

COURSE REPORT

Background information (To be completed by course administrator)

Course LADOK code: KK681A	Scope (hp): 7,5 hp
Course title: Locations of Culture - History and Place	
Course coordinator: Alwall Jonas	Number of registered students: 36
Semester in which the course is conducted: Autumn 2023	
Is the course an independent course, programme course or contract course? If the course has been completed within a programme, enter the programme name: HAKIF	

Administration's perspective (To be completed by course administrator)

The administration's views:

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

Formative course evaluation: There have been discussions in class throughout the course, but given some of the more critical remarks in the summative evaluation I think a formative course evaluation should have been done in a more formalized way.	Number of students who participated in the course evaluation:
Summative course evaluation: Digital survey, after the completion of the course.	Number of students who participated in the course evaluation: 14 (out of a total of 27 active students on the course, i.e., slightly over 50 %)
Feedback to students: Feedback will be given to students orally in December (plus, of course, through this written course report).	

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

Summary of the students' course evaluations:

Responses to the fixed response questions in the evaluation survey:

What do you think about the course as a whole?

Good or very good: **57 percent**. Bad or very bad: 21 percent.

To what extent do you think the course has met your expectations in general?

To a large or very large extent: **50 percent**. To a small or very small extent: 21 percent.

To what extent do you consider you have achieved the expected learning outcomes of the course?

To a large or very large extent: **36 percent**. To a small or very small extent: 14 percent.

To what extent do you think that the working methods / learning activities on the course have reinforced your learning and your ability to achieve the expected learning outcomes?

a) Lectures

To a large or very large extent: 21 percent. To a small or very small extent: **28 percent**.

b) Seminars

To a large or very large extent: **35 percent**. To a small or very small extent: 28 percent.

c) Reading of the literature

To a large or very large extent: **28 percent**. To a small or very small extent: 14 percent.

d) Canvas

To a large or very large extent: 21 percent. To a small or very small extent: 21 percent.

e) Assignments

To a large or very large extent: **65 percent**. To a small or very small extent: 14 percent.

f) Other teaching activities

To a large or very large extent: **54 percent**. To a small or very small extent: 23 percent.

To what extent do you think the examination forms have given you the opportunity to show how well you have achieved the expected learning outcomes?

To a large or very large extent: **50 percent**. To a small or very small extent: 7 percent.

To what extent has the course given you the opportunity to take responsibility for your own learning?

To a large or very large extent: **64 percent**. To a small or very small extent: 14 percent.

How much time (hours) per week have you spent on the course?

The mean lies around 16-17 hours per week (out of an expected 20).

Responses to open-ended questions:

It is not easy to summarize the comments in the open questions, but statements are common regarding the course to have been "open", "easy" (as compared with the parallel and more theoretical course) as well as "vague". There are comments asking for more readings (and follow-up on readings), which, however, could be of a "lighter" kind,

in line with what distinguishes this course as more open, experimental and to some extent playful than a traditional academic course.

More statements by the students will be commented on below in the “Teacher’s perspective”.

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

Summary of the teacher’s views/Results:

I will start by saying that I am very happy about this course, with the exchange with the students throughout the course as well as with its result in terms of the students’ projects work and their presentations thereof.

Not having been teaching the course from the start – I have “inherited” it – this was the second time I was responsible for it. The students’ remarks in the evaluation prompt me, again, to consider some of its features. Already last year, amendments were made to the reading list (two previous titles excluded and one new added). I think this should be taken one step further, with the course literature relating more clearly to the kinds of investigation that the students are likely to perform in their project works: in short, less “cultural studies” (theory) and more “culture” (including different forms of artistic expression); more methodologically oriented texts; and excerpts from different media (film, podcasts, etc).

Regarding the form of examination, some students express a difficulty to see its connection with the learning outcomes of the course. From my perspective, there is such a connection. The project work and presentations – that amount to the entire examination of the course – work well to capture the different learning outcomes, which I have also tried to convey in my feedback to the students. One problem is, however, that the project work/presentation being the *only* form of assessment probably creates a vagueness regarding other elements of the course (e.g., literature seminar and study visits) that cannot be considered obligatory but still are of importance as moments of learning. I will consider whether there should be another form of assessment as well, if so preferably in the form of a literature seminar. That would put more emphasis on the students’ processing the course literature and, thus, give it more weight as an academic course.

