

Board of Studies for Languages and International Studies

Reviews of Fall 2008 Semester

Head of Studies Review, Languages and International Studies (SIS) Programs

A number of elements characterize the overall experiences reflected in both written and oral student reviews of the 2008 semester:

- Interest in and appreciation of the SIS educations' interdisciplinary character
- Interest in the specific blend of political, cultural, social and language studies
- Appreciation of engaged teachers
- Desire for clearer communication via the study's website and concerning practical procedures
- An interest in continued work toward continuity concerning scholarly methods across the educations' multiple disciplines
- Satisfaction with the relevance and interest level of the topics presented in courses and modules

The SIS educations involve a number of elements shared between the educations – such as the 1st semester project module – and between other educations, such as project modules in the 3rd semester and a number of language disciplines. Student reviews show these shared activities to generally function well, and enhance the interdisciplinary nature of the studies. While acknowledging a difference between the educations concerning the level of language competence with which students enter SIS English and SIS Spanish, respectively – this due largely to the relatively widespread use of English language in Danish society (as opposed to little social use of Spanish) – the studies will seek to ensure that SIS students are provided with sufficient opportunities to train their written and oral foreign language skills at the same time that focus on competences in international politics, social and cultural studies remain central to the educations.

Beyond regular course and examination activities, the SIS programs held two noteworthy special events in Fall 2008 to contribute the studies' student environment: a mid-semester evaluation and theme day and an essay contest on topics in human rights. The mid-semester evaluation and theme day provided oral feedback on the studies, extending instructor insight into student experiences beyond that provided in written reviews. Here, students expressed general satisfaction with their studies. Among SIS English students, there was concern expressed relating to the continuity of methods in the study's multiple disciplines. Students in both studies expressed concern with communication channels, especially the transparency of the studies' homepages. All students felt that the general student atmosphere had improved in the studies, with greater clarity provided for their identity as international studies students. Regarding the human rights essay contest, few entries were received. However, the winner wrote a high

quality essay on problems concerning contemporary international laws on terrorism. The study views the mid-semester day and human rights essay contest as the start of new annual and/or semester traditions for the studies.

Overall, the Fall 2008 semester must be considered a success for the SIS educations, though student concerns regarding methods and practical administrative must – and will – be addressed.

Coordinator reviews of the two educations may be read below.

Ben Dorfman, Head of Studies, Languages and International Studies

Coordinator Review, Spanish and International Studies

Der er evalueringer for tre kurser på 1. semester, 3 kurser på 3. semester og 2 kurser på 5 semester.

På første semester har vurderingen af kurserne varieret mellem tilfredsstillende og meget godt. Dog har kun en udfyldt skemaet i faget mundtlig fremstilling, og der udtrykkes et ønske om en mindre klassestørrelse i dette fag.

På tredje semester er to fag blevet evalueret som utilfredsstillende, mens det sidste fag er blevet evalueret som tilfredsstillende. Koordinator vil tale med de involverede undervisere.

På femte semester besvares evalueringen af de to fag som enten godt eller tilfredsstillende. En enkelt studerende finder det ene kursus utilfredsstillende.

Steen Fryba Christensen, SIS Spanish Coordinator

Coordinator Review, English and International Studies

The study received reviews on almost all course activities in the 1st, 3rd and 5th semesters. There was relative balance as concerned assessments of the course activities. Of the twelve course reviewed, five were characterized by students as “good to very good,” four as “good,” two as “average to satisfactory” and one as “unsatisfactory to satisfactory.”

Of note is that both language courses and “content” courses, or courses concerned with the social, political and cultural emphases in the education, were equally well evaluated. There appears to be relative balance and parity from the fall 2008 semester in terms of the quality of experience across the education’s disciplines.

Concerning the one course evaluated as “unsatisfactory to satisfactory,” the central criticism of the course was related to its construction using multiple instructors. The practice will be reviewed for the next offering of the course.

It is also noted that 3rd semester students expressed dissatisfaction with the 3rd semester project module in the education's mid-semester meeting between students and faculty members, based in concern with the relevance of the material for the education as a whole and the continuity of methods. These concerns will be taken into consideration and reviewed with the appropriate personnel. There was also concern expressed regarding the timeliness of the publication of student exam results.

Ben Dorfman (head of studies), on behalf of Kirsten Jæger, SIS English Coordinator