

SVF-3023 Student Evaluation Report, Autumn 2005

The student evaluation of SVF-3023 Specialisation with Methodology was performed through a) An electronic questionnaire sent by e-mail to students, b) the Student Staff Liaison and c) A final evaluation meeting of the subject was planned for December 6th, 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-3023

1. Explanation

The students registered in SVF-3023 anonymously filled out electronically QuestBack forms in one occasion with a delivery deadline on January 27th, 2006. The following form was used in the evaluation:

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

Form A

<i>General Questions about the exam form</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. How satisfied are you with the feedback you got in your presentation?					
2. How satisfied are you with the help you got from your supervisor this semester?					
3. How satisfied are you with the feedback you got from the examiners?					
4. How satisfied are you with the grade you received?					
5. How would you rate the exam form in relation to the purpose of the subject?					
6. How helpful was the subject in developing your understanding of Peace Studies?					
7. How helpful has SVF-3023 been in your way to developing a thesis project?					
8. How helpful has SVF-3203 been in developing your thesis?					
9. How satisfied are you in general with SVF-3023?					

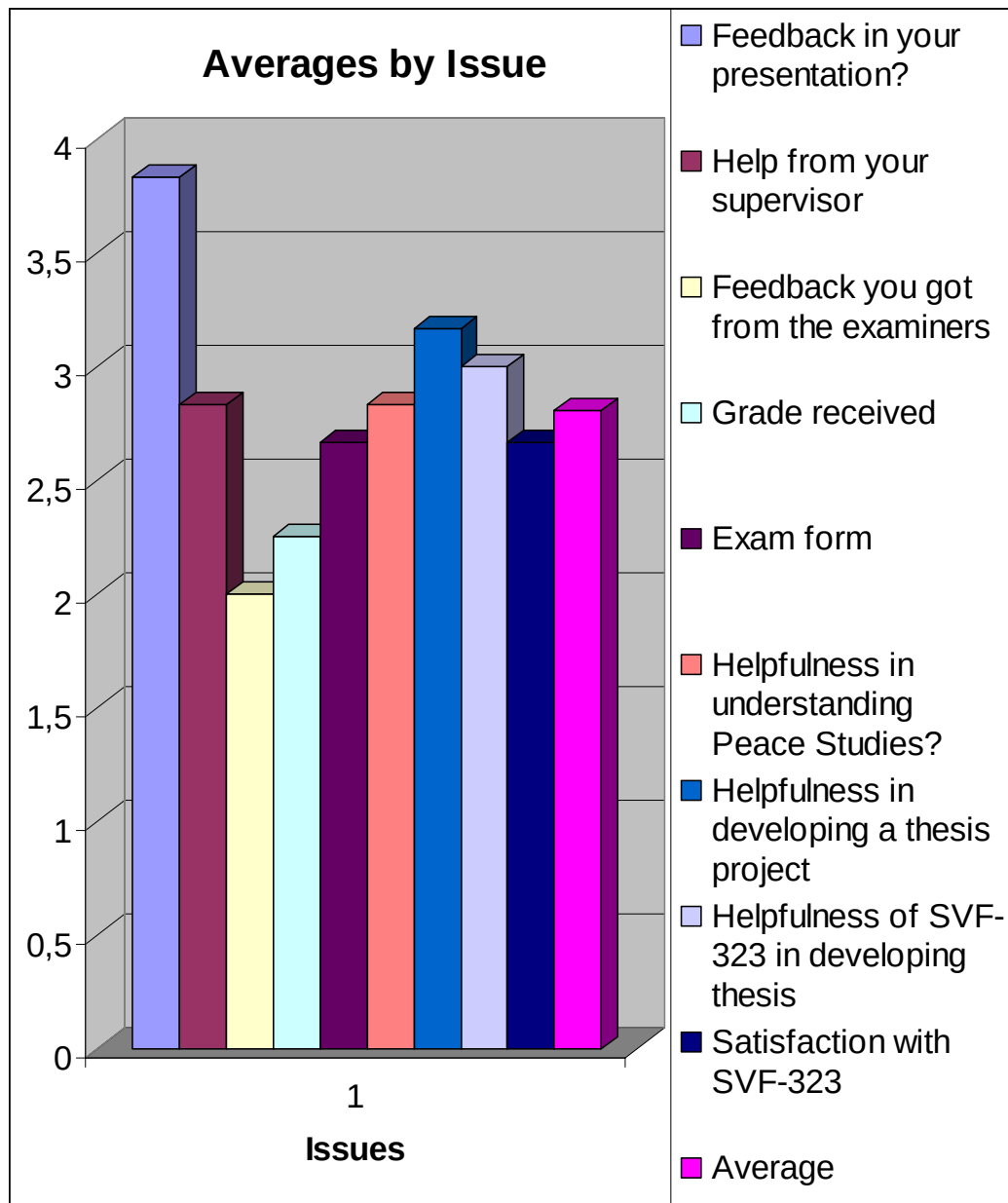
The form also included a space where students could make comments on how they had experienced the subject.

