

Emneevaluering / course evaluation ISV

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Navn / name *

Navn til emneansvarlig

Do Young LEE

Semester

Våren 2025

Velg kursnivå *

Masterkurs

*

Bolk 1

Emnekode / course code *

PECOS4111

Emnenavn / Course title

Conflict and Cooperation

Emnerapport / course report *

Course-code: PECOS4111 2025
Course title: Conflict and Cooperation
Language: Norwegian, English

Instructor's evaluation of the course:

I believe that PECOS4111 was a success overall. The integration of lectures on foundational theories with empirical case studies, along with interactive discussions, effectively supported the course's learning objectives by deepening students' understanding of conflict and cooperation in international politics.

Each seminar session was structured around a lecture followed by a discussion. The lecture component introduced key concepts and examined the core logic of conflict and cooperation from diverse theoretical perspectives. In the discussion segment, students engaged with three to five guiding questions related to the weekly topic, which had been shared a few days in advance. Overall, student engagement in discussions was active. In some classes, I conducted the discussion in an individual format, while in others, I used a team-based format to encourage more active participation from students. For team discussions, I first divided the class into small groups and gave students time to share their thoughts with their peers.

Out of the 10 classes in the course, 3 were led by guest lecturers: Ian Bowers (Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies), Hasini Linayage (University of Oslo), and Jamie Withome (University of Oslo). Each guest lecturer was well-suited to the subject matter of their respective classes, which covered China's nuclear modernization, arms control, and the Andøya nuclear crisis and strategic stability.

There were two compulsory activities in the course: 1) a 1,000-word essay on the benefits and costs of extended deterrence, and 2) a 1,500-word critical review paper on an assigned article about Democratic Peace Theory from the course readings. Both assignments were graded on a pass/fail basis, and all students who submitted them received a passing grade. Additionally, students completed a three-hour written exam based on the course materials. The exam questions focused on defining key concepts and understanding the logic of the main arguments in the assigned readings.

Summary of feedback from student representatives:

I repeatedly asked students to volunteer as class representatives, but unfortunately, no one stepped forward, so there was no formal opportunity to receive feedback directly from the students. I regret this. However, informal feedback gathered from conversations with students during class breaks or in between sessions was generally positive.

Since the main goal of this course was to learn theories and key concepts related to conflict and cooperation in international politics, the material could have been somewhat dry. To address this, I used the discussion sessions to help students connect the subject matter and theories covered that day to real-world international political issues. For example, while explaining international relations theories on whether military alliances deter external threats or provoke wars, we discussed NATO's eastward expansion and how it relates to Putin's decision to invade Ukraine.

I chose to organize the discussion topics around timely and relevant issues because students from the 2024 iteration of the course provided very positive feedback on this approach—discussing current events in international politics. Linking contemporary political developments to the theories covered seemed to enhance student engagement and encourage more active participation.

Suggestions for improvements to the course:

In the early weeks of the course, discussion participation was limited to a small number of students. However, as the semester progressed, participation increased, with more students contributing actively. I observed a particularly positive effect when I expanded the use of team-based discussions. If I have the opportunity to convene this course again, I plan to incorporate more team-based discussions from the beginning.

The recent policy change eliminating the requirement to record student attendance has made course administration more convenient for instructors. However, I have observed a rise in absenteeism. This may be due to the absence of a minimum attendance requirement (e.g., 6 or 7 out of 10 sessions) and the lack of any attendance monitoring. I believe it would be beneficial to reinstate a minimum attendance policy as part of the course requirements to encourage more consistent student participation.

Emneevalueringen bør inneholde:

1. Vurdering av emnet
 - Læringsutbytte i emnet
 - Undervisningsformer og organisering
 - Andre relevante temaer som læringsmiljø, studentenes arbeidsinnsats og eventuelt vurderingsformer
2. Studentens tilbakemelding
 - Oppsummering av studentenes viktigste tilbakemeldinger
3. Helhetlig vurdering og videreutvikling
 - En samlet vurdering av kvaliteten på emnet
 - Justeringer som er foretatt som følge av evalueringen.
 - Muligheter for videreutvikling av emnet

The course evaluation should include:

1. Assessment of the course
 - Learning outcomes in the course
 - Teaching methods and organization
 - Other relevant topics such as the learning environment, students' effort and possibly forms of assessment
2. Student's feedback
 - Summary of students' most important feedback
3. Overall assessment and further development
 - An overall assessment of the quality of the course
 - Adjustments made as a result of the evaluation.
 - Opportunities for further development of the course