

## SVF-3021 Student Evaluation Report, Autumn 2005

The student evaluation of SVF-3021 Integrated Peace Studies was performed through a) three rounds of questionnaires answered by students electronically in QuestBack and b) the Student Staff Liaison. A final evaluation meeting of the subject was planned for December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005, but it did not take place due to lack of student attendance. The following report sums up the most important results from such student assessments and points to conclusions that are to be taken in consideration in the subsequent phases of the MPCT evaluation period 2005-06.

### ***I. QuestBack Evaluation of SVF-3021***

#### **1. Explanation**

The students registered in SVF-3021 anonymously filled out electronically QuestBack forms in three rounds. The first one had a deadline on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The second one had a deadline November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Finally the third QuestBack evaluation was handed in December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The following forms were used in each of the evaluations:

Scale : Excellent (All) = 5, Very Good (Most) = 4, Good (About half) = 3 ,  
Average (Less than half) = 2, Bad (Few) = 1

**First and second rounds of evaluations, October 5<sup>th</sup> and November 9<sup>th</sup> , 2005.**

#### **Form A.**

| <b><i>General Questions</i></b>                                                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. How many lectures have you followed?                                                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. In the beginning, my motivation to follow the lectures was                                |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. The teacher's knowledge of the subject matter being taught is                             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. The clarity and organisation of the lectures is                                           |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. I would rate the student-teacher communication as                                         |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6. The amount of lectures on the topic have been                                             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7. The amount of reading-material in the topic has been                                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| 8. I believe that the relation of the lectures to Peace Studies is                           |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9. I think that the cumulative progression of the specific lectures given by this teacher is |   |   |   |   |   |
| 10. How effectively did the lectures build on the material in the required readings?         |   |   |   |   |   |
| 11. What is your overall assessment of teaching in this series of lectures?                  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 12. After the lectures, the improvement in my motivation towards the topic was               |   |   |   |   |   |

#### **Third round of evaluation, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Form B.**

| <b><i>General Questions about the exam form</i></b>                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. How would you rate the exam questions in relation to the content of the subject?     |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. How do you think the questions adapted to the length of the essay you were to write? |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. How satisfied are you with the feedback you got from the examiners?                  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. How satisfied are you with the grade you received?                                   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b><i>General Questions about the subject as a whole</i></b>                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. How satisfied are you with the content in SVF-3022 as a whole?                       |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. How satisfied are you with the structure of the content in SVF-3022 as a whole?      |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. How helpful has SVF-3022 been in your way to developing a thesis project?            |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. How helpful was the subject in developing your understanding of Peace Studies?       |   |   |   |   |   |

