



<b>Course evaluation</b>
<b>Course name: Health Systems: Organization and financing</b>
<b>Semester: Spring 2021</b>
<b>Number of registered students: 34</b> <b>Number of “active” students: 32</b> <b>Number that participated in the valuation: 23</b>

1. Describe the implementation of the course in relation to the content and prerequisites of the course (e.g., level of course, number of teachers, type of learning methods, special pedagogic methods used, presence of students, etc.):

The **expected learning outcomes** of the course includes students gaining knowledge of “basic functions and organization of different health systems” and of “basic concepts in economic theory relevant to an analysis of health systems functioning”. With this basis the students should at the end of the course be able to “critically analyze, with the help of economic theory, rights based philosophy and social theory, issues related to financing, production and organization of health systems” and to “identify and analyze problems in different healthcare systems on the basis of the features of these systems” and in “collaboration with others compare different health systems, identify problems and propose improvements and to report and discuss it”. Students are also expected to master an analysis of “how ethics and moral philosophical issues concerning people's right to health care relate to the principles that govern the healthcare structure and function in different countries” (quotations from the course syllabus).

**Content.** The course is started with an overview and history of health systems. The framework and service delivery of health systems are also outlined. This is followed by a discussion of the basic tools in an economic analysis of people’s health and health care. On the basis of this, the building blocks of health systems: organization, regulation, financing and delivery are analyzed. Different national health systems are examined and compared to reflect on the values used to implement them. The concept of health systems as social determinants for health, and the necessity of strengthening health systems to address inequality are also discussed.

The **teaching** is a mix of lectures, group work and presentations, paper discussions and a seminar. In addition to this there is a course project where students in groups of two or three do a comparison and an assessment of the health systems in the countries represented in the groups. The task involves analyzing strengths and weaknesses and developing recommendations on how to improve the systems. There are three teachers doing almost all of the teaching. These teachers have been involved in the course for a longer time and therefore have an understanding of what each of them do, which benefits coordination.

The **examination** is twofold: 1) Student (compulsory) participation in the course project, group work, paper discussions, the seminar, and 2) a written examination.

**2. Describe how learning activities and examining elements ensure that students are given the conditions to achieve the expected learning outcomes:**

The teaching methods are diversified in the way described in (1) above so that they involve **substantial time for student centered activities** – e.g. discussions in groups, analyzing and listening to other students' analysis of scientific papers, and preparing presentations of analysis of health systems in different countries. The teaching has been planned in this way to promote the attainment of the expected learning outcomes, also described in (1) above.

Having the examination done in two parts strengthen the promotion of student activity. A written exam is deemed necessary to be able to discriminate between students when deciding the final course grade. But the other part of the examination – compulsory group work, paper discussions, the seminar and the course project – give strong incentives for the students to be active through the course.

**3. Describe the analysis from student valuations and teachers' experiences with conclusions and possible suggestions for changes:**

The **result on the written exam** was that 13 students received the highest grade, *Pass with distinction*, 16 received the grade *Pass* and 2 received the grade *Fail*. These latter 2 passed on the re-sit exam.

Our evaluation of this is, from the teachers' side, that in the end all active students displayed, in a satisfactory way, that they have attained the expected learning outcomes.

The **course valuation** was done in two parts. There was a class discussion with the students at the end of each of the first two course weeks. There was also a survey, a web-based questionnaire, distributed to the students after the written exam on the course had been given allowing for anonymous answers. Of the 32 active students on the course, 23 answered the questionnaire.

**Students' grading of different aspects on the course**

7 grade scale where 1= relatively low value and 7 = relatively high value

Question	Average score	Score		No of responses
		below 5	below 4	
How would you assess the quality of the course as a whole?	5.5	3	0	23
How would you assess the way you have been treated in general as a student during the course?	5.7	1	0	23

5 grade scale where 1= very low and 5 = very high

Question	Average score	Score		No of responses
		below 4	below 3	
How do you value the course in terms of new and relevant knowledge for your future work?	4.4	1	0	20
How do you value the course with regard to teaching methods?	3.9	6	0	20
How do you value the group work?	4.0	4	1	20
How do you value the course with regard to exchange of experiences with students from other countries?	4.4	2	1	20
How do you value the course book "Understanding Health Services" by Black N & Gruen R?	3.9	5	1	20
How do you value the course book "Health Care Management." by Walshe K & Smith J (eds)?	3.8	7	0	20

There were both scale and open-ended questions in the questionnaire. The answers to the former type of questions are summarized in the table above.

