Course Report

Department of Criminology (DoC), Malmö University (MAH)

Course reports form a vital part of our quality assurance work; development of courses and programs and to ensure students’ rights to influence their education. The structure for MAHs course evaluation process is described in the document Policy för kvalitetsbygge: kursutvärdering. The course report contains background information/key numbers, a summary of the students’ course evaluations, an analysis, plan of action and suggestions for further course development. The course report is published on the course website.

Background information

Course: Criminal Careers

Term/Semester: Fall 2017

Ladok* Code: KA712E

Course coordinator: Marie Väfors Fritz

Number of registered students: 33 (31 of who were actively participating in the course)

Response rate: 78.79% (26 students answered the Sunet Survey = 84%, 22 students filled out the written anonymous evaluation after 3 weeks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Was the following conducted:</th>
<th>If yes: X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication of previous course evaluation at course start</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early dialog on expectations of the course</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-term or Formative course evaluation</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary course evaluation</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback/Comments to students</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forms of the evaluation

A couple weeks into the course students were asked to anonymously fill out written comments of their perception of the course thus far, this together with the automatic Sunet Survey questionnaire serves as the material for this report. Below are mean values described on a scale that reaches from 1 (to very little extent) to 6 (to a very high extent):

Learning outcomes reached (4.5); Work formats (4.0); Lectures, incl IT-based (4.0); Seminars (3.1); Written assignment (4.4); Group work (4.6); Own studies (5.2); Oral presentations (4.4); Course material (4.0); Feedback (3.6); Structure (2.9); Examination (4.4); Research based course (4.6); Students knowledge been utilized (3.9); Work load (4.3); Hrs per week studied over 80 percent of the student studied between 11-40 h/week (only 6
students between 31-40hrs a week); Student influence 80 percent of the students reported there being opportunity for student influence. The mean value reported for the course as a whole was kind of low (3.6).

The work format seminars was what that students were the least satisfied. Not so much the learning activities that seminars make out, rather, the way the seminars in this course were conducted together with the limited amount of information given beforehand for each seminar. Each seminar had suggested readings to it but the execution of the seminar differed from time to time - something that was not appreciated by the students. Some students did however like this form of varying seminars as detected by the free text in the survey and the written evaluations mid-course. As usual, it is hard to reach satisfaction to all when laborating with working formats to reach the majority of the students’ needs among course starts.

**Summary of the students’ course evaluations and the involved teacher’s evaluation of the course’s content, learning activity and examination**

Many students expressed very positive comments regarding the lectures, both those by the course coordinator and those by guest lecturers. Two students expressed that they did not see how two lectures fitted the course, but they did not refer to the same lectures. This is more the rule than the exception – that everything in the course does not fit everybody. Mostly, the lectures were appreciated – also the variety of the topic addressed and the fact that three faculty members contributed to the course content together. For some, more in-depth studies of some of the themes raised in the course would have been appreciated, while others were positive to the multiple angles addressed in the course. The assignments were opportunities for students to explore each theme more deeply and most students accepted this.

Recourses were prioritized this semester to create additional teaching material that were made available for the students. Such as audio and video files and instructions of how to write a paper. These were generally appreciated by the students.

**Analysis**

The wide spread views on what is appreciated and what needs improvement contribute to the difficulties of further developing the course. Often, one student’s comment is the opposite of the next’s. Collectively, the students communicate that they desire more detailed information on what to read, how to read it, how to prepare, how to execute seminars and what do focus on within seminars and assignments. *This is* what the focus will be on in future revisions.

Regarding the low ratings on the evaluation pertaining to feedback. Feedback was given to each group presentation (assignment 1) directly after these were done and general feedback was given to the students via the *Its learning platform* after the introduction paper (assignment 2). Office hours were made available for *all students* who wanted individual feedback to their written paper. Four students made contact to get this feedback. Thus, it is difficult to interpret the low rate for this particular item in the evaluation survey.

**Plan of action for future revisions and Suggestions to revise the course syllabus**

The structure of the course needs to be outlined in the Study Guide in greater detail for next semester. That seminars change in nature will sustain though this offers student’s platforms to approach literature and subjects from different angles. However further development of writing clearer instruction to the assignments will be prioritized for next time the course runs.