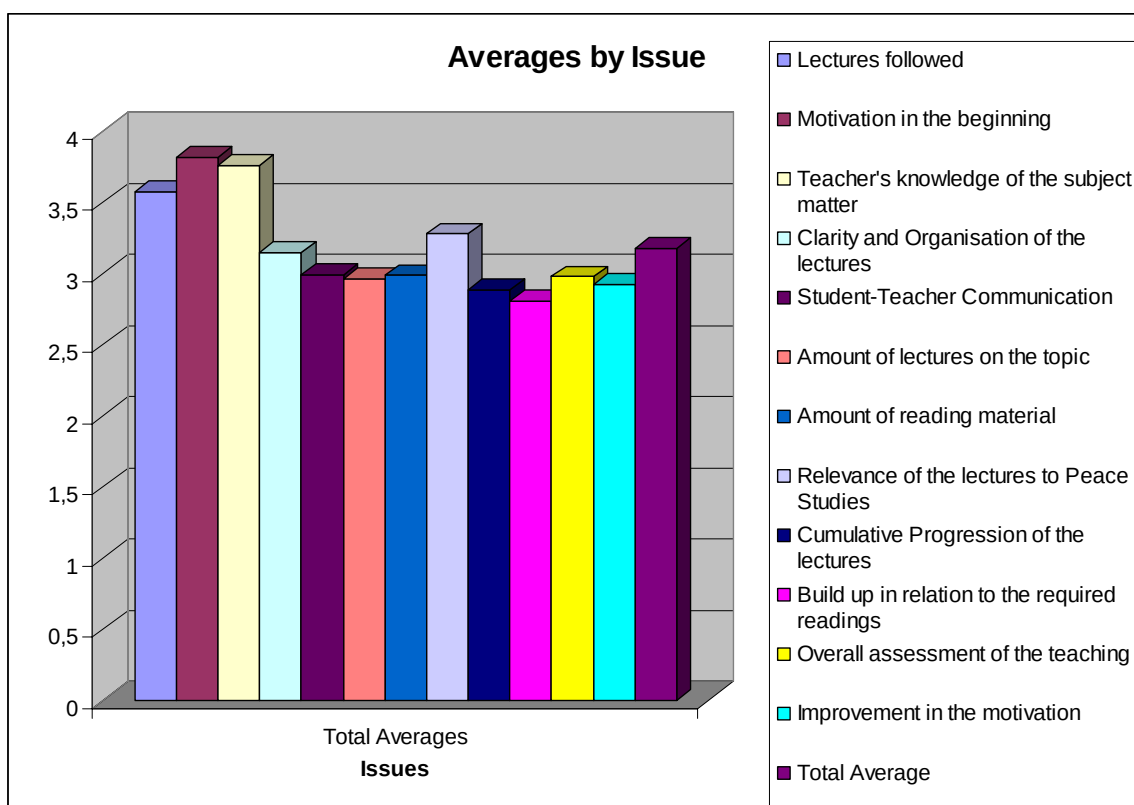
In the three occasions the forms included a space where students could make comments on how they had experienced the subject.

## 2. Form-Evaluation Results

### 2.1. Lectures

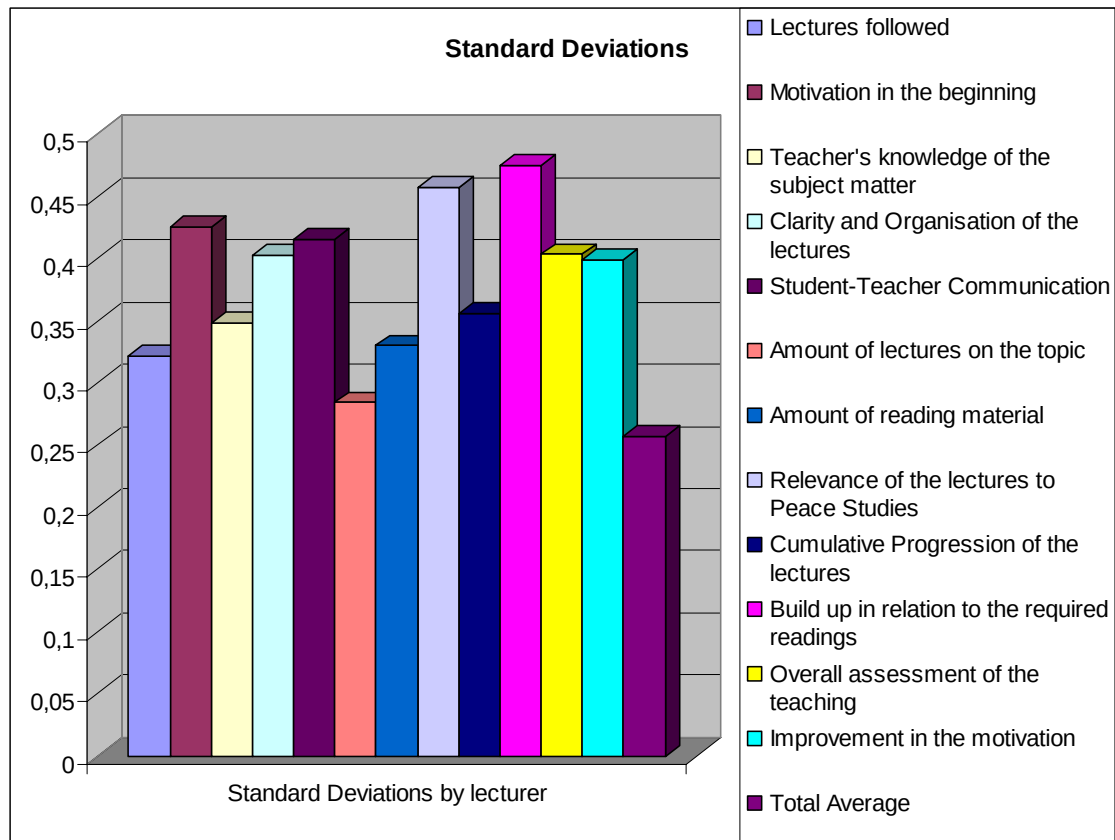
A total of 13 students of 20 answered the first electronic QuestBack questionnaire on the lecturers. A total of 17 students of 20 delivered filled out forms in the second round of evaluation on the lecturers. Students gave lecturers in SVF-3021 an overall average grade of 3,17, in a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is bad and 5 is excellent. This is the overall average of the specific grade averages each student assigned to the 12 issues raised by form A for each lecturer. The standard deviation of averages by question is 0,35 and 0,25 for averages by lecturer. Figure 1 presents a summary of the results.

