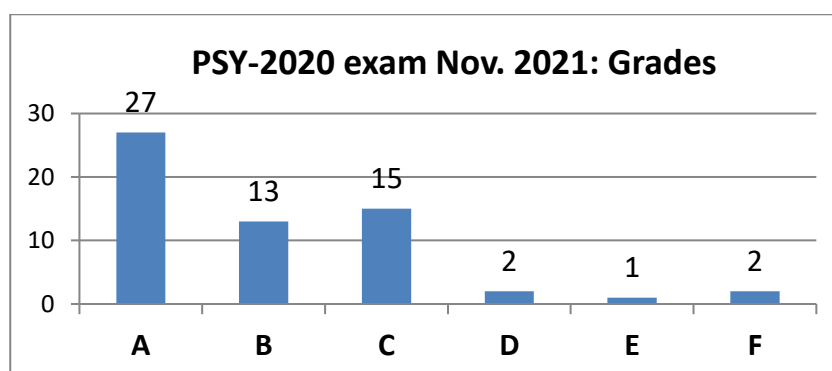


PSY-2020 “The Psychology of Attitudes” (Autumn 2021)

Course evaluation

“PSY-2020 The psychology of attitudes” is an English-taught course for second- and third-year Bachelor students in psychology. The course is open to students from other study programs, and to international exchange students. Its 12 two-hour lectures are based on a course textbook, research articles, and classroom exercises.

In line with the university’s coronavirus regulations in the Autumn semester 2021, the lectures were held “live” in a lecture hall; in addition they were video-taped and the recordings were made available to the students. During the semester, around 70 students were registered for the course. Sixty students took the final exam. The grades for submitted exams covered the full range of the grading scale. Most exams received an A, B, or C:



More details on the exam are available from a document that was sent to the class after the grading was finished (see the Appendix).

The course teacher announced during the semester that the students would be invited to evaluate the course after the grades are known to them. An invitation email with a link to the online evaluation survey was sent to the class on December 30th 2021, a reminder email was sent on January 3rd 2022. The complete survey is shown on the next page.



Course evaluation for "PSY-2020 The psychology of attitudes" (Autumn 2021)

Thank you for participating. The evaluation is run by the course teacher (Assoc. Prof. Frank Siebler, frank.siebler@uit.no). Your answers are anonymous.

Here is a reminder of the course objectives:

"The course introduces core concepts, research methods, and theories in the domain of attitude formation and change. Students acquire a thorough understanding of both classic approaches and recent developments. The course aims to provide students with the methods and theoretical tools required to design studies and interventions that deal with the measurement or change of attitudes. Students will use this knowledge to design an empirical study."

PART 1: LEARNING & TEACHING

How useful was each of the following elements for your own work with the course contents?

(If you don't remember an element or have not used it, then please leave that line unanswered)

	not useful					very useful
The course readings (textbook and articles) were ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The lectures (the course teacher's live presentations) were ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The classroom activities (f. ex., on designing research materials) were ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The downloadable lecture slides on Canvas ("Powerpoint") were ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The downloadable notes for the exam preparation on Canvas ("exam tips") were ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART 2: EXAMINATION & EVALUATION

How much do you personally agree with the following statements?

(If you have absolutely no opinion on a statement, then please leave that line unanswered)

	completely disagree					completely agree
"The four-hour exam was an excellent match to the course contents."	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
"It was very clear for me how to prepare myself for the four-hour exam."	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
"At the end of the course I could easily have passed a much longer and more difficult exam about the course contents."	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
"It was no problem for me that the lectures and lecture slides were in English language."	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Summary evaluations

(If you do not want to answer a question, then please leave that line unanswered)

	A	B	C	D	E	F
What grade did the course give you?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
What grade do you give the course?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART 3: For the statistics

What is your student status in this course? (Please select the best-matching answer)

- ☐ Regular student at the University of Tromsø, BA Psychology
☐ Regular student at the University of Tromsø, but *not* BA Psychology
☐ International exchange student
☐ Other

PART 4: OPEN-ENDED FEEDBACK

If you want to make comments or suggestions, then here is the place to do so. It can be on anything: the general course organization, the materials, the lectures, the exam, things that you missed, and so on. You can list things that you liked, and things that you did not like about the course.