2. Form-Evaluation Results

2.1. SVF-3023 as a whole

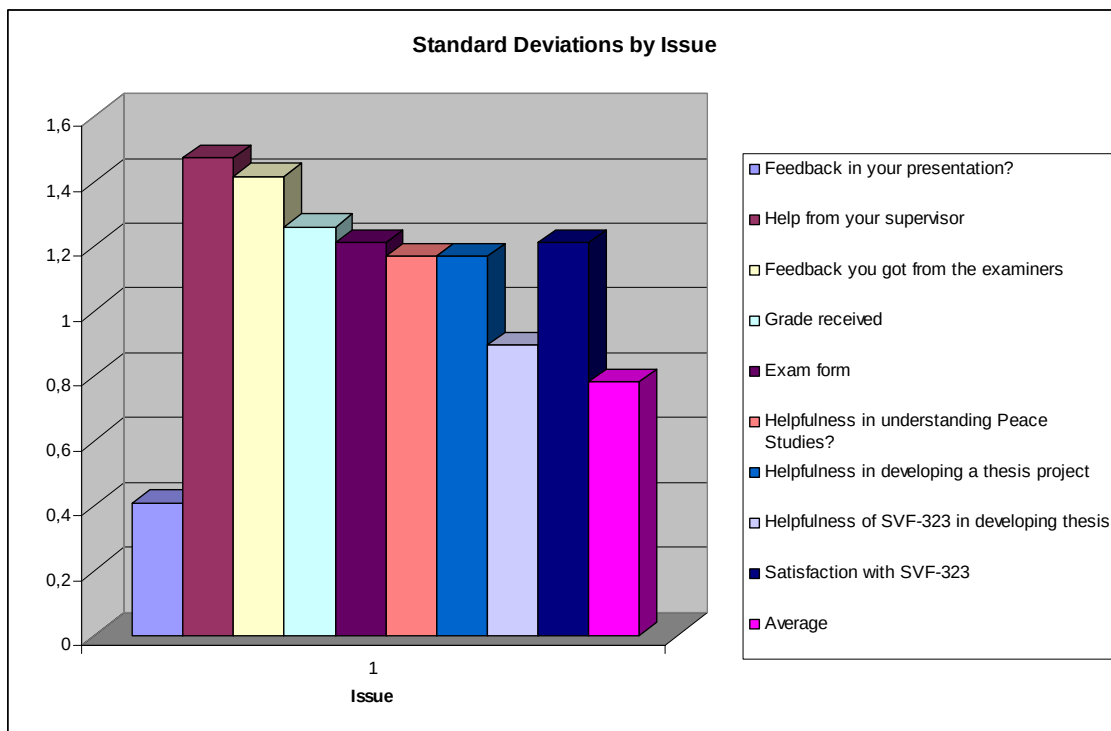
A total of 6 students of 26 answered the electronic QuestBack questionnaire on the course. This amount of responses is too low to make any generalisations about the general student opinion. However, it is anyways important to take a look to the opinion of this small group of people in the class. These 6 students gave SVF-3023 an overall average grade of 2,81, 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 9 issues raised by form A. The standard deviation of averages by question is 0,22 and 0,78 for averages by respondent. 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, Figure 2 presents the standard deviations of student answers to each question in Form A.