**Figure 1**



In order to present a measurement of the variance in student opinion (disagreement) regarding each of the questions on lecturer performance, Figure 2 presents the standard deviations of student answers to each question in Form A.

**Figure 2.**



### 2.1.1. Interpretation of the Results of the Lecturer Evaluation

According to the scale and criteria employed, the general opinion of students is that the quality of lectures in SVF-3021 approximates to *good*, with an overall average score of 3,17 and a standard deviation of the averages by question of 0,35. This information can be used to verify hypotheses on students' opinions about the course:

**Table 1. Verification of Hypotheses on Students' Opinions on SVF-3021**

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Ho: The lectures are bad</b>       | FALSE       |
| <b>Ho: The lectures are average</b>   | FALSE       |
| <b>Ho: The lectures are good</b>      | Significant |
| <b>Ho: The lectures are very good</b> | FALSE       |
| <b>Ho: The lectures are excellent</b> | FALSE       |
| <b>Significance</b>                   | <b>95%</b>  |

The student answers to the forms also serve to identify strengths and weaknesses in the content, structure and presentation of the subject by each lecturer. Those elements with a grade higher than the average are regarded as strengths and those with a grade lower than the average are considered weaknesses.

**Strengths of the lectures:** Motivation in the beginning ( $\mu = 3,82$  and  $\sigma = 0,42$ ); Attendance ( $\mu = 3,57$  and  $\sigma = 0,32$ ); teacher's knowledge of the subject matter ( $\mu = 3,75$  and  $\sigma = 0,34$ ); relevance of the lectures to Peace Studies ( $\mu = 3,28$  and  $\sigma = 0,46$ ). It should be an aim to preserve these aspects of SVF-3021.

**Weaknesses of the lectures:** According to the results, the series of lectures in SVF-3021 have to improve *primarily* in the clarity and organisation of the lecture ( $\mu = 3,14$  and  $\sigma = 0,40$ ); student-teacher communication ( $\mu = 2,99$  and  $\sigma = 0,41$ ); overall assessment of the teaching ( $\mu = 2,98$  and  $\sigma = 0,40$ ); amount of reading material ( $\mu = 2,97$  and  $\sigma = 0,33$ ); amount of lectures on the topic ( $\mu = 2,95$  and  $\sigma = 0,28$ ); cumulative progression of the lectures ( $\mu = 2,89$  and  $\sigma = 0,36$ ); build up in relation to the required readings ( $\mu = 2,81$  and  $\sigma = 0,47$ ); and finally, improvement in the motivation, which the students think dropped from 3,82 to 2,92 as the semester was underway ( $\sigma = 0,39$ ). However, it must be pointed out that even the *weaknesses* in the subject receive high marks, with an average of 2,95 ( $\sigma = 0,11$ ), which is approximately *good* according to the grading scale. At a significance of 95% the weaknesses of SVF-3021 still receive a *good* grade by the students.

