

ALEXANDER MIHAILOV: TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND EVALUATION

I. SUMMARY OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND ACHIEVEMENT

I have always believed in a simple teaching philosophy, namely one that requires diligent preparation and clear lecture delivery based on solid background and research in the subject-matter. My principle is to be student-friendly, but not to compromise hard material. To implement it, I have a strategy of teaching which explains in a straightforward, consistent and progressive way the aims and learning outcomes of each module, lecture, seminar, course work. Guiding students step by step through the topics and the logic of models, mathematical derivations, statistical approaches and computation, and condensing even the theories and methods at the research frontier to appropriate illustrations that update relevant issues in the curriculum each year, has won me a rewarding experience and a wonderful teaching reputation at the universities of Essex and Reading, both among the undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as among colleagues and peers. I view my role in teaching and learning as complementary and stimulating with respect to my other university roles, in research and administration. For my persistent efforts and achievements in teaching I received on 10 June 2009 from the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) at the University of Reading, Professor Rob Robson – upon nomination from the Head of School of Economics, Professor Uma Kambhampati – the School Award for Outstanding Contributions to Teaching and Learning 2009 (Experienced Staff category). I am particularly glad and proud, as this award justifies my teaching philosophy and practice. It also motivates me further to search for perfection in my overall activities to the benefit of our students, colleagues and my own academic and professional development.

II. SUMMARY OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Student assessment of courses at **the Department of Economics of the University of Essex**, where I was **employed full-time as Lecturer, September 2003 – August 2006**, is carried out near the end of each term.

The questionnaire contains the following five statements.

- Q1. The overall level of the course was about right, given my background.
- Q2. The formal (mathematical) content was appropriate, in view of the subject.
- Q3. The assigned readings and learning tasks (e.g., exercises) were appropriate.
- Q4. The supporting course materials (handouts, etc.) were satisfactory.
- Q5. The course was well taught.

Students are asked to answer all questions, using a 5 point scale, where 5 is the highest score and 1 the lowest:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
 - 2 = Disagree
 - 3 = Mildly agree
 - 4 = Agree
 - 5 = Strongly agree
-

I have obtained the following assessment for the courses I have taught at Essex.

1. EC246: International Trade Institutions and Policy (2nd year undergraduate course)Autumn 2003

Total Replies (26)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Course Mean
Mean	3.74	4.03	3.97	3.65	4.26	3.93
Dept. Mean	3.45	3.75	3.63	3.65	3.75	3.64

Autumn 2004

Total Replies (23)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Course Mean
Mean	3.96	4.00	3.83	3.96	4.30	4.01
Dept. Mean	3.69	3.71	3.68	3.66	3.84	3.72

Autumn 2005

Total Replies (26)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Course Mean
Mean	4.12	4.08	3.77	3.73	4.38	4.02
Dept. Mean	3.61	3.69	3.71	3.66	3.75	3.68

2. EC248: Monetary Innovations and Central Banks (2nd year undergraduate course)Spring 2004

Total Replies (13)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Course Mean
Mean	4.77	4.54	4.38	4.31	4.62	4.52
Dept. Mean	3.79	3.73	3.78	3.69	3.80	3.76

Spring 2005

Total Replies (25)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Course Mean
Mean	4.12	4.12	3.96	4.00	4.20	4.08
Dept. Mean	3.62	3.66	3.59	3.62	3.73	3.64

Spring 2006

Total Replies (23)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Course Mean
Mean	4.83	3.96	4.17	4.26	4.43	4.13
Dept. Mean	3.78	3.78	3.70	3.71	3.90	3.77

3. EC330: Economics of Transition, with Alastair McAuley (3rd year undergraduate course)Spring 2004

Total Replies (26)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Course Mean
Mean	4.27	3.96	3.92	4.38	4.07	4.12
Dept. Mean	3.79	3.73	3.78	3.69	3.80	3.76

Spring 2005

Total Replies (18)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Course Mean
Mean	4.11	4.22	3.78	4.28	4.17	4.11
Dept. Mean	3.62	3.66	3.59	3.62	3.73	3.64