The responses from the students indicate that the course should be somewhat more academically demanding, and I will take that to heart in planning for next year’s course. Some also express that the focus on culture and place should be less centered on Malmö and more open to other places. On the one hand, I find it important that the questions regarding cultural sites (and culture’s situatedness in a more general sense) are not limited by what Malmö as a city has to offer. On the other hand, however, I also see a point in this course – as a first course on an international program, located in a city in which several of the students have only just arrived – provides an acquaintance with the city as well as with the subject matter of the course. In a sense, the way the course is constructed the city of Malmö becomes part of that subject matter. In that respect, however, it also becomes important to emphasize that although what we study could be seen as site specific, that does not mean it has to be Malmö specific.

The students were, in general, not impressed by the lectures given in the course, and I can understand that. In retrospect, the lectures became too general and too focused on providing an overview rather than delving deeper into the literature of the course. In the end, the students were too much left to self-study regarding the literature and may have felt that it didn’t much matter whether they studied it or not. This is an aspect of the “freedom” inherent in the course that did not turn out to its benefit.

There were two other teachers involved in the course, but for different reasons their

contributions became quite limited. For next year, I hope there can be more teachers involved (or other teachers given more time) in the course. Although it helped me in my role as teacher and course responsible to meet the students often, they would have benefited from having input from more and other teachers. That would have provided more depth and a greater variety of perspectives.

Another type of critical remarks concerns the project work, which – although several students express they learnt a lot from it – was perceived as having been initiated somewhat too late and not given sufficient guidelines. Here, I both agree and disagree. The forming of project groups turned out to be rather more complex this year than last year. This process would have gained from having started earlier. It is, however, difficult to form groups (and greater risk that groups will have to be re-formed) if it is done before the students have begun to know one another. My aim was for the students to start thinking about the project work already from the onset of the course (it was introduced during the first lecture) but not think so much about it that they would lose focus on the first weeks' more generally explorative elements. There is a balance to strike here, and it obviously didn't work perfectly. The same goes for the *instructions* to the project work, which remained quite open and were given gradually (through supervision rather than as a clear set of parameters from the start). My conclusion is that the students showed great creativity in conducting and presenting their projects, and I wouldn't want to have them lose that creativity by introducing guidelines that were too rigid. Still, it would be possible to be more concrete in explaining the aims of the project work, show more examples, etc.

Analysis and action plan (To be completed by the course coordinator)

Analysis:

The basis of an analysis has been given in the previous sections. To summarize, also highlighting the positive remarks given about the course, it can be concluded that the course:

- was characterized by openness and accessibility,
- gave room for creativity,
- had moments that were fun and stimulating, and
- gave opportunities to identify and engage with culture in a city (as well as in specific sites), all this very much in line with its overall aim.

The course would, however, have gained from:

- having been better structured and clearer in terms of goals and expectations,
- having more focus on methodology, and
- having more theoretical depth.

Although the evaluation survey showed opinions about the course that were in some respects rather polarized, I don't see these summarized views as contradicting one another. Rather, they point, both to what should be retained and what could be adjusted and improved.

Action plan:

Since last years course, based on students' observations, a partial change of course literature had been made.

The experiences from this year's course tells me that this change should be taken further, introducing literature that is more specific to the subject matter and character of this course, highlighting methodological issues and theoretically providing clearer links between culture and place.

An additional change of the course curriculum would be to introduce a second

assignment/form of assessment that would be graded. This assignment should involve literature study and could be in the form a literature seminar (already employed in the course although not formally assessed).

As concluded above, the course would gain from including more voices/perspectives, meaning more teachers should be involved in it (and/or be given more time).

These suggested amendments to the course could meet certain restrictions in terms of time-limits and resources but will be done to the extent it is possible. What could be done under any circumstances, however, is to make the presentation of the course (both aims and content) clearer and to start earlier in forming groups for the project work and informing the students about what is expected of them.

Publishing and archiving (To be handled by the course administrator)

- The course report is published, and the students have been informed about the publication,
- The course report is archived according to the university's archiving rules,
- The course report is shared with the programme coordinator (if applicable),
- The course report is saved according to any additional requests on behalf of the department.