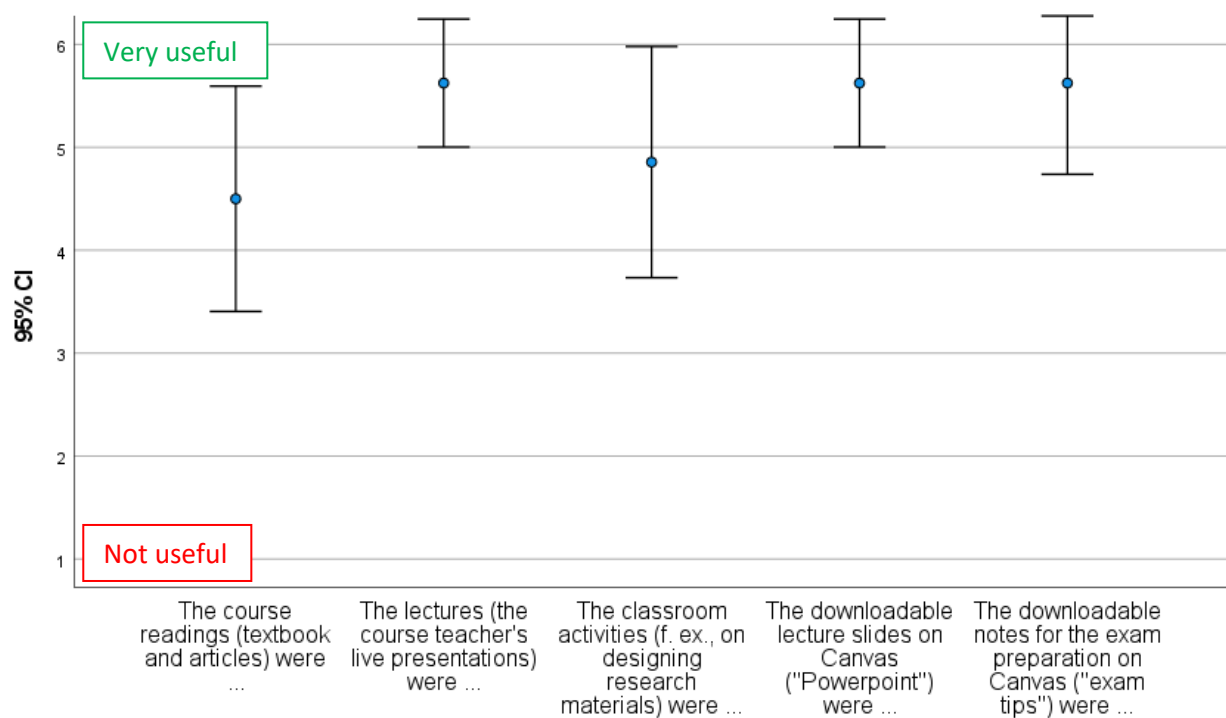
PART 5: SENDING YOUR ANSWERS

That was all, thank you. **Please click on the button below to send your answers.**