4. EC933: International Finance (MSc, PhD graduate course)Autumn 2004

Total Replies (32)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Course Mean
Mean	3.50	3.38	3.47	3.94	3.66	3.59
Dept. Mean	3.69	3.71	3.68	3.66	3.84	3.72

Autumn 2005

Total Replies (15)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Course Mean
Mean	3.80	3.87	4.20	4.27	4.27	4.08
Dept. Mean	3.61	3.69	3.71	3.66	3.75	3.68

Student assessment of courses at **the Department of Economics of the University of Reading**, where I am **employed full-time as Lecturer since September 2006**, is carried out near the end of each term, but in a slightly different format. Each course convenor is required to summarise student evaluation

and achievement in a brief convenor's report.

The reports for the courses that I have taught at Reading follow further down.

1. EC311A: International Economics 1 (3rd year undergraduate course)

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT **2006/7** (based on 21 students and 9 completed forms)

Examination results

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
21	2	1	10	4	4	58.6	14.6

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	4.1	1.0
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	3.3	1.5
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	4.6	0.5
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	2.8	1.7
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	3.2	1.4
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	3.4	0.5
7	How much did you learn?	3.9	0.8
8	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.3	0.7
9	Overall impression of module	4.3	0.9

Convenor's module assessment

The objectives of the module were largely achieved and the students were satisfied overall, as could be seen in the above two summary tables. The distribution of the marks was fairly normal. The student evaluation results show as main strengths the recommended textbooks, the effectiveness of the lecturer and the overall quality of the course. The only key weakness has been identified with respect to the Blackboard site. I find this surprising as this site was very rich with lecture slides, handouts, additional material and message-board communication. One explanation could be that many students have not really been using actively the module site. Also, a student pointed out to the insufficient number of reading material in the library, and another two to the preferred more intensive use of the whiteboard, in addition to slides: I shall definitely address this latter remark next year, since last year I was constrained by having no spare whiteboard different from the screen for projection. The best element of the course has been different according to different students, e.g., the essay topics were found interesting, as well as the parts on exchange rates or on trade theory, and "the lecturer was always helpful and covered the material in an easy to understand way".

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT **2007/8** (based on 16 students and 13 completed forms)

Examination results

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
16	0	2	3	9	2	59.5	6.8

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	4.5	0.7
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	3.2	0.8
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	4.8	0.4
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	4.1	1.4
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	4.3	0.5
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	3.8	0.8

7	How much did you learn?	4.5	0.5
8	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.4	0.5
9	Overall impression of module	4.6	0.5

Convenor's module assessment

The objectives of the module were achieved better than last year, and the students were generally more satisfied, as could be seen in the above two summary tables if they are compared with those for academic year 2006-2007. In particular, the distribution of the marks in 2007-2008 was skewed rightwards/upwards, which led to a higher average than last year (59.5 versus 58.6) and a lower standard deviation (6.8 versus 14.6). Yet the students who took this optional module were a smaller amount (16 versus 21), which I believe will be corrected next year due to the increased “credibility” of the lecturer after his second year of teaching the module. The student evaluation results show as main strengths the recommended textbooks, the overall impression of the module, the reading material in the library, the degree of learning, and the effectiveness of the lecturer. The only key weakness has been identified with respect to the availability of reading material in the resource centre, which I shall try to improve next year. The best element of the module has been pointed out to be the “combined problem sets and questions to reinforce class work and ensure understanding” and the “well structured” approach. Areas I shall attempt to improve are “quite a lot of content” and “some more references to current economic events”.

