Course Report, Faculty of Education, Malmö University

Background information

Course name: Education: Research Methodology, Research Ethics and Academic Writing I
Semester: Autumn 2020
Ladok code: ET603E-L9989
Course coordinator: Hanna Sjögren
Number of registered students: 19
Number of students who responded to the course evaluation: 12

Implementation	Mark with X
Previous course report was communicated at the beginning of the course	N/A (new course)
Early dialogue about expectations on course	X
Formative course evaluation	X
Summative course evaluation	X
Feedback to students	X

Forms of evaluation

The course coordinator asked for the students' expectation at the course introduction on December 14, 2020. Many students expressed that they expected to work on their academic writing during the course. In response to this expectation the course coordinator offered individual, oral feedback on each student's academic writing after grading the final papers in January 2021.

An oral half-way evaluation was conducted by the course coordinator on December 21, 2020 with 9 students present. The students expressed that they found the mini-lecture at the first seminar useful and wished mini-lectures on a regular basis. This suggested change was approved and mini-lectures were given at the beginning of the remaining seminars. The students further expressed they wanted scheduled office-hours outside of the regular seminars. This wish was approved and two office-hours were scheduled by the course coordinator. The students also

asked for recommendations on handbooks about historical methods. The course coordinator posted two eBooks available at Malmö University library on Canvas.

A final evaluation was conducted after the oral examination on January 15, 2021 with 12 students present. The evaluations were conducted in three groups with four students in each group. One student per group took notes and sent these to the course coordinator after the meeting. The students were given the following questions to discuss: 1) What did you learn from this course? 2) In your opinion, did you reach the intended learning outcomes of the course? 3) If so, in what way did the assignments contribute or prevent your ability to reach the intended learning outcomes? 4) What should have been done differently? 5) What should be kept to next course? 6) Other thoughts?

The results of this reported was posted to the students on Canvas January 19, 2021.

Summary of the students' evaluations

All three groups expressed in their written evaluations that the course had been both challenging and interesting. This was a typical comment: "It was an extremely interesting course, we feel we needed more time to understand all we needed too". Furthermore, the students wrote that they got a better grasp of philosophy of science and methodology, but that the course was far from straight forward. One group wrote: "We could have had an overview of the field in a more clearer way." One group wrote: "We wish we had this course before doing the other courses, we would have had a deeper understanding of the other texts."

All groups agreed on that the articles from Stanford Encyclopedia were regarded as too advanced. For example, one group wrote that the articles "…are very advanced, and they were hard to understand without a basis." All groups agreed on that they would have liked more mini-lectures, office hours and breaks during the seminars, and one exam instead of two.

The students wrote that they liked the guest lectures, but they suggested the guest lectures to be held towards the end of the course as examples of applied philosophy of science and methodology.

Summary of the teacher team's evaluation

This course was taught by one main teacher (the course coordinator), with the exception of two guest lectures and one seminar with one of the program's teachers. All teachers were asked to give feedback on email on how they had experienced the course. One teacher (within the program) pointed to the importance of analyzing the reason why the students felt confused about the course.

Analysis

From the point of view of the course coordinator, the course has many focuses: philosophy of science from different perspectives, historical methods and academic wiring. On top of this, the course runs over Christmas with means that three out of five weeks are interrupted with Bank holidays. Furthermore, the course curriculum states four intended learning outcomes and two different exams (one oral and one written). All and all, this offer both an organizational and pedagogical challenge, which seems reflected in the students' evaluations.

All students who took the two exams have passed (with grades varying from A to E) and achieved all learning outcomes. From this perspective, the course taught the students what they were supposed to learn. It is also important to keep in mind that students' initial confusion about a course might be a good and useful thing for the teacher to work with. Confusion *per se* should

not be avoided in education. However, there are a few point that could and should be adhered to in order to improve the course. See *Plan of action*.

The mini-lectures will be kept at the current minimum, as it from the teacher's perspective seems more beneficial for the students to actually discuss their own readings of the texts. The two exams will also be kept as the course coordinator noticed that the two forms of exams completed each other.

Plan of action

The course coordinator suggests the following changes based on the students' evaluations:

- The articles from Stanford Encyclopedia are exchanged with a comprehensive book on philosophy of science, preferably in written for educational research.
- The intended learning outcomes are reduced from four to three.
- Weekly office hours will be scheduled during the whole course and not only towards the end.
- Guest lectures are held towards the end of the course.
- Breaks will be scheduled during the seminars.