Continue

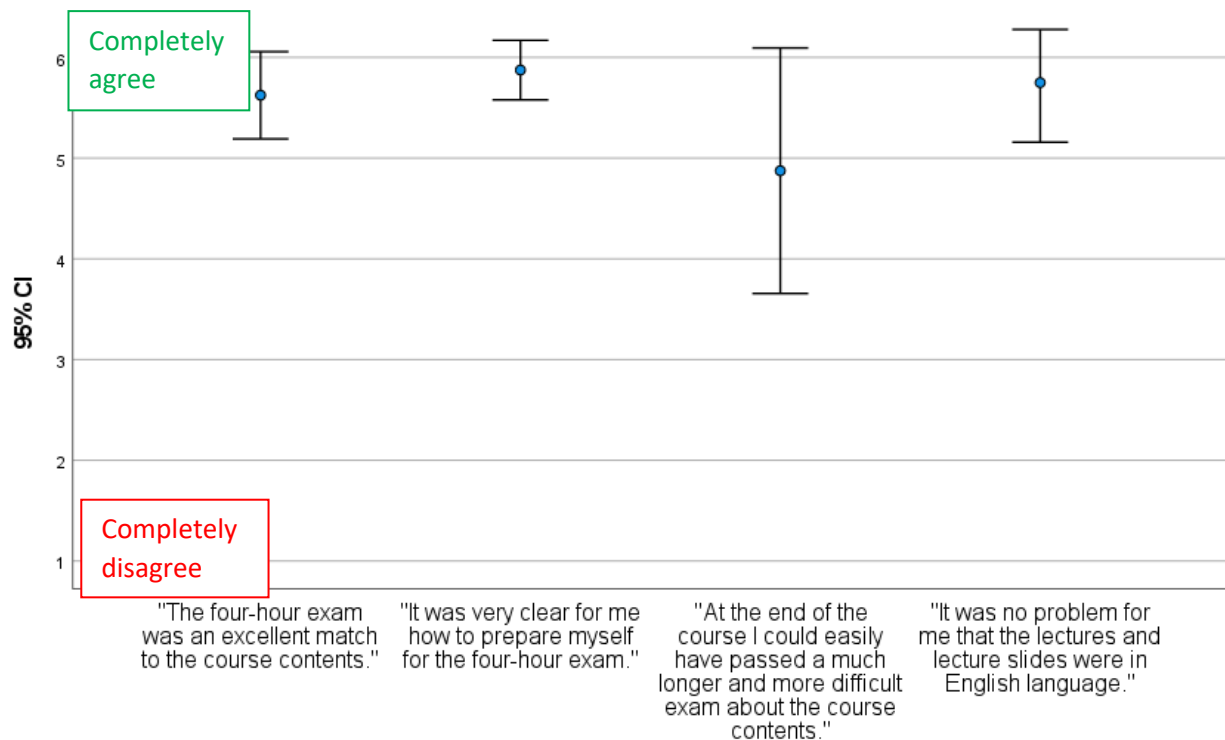
The student participation in the evaluation was unexpectedly low: only eight students (13.3% of those who had taken the exam) filled in the questionnaire. Seven of the respondents were regular students in the BA Psychology program at the UiT, one respondent was an international exchange student. Seven respondents reported to have received an “A” in the exam; one respondent (not the international exchange student) reported to have received a “C”. The following survey results need to be interpreted with great caution, first because of the overall low participation rate, and second because of the sample comprising mostly students with “A” grades in this exam.

