



UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN

Institutt for sammenliknende politikk

Evaluation

SAMPOL 209 - Courts, Law and Politics

Fall 2015

Lecturer:

Professor Siri Gloppen

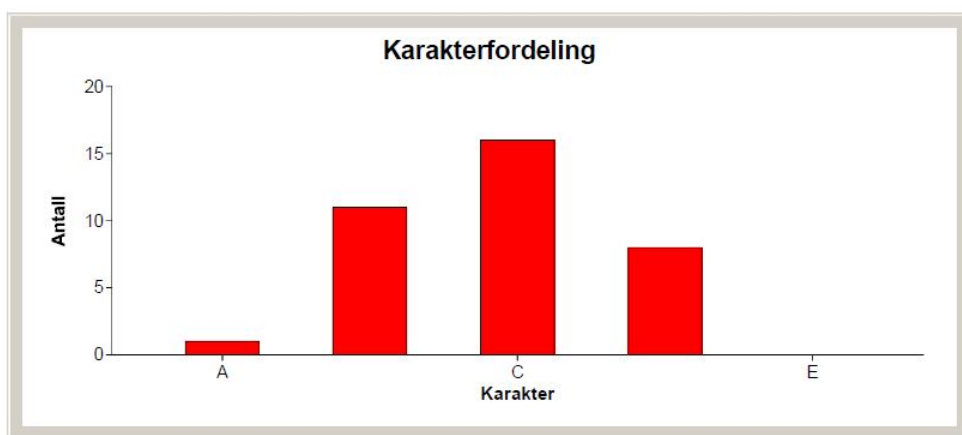
About the course:

- Course leader: Professor Siri Gloppen
- Lecturers: Henrik Litleré Bentsen, Andrea Castagnola, Gunnar Grendstad; Jon Kåre Skiple, Vegard Vibe
- 13 lectures throughout the semester and several academic-social events; Movie-night, Stein Rokkan Memorial Lecture
- Assessment: Group presentations and take home exam

Student statistics:

Average grade: C	Registered	Met for exam	Passed
Number	42	37	36
%	100	88	86
Total		100	97

Distribution of grades:	N
A	1
B	11
C	16
D	8
E	-
F	1
Total	37



Student evaluation:

The evaluationform was returned from 8 students, six students from the bachelorprogram in comparative politics, one student student from european-studies and one law student.

Lecturs and learning

Respondent	How many lectures did you attend (a total of 13)?	To what degree have the lectures contributed to your learning? (1= Very little/6= Very much)	How would you describe the number of lectures?
1	7	6	Appropriate
2	9	5	Appropriate
3	10	5	Appropriate
4	13	6	Too few
5	6	3	Appropriate
6	11	5	Too few
7	8	3	Appropriate
8	9	5	Too few
Average	5,6	4,7	-

Curriculum and learning

Respondent	How many hours pr week did you read the curriculum?	To what degree has curriculum contributed to your learning? (1= Very little/6= Very much)	How would you describe the difficulty level of the curriculum? (1= Not difficult/6= Very difficult)
1	2	6	4
2	4	5	4
3	6	5	4
4	1	2	5
5	4	5	4
6	6	3	3
7	4	5	5
8	5	4	4
Average	4,0	4,4	4,1

Qualitative statements:

Are there any part of the course that you are especially satisfied with?

- *The easiness to open up for a discussion among the students on a particular topic*
- *Det er veldig positivt at det hentes inn forskjellige forelesere som er gode på ulike temaer!*
- *The country-presentation. It was interesting to find out more about a spesific country, as well as it was interesting to work in groups and get to know other students from other study programs.*
- *I enjoyed the groups presentations, all though they should have been presented over several lectures. I very much enjoyed discussions in the lectures, and the screenings of the documentaries we watched. I found most of the readings very interesting as well! In general, I thought the course was extremely interesting and meaningful, and gave me a whole new perpective on things both personally and academically.*
- *The lectures were good.*
- *Legal mobilization*
- *Siri Gloppen is by far the best lecturer I have ever had.*

Are there any part of the course that you are especially dissatisfied with?

- *Using some guest lecturers who aren't as well suited to hold a lecture*
- *The number of electronic reading links that don't work*
- *Faget tok opp mange relevante og interessante tema. Jeg føler nå at jeg har god innsikt i flere tema og debatter innenfor feltet politikk og lov. Det eneste jeg har å utsette på faget er at det har vært litt vanskelig å få full oversikt over hva som er pensum og ikke. Det kommer nye artikler og tekster underveis i faget gjennom hele semesteret. Dette er negativt fordi jeg nå ikke er helt sikker på om jeg har full innsikt i hva som er pensum. Dette kan tydeliggjøres til neste gang faget holdes.*
- *The home exam was the day after my other sampol-exam, which was a bit exhausting, but I guess that it is hard to plan the exams.*
- *It was quite hard getting into the readings, and the course in general, as there was no overview or coordinated introduction. I found it quite hard to try to fit each article under a subcategory and evaluate them in terms of each other. Each article (with some expceptions) was very specific on a particular issue with very specific terminology.*
- *The presentation(Fear of public speaking). Although it probably did me good.*
- *Syns det var veldig dårlig at pensum var så uoversiktlig og lite tilgjengelig. At den ene artikkelen ikke var å få tak i før dagen før eksamen, det gjorde det veldig vanskelig å føle seg forberedt. Pensum må være mer oversiktlig til neste gang.*
- *Some of the lecturers had problems with their english, in turn making the lectures quite boring.*

Was there anything that you considered to be missing from the course, and that could or should have been included?

- *I think the course lacked a clear structure in regards to theory. The articles in the curriculum was mainly empirical studies. If possible, a text-book as the primary literature with supplementing articles would be the best. Although interesting, Siri's*

interruption of other the other lecturers should be kept at a minimum. I also think her part of the course lacked a clear structure. She is obviously very interested in the subject, and that is great, but it also results in sometimes confusing monologues. The first two lecturers could be combined into one. It felt like the course never started.

- *Notes/ power points from each lecture - some are up, but not all*
- *It would have been useful to have a summary lecture to try to connect the dots, and some framework around what theories, models and concepts were the most relevant.*
- *Personally I'm not very fond of electronic literature. Books and compendiums are easier to read and more relaxing.*

Lectures' assessment and comments

It was an interesting course to teach with a very engaged group of students and a good mix of our own comparative politics bachelor students, and students from law, including quite a few foreign exchange students.

The evaluations confirm that the students generally were happy with and felt they benefitted from the course. Most of the negative comments are on "technicalities" (non-functioning links to literature, readings that are posted late etc), which we should of course work to improve, but in terms of the content and structuring of the course, the feedback suggests that we are on a good track.

When initiating the course, one of the motivations was to "showcase" all the staff working in this field at the department, and to give junior staff a chance to lecture on topics close to their key competences. This is reflected in the way the course was structured with a very substantial part on judicial behaviour (with Grendstad, Bertsen, Skiple and Castagnola), one section on judicial independence (Castagnola) and one on political mobilization (Vibe). The challenge with many lecturers is of course a risk of fragmentation, which I tried to reduce by participating in most of the other lectures, filling in and connecting the dots. The feedback on lecturers vary somewhat but is generally positive, and there is no part of the course or readings that come out as weak. It is also nice to see the general satisfaction with the course (7 of the 8 respondents would recommend the course, one 'maybe') and the positive feedback regarding academic gain (with 6 'very substantial/substantial' and the remaining 2 'modest')

The evaluations also confirm the impression that the group presentations on selected countries were useful for learning, although it was a challenge to find enough time to present them.