
Kursrapporter vid Fakulteten för lärande och samhälle vid Malmö universitet/Course Report, Faculty of Education, Malmö University

Bakgrundsinformation/Basic information

Kursens namn/Course name: History and theories of education

Termin/Semester: H21

Ladokkod/Ladok code: ET601E revision 1.1

Kursansvarig/Course coordinator: Morten Korsgaard

Antal registrerade studenter/Number of registered students: 14

Antal studenter som besvarat den summativa kursvärderingen/Number of students who responded to the course evaluation: 6

Genomförande	Sätt X
Föregående kursrapport är kommunicerad i samband med kursstart/Previous course report was communicated at the beginning of the course	x
Tidig dialog om förväntningar på kursen/Early dialoge about expectations on course	x
Formativ kursvärdering/Formative course evaluation	x
Summativ kursvärdering/Summative course evaluation	
Återkoppling till studenterna/Feedback to students	

Utvärderingsformer/Forms of evaluation

The course has been evaluated through formative assessment both oral and written. No summative evaluation was deemed necessary due to the limited number of students.

Sammanfattning av studenternas kursvärderingar/Summary of the students' evaluations

Overall the students seem to be very pleased with the course, and although they have found it challenging, they feel they have learned and improved throughout the course.

Below are a selection of statements from the students about the various aspects of the course sorted by the questions posed in the written evaluation:

1. What do think of the structure of the course?

I found that the course gave a lot of freedom to discuss the issues most relevant to me; I had plenty of opportunities to express perspectives that were then discussed and questioned, and so I could develop a more profound understanding. I was very glad to have seminars with the authors of some of the texts we read. This was a drive to ask just the right questions, and to be critical in a constructive way (I mean in order to better grasp the text and its relevance to my own understanding), remaining open minded and trying to understand what the author really meant to say. I can see how this can be a very important tool for learning to take part in any discourse. Having to write brief explanations, and finally to give a presentation, on our understanding of a particular topic, were useful tools for compartmentalizing what we had learned, and for summarizing thoughts. It was also brilliant for getting lots of different angles on a given topic within the group, rather than just following the flow of discussion that happened in the seminar. (Though I think that that was also great because we then got to move towards areas of misunderstanding or confusion better than if everything had been structured!)

I think the course was well structured. Maybe I would have put Plato more at the beginning of the course, because it is mentioned in many of the papers and books we have read, so understanding the metaphor of the cave would have made it easier to understand the different references in other readings. Another thing I feel it would have been better is to have two or more seminars dedicated to Emile, or at least some part of a different seminar, because it is a very long treatise, it has many different scopes of education, and it is part of our assessment. And I think the presentations would have benefited from a couple more conversations about it with you, because we couldn't really answer each-other questions. One of the main questions was what was the meaning of contemporary in the assignment and if our interpretation was correct, which that is something I have found a bit confusing about some assignments, I feel a lot of times when we wrote about something we said, I don't really know if this is how it is supposed to be done, or I am not sure if I have understood correctly, which it is fine if you wanted us to make our own interpretations, but if you wanted us to do something more specific then I feel some specifications would have been better.

Books were interesting to read and gave me new valuable perspectives about education. In the case of the way the classes were run, the combination of two teachers discussing our ideas was one of my most fascinating experiences in the history of my education. Because you have opportunity to look at one book from two professional points of view. 5- However, a problem that may have

been lost in the hidden corners of classroom management was that sometimes the classroom became a monologue between teachers and one student, which reduced the motivation and focus to pursue classroom discussion. And on the other hand, some of the debates about whether the book is a good book or not I believe is irrelevant because it may not have helped us to understand the deep content of the books.

I think because of the amount of information from each book that must be stored in our brains for a short period of time, it would have been better for us to know the clear purpose of reading each book before reading it. I can understand that you gave us the freedom to have a hermeneutic encounter with the book, but when we came to class, sometimes the important basic concepts in the book were never discussed, and this became more apparent when it came to writing the final exam for twelve pages (in analysis form I mean) that requires deep understanding of the concepts that might be lost in the midst of our study and class discussions.

Seminars in which one of the teachers presented a summary of his views on two books had the greatest impact on my understanding of the book as it reduced the stress of dealing with the heavy contents of the book and made my understanding of the book more compelling. It gave me the opportunity to look at the book with a critical thinking as well.

I liked the structure. It gave us a lot of room to express ourselves and get to know each other. I also appreciated the Friday seminars where we were to submit a text beforehand, because it ensured that everyone got space to talk and the opportunity to set the tone for the discussion. I think occasionally there could have been more of this structured discussion to ensure that everyone got to lift the passages they had picked from the readings.