Part 1: Learning and teaching

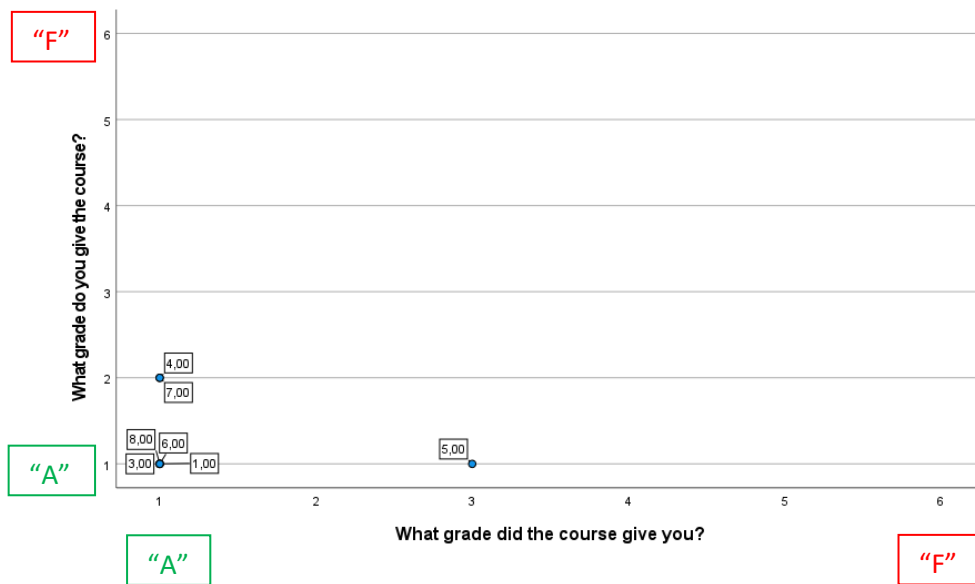


On the answer scale from 1 (“not useful”) to 6 (“very useful”), the neutral scale midpoint is 3.5. The average answers (blue circles) are all well above that midpoint. Thus they indicate a positive to very positive evaluation of the live lectures and the written materials.

Part 2: Examination and evaluation



On the answer scale from 1 ("completely disagree") to 6 ("completely agree"), the neutral scale midpoint is again 3.5. The average answers (blue circles) are all well above that midpoint. Thus, the students found the exam to be an excellent match to the course contents, it was clear to them how to prepare for the exam, and the use of the English language was no problem for them. Given that most of the respondents received an "A", it is not surprising that most of them assume they could have passed a longer and more difficult exam as well. Interestingly, however, the answers to this question show variability, as indicated by the wide 95% confidence interval (the "whiskers").



Seven respondents gave the course a letter grade (1 = "A", ..., 6 = "F"). The letter grades were positive ("B": $n = 2$) or very positive ("A": $n = 5$), and not simply a reflection of the grade that the respondent had achieved her-/himself in the exam (Pearson's $r = -.26$).

Part 4: Open-ended feedback

Three respondents filled in the survey's open-text field:

- 1) I really liked that you gave us the exam tips for preparation. This made it easy to know What was the most important parts of the course. I also enjoyed attending the lectures- they were interesting!
- 2) Honestly a really great class with a good book, good study material, and a very good teacher. Have no complaints, only praise! Happy New Years! :)
- 3) Very interesting course. In hindsight, I wish i had given it more personal effort, because I think it could have been even more rewarding (better grade and understanding of the subject). Thank you.

In line with the quantitative (numerical) feedback, the qualitative feedback is also very positive.

Summary and discussion

With only eight responses to the email invitation (13.3% of the students who had taken the exam), student interest in the course evaluation was rather low. Those who did participate, gave the course good to very good ratings in all categories. The results need to be interpreted with caution, first because of the low response rate, and second, because of the sample comprising mostly students who had achieved an “A” in the exam. With that said, the course evaluation did not reveal points of critique or aspects of the course that should be changed the next time the course takes place. I wish to thank everyone who took the time to participate in the evaluation.

Appendix

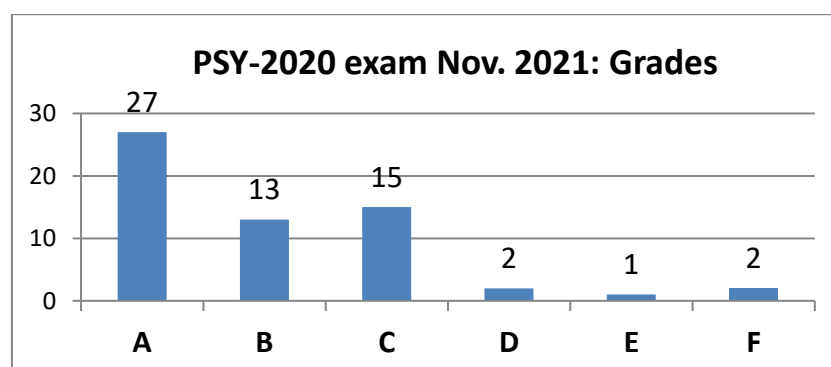
- The document that informed the students about the grading process and the exam results for the class as a whole

