Course evaluation template

After the course has ended, the course leader must fill in this template. The program director and education management will use your reflections to make adaptations to the program and/or the next time the course is given. The reflections will also be posted on the program web for students to read.

Course code 4FH090	Course title Theory of Science	Credits 2,5 hp
Semester Spring 26	**Period** 20260119- 20260128	

Course leader Melody Almroth	Examiner Melody Almroth
Other participating teachers Vera Atarodi Jeffery Casely-Hayford Mattias Ekman Daniel Falkstedt	**Other participating teachers** Andreas Lundin Kuan-Yu Pan Andreas Rödlund

Number of registered students 56	Number who have not completed the course[1] 10	Number passed after regular session[2] 46
Methods for student influence other than course survey[3] A course wrap up session where students could share their opinions about the course.		

[1] *At the time of completed grading and mandatory assignments/revisions.*
[2] After first summative examination.
[3] State: how the students were given the opportunity to participate in the preparation and decisions at course level, how the students were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the course and how this forms the basis of the analysis and proposals below, response frequency (for example, concluding survey 70 % response frequency, post-it notes – improvement suggestions after the second course week 90 % response frequency, course council 85 % attendance).

Conclusions from the previous course evaluation

- In general, I found that the course and the feedback were very positive and that things are working well in the course.
- The course is very short, and I will not add more concepts or material. I also hope to keep the same constellation of teachers. However, I will try to include more examples outside of Europe and North America when possible.
- I will continuously evaluate the essay assignment and the grading criteria in the context of the widespread use of generative AI tools.
- I will consider making the pass with distinction criteria more specific for both the students and the evaluators. Though there was very high grading agreement between evaluators, I will reflect on how to be more transparent about how we

assess the essays. The criteria for passing is clearly outlined, but the pass with distinction criteria is less explicit.
- There were some issues that came to my attention because the group was so large this time. If the next group is equally large, I will reconsider if and how some whole-group sessions are conducted.
- I will watch and see if the low attendance problem continues during the next time the course is given.

Description of conducted changes since previous course occasion

The biggest change to the course was the examination. It was decided through dialogue with the program council that a written home examination without in-person follow-up is no longer an acceptable form of evaluation given the extensive availability of generative AI. Because the intended learning outcomes for this course revolve around reasoning and argumentation, it was difficult to find an appropriate replacement examination. Thus, for the examination this time, the students were to write an essay in a controlled examination setting using Inspera. They had a study guide, time to prepare, and could bring one page of notes.

Summary of the students' response to the course valuation

Overall, the evaluation was more negative than previous years. The students indicated that they were provided with opportunities for active learning, felt respected, had equal learning opportunities, and experienced a good atmosphere to a relatively high degree. On the other hand, there were clear indications that many felt that there was too little time to reflect and that the demands of the course were too great.

They expressed frustration with having mandatory sessions, a lot of reading, and several found the exam to be overwhelming or otherwise unclear. Some thought that the course unfairly advantaged those with a philosophy background.

The course leader's reflections on the implementation and results of the course

Despite the frustration that was expressed, the students were quite successful with the examination for the most part. The grade distribution was similar to previous years. I understand the difficulty in having to write an essay in a controlled examination setting. Particularly, as it is an international program with primarily students with English as a second language, this is a major challenge. On the other hand, the alternatives are limited. The intended learning outcomes cannot be assessed through the type of exam questions with a "right" or "wrong" answer because the goals are about reasoning, argumentation, and justification. Given the short length of the course (8 days), individual oral presentations are not favorable given the very large group of students (even a 10-minute presentation per student would require two full days, equivalent to 25% of the total course).

Though students have previously expressed that the course is too short, this is the first time that multiple students were quite negative about the amount of learning activities. I have noted previously that I will not add anything more to the course load, but I will need to evaluate what might be possible to reduce. There is a lot to cover, and I try to give them different opportunities and plenty of examples.

We have tried to align what is covered in this course and the introduction to public health course through communication and using the same lecturer. Some students have previously said that there is too much repetition, while others feel that it is too advanced. Like with all courses in the master program in public health, the students' diverse cultural, educational, and professional backgrounds make it difficult to cater each course to the entire group equally. Some will inevitably be at an advantage based on their previous knowledge.

The learning activities in the course are diverse, and include reading, individual reflection, lectures, guest lectures with specific examples in research, as well as three workshops that are group discussion based. The students are generally quite positive about the workshops and enjoy discussing with each other and usually express appreciation that they are in the same groups throughout the course. In this sense, their diverse backgrounds are a major advantage and learning opportunity. On the other hand, attendance in the non-mandatory sessions is very low, with only around 1/3 of the students attending. At the same time, there are complaints about having three mandatory sessions. The mandatory sessions involve group discussion and peer-to-peer learning, meaning that the students contribute to their own learning as well as their fellow classmates'. For this reason, the intended learning outcomes cannot be achieved if the students are not present and/or do not participate. Making these sessions non-mandatory does not seem like an option to me.

Course leader's conclusions and suggestions for improvement

- The change in the examination format did not seem to be a popular choice among the students. This needs to be discussed among the main contributing teachers to the course, as well as the program council. We will need to take into account the pros and cons of giving the students more specific instructions ahead of time. The downside of this could be even lower attendance in the non-mandatory sessions, and a greater risk that the students rely more on generative AI and less on their own knowledge and reflections. Another format would be to change the exam to shorter open-ended questions rather than an essay, which also has its drawbacks in terms of assessing the students' skills in reasoning.
- Students have previously expressed that the course is too short and too intensive, but this was especially reflected this year with a different exam format. I will consider which activities could be combined or removed and consider reducing the reading load.

Other comments