

COURSE REPORT – Summary of course evaluation

Background information (To be completed by the course administrator)

Course LADOK code: IR103L	Scope (hp): 30
Course title: International Relations III	
Course coordinator: Michael Strange	Number of registered students: 74
Semester in which the course is conducted: VT26	
Is the course an independent course, programme course or contract course? If the course has been completed within a programme, enter the programme name. SGINE Programme course term 6 + independent	

Forms of evaluation and feedback (To be completed by the course coordinator)

Formative course evaluation, for example dialogue during the course (optional)	Approx. number of students who participated in formative course evaluation(s):
Summative course evaluation (obligatory) ☐ Only via Canvas ☒ Canvas and other form ☐ Only other form (written and/or oral)	Number of students who participated in the summative course evaluation: 20 via Canvas, supported by 5 students within the Course Representative Committee (CRC)

Student's perspective (To be completed by the course coordinator)

Summary of the students' oral and written feedback: - The majority of students felt they had achieved the course's intended learning outcomes to a large extent. - This semester presented a new challenge due to the unusually high intake. One student noted: 'I think the course was covering very interesting topics that are all important, however I lacked the individual approach with a too big of a class'. - A slight majority of students report on the negative half of the scale when asked whether they felt the teaching methods supported them in achieving the intended learning outcomes. - However, students praised the lectures and seminars, one stating: 'All learning activities in the beginning of the course were very helpful' but felt there needed to be more seminars further on despite moving to independent work on the thesis. That compares very differently to past years but is a clear common concern from VT26 despite the course structure being unchanged. - The majority of students felt that the course's examination forms gave them the opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes. However, again there appears to be a feeling that there was too much time devoted to working independently on the thesis. One student, for example, asked for more group work. - The majority of students felt that the course had met their expectations in general but we also see higher rates of dissatisfaction than in previous years. - When asked about what they found 'especially good about the course', students focused specific lecturers, the supervision, the lectures and seminars, the examination format, and the communication with lecturers and course head.
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- When asked for suggestions of what can be 'developed', several asked for more guest lectures and special events whereby students might take a break from the independent work on their thesis. There was also a concern that sometimes supervision is provided by doctoral students.
- Regarding infrastructure, one student noted that the library no longer subscribes to many important academic journals. Important to note, this change is related to centrally agreed arrangements and so falls outside the control of the university.

Teacher's perspective (To be completed by the course coordinator)

Summary of the teacher's views:

- Normally IR103L receives high evaluations. Whilst there is much that is positive here, it is also clear that the semester was less successful than we'd expect and can normally achieve.
- The difference this semester is that we had nearly twice the usual intake but no additional permanent staff. That meant, without more employment, we had to rely more on doctoral students.
- Whilst doctoral students can bring many strengths as supervisors and it is a common approach globally, it is not our preferred method given that doctoral students simply have less experience such that it can be harder to maintain a common standard. This can work well when we have just 1 or 2 doctoral students as supervisors, the economic situation meant we had to suddenly incorporate 4 in addition to non-programme colleagues. Our overall impression is that they did a good job but it nevertheless meant students perceived a variation in supervision methods that, when communicated with other students, made them worry more than usual.
- Speaking to colleagues, we are concerned that the quality of students' research design skills has lowered. For this cohort the main difference is their class size but also they are only the second group to have undertaken the joint methods course in their third semester. There the need to combine teaching with other programmes as led to a change in the examination format away from a research design towards a sit-down exam. There is an ongoing discussion where we hope to take the joint methods teaching in-house. Such changes are part of advanced level teaching and show we continually seek to improve the education.
- The call for more seminars is quite different to past years but also we see several comments from students who enjoyed the freedom to work on their own research topic in the thesis. We therefore see it as at least partially reflective of the larger class size where students more strongly felt the contrast between ordinary lectures and then working independently. It is worth noting also that students have said they would like more access to special talks and other events to help them meet up during the independent study period.

Action plan (To be completed by the course coordinator)

The underlying analysis and the action plan should be based on a summary of the students' individual course evaluations, views from teachers in the course and the knowledge development in the research field. If identified problems are left without action, this should be motivated.

The following changes are planned in the short and long term:

WHAT should be done, WHO should do it and WHEN should it be done?

- Given the interest in additional academics events we will remind students of the university's calendar system where they are accounted.

- We will increase efforts to reform the joint methods course or return that part of the methods teaching to the programme. That said, it is also clear from student comments that the current lectures in IR103L are appreciated.
- The semester needs a more stable intake but also access to more permanently employed lecturers qualified in International Relations so as to reduce the reliance on doctoral students.

Remember to orally feedback the results of the course evaluation to

- the students who have completed the course evaluation
- the students of the next course round, i.e. the next time the course is given