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2008/9 (based on 25 students and 18 assessment forms)

Examination results

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
25	0	1	3	18	3	62.1	5.4

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	3.6	1.1
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	2.4	1.1
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	4.6	0.7
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	3.5	1.5
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	3.9	1.0
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	3.8	0.8
7	How much did you learn?	4.2	0.7
8	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.3	1.0
9	Overall impression of module	4.5	0.8

Convenor's module assessment

The module objectives were broadly achieved, as can be seen in the student feedback forms as well as the examination results and the components of the evaluation in the summary tables above. I had the feeling while teaching this cohort that they were the best in my Reading experience, and this proved true when comparing the attained average mark to previous years: it is the highest, 62.1, relative to 59.5 last year and 58.6 in 2006-2007. Also, as I predicted in the same report last summer, 2008-2009 saw an increase in the students enrolled for this optional module, namely 25 students, compared to 16 last year and 21 in 2006-2007. The student evaluation results were very positive, and this is in line with the teaching award from the Henley Business School for experienced staff that I got this academic year. Like last year, among the main strengths of the module were the recommended textbooks, the overall impression of the module, and the effectiveness of the lecturer. The key weaknesses I shall try to improve have been the availability of reading material in the resource centre and the smaller number of seminars and numerical examples relative to the lectures and the algebra. The best element of the module pointed out which I would remember was “the friendly and open attitude of the lecturer to his students”.

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2009/10 (based on 39 students and 13 assessment forms)**Examination results**

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
39	4	8	4	14	9	58.0	14.6

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	3.5	0.7
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	3.0	0.4
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	4.4	0.8
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	3.9	0.6
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	4.1	0.6
5a	If feedback given how useful it was	3.7	0.8
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	3.8	0.7
7	How much did you learn?	4.0	0.8
8	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.2	0.8
9	Overall impression of module	4.0	0.8

Convenor's module assessment

The module objectives were achieved, overall and by components in the student evaluations. In fact, since I took up this optional course at Reading in 2006, the number of students enrolled has been increasing, from about 20 to about 40. This doubling of the class size is a sign of good interest in the subject matter and general satisfaction with the quality of teaching. The evaluation overall and by each component looks very similar to last year's one, and although a few marks have gone marginally down from the very high level of close to 4 or above, the standard deviation has narrowed almost on each component, which shows consolidation of opinion. Conversely, the average mark from the examination has dropped to 58.0 from 62.1 and the standard deviation has broadened to 14.6 from 5.4, which results most likely from the higher enrolled number and their diverse backgrounds. Like past years, among the main strengths of the module were the recommended textbooks, the overall impression, and the effectiveness of the lecturer. Having addressed key weaknesses in recent feedback, I was glad to understand that now students appreciated a lot the seminar problems and solutions and the newly introduced empirical project. Further minor improvements along such lines are possible, but the constraint is the non-core economics background of some of the students.

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2010/11 (based on 51 students and 29 assessment forms)**Examination results**

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
51	5	5	18	20	3	55.4	11.9

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.3	0.7
2	Effectiveness of class tutor	N/A	N/A
3	The lecturer displayed enthusiasm for the subject	4.8	0.4
4	The lecturers were helpful & approachable	4.6	0.6
5	The class tutors presented material clearly	4.5	0.5
6	The types of assessment were appropriate	4.4	0.6
7	Feedback given was useful & informative	4.1	0.9

8	The reading material in library was adequate	4.2	0.8
9	Handouts & support material was useful & relevant	4.8	0.4
10	The Blackboard site was useful & kept up-to-date	4.6	0.5
11	Overall satisfaction of this module	4.3	0.6
12	My overall knowledge of the subject has increased	4.3	0.6

Convenor's module assessment

Our Department of Economics changed the structure of its module evaluation form starting from 2010/11, which explains the differences with earlier versions. I have been teaching EC311A since 2006/07, and this last edition seems to have been the most successful one in terms of student feedback and still another rise in enrolment, 51 students (in an optional course). The overall satisfaction of the module attains an average of 4.3, with a standard deviation of 0.6. However, the average mark as well as the fraction of marks in the top category could be increased (much, as has been in past years). All evaluation components get an average higher than 4.0, with the dispersion of opinions lower than 1.0 SD. Unlike previous years, the usefulness of the Blackboard website is the best-rated component, 4.8, due to enhanced uploading of articles and guidance I undertook following past evaluations. My responsiveness to such student feedback has addressed negative remarks over the years, and weaknesses have been minimised. I'll do my best to keep up this high standard of teaching reflected in the summary table above. Yet a few students per cohort complain that the material is too much or suggest additional seminars. While the first problem will be avoided when the module becomes shorter, 10 weeks next year, the second cannot be.

