Course Report

Course(s)
- Psychophysiology: relationships between psychological and physiological processes, PSMT54-36602 7.5 hp

Semester
Autumn 2021

Course Site Name in Athena
PSMT54-HT21 Psychophysiology-HT21 (8195)

Department
Department of Psychology

Published:
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Number of respondents
24

Number of answers
13

Compilation
Compilation_PSMT54_HT21.pdf

Description of changes since the last course and decisions already made since last course date (if any was made)

Because of Covid, all activity had to be offered online. This was a challenge because the course is about methods, and in earlier years, the course had many hands-on experiences. These could not be offered.

The strengths of the course's according to the students
(summary based on quantitative results, text responses from the survey and any other evaluation during the course)

Overall, students were quite satisfied with the course. Students thought the distance learning worked well and also evaluated individual lecturers quite highly (but with some variability). Individual answers suggested that students appreciated the wide range of topics.
The weaknesses of the course according to the students
(summary based on quantitative results, text responses from the survey and any other evaluation during the course)

Ratings varied in how helpful the content and teaching was for the learning outcomes. The majority of students disagreed that the examination tested how well the learning outcomes were achieved. Individual answers suggested that students did not like that different instructors handled their seminars differently, and that article selection for the discussion seminars was too time consuming. Students also noted that the grading was not transparent.

The teachers' analysis of the course's implementation and results

The course is about methods, and in earlier years, the course had many hands-on experiences. These could not be offered because of Covid. This made the course material more abstract and did not allow for immediate interactions with the students. Also, although the teaching platform (Athena) has many advantages, it has several limitations that the course organizer discovered only during the course. For example, the discussion forum does not send out notifications, so the lecturers did not get notified about student questions. Also, external lecturers still could not get access to Athena, and thus, all communication had to be mediated by the course organizer. Students in previous years appreciated that they could partake in the selection process of articles for the discussion seminars, but the students this year thought that the selection process took too long. The course organizer agrees that IRL, the selection process tended to take less time and was much more engaging.

The course organizer is unsure why students thought that content, teaching, and examination were less helpful to achieve the learning outcomes. There are three outcomes: 1) read and comprehend advanced scientific publications in psychophysiology, 2) describe and explain orally and in writing different methods within psychophysiology, 3) describe, analyze, integrate, and discuss the current literature on a topic within psychophysiology. The seminars are meant to address 1 and 2, and the term paper is meant to address 1 and 3. The term paper is chosen to allow individual students to focus on a topic and method that is closest to their own interest. Because many students do not work any of these methods, it was felt that a term paper is more beneficial to students than a general exam that assesses their understanding of different methods.

Because oral activity counts towards the grade, it was challenging to determine how to code online activity in terms of oral activity. When seminars are held IRL, it is easier to determine oral activity; this is harder in digital meetings.

Because the diversity of topics is appreciated, the course organizer tries to have experts teach the various topics. Unfortunately, this results in more variability in how lecturers organize their teaching and seminars.

Conclusions and suggestions for possible changes in order to develop the course and any decisions already made to develop the course before future course dates.

The course organizer will discuss with the graduate director of studies how to improve the match between learning outcomes and teaching/examination. The course description will be revised to clarify the grading. If the course has to be offered online, the limitations of the teaching platform will be taken into account to avoid problems. Articles for the discussion seminars will be selected by the instructors.

Other comments