The lowest score was given to the build-up in relation to the required readings. However, this is an issue in which student opinion varies relatively a lot, since its standard deviation is the highest  $\sigma = 0,47$ . By standardising the average we observe that students think that the build-up is either *average* in quality or *good*, but not *bad*, *very good* nor *excellent*.

## 2.2 Exam

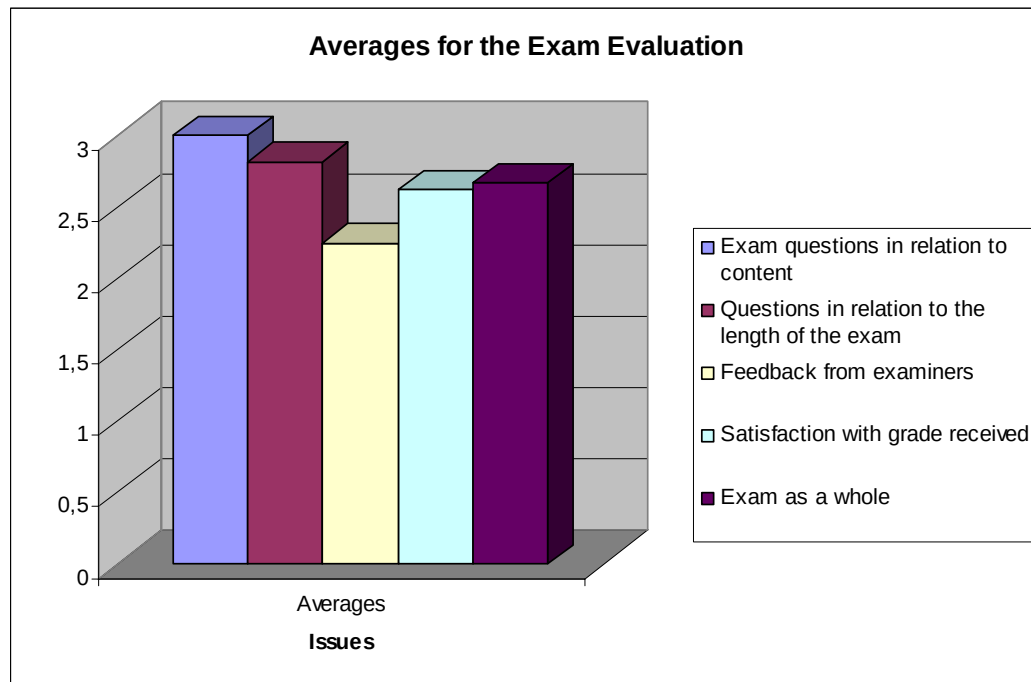
A total of 11 of 20 answered the electronic QuestBack questionnaire on the exam. The students consider that the quality of the exam approximates to *good*, with a score of 2,67 and a standard deviation of 0,32 of the average responses for each question. Table 2 verifies hypothesis on the subject SVF-3021:

**Table 2. Verification of Hypotheses on student opinion for SVF-3021**

|                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Ho: Bad Exam</b>       | FALSE       |
| <b>Ho: Average Exam</b>   | FALSE       |
| <b>Ho: Good Exam</b>      | Significant |
| <b>Ho: Very Good Exam</b> | FALSE       |
| <b>Ho: Excellent Exam</b> | FALSE       |
| <b>Significance</b>       | 95%         |

Which means that in general, data shows significantly that students think that the exam was *good*. Scores above the average are considered strengths and scores below the average mark are considered weaknesses. Such an interpretation helps the academic coordinator establish priorities of action regarding the changes to consider in the exam form. The results are summed up in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**



**Strengths of the exam:** The exam questions and their relation to the subject ( $\mu = 3$  and  $\sigma = 1$ ). The adaptation of the questions to the length of the essay students were to write, which got a mark just over the average of the exam as a whole ( $\mu = 2,82$  and  $\sigma = 0,98$ )

**Weaknesses of the exam:** The results point out that the students are less satisfied with the grade they received ( $\mu = 2,65$  and  $\sigma = 1,19$ ) and even less with the feedback they received in their oral exam, which got the lowest mark ( $\mu = 2,25$  and  $\sigma = 0,89$ ). However, even the weaknesses of the exam get a grade above *average*, with an overall average of 2,45 ( $\sigma = 0,28$ ), just 0,2 points under the overall average for the exam form.