The structure of the course is good. Ten weeks is sufficient, yet two days of class of 1 hour and 45 minutes is a little on the low side. I would have preferred longer sessions, at least on one of the days. The weekly assignments were useful, but merely discussing them in class, one after the other, can be reconsidered in a bit more exciting manner. What I missed in such a long course was a bigger assignment in the middle of the course. The presentation and paper at the end could have been spread out instead. Furthermore, I'm used to write also a midterm paper, which always helps with gathering your thoughts during the course. Could be an idea for next time.

The structure of the course is good, I like it very much. Just want to have more courses from professors.

2. How was the literature suited to the objectives of the course?

I enjoyed reading the original, complete texts, in many cases; texts that whole discourses are based on. I feel more equipped to take part in the discourse surrounding the history and theories of education, even though the course was relatively short. I feel that the literature gave me a profound inkling. But I have to say that the pod casts were very important and useful for understanding the background. I understand that discussing the podcasts would take far, far too much time, but I wonder if they could be lifted as helpful more often.

The papers and the books were very interesting. The only reading I found a bit “unnecessary”, at least in my opinion, was Pedagogical postures: a feminist search for a geometry of the educational relation. I didn’t find it really interesting or provoking. And I don’t think it is a paper that has been mentioned more during our conversations.

The large number of books and the short amount of time we had to read the books created stress that had an undeniable effect on the comprehension of the book and conceptualization of the books’ concepts.

I have one remark to make on the literature. I thought the literature picked to represent a feminist counterposition was insufficient and not representative. As several of the seminal texts we read are blatantly sexist I think in order to claim to address a femisist perspective more broad and general criticism needed to be represented. If there is not room for that in the course I would have prefered that a feminist perspective was not adressed at all, as this treatment felt like it minimized how sexist the rest of the readings were.

I was a little disappointed with the fact that the literature contained mainly Western, white, male authors. At the end of the course I was a little tired of reading ‘what men have to say about things’. Also, I’m not sure to what extent I have a good overview of the history of educational ideas. It was nice to be able to read core texts of key figures, yet it seems there is still a lot more to it. For someone who is outside of the field, it is somewhat difficult to grasp where the course literature fits in the bigger framework of philosophy of education. It could have benefitted the course to place texts more thoroughly in its context.

The literature suited the objectives of the course very much.

3. How did you experience the readings in the course?

There was a lot of text, but it was great to get a more authentic understanding. I was helped by listening to some of the texts online while reading them. This kept me focused and helped me read quicker, as well as follow the thread better (On LibriVox). The translations were sometimes different from the texts we used in class though.

I feel like the reading part was a bit overwhelming, reading this type of books takes a bit more time than reading a novel, at least for me, and it is not about scanning what it says, but really understand and process everything, and that takes time, so I found that it was very stressful some weeks to try to reach the seminar date.

Some books, I think, needed more time to be devoted to them or needed more time to discuss.

I appreciated getting the chance and the reason to read some of the classic works in education such as Dewey and Rousseau, so that I could form my own understanding and view of them. I would have also liked to read Vygotskij.

The readings were on the heavy side, especially if you combine the programme with either work or other studies. (this is of course not a problem on the side of the study, but on that of the student) What worked for me was to listen to the audiobook version and then read simultaneously. In this way, the workload was doable, and I always managed to read everything. The downside of the heavy workload is that it is difficult to come back to the readings, as the pace of the course is too high in that regard. The only moment you go back to the literature is when you're writing the paper, and then you realize how rich the texts are, yet how little time there is to engage with them.

I quite enjoy the reading part, except in the beginning, I advise that small amount of reading would help.

4. How well did the study groups support your work with the aims of the course?

Very. We discussed the texts in the contexts of our lives and our roles as teachers and/or parents. This gave us a better understanding of the implications of the texts.

We also occasionally had sessions where we wrote together, parallel, online. We gave a brief description of what we planned to write about, which helped to narrow down a topic and formulate ideas more concisely before starting. And we could help each other find pointers in the relevant literature.

I think the study groups have been very useful to share thoughts and ideas, but we had it Friday mornings right before the seminar, so when you talk about the paper for 2 hours, when the seminar comes you feel like you have said everything you wanted to say, and it feels strange to say the same things in the class that you have said to your group, so then in the seminar no one really talks and if they talk is to say the things that they have already said, which

is fine because then we get to hear your opinion about what we think, but if we tried to have seminars before Friday then we weren't done with the reading.