2. EC311B: International Economics 2 (3rd year undergraduate course)

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2006/7 (based on 10 students and 5 assessment forms)

Examination results

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
10	0	0	2	5	3	64.1	6.8

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	3.8	0.4
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	3.5	0.6
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	4.6	0.9
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	3.0	1.2
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	3.4	1.1
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	4.2	0.8
7	How much did you learn?	3.8	0.8
8	Effectiveness of lecturer	3.8	1.1
9	Overall impression of module	3.8	1.0

Convenor's module assessment

The objectives of the module were largely achieved and the students were satisfied overall, as could be seen in the above two summary tables. The distribution of the marks was skewed to the right, but the vast majority of the students performed very well and this should not be a cause of concern. Similarly to EC311A, the student evaluation results show as main strengths the recommended textbooks; differently from EC311A, they also add the quantity of course work and reading required. The effectiveness of the lecturer comes next, together with three other points. The best element of the course has been different according to different students, e.g., "examples from real-life economies", "insight into developing countries" and "everything is well explained and thoroughly covered". One student suggested as area of improvement the "lecturer".

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2007/8 (based on 6 students and 4 assessment forms)**Examination results**

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
5	0	0	0	5	0	62.4	2.9

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	3.8	1.0
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	3.3	0.6
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	4.8	0.5
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	4.8	0.5
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	4.3	0.5
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	3.5	0.6
7	How much did you learn?	4.0	1.4
8	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.5	0.6
9	Overall impression of module	4.0	1.0

Convenor's module assessment

The objectives of the module were largely achieved, although the average mark (62.4) is lower than last year's very high one (64.1); the standard deviation is lower too, though (2.9 versus 6.8). The students were generally more satisfied, as could be seen in the above summary table if it is compared with that for academic year 2006-2007. Yet the students who took this optional module were a smaller number (5 versus 10), which I believe will be corrected next year due to the increased "credibility" of the lecturer after his second year of teaching the module. The student evaluation results show as main strengths the recommended textbooks, the usefulness of the Blackboard site, the effectiveness of the lecturer, and the usefulness of the assignments and tests. The only key weakness has been identified with respect to the availability of reading material in the resource centre, which I shall try to avoid next year. The best element of the module has been pointed out to be "lecturer very supportive + willing to work one-to-one, textbook very well tied to the course". Areas I shall attempt to improve are outlining the distinctive features from other modules ("originality") and providing "more examples".

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2008/9 (based on 13 students and 10 assessment forms)**Examination results**

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
13	0	0	2	9	2	64.2	5.6

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	3.8	0.8
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	3.3	1.2
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	5.0	0.0
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	4.3	1.4
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	4.8	0.5
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	3.9	0.8
7	How much did you learn?	4.3	0.7
8	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.6	0.5
9	Overall impression of module	4.6	0.5

Convenor's module assessment

The objectives were attained at a level that becomes customary for this module, and the average mark, 64.2, is marginally higher (and with the lowest standard deviation, 0.8) than the highest one thus far, 64.1 for 2006-2007 (versus 62.4 last year). The students were very satisfied, as could be seen in the

above summary table as well as from reading their comments. This feedback is in line with the teaching award from the Henley Business School for experienced staff that I got this academic year. Also, as I predicted in the same report last summer, 2008-2009 saw an increase in the students enrolled for this optional module, namely 13 students, compared to 5 last year and 10 in 2006-2007. Like last year, among the main strengths of the module were the recommended textbooks, the overall impression of the module, and the effectiveness of the lecturer. The key weakness I shall try to improve has been the availability of reading material in the resource centre. The best element of the module pointed out in most of the evaluation forms was that “lectures were related to the current global financial crisis”, in fact a useful policy application of the theories of factor mobility and the debates on the world financial architecture as main topics.