Suggestion for revised curriculum

See suggested changes below:

Course purpose
The aim of the course is to enable students to develop knowledge of the philosophy of science and ~~historical~~ research methods within education and the education sciences, in order to problematise relevant epistemological, ontological and ethical matters. Additionally, the course aims to help students strengthen their academic writing skills.

Course contents
The course provides an overview of perspectives in the philosophy of science and methodology relevant to educational theory. It also investigates how these perspectives relate to various ontological and epistemological approaches. ~~The course places particular focus on methods for identifying, studying and analysing historical materials.~~ Ethical matters concerning historical studies will also be discussed, and traditions in academic writing will be explored.

Learning outcomes
Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to

1. compare and discuss the foundations of different traditions within the philosophy of science;
2. test and evaluate various methodological approaches, and problematise the relevant epistemological, ontological and ethical concerns in relation to them;
3. ~~analyse and contextualise historical texts and events using different approaches to research methods;~~
4. formulate an academic text in genre-conscious ways.

Learning activities
The course is based on regular lectures, seminars, workshops and field trips. There will be opportunities for feedback between the students throughout the course.

Assessment

Test 1 (2001): Written exam (Skriftlig examination), 5 credits. This test examines learning outcomes 1, 2, and 4.
Test 2 (2002): Oral exam (Muntlig examination), 2.5 credits. This test examines learning outcome 3.
The course coordinator will provide information about grading criteria at the start of the course. It must be possible to distinguish between individual performances for all assessments.

Course evaluation
Students who participate in or complete a course must be given the opportunity to share their experiences and provide feedback on the course via a course evaluation issued by the University. The University will compile the course evaluations and provide information regarding the results and any measures taken as a result of the course evaluation. Results will be made available to the students. (Higher Education Ordinance 1:14).

Course literature
~~Anderson, Elizabeth (2019). Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science. In Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2019 Edition) (available online) (20 p)~~
~~Aylesworth, Gary (2015). Postmodernism. In Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2015 Edition) (available online) (20 p)~~
~~Bird, Alexander (2018). Thomas Kuhn. In Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2018 Edition) (available online) (20 p)~~
Foucault, Michel (1970). Foreword to the English Edition, and Preface in Foucault, Michel, The Order of Things. Vintage Books, New York (40 p)
Foucault, Michel (1997). 'What is Enlightenment?'. In Faubion. J. (ed.), Essential Works of Foucault (1954–1984) Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth, vol. 1. New York: New Press, pp 303–20 (17 p)
Friesen Norm (2017). The History of Education as the History of Writing. In Siljander P., Kontio ~~K., Pikkarainen E. (eds.), Schools in Transition. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, pp 273-287 (15 p)~~
~~Glendinning, Simon (2008). What is Phenomenology? Philosophy Compass 3/1, pp 30-50 (20 p)~~
~~Hacking, Ian (1992). 'Style' for historians and philosophers. Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A, 23(1), pp 1-20 (20 p)~~
NEW: Godfrey-Smith, Peter. (2003). *Theory and reality: an introduction to the philosophy of science*. New ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (288 p)
Haraway, Donna J. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. Feminist Studies 14(3), pp 575-599 (25 p)
Harding, Sandra (1995). 'Strong Objectivity': A Response to the New Objectivity Question. Synthese 104 (3): 331–349 (13 p)
Labaree, David (2012). A sermon on educational research. International Journal for the Historiography of Education, 2(1), pp 1-11 (11 p)
~~Little, Daniel (2017). Philosophy of History. In Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2017 Edition) (available online) (20 p)~~
~~Mantzavinos, Chrysostomos (2016). Hermeneutics. In Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2016 Edition) (available online) (20 p)~~
Mintz, Avi (2016). The Use and Abuse of the History of Educational Philosophy. In Levinson, N. (ed.) Philosophy of Education Yearbook 2016 (available online) (8 p)
~~Smith, David Woodruff (2018). Phenomenology, In Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2018 Edition) (available online) (20 p)~~
~~Steup, Matthias (2018). Epistemology. In Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2018 Edition) (available online) (20 p)~~
~~Thornton, Stephen (2019). Karl Popper. In Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2019 Edition) (available online) (20 p)~~

NEW: An additional 200 pages will be distributed during the course.