The study groups were quite helpful to share ideas and build a new way to come across the concepts.

Quite well, I think we are still trying to figure out the scope and structure of the study groups.

The study groups helped a lot in talking through the texts and gathering ideas and thoughts. It was a very useful way to prepare for class.

Study group really helps, it sorted my thoughts before class, and make me familiar with the course content more.

5. What is your overall assessment of the course?

I loved it.

I have found this course very "food for thought" which is very exciting, even though most of the times there is a sense of frustration reading all these books, it feels almost bad to be a teacher, there is a critique for everything, but not really a solution and if there is, is too fictional to be applied, but I guess it is a process and not all the books in the coming courses will give a sense of frustration, or maybe they will, I don't know. But overall, the content of the course is very interesting.

It was so helpful that we had a chance to write for each module in canvas. It helped me to tackle with books in a real way not just in my imagination when I must present them for someone. And it also gives the opportunity to the introvert students to be heard.

One of the seminars I have learnt a-lot was our oral presentation day. It helped me not only knowing more my classmates but also taught me that there are thousands of ways for looking at same concept that I would never have chance to hear them without participating in this course.

Sometimes it seemed that some students' opinions were more interesting to some teachers (unconsciously), and this raised several issues: 1. Feeling ashamed to express opinions when you feel your ideas are not as interesting and intellectual as others according to some teachers 2. Draw an invisible line between teacher's favorite students and non- favorite students that affect class atmosphere and relationship between students.

Freedom of choice in picking out the subject for final exam is another aspect that I really liked about the structure of this course. I felt I must use my creativity and analytical mind to choose the topic and in the way I must develop it. But 12 pages are a lot for just 5 days if you expect we handle a real paper.

I enjoyed the course. I think the two of you have a good dynamic when holding the seminars, which contributes with enthusiasm and engagement in the discussions. During the seminars on some of the longer books Dewey and Aristotle, Johan offered to give an overview of the work before discussing it. I appreciated this as it kept us from sidetracking later in the discussion, but I would have preferred if these introductions felt a little more prepared and structured.

The course was interesting, but as I said I got a bit tired of reading similar kind of texts. I can understand if these authors are considered crucial to know, but I wonder if they could have been put in a more critical perspective. I had the feeling that the discussion among students, and the 'lecturing' of the teachers was in balance. Yet, I'm thinking that the teachers could have provided more critical analyses on the texts, instead of merely explaining what they were about. I look forward to reading more contemporary and different perspectives and thoughts on education.

The whole course is fun, sometimes we have a professor guest join us through the zoom, it is quite exciting. Assignment is helpful for understanding the week theme in a right direction. Reading though is a lot, it takes a lot of time, it helps fully understanding the educational theory. Except hope the criterion for the final writing paper could be not too strict at this first course .

Sammanfattning av lärarlagets utvärdering/Summary of the teacher team's evaluation

The general feeling is that the format and structure of the course has worked well, although the students express a wish to receive more lecture based teaching or critical interventions from the teachers. This can of course have to do with the experience of the more informal style of teaching generally associated with the Nordic countries, but also with the issue of having to learn and adapt to postgraduate studies. There have been some difficulties in obtaining the literature, for some students, which has inhibited their participation in the seminars, which could also be connected to the issue of wanting more teacher led activities. This is unfortunate but also to be expected in the circumstances.

Many of the students appear to find reading the literature to be challenging and time consuming but also express the benefit of this and are pleased with the literature and their own progression in relation to this.

Analys/Analysis

Overall the course has been appreciated and although reading has been challenging and tough, it seems to have been in line with the objectives of the course, and there seems to be a general agreement on the suitability of the literature as well as the amount of reading required. Some students express an interest in reading more perspectives such as feminist critiques and non-western perspectives. The study groups have worked well, but some students who came in late had difficulties with getting involved in the study groups. Some students experienced difficulties with the written assignment, and had trouble identifying the genre of writing papers in educational theory.

Åtgärdsplan/Plan of action

We will continue with the course plan and syllabus as they are as they seem to have worked well , but will evaluate the course literature, in connection the students comments. We will increase our efforts to include latecomers into the study groups and try to find ways of assisting those who are experiencing difficulties with getting a hold of the course literature. We will also introduce a set of exemplary papers in the field in order to introduce the students to the genre of writing papers in educational theory.

Förslag till revidering av kursplan/Suggestion for revised curriculum

No suggestions at this time.