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2009/10 (based on 13 students and 7 assessment forms)

Examination results

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
13	0	0	4	5	4	63.3	9.6

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	3.4	1.3
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	3.0	1.0
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	4.1	0.7
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	4.4	1.4
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	4.4	0.5
5a	If feedback given how useful it was	4.0	0.6
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	3.9	0.4
7	How much did you learn?	4.3	0.5
8	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.6	0.5
9	Overall impression of module	4.3	0.5

Convenor's module assessment

The objectives were attained at the usual high level for this specialised optional module with a lower number of student but high interest and motivation in the subject, with an average mark of 63.3 and an overall evaluation of 4.3. Like past years, among the main strengths of the module were the recommended textbooks, the overall impression of the module, and the effectiveness of the lecturer. What could be added to these strengths in the last edition of the module are now also the usefulness of the assignments and tests and the learning component. The key weakness I shall try to address seems to be that “lecture slides could be condensed, which would make revision more efficient”. The best element of the module pointed out appears to be the “in-depth information given on each topic”.

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2010/11 (based on 21 students and 9 assessment forms)

Examination results

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
21	0	2	7	11	1	59.0	5.9

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.7	0.5
2	Effectiveness of class tutor	4.9	0.4
3	The lecturer displayed enthusiasm for the subject	5.0	0.0
4	The lecturers were helpful & approachable	4.7	0.7

5	The class tutors presented material clearly	4.8	0.5
6	The types of assessment were appropriate	4.8	0.5
7	Feedback given was useful & informative	4.2	0.7
8	The reading material in library was adequate	4.1	1.2
9	Handouts & support material was useful & relevant	4.9	0.3
10	The Blackboard site was useful & kept up-to-date	5.0	0.0
11	Overall satisfaction of this module	4.3	1.0
12	My overall knowledge of the subject has increased	4.7	0.7

Convenor's module assessment

Our Department of Economics changed the structure of its module evaluation form starting from 2010/11, which explains the differences with earlier versions. I have been teaching EC311A since 2006/07, and this last edition (the 5-week modules are discontinued) is the most successful one in terms of student feedback and still another rise in enrolment, 21 students (in a brief optional course). The overall satisfaction of the module attains an average of 4.3, with a standard deviation of 1.0. However, the average mark as well as the fraction of marks in the top category could have been somewhat higher (as has been in past years). All evaluation components get an average larger than 4.1, with the dispersion of opinions smaller than 1.3 SD. The usefulness of the Blackboard website and my passion for the subject-matter are the best-rated components, attaining the maximum of 5.0, due to my progressive improvement of the module as a consequence of past evaluation feedback. My responsiveness to such student comments has minimised the course weaknesses. Yet a few students per cohort keep on suggesting lower coverage and more focus of the material. As a farewell to the module, let me quote just one remark by a student on its best element: "The way in which information was delivered is great, understandable."

3. ECM87: Business and Management in Emerging Markets (MSc, PhD graduate course)

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2007/8 (based on 24 students and 11 assessment forms)

Examination results

No of students	Fail B	Fail A	Pass	Merit	Distinction	Avg	SD
24	3	0	9	9	3	54.26	18.16

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	3.6	0.8
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	3.5	0.8
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	3.6	0.8
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	3.7	1.5
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	3.4	1.4
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	3.7	0.5
7	How much did you learn?	4.0	0.5
8	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.5	0.7
9	Overall impression of module	4.0	0.6

Convenor's module assessment

The objectives of the module were largely achieved and the students were satisfied overall, as could be seen in the above two summary tables. The distribution of the marks was fairly common for a course involving some formalism like this one. The student evaluation results show as main strengths the effectiveness of the lecturer and the overall quality of the module. As key weakness students have identified the usefulness of assignments and tests and the availability of reading material in the resource centre; yet both these weaknesses are in fact rated relatively high (3.4 and 3.5, respectively), and so appear not a serious problem after all. The best element of the course has been stated to be the

useful diversity of the covered material (2 students), “the lecturer” (1 student), and “the lectures” (another one). Areas that may be improved by the lecturer who will teach the module next year are: (i) including “a few African countries as emerging economies” (1 student); and (ii) explaining in more detail the modelling parts of the course perceived as more difficult (another student).