## 2.2 Subject as a whole

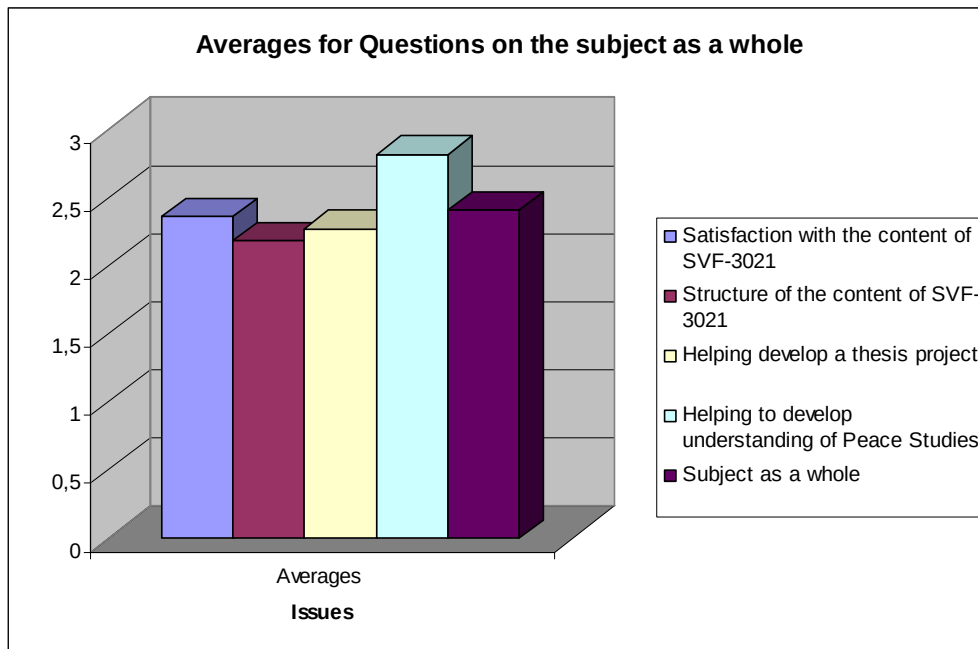
Of 20 students, 11 answered the electronic QuestBack questionnaire on the subject as a whole: lectures and exam. The average grade the students gave to the lectures and exams in SVF-3021 was 2,41, a grade that suggests that the students think that the quality of SVF-3021 was *average*. The standard deviation in the questions answered on the subject as a whole was 0,28. Table 3 shows the verification of hypotheses on SVF-3021 as a whole

**Table 3. Verification of hypotheses on SVF-3021 as a whole**

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Ho: Bad Subject as a whole</b>     | FALSE       |
| <b>Ho: Average Subject as a whole</b> | Significant |
| <b>Ho: Good Subject</b>               | FALSE       |
| <b>Ho: Very Good Subject</b>          | FALSE       |
| <b>Ho: Excellent Subject</b>          | FALSE       |
| <b>Significance 95%</b>               |             |

Figure 4 sums up the results:

