

**Board of Studies for Languages and International Studies**

**Studienævn for Sprog og Internationale Studier**

**Reviews of Courses in the Spring 2009 Semester /Kursusevaluering Forår 2009**

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

In terms of course reviews for the Spring 2009 semester, the number of responses was high. Both SIS English and SIS Spanish retained a high number of their students in the transition from first to second semester (with SIS English taking on new students from other programs), and this was reflected in the largely positive reviews of the Spring 2009 courses.

Thematically, the SIS educations cut across a number of disciplinary areas – practical language proficiency, the study of language in society, international politics, intercultural studies and regional social and historical studies. Students expressed a high level of enthusiasm for both the contents and presentation of the material concerned with international politics, intercultural studies, regional social and historical studies and the language in society – “discourse studies” – areas. Specifically, students expressed satisfaction with the interdisciplinary blend of the educations, the enthusiasm of their instructors and the general relevance of their reading materials and class activities.

SIS students expressed some concern over the presentation and examination forms concerned with practical language proficiency. While students clearly viewed themselves as benefitting from the teaching, they in certain cases felt not clearly informed about the expectations related to their examination and the appropriateness of the size of their exams in relation to the ECTS points attached to the exams in questions and the specific set of activities and readings conducted in the classroom. This issue will be addressed by the Head of Studies in relation to the relevant modules.

It should also be mentioned that, informally, several SIS students expressed a high level of enthusiasm for extra-curricular activities arranged by the education during the Spring semester, such as the debate day about terrorism laws in Denmark.

**Coordinator Review, English and International Studies**

**6th Semester Courses:**

**Intercultural Communication, Basic Issues**

**Intercultural Communication, Ethics, Politics, and Philosophy**

**Intercultural Market Communication**

Regarding the disciplinary content, the course offerings spanned a wide area. One of the courses, Intercultural Market Communication was taught for the last time as a compulsory module. In the 2009 curriculum, it has been changed into an elective model, which fits well with some student comments expressing that the course itself was excellent, but difficult to connect to the learning objectives of the entire SIS program, aiming at a more international studies oriented profile. However, for some students this course is clearly highly applicable and central to the disciplinary profile they seek in the SIS program. Generally, the course was praised for its clear communication of disciplinary content, its practical applicability, accessible course literature and the engagement and communication skills of the course teacher. The two Intercultural Communication courses were supposed to lay a foundation for subsequent project work. Good communication of theory, inspiring discussions, and thought provoking literature were emphasized in the evaluation of the course Intercultural Communication, Ethics, Politics, and Philosophy. As for the course on ‘Basic issues’, the evaluations suggest that more should be done to coordinate individual course sessions in team-taught courses.

**4th Semester Courses:**

**Culture and Communication**

**International Organizations**

**Globalization**

At 4th semester, there seems to be an overall satisfaction with the courses offered. It should be noted, though, that only one part of the course in International organizations, the part taught by Per Lunde, was addressed in the course evaluations. Also, only one form regarding the course ‘Globalization’ was handed in. Students unanimously appreciated lively discussions, thought-provoking lectures, and the possibility of active participation in the course Culture and Communication. Negative comments are exclusively related to practical issues at 4th semester, frequent rescheduling is mentioned as a problem regarding the Globalization course, and there seems to have been a minor problem with the availability of the course material in the International Organization course.

**2nd Semester Courses**

**British social, political and cultural history (BSPCH)**

**American social, political and cultural history (ASPCH)**

**Grammar**

**Basics of Translation (BOT)**

The BSPCH and ASPCH courses seem to fulfill the double purpose of giving students an overview of British and American history and of forming a basis for subsequent project work. Students characterize the BSPCH course as inspiring and state that it has given an overview of British history. Students have experienced the content of the course as well organized and presented, and they appreciate that the lectures have been combined with activities involving their active participation (group work and similar activities). The course is well connected with the ASPCH course which is also characterized as enhancing student learning significantly. Students have found the course material interesting and experience that lectures help them getting an overview and deeper understanding of the course content. Based on the student evaluations, it must be concluded that the two courses supplement each other very well and seem to give students a coherent picture of British and American social, political and cultural history.

In 2nd semester, the most demanding course is no doubt the grammar course, preparing the students for an external, written exam. Several students express a certain level of insecurity regarding the exam requirements. The fact that they have no clear impression of the level of competence which will be expected of them, makes it difficult for these students to estimate the learning outcome of the course. However, others report that the learning outcome has been absolutely satisfactory and that they have been much helped by the clear presentation of content and, especially, by the lecture notes handed out, which according to one student ‘meant everything’. The students also express very different opinions regarding the relevance of the course. Most students realize that the acquisition of grammar is critical to written presentation and therefore a key competence. However, a few feel that International Studies students should not be exposed to so rigorous theoretical demands in a purely linguistic discipline. In general, all students acknowledge that they need to be able to write and speak a grammatically correct English – the difficult part seems to be the acquisition of theory and meta-language and to understand how theoretical understanding and language proficiency connect. Students report that the courses Grammar and Basics of translation are well connected. As for the BOT course, students generally appreciate the practical aspects of the course – comments on own translation assignments and the improvement of own translation skills, and several students recommend that the course should be even more practice-oriented. Again, the responses vary: some students value the deeper understanding of translation principles that they have acquired in the course, others do not experience a need for translation skills beyond a very basic level and evaluate the relevance of the course accordingly.

**Ben Dorfman, Director of Studies**

**Koordinator Evaluering, Spansk og Internationale Studier**

Der er blevet evalueret kurser på 2, 4 og 6 semester.

Der er tale om i alt 9 kurser. Alle kurserne er blevet bedømt positivt – naturligvis med visse kommentarer, som dog ikke vedrører denne evalueringsrapport.

**Steen Fryba Christensen, koordinator SIS Spansk**