projector and cabling of the computer in the room had some issues.

Other conditions: The three hour model worked well, as did presenting the course in a more structured way around shared readings.

Teacher's commentary on student evaluation of the course:

Method and Implementation
30 minutes of the final session were dedicated to evaluating the course in informal discussion. Students reported satisfaction with the course and with their work in it. Students responded well to structured short writing assignments and reported that it kept them engaged with the course material and helped to develop peer relationships within their group. Peer evaluation and response were regarded as an important aspect of the course. Students said that the variety of readings was a strength of the course, but would have liked for more time to be dedicated to discussing their project drafts in the later part of the semester (so maybe one less book in the term).

Other commentary: The course functioned better with at least 6 students enrolled than it has when fewer (for example 3 students) took part.

Teacher's overall assessment and suggestions for improvement: The course functioned very well this term. The shift towards a more structured course that emphasized analysis of research methods in humanities contexts (as well as some social science methods) was very successful, as was raising reading expectations and writing activity for the students in the course.

Scott Rettberg, Professor of Digital Culture