Figure 2



2.1.1. Interpretation of the Form Evaluation Results

According to the scale and criteria employed, the opinion of the six students that answered the form is that the quality of lectures in SVF-3023 approximates to *good*, with an overall average score of 2,81 and a standard deviation of the averages by question of 0,22. This information can be used to verify hypotheses on these six students' opinions about the course:

Table 1. Verification of Hypotheses on Students' Opinions on SVF-3023

Ho: SVF-3023 is bad	FALSE
Ho: SVF-3023 is average	FALSE
Ho: SVF-3023 is good	Significant
Ho: SVF-3023 is very good	FALSE
Ho: SVF-3023 is excellent	FALSE
Significance	95%

The student answers to the forms also serve to identify strengths and weaknesses of the course. 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 SVF-3023: Feedback in your presentation ($\mu = 3,83$ and $\sigma = 0,41$); help from your supervisor ($\mu = 2,83$ and $\sigma = 1,42$); helpfulness in understanding peace studies ($\mu = 2,83$ and $\sigma = 1,17$); helpfulness in developing a research project ($\mu = 3,17$ and $\sigma = 1,17$); and finally, helpfulness of SVF-3023 for your thesis ($\mu = 3$ and $\sigma = 0,89$).

Weaknesses of SVF-3023: According to the results, SVF-3023 has to improve *primarily* in the feedback gotten from the examiners ($\mu = 2$ and $\sigma = 1,41$); student satisfaction with the grade received ($\mu = 2,25$ and $\sigma = 1,26$); the exam form in relation to the objectives of the subject ($\mu = 2,67$ and $\sigma = 1,21$); general student satisfaction with SVF-3023 ($\mu = 2,67$ and $\sigma = 1,21$).

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 22nd. The following meetings took place on October 20th and November 29th. 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-3023 Specialisation and Methodology taken up in the SSL meetings are:

Unfortunately not all the students showed up to the seminars. Students felt that the seminars were useful and the lectures that Diane Lister has given them have also been good. The changes that have been implemented moved the subject in a good direction. Nevertheless, some students experienced anxiety about the paper they have to write and how to connect this to their thesis. Many had problems using the data that they collected in their fieldwork. Some supervisors seemed to be little aware of their role, both during the course and censurs. They have to meet or get information about this.

Students think that this subject is a good concept. However people are still concerned about the content of the essay they have to write and about the work of the supervisors. It should not be an A-F subject. It would be better if the subject could have a pass/not pass evaluation system. Students also complain that the information in the Internet has changed. However, people think that the sessions have been good. A criticism is that the supervisors do not know what students are doing in SVF-3023 and their confusion is frustrating for students. According to the administration this is strange, since supervisors have been informed and they have the responsibility to read the information on SVF-3023 themselves. One of the reasons people are confused is that this subject is the stepping-stone to writing the thesis. It is an easing-in phase to analysing data, so it is a confusing stage anyways, no matter how good the subject organisation is. This is explained by the fact that in this phase of a masters programme, students are somewhat left to their own devices, and it is a difficult phase anyways. From the sessions, it is obvious that some people have not had enough guidance from the supervisors. The administration circulated some guidelines for supervisors, what they should do and what is expected from them. Another reason people have been experiencing problems is that there are many methodological issues that have not been dealt with on time and these problems are surfacing at this stage.

Students have complained about the late delivery of grades for this topic, an issue taken up in the SSL meeting of January 25th, 2006 (minutes not approved and not sent to archive by this date). This delay is explained by the grading system that was adopted, which sacrificed efficiency for students' understanding of fairness. Some students brought this situation upon themselves by requesting a longer evaluation process, which overloaded the Academic Coordinator with work, having to discuss every paper with supervisors and the external examiner.

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 with one month in advance. However, two groups met informally and discussed issues themselves. Then they delivered a summary of these discussions to the Executive Officer of the CPS. What follows is a summary of these discussions:

- It is important to have good information about the course during the Spring semester.
- Students enjoyed the presentations and found them useful. It would be good to include the 1st year students so that they can think about their own theses and prepare themselves for the challenges they might face. The CPS staff made good contributions. They provided a good follow up with articles and feedback during the sessions.
- Students have the impression that there has been too little and too late information to supervisors.
- Maybe the course could be given in the second semester only. The workload could be: define a topic, find a supervisor, complete project proposal, prepare fieldwork. The second semester elective could then be moved to the third semester, or eliminated leaving 50 credits of work for the thesis. The benefits of this would be better preparation for fieldwork, more guidance in the process of finding a supervisor and defining a topic for the thesis. The disadvantages are less flexibility in taking electives (because there is just one semester left for them and therefore less options) and the valuable presentations would be lost.
- The idea of the course is good, the name that it has is bad, because it is misleading.