4. ECM83: International Money and Finance (MSc, PhD graduate course)

MODULE CONVENOR’S REPORT 2007/8 (based on 16 students and 14 assessment forms)

Examination results

No of students	Fail B	Fail A	Pass	Merit	Distinction	Avg	SD
16	2	4	4	5	1	49.53	18.36

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	3.3	1.1
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	3.1	0.8
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	3.8	0.9
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	3.2	1.9
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	3.8	1.3
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	4.1	0.9
7	How much did you learn?	4.1	0.9
8	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.6	0.8
9	Overall impression of module	4.5	0.9

Convenor’s module assessment

The objectives of the module were largely achieved and the students were satisfied overall, as could be seen in the above two summary tables. The distribution of the marks was fairly normal for a technical course like this. The student evaluation results show as main strengths the effectiveness of the lecturer, the overall quality of the module, and the recommended textbooks. As key weaknesses students have identified the availability of reading material in the library and the resource centre as well as the usefulness of the Blackboard site. While the first two are commonly stated weaknesses and have partly their explanation in the higher level of the module, I find the Blackboard weakness surprising as this site was very rich with lecture slides, handouts, additional material and message-board communication. One explanation could be that many students have not really been using actively the module site. The best element of the course has been stated to be “the lecturer” (2 students) and “the lecture notes” (another one). Areas I shall think of addressing next year pointed to making the module “less mathematical / less difficult / less theoretical” (4 students) and recommending additional, more appropriate textbooks (another student).

MODULE CONVENOR’S REPORT 2008/9 (based on 13 students and 13 assessment forms)

Examination results

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
11	0	0	5	4	2	61.6	7.1

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	3.9	1.5
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	3.8	1.0
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	4.2	1.0
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	3.8	1.6
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	3.9	1.5
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	4.0	0.7

7	How much did you learn?	3.7	1.2
8	Effectiveness of lecturer:	4.8	0.4
9	Overall impression of module	4.3	1.2

Convenor's module assessment

The objectives of the module were largely achieved, as the feedback from the students was very positive. This fact is reflected above (no single element is rated below 3.7) and also emerges as the dominant impression summarising the comments in the evaluation forms. The three main strengths of the module have been again, as it was last year, the effectiveness of the lecturer, the overall quality of the module, and the recommended textbooks. Having done a lot to improve the module by addressing negative points in past evaluations, the course does not appear now to have any blatant weakness. The best element of the course has been stated to be "lecturer's notes and slides". Some of the students still find the course a bit "heavy" or "difficult", no matter that my adaptation to their level in terms of selection of topics, methods and speed of teaching has been acknowledged: "At times the course has been difficult, but Alex has adapted his pace of teaching to accommodate this, to make sure we understand the fundamental ideas."

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2009/10 (based on 20 students and 15 assessment forms)

Examination results

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
20	2	6	3	7	2	53.4	12.1

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	3.5	1.1
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	3.1	1.0
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	3.7	1.0
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	4.5	0.6
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	4.1	0.8
5a	If feedback given how useful it was	3.9	1.1
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	4.0	0.9
7	How much did you learn?	3.5	0.8
8	Effectiveness of lecturer:	4.1	0.8
9	Overall impression of module	3.9	0.8

Convenor's module assessment

The objectives of the module were generally attained, as the summary of the student evaluation feedback shows. The overall impression from the module is 3.9, with a standard deviation of 0.8. All evaluation components are marked higher than 3.1 and the dispersion of opinions is not really large. Differently from last year, now the usefulness of the Blackboard website is the best-rated component. This is so because there is no textbook for the module and all lecture notes, slides, data sets, solution notes and programs are provided via the course website. The other strengths of the module include the usefulness of the assignments and tests as well as the feedback on them, and, as it has been in past years, the effectiveness of the lecturer. Having gradually improved the module by addressing negative points over the evaluation rounds, weaknesses have been minimised. However, students with a lower analytical and quantitative background still find the level of the course too difficult. This is reflected in the average mark on the examinations, 53.4 (much lower than last year) and its high standard deviation (12.1, larger than last year). More relevant real-world context should be linked to the theoretical material as well as the empirical exercises extended, since students have proposed and liked such features in particular.

