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Teaching

I do not teach economics courses at HKUST because of what is/was an informal understanding between the Social Science Division and the Economics Department that no economics be taught in the Social Science Division (and no China courses in the Economics Department).

Student teaching evaluations

Between summer/fall 2002 and spring 2007 I have taught (some courses repeatedly):
 SOSC 102j/ 181 Introduction to China's Economy,
 SOSC 260 China's Economy,
 SOSC 301B Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences,
 SOSC 511 Social Science Research Methods, and
 SOSC 534 Quantitative Analysis in the Social Sciences.

A table with teaching evaluation summary scores is appended. In each course, the scores in the two items Q. 14 "Overall (the course provided a good opportunity to learn)" and Q. 24 "Overall (the instructor created a good opportunity to learn)" are near-identical. When I teach China's Economy at the first-year level (as required by the division), I score a few percentage points below the division mean, at second-year level above the division mean. At the postgraduate level I usually score well above the division mean.

The student *comments* in the teaching evaluations of the China's economy course cover a wide range. On workload and difficulty, in one and the same course some students say "too difficult" and "too much assignment," while others find that the "difficulty level of the assignments were appropriate and workload is not demanding." In terms of level of abstraction, "too theoretical" is balanced by "many real life example-the articles from Chinese press. Let them know about the real life and problem in nowadays China." Students also write: "very interesting material and good selection of the material include everything," "very professional and energetic on class, and always encourage students to think," and "he always provides students with open ended questions ... helps us to think comprehensively ..." (All quotes are for SOSC 181 in fall 2005, when previously taught; for spring 2007 the comments are fewer but similar.) Correspondingly, students differ on if the instructor "created a good opportunity to learn," but I generally get a 80-90% majority rating of neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

At the 200 level I receive such feedback (in fall 2002, when last taught at this level) as: "At first I thought that his course is going to analyze the ancient and past economy development, but it turns out to be analyzing the most current economic issues, which is very good and out of my expectation." Or: "Professor has greatly aroused my interest to current situation in China. (Thanks Professor!) Before this course, I know nothing about the Chinese government system and economy, but now I know a lot. The way professor teach us (through some normal lecture, homework analysis and discussion) make students involve a lot in the course. And professor can always link the knowledge to current issues, and he can also tells

us the truth about current Chinese system, which make the course very interesting. So if there is other course offer by this professor next semester, for sure I will take it. I would also highly recommend this course to my friend too. (Because I couldn't figure out why such as good course have so few students.)”

At the postgraduate level I usually score very highly in the teaching evaluations. The research methods course is a required course for research postgraduate students and is taught every year; students have received it quite differently over time, depending on instructor, with scores at times well below the division mean. I have probably achieved some of the highest if not the highest evaluation scores of this course.

Approach to teaching

1. If we have professors teaching courses rather than students being taught by a computer (or engaging in self-study), then the human element must be crucial. So the course needs to be flexible, allow for discussions, and come with a bit of humor and fun.
2. In each course I identify core material that I want to get across and then try to make sure that we spend enough time on that. The core material is supplemented, depending on course, by a discussion of current issues, planned or spontaneous group work, exercises in between when lectures become too long, or student presentations in class.
3. I prepare my classes exceedingly well. This is reflected in my scores on the relevant question in the teaching evaluations. (In SOSC 511 in fall 2005 I scored the full 100%.)
4. One aspect of teaching is that students learn to extract the main points in a lecture and to put them together in a logical manner on their own. (If you are employed in a company after graduating from university and your superior has a meeting with you, you can't ask for his/her lecture notes.) Hence I do not distribute lecture notes. I write on the board or on transparencies and welcome interaction.
5. The division's workload guidelines of 1998 with solid requirements at the undergraduate level for reading/ writing / testing/ study time apply across all my undergraduate courses.
6. I use rigorous and frequent evaluation mechanisms in all my courses; I appear the only faculty in the division to give exams in postgraduate courses. Beyond evaluating students' capabilities, regular exams set clear incentives for students to study, and allow a fair evaluation of performance. If the class is small, I grade “blindly,” with only a secretary knowing which exam is whose. At the postgraduate level, I require a term paper on which I give detailed feedback.
7. In my experience, 3-hour evening courses don't work for me—nor for my students—so I teach all courses during the day, whereas the division otherwise teaches all postgraduate courses in the evening in 3-hour blocks. In the quantitative analysis course, students and I unanimously decided to switch to two separate 1.5 hour classes, taught during the day.

Enclosed:

- (i) Teaching evaluation summary sheet
- (ii) Course outlines of courses taught in the previous year, 2006/07:
SOSC 534 (2pp.), SOSC 511 (8pp.), and SOSC 181 (7pp.).
For course outlines of courses not taught in 2006/07 please see my homepage.

Social Science Division

Summary of Teaching Performance (starting from fall 2002)

Carsten A. Holz

Year	Sem.	Course Code	Course Title	Q14 Course Summary			Q24 Instructor Summary			Response No.	Class Size	Response (%)
				Instructor	Div.	School	Instructor	Div.	School			
2002	Summer	SOSC102J	Introduction to China's Economy	67.9	78.8	n.a.	69.0	78.8	n.a.	84	133	63
2002	Fall	SOSC260	China's Economy	86.7	76.7	75.8	81.7	76.7	74.9	15	26	58
2002	Fall	SOSC511	Social Science Research Methods	88.2	76.7	75.8	95.6	76.7	74.9	17	18	94
2003/04: sabbatical leave												
2004	Fall	SOSC181	Introduction to China's Economy	66.3	74.2	74.3	66.9	73.6	73.8	40	80	50
2004	Fall	SOSC511	Social Science Research Methods	88.9	74.2	74.3	88.9	73.6	73.8	18	21	86
2005	Spring	SOSC301B	Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences	77.1	75.2	75.5	79.2	73.2	73.8	12	31	39
2005	Fall	SOSC181	Introduction to China's Economy	65.2	76.6	76.1	63.4	76.3	75.7	69	123	56
2005	Fall	SOSC511	Social Science Research Methods	83.3	76.6	76.1	88.9	76.3	75.7	9	1	90
2006	Spring	SOSC301B	Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences	68.8	77.5	77.1	65.6	77.1	76.5	8	15	53
2006	Fall	SOSC511	Social Science Research Methods	89.6	75.2	76.0	85.4	74.2	75.6	12	12	100
2007	Spring	SOSC260	Introduction to China's Economy	73.3	77.4	77.8	75.9	77.7	78.0	30	66	45
2007	Spring	SOSC534	Quantitative Analysis in the Social Sciences	95.0	77.4	77.8	91.7	77.7	78.0	10	11	91

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Prepared and verified by Carsten Holz