PSY-2020 Autumn 2021, Grading and results

“PSY-2020 The psychology of attitudes” is an English-taught course for second- and third-year Bachelor students in psychology. The course is open to international exchange students, and to students from other study programs. Its 12 two-hour lectures are based on a course textbook, research articles, and classroom exercises.

The four-hour home exam had 15 main questions (some with sub-questions). Together, the questions covered all sessions of the course. The required answers differed in length between a few words as the minimum, and circa one page as the maximum. Written instructions for the examiners defined the normatively correct answer to each question, as well as answer variants that should also count as correct. Each question had a certain number of maximum points that could be achieved, from 3 points (for simple definitions plus an example) over 4-6 points (for questions that required more thought) to 10 points (for the detailed description of a full study or program of research). The maximum number of points for each question was listed in the exam; the examiners gave partial points for partly correct answers. The maximum number of points for the whole exam was 90 points. 75 points or more counted as an A. For each 15 points less, one grade was subtracted (B = 60-74, C = 45-59, and so on).

The course teacher served as the internal examiner in the examination committee. The external examiners (all native speakers of Norwegian) were psychologists working elsewhere. The examination committee received the exams in an anonymous form. The grades for submitted exams cover the full range of the grading scale. Most exams received an A, B, or C.



Where do the differences in the grades come from?

The exam started with (among others) the following instructions for the students:

"Keep the overall situation in mind: you write the exam at home, you have all lecture materials at hand, and the examiners know this. For the full points, try to demonstrate insight and understanding in your answers. Technical terms and formal definitions must of course be the same as in the scientific literature. But other than that, wherever possible, try to say things in your own words, use your own formulations, and when an everyday example for something is requested, try to find your own example."

For each question where that was applicable, the examiners received copies of the most relevant textbook paragraph and/or lecture slide. The examiners gave some points if the answer was correct but was little more than a copy of the course materials. They gave more points if the answer showed some insight and understanding (f. ex., by using a correct example that did not simply repeat the one from the course materials). They reserved the full amount of points for answers that were particularly well written (f. ex., by giving a short explanation to the reader, rather than just a bare minimum of keywords). Of course this schema did not apply to all questions (some were of the "correct or wrong" type, "all points or none"). But it applied to most of them.

All exams missed at least a few points underway, for answers that were overly close to the course materials (this includes simply translating the course materials from English to Norwegian), that were incomplete, that were unclear to one or both examiners, or that were wrong. That, by itself, was not necessarily a problem: Missing up to 15 points across all 15 answers still allowed an "A." However, missing even more points then started to impact the grade.

Were all exam questions "good"?

The following analysis of the exam's internal consistency is based on the question-by-question points from all submitted exams ($N = 60$).

The left-hand table shows that Cronbach's Alpha is .88 – no matter whether we give equal weight to each of the 15 exam questions, or take into account that different questions had different numbers of maximum points. That is a good reliability score.

The right-hand table shows, separately for each exam question, what Cronbach's Alpha would be if that question had not been asked. If a question differs from the others, then removing that question would increase Cronbach's Alpha noticeably. However, as the table shows, we can remove any question, and Cronbach's Alpha would stay practically unchanged.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.88	.88	15

Item-Total Statistics	
	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
q1	.88
q2	.88
q3	.87
q4	.88
q5	.87
q6	.88
q7	.88
q8	.87
q9	.87
q10	.86
q11	.86
q12	.87
q13	.86
q14	.87
q15	.87

In sum, all questions were "good" and contributed in the same way to the total grade.