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2010/11 (based on 13 students and 13 assessment forms)**Examination results**

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
13	1	3	3	3	3	52.8	19.2

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.4	0.7
2	Effectiveness of class tutor	N/A	N/A
3	The lecturer displayed enthusiasm for the subject	4.5	0.5
4	The lecturers were helpful & approachable	4.5	0.5
5	The class tutors presented material clearly	N/A	N/A
6	The types of assessment were appropriate	4.5	0.5
7	Feedback given was useful & informative	4.5	0.5
8	The reading material in library was adequate	3.7	1.2
9	Handouts & support material was useful & relevant	4.8	0.4
10	The Blackboard site was useful & kept up-to-date	4.8	0.4
11	Overall satisfaction of this module	4.5	0.5
12	My overall knowledge of the subject has increased	4.2	0.7

Convenor's module assessment

Our Department of Economics changed the structure of its module evaluation form starting from 2010/11, which explains the differences with earlier versions. ECM83, first introduced in 2007/08, has had fourth editions so far, and this last one proves to have been the most successful in terms of student feedback. The overall satisfaction of the module attains an average of 4.5, with a standard deviation of 0.5, in the summary above. However, the average mark as well as the whole distribution of marks from the exam could be improved. This will need some further learning effort and exam concentration by the students. All evaluation components, except one, are marked higher than 4.1, with the dispersion of opinions lower than 0.8. Like last year, the usefulness of the Blackboard website is the best-rated component, 4.8, now together with the lecture notes, that are the basis of a co-authored MSc book of mine at OUP in progress. Having gradually improved the module by addressing negative points over the evaluation rounds, weaknesses have been minimised. There seems to be one such remaining, the reading material in the library, which I shall try to update by some new recommendations of recent articles to read and books to acquire and consult. Another possibility is to consider introducing a tutorial or two, as also suggested by students.

5. EC202A: Intermediate Macroeconomics (2nd year undergraduate course)**MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2008/9** (based on 157 students and 84 assessment forms)

Other lecturers: Xinyi Li

Class tutors: Elisavet Kitou

Examination results

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
157	4	33	56	32	32	57.8	12.0

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	2.9	1.0
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	2.6	0.9
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	4.0	1.0
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	3.4	1.3

5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	3.3	1.1
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	3.1	1.1
7	How much did you learn?	3.3	1.0
8a	Effectiveness of lecturer: Alexander Mihailov	4.0	1.0
8b	Effectiveness of lecturer: Xinyi Li	3.3	1.1
8c	Effectiveness of tutor: Elisavet Kitou	3.4	1.1
9	Overall impression of module	3.3	1.0

Convenor's module assessment

The objectives were mostly achieved, for such a large and diverse by students' background 2nd-year module. The summary of the feedback forms by components of the evaluation confirms this overall impression, as the means are spread between 2.6 (availability of reading material in the library) and 4.0 (usefulness of recommended textbook and convenor-lecturer), on the higher half of the scale. It is difficult to generalise on the main strengths and weaknesses of the course, because students with solid versus shaky math/stat/economics have often expressed contradictory opinions. The key areas to improve seem to be that students would like more tutorials, exercises and details on the slides/handouts. This is, however, their ex-post wish. Ex-ante, many of them have rather been trying to avoid too much work on understanding analytically and graphically the basic macro-models and on solving patiently and correctly the suggested related problems. The best elements of the module most students have pointed out are the clarity of the chosen book and of the lectures.