For all of the aspects on the course assessed by the scale questions the average score is high, in the upper end of the scales. The number of scores below the centre of the scales are less than a handful and only for less than half of the questions. The students rate the quality of the course, the way they have been treated during the course, and the knowledge they have gained to be very high. This also goes for the teaching including group work, the exchange of experience with other students, and the course literature. Judging from the answers on the scale questions, not only the teachers (whose assessment was commented on above) but also the students hold the course outcome to be good.

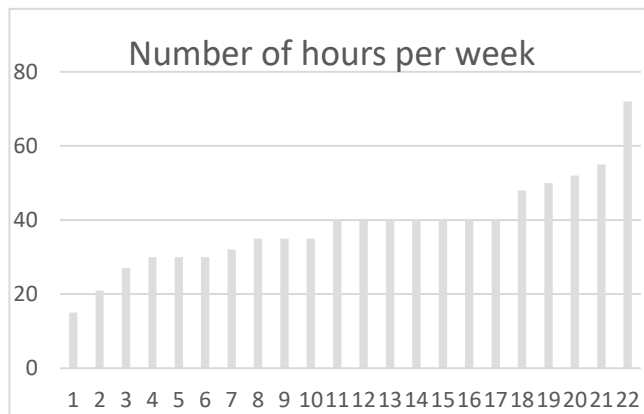
A reservation here is necessary though. We do not know what the 9 active students who did not respond to the survey think. We can only say that we, as teachers, have not experienced any dissatisfaction from this group being expressed. Nor were any such views expressed on the evaluation discussions we had at the end of the first two course weeks.

Due to the pandemic the course was conducted on ZOOM. Judging from the answers to the open-ended questions students clearly prefer face-to-face teaching although still rating the course quality as being high. Being back in the lecture or class room setting is also something teachers long for. The pandemic also affected the way the written exam was done. In usual conditions students will be in an exam hall supervised by invigilators and not having access to course literature and the internet. For this course, the written exam was done by the students at home only for the same amount of time as he or she would have had in an exam hall but of course with an unlimited access to potential aides. The exam questions were adjusted to this and some students commented on the fact that they were unused to this situation and the uncertainty it produced. We hope to do it in the usual exam hall way the next time the course is given.

Which other **future changes** addressed by students answering the open-ended questions may be discussed?

There are a number of detailed comments in the survey that we discuss among us teachers. But for this course evaluation report two things stand out in the answers given by students and therefore merit being emphasized here.

1) **Too much?** The students were asked the following question: "On average, how many hours per week have you devoted to your studies (timetabled classes plus working on your own or together with other students) on the course?" The average for the 22 students answering this question is 39 hours.



Many of the students comment on what these hours were filled with, which the following examples illustrate: "...my perception is that we had an excess of lectures and essential reading", "We were bombarded with several lectures back to back during the 1st week", "Teaching and content was good but couldn't have the time to go through all of it", "Too much reading - It would have been better to do some exercises on our own first and then discuss it in groups"

It seems there are too much of lectures and of reading in the opinion of many. Suggestions on how to solve this vary; e.g. reduce lectures and group work, less of articles, and change of books.

This leads to a very interesting question. **What is the optimal balance between teaching, group work and the students' self-study?** Students' reactions call for a discussion about this in the teacher group. One important aspect in this discussion is that a university student, and so certainly on the master level, should have a lot to do. University training also involves being able to independently go through and analyse a large material. However, having e.g. too much of lecture time could negatively inflict on students' possibilities to do meaningful reading.

- 2 The second thing standing out is related to the questions of "too much". It concerns the breadth of the course content. There may be a **conflict between the topics** covered in a course **and the time for deeper reflection** on some of the topics. Students write e.g.: "The topics were more comprehensive and I wish the lectures went deeper", "What I mean is that got to deeper reflections when the floor is open to anyone, allowing for more discussion than a mini-presentation of slides from each group"

This is also something to be discussed in the teacher group. Do we do too much content wise?

These questions are interesting, and particularly so against the reported background of students rating the course very high.

<b>Course coordinator:</b>  Anna-Karin Hurtig	<b>Date:</b>  5: maj 2021
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