**Figure 4**

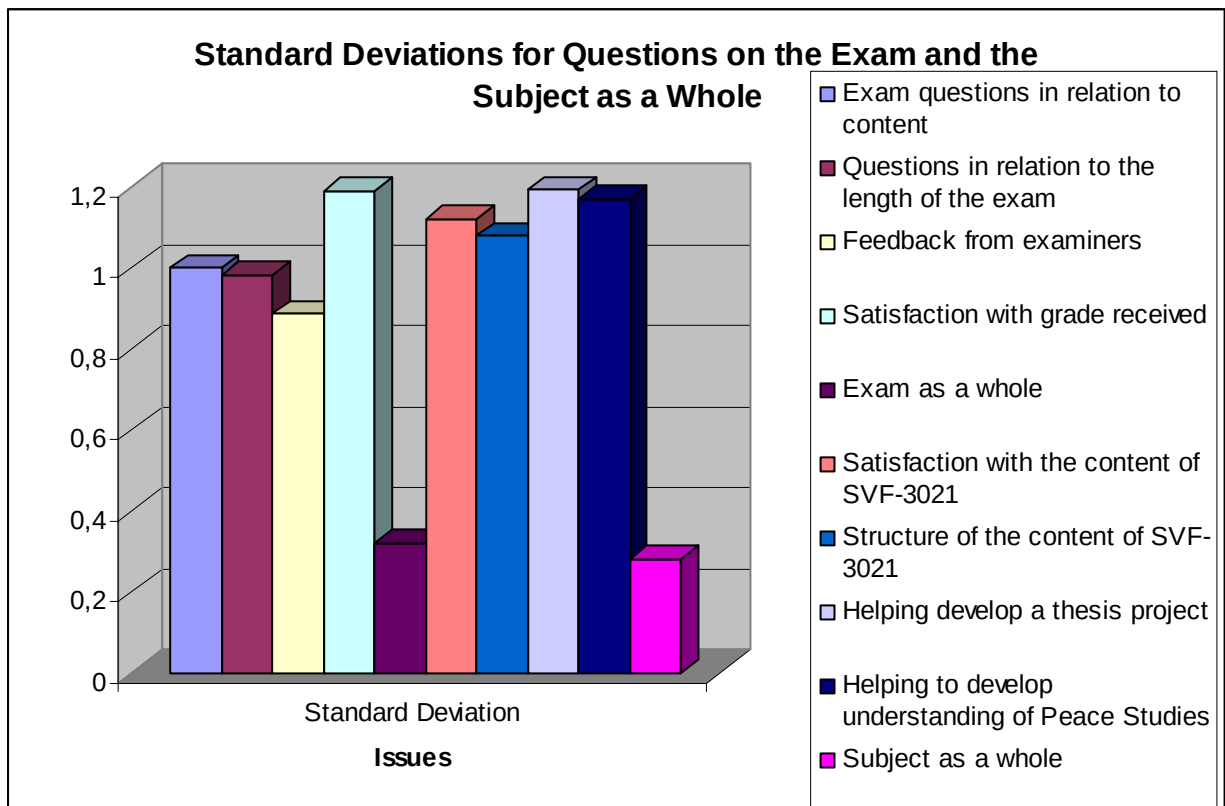


**Strengths of the subject as a whole:** The subject scored higher in helping students develop their understanding of Peace Studies ( $\mu=2,81$  and  $\sigma =1,17$ ).

**Weaknesses of the subject as a whole:** The subject scored lower in content ( $\mu=2,36$  and  $\sigma =1,12$ ); structure ( $\mu=2,18$  and  $\sigma =1,07$ ) and in being helpful to develop a thesis project ( $\mu=2,27$  and  $\sigma =1,19$ ); which is the issue students seem to disagree the most on.

Figure 5 presents the standard deviations for the questions answered by students on the exam form and the subject as a whole. They can be used to measure disagreement in the class on each issue.

**Figure 5.**  
**Standard Deviations for Questions on the Exam and Subject as a Whole**



### 2.3 Student Comments

This section sums up concrete suggestions taken from the student comments handed in with the QuestBack forms that were delivered electronically in three occasions, October 5<sup>th</sup> and November 9<sup>th</sup> and December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

The course is generally good and helpful to peace studies as a whole. Lectures were well organised.

The course could be more consistent as a whole. If the different lecturers would have known what the others had been teaching, it could be easy to create a red line between the courses. For example by using some clear cut examples of certain (types of) conflicts seen from religious, historical and political points of view. This could be used through out the course. For now it just seems very inconsistent, scattered, and confusing, with the reading list adding to the mix.