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT 2009/10 (based on 140 students and 64 assessment forms)

Other lecturers: Eshref Trushin

Class tutors: Remmy Kampamba

Examination results

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
140	8	25	41	46	20	56.6	11.8

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Availability of reading material in main library	2.9	1.0
2	Availability of reading material in resource centre	2.7	0.9
3	Usefulness of recommended textbooks	3.8	0.8
4	Usefulness of Blackboard site	4.0	0.9
5	Usefulness of assignments and tests	3.7	1.0
5a	If feedback given how useful was it	2.9	1.1
6	Quantity of course work and reading required	3.2	1.0
7	How much did you learn?	3.1	1.0
8a	Effectiveness of lecturer: Alexander Mihailov	4.2	0.9
8b	Effectiveness of lecturer: Eshref Trushin	3.0	1.2
8c	Effectiveness of tutor: Remmy Kampamba	2.3	1.3
9	Overall impression of module	3.3	1.1

Convenor's module assessment

The objectives were generally achieved, no matter the large number of students and the diversity of their backgrounds. The average overall impression of the module in the student evaluations was kept at the relatively high level of last year, 3.3. The summary by components of the evaluation confirms this too, with all except one above the average of 2.5. The highest component marks, 4.2, 4.0 and 3.9, were attributed to the effectiveness of the lecturer, the usefulness of the course website, and of the recommended textbook, respectively. The lowest evaluations concern the effectiveness of the class tutor and the availability of reading material in the resource centre. Like last year, opinions on the best and worst elements of the course differ, due to the various backgrounds of the students and, hence,

their needs. The best element mentioned frequently was the enthusiasm for the subject of the two lecturers, their knowledge, and the relevance of the material. The areas to improve are again the tutorials and the assessed work. This could be in part addressed next year, although a cardinal change is not likely given the time and structure constraints for the module.

MODULE CONVENOR'S REPORT **2010/11** (based on 104 students and 44 assessment forms)
 Other lecturers: n.a. Class tutors: Remmy Kampamba

Examination results

No of students	<40	>=40<50	>=50<60	>=60<70	>=70	Avg	SD
104	7	14	30	25	28	60.0	15.8

Student evaluation

No	Question	Avg (out of 5.0)	SD
1	Effectiveness of lecturer	4.5	0.5
2	Effectiveness of class tutor	3.2	1.0
3	The lecturer displayed enthusiasm for the subject	4.6	0.5
4	The lecturers were helpful & approachable	4.3	0.7
5	The class tutors presented material clearly	3.5	1.0
6	The types of assessment were appropriate	3.7	0.9
7	Feedback given was useful & informative	3.4	1.0
8	The reading material in library was adequate	3.4	0.8
9	Handouts & support material was useful & relevant	4.2	0.6
10	The Blackboard site was useful & kept up-to-date	4.4	0.8
11	Overall satisfaction of this module	4.1	0.6
12	My overall knowledge of the subject has increased	4.1	0.6

Convenor's module assessment

Our Department of Economics changed the structure of its module evaluation form starting from 2010/11, which explains the differences with earlier versions. I began teaching EC202 (Part A, at that time, a 15-week course) in 2008/09, after several years of complaints by students about the module's quality of teaching and learning. I changed the textbook and invested my specialism and passion for the subject matter, undertaking a friendly but uncompromising approach. The latest, third edition of the module under my lead, and the first one as a redesigned 10-week course, has been the most successful in terms of student feedback. This is revealed by comparing the summary table above against its predecessors. Moreover, the average mark has risen a bit, to a 2.1 category this time, with many (28) top marks. The overall satisfaction of the module climbs to an average of 4.1, with a standard deviation of 0.6, the highest achievement over my three years as its convenor. Most evaluation components get an average higher than 4.0, with the dispersion of opinions lower than 0.9 SD. This latter outcome is much better than in recent years too. The most common weaknesses of the module students point to are the less clear tutorial teaching, the many formulas (but all of them derived! – as a student praises the module) and the 9 a.m. scheduling.