This subject needs more communication between the teachers. It also needs one teacher in charge like SVF 3022 has. The subject lacks guidance from a teacher. This can be made better by one teacher more clearly being the one to turn to.

It would be good to have a seminar group throughout the semester.

SVF 3021 needs a clearer outline on what it is that we should know by the end of the semester.

The teachers that make up the committee for grading the exam and doing the oral need better information about what is actually required readings.

2-4 essays to be written during the semester is perhaps a much better way of learning than pressing 2 demanding essays into 2 weeks. An oral exam in the end could still be a good way to make sure that the right assessment of the students' performance is achieved.

I have many suggestions for improvement, but I don't think that they can be applied to MPCT because of the structure of the Norwegian university system. For example, I would suggest making lectures and meetings mandatory. It is hard to be motivated when you don't even have to come to lecture. Somebody who skips every time can get the same grade or better than someone who shows up, participates, and does the reading. That does not motivate students.

I think that having two or three multidisciplinary professors who we could get to know and who would get to know us and who would lecture on various topics would be excellent. (More stability in general.)

I would like to have had much more discussion. I wish we could have discussed current events, because there is a lot happening right now and no one ever brought that up in lecture.

It is great that a writing course is offered! Just a few suggestions for next time; it should all be given before the first exam when people are nervous and insecure about how the essay should be written. We come from very different backgrounds and therefore also very different ways of writing so there was a uncertainty before the first exam which way was the proper way to write for our subjects here. Also maybe it does not need to be as many hours.

I think 3021 and 3022 should both be 15 credits. I think they are equally important.

It would be nice if we had more time to actually get to know the professors, and for them to know us, because otherwise it seems like we have this mutual lack of investment...they just show up, give us lots of information in a short period of time, and then we never see them again.

## ***II. Student Staff Liaison (SSL)***

There were three SSL meetings in the course of the Autumn Semester 2005. The first one was combined with the "MPCT Study Programme Evaluation 2005" on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The following meetings took place on October 20<sup>th</sup> and November 29<sup>th</sup>. The results of the first meeting are included in the "MPCT Study Programme Report 2005" (DocuLive saksnr. 2005 02607). The following two meetings are summed up in the minutes (DocuLive saksnr. 2005 02976).

The comments and measures on SVF-3021 Culture Conflict and Society taken up in the SSL meetings are:

**Suggestion:** Many students feel that it is hard to make sense of the subject. Teachers make very little effort to connect their part with the topic as a whole and do not seem to know very much what peace studies is about. Students acknowledged that it could be a bit too early to judge and that things might start making sense as they progress in the programme. However, better coordination with the teachers is needed.

**Follow up:** Diane asked the lecturers to include structured discussion in class next autumn. The lecturers are also to provide the reading materials in advance so that compendiums can be available on time. They have also been indicated that they have to prepare and structure their lectures and use Power Point to present their material, because some of the lectures in the autumn semester 2005 were hard to follow because of their lack of structure. Lecturers have also been asked to relate their material more to the course as a whole. Hopefully teachers will follow up. Students have to take care that the lecturers take Diane's recommendations into consideration.

**Comment:** This subject implies a lot of work in very short time. The students saw the exam questions of 2003 and think that it was better before when people had a choice to write more in depth on one question instead of having to write two equally small essays. However, the students have been happy with the questions. Vidar and Diane said that students could ask questions one day after the questions had been distributed, however students would have liked a longer period for questions about the exam. But all in all, people have been happy about it the exam. The student representatives think that it is good that people have alternatives on what to write about. SVF-3021 is a broad subject and people want to show that they know what is going on. It is also positive that the three evaluators will be present during the oral exam.

### ***III. General Evaluation Meeting***

Unfortunately there was no formal “General Evaluation Meeting” due to lack of student attendance. The CPS staff regards this as unfortunate, since two reminders were sent with good timing for this meeting and information about it had been posted in the CPS website more than one month in advance.