



# OLC 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting Minutes

## Call to order

The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of OLC was held [online](#), 14:00-16:00 on 10 May 2022.

## Attendees

Attendees included (A-Z):

- 1) Ana Olear Rabanal
- 2) Hannah De Mulder
- 3) Ivan Anderegg
- 4) Irene Hadiprayitno
- 5) Jeffrey Fynn-Paul
- 6) Looi van Kessel
- 7) Marat Markert
- 8) Ole Zips
- 9) Sirius He

## 1. OSO OER

- The Programme Board asked for OLC's approval for some of the future designs of the courses.
  - o Changes on requirement of taking Thesis Seminar
    - In the BA International Studies, students are required to successfully complete a Research Method course, or the Thematic Seminar course with a total of 100 EC to take the Thesis Seminar.
    - The Programme Board would like to change the requirement to participate in the Thesis Seminar course, to only requiring students to have previously passed the Thematic Seminar course and to have obtained a total of 100 EC.
    - Some OLC members suggest that Research Methods seminars fit better into the pathway of learning how to write a thesis.
    - Some members think the Thematic Seminar can only be taken in the second semester, so if students failed their Thematic Seminar this will automatically cause them to have do a fourth year, in order to complete their thesis.
    - However, currently there is a possibility of following a thematic seminar alongside student's thesis for those who failed Thematic Seminar. If the

Thematic seminar is required exclusively, this will immediately force students who have failed the course to have to do their thesis in the 4th year because they have to retake their thematic seminar in the third year and they can't do them at the same time.

- Some members think that Thematic Seminar is more useful for students in writing their thesis than research methods but requiring to pass the Thematic Seminar exclusively makes it more complex to access student's thesis.
  - To sum up, if it is necessary to delete one of the courses (Research Methods or Thematic Seminar), according to OLC members' general opinion, the Research Methods course is advised to be kept. Otherwise, just leave it as it is.
- OLC's opinion regarding the BA OSO International Studies
- No issues with 'Chapter 2: Description of the Programme', which includes Objectives of the programme, Specialisation, and learning outcomes.
  - Issues with Language Courses
    - Hebrew has the highest minimum exit levels (B2), which is even higher than French and German.
    - Some members doubted the applicability of the CFR system (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) for non-European languages, since the system was designed for European languages.
    - From another perspective, some members believe that there is no serious problem with the CFR system, but more justification is needed. Non-European languages have their own methods to standardize the language level, it is not easy to apply them to the CFR system in general, but more clarification can be given at the corresponding level. For exam, Mandarin has 9 levels from HSK1-HSK9 in HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi), Japanese has 5 levels from N1-N5 in JLPT (Japanese-Language Proficiency Test).
    - According to student concerns voiced to the OLC, the teaching content in Swahili Language course level is much higher than it was required (A2). During a 2-hour exam, students are required to write about discrimination and the monarchy and Parliament in Swahili in 500 words in a 2 hour exam, which is way higher than an A2 level. The Beginner Swahili matches the level well, but the pre-intermediate level and intermediate level are way higher than is required.
    - Generally speaking, OLC wants more justification for why there are these level differences, whether the CFR framework really is the most logical given there are also non-European languages.
    - Instructors set the level based on how they believe students can do, but there is no clear basis for this.

- Issues with Chapter 3 Curriculum, 'Optional components'
  - Students who have chosen North America are not allowed to do American studies as a minor, and students who have chosen East Asia are not allowed to choose Chinese economy and society as a minor. Because for each of the minor programs there is one course that overlaps with a course in students' studies.
  - Among these courses, the Modern Chinese History course overlaps with the Chinese economy and society minor. And for American studies, the History of North America overlaps.
  - Explain: The minor Chinese economy and society offers a total of 25 credit courses, so students are not allowed to do modern Chinese history (a five-credit course), but it would still allow them to choose from 19 other courses for this particular minor. And the same situation applies to American studies.
  - American studies has 2 tracks, the history track, and the American literature and culture track. Especially, the American literature and culture track doesn't overlap with any of the courses that are taught in International Studies. It can stipulate that students cannot do history North America, because that's already in the curriculum of International Studies, but students could still then possibly choose the American literature and culture track.
  - Students read this as a blanket ban, even if that isn't necessarily the case based on the last paragraph of the section.
- In principle, the OLC endorse it, the OLC wants to keep it in its original version and otherwise the OLC has some suggestions for clarity.

## 2. Problematic evaluations

- Global History
  - The course received a score below 6 and 48 responses.
  - Strong points: the course content is very broad, and it fits in well with the degree program.
  - Improvements:
    1. The course apparently does not stimulate students to actively process the knowledge and to use it and the internal cohesion of the course in general has been lacking.
    2. The tutorials seem to diverge from the lectures, and they don't seem to be especially related or to build upon much of them.
    3. Students complain about the format of the lectures and speaking pace of the lecturer. There was no way to pause the lectures if students were watching them online. Students just had to watch a full slide.

4. Two main issues are still recurring from last year, number one is reducing the workload. There were a lot of readings and in-class tasks in the course. Another one is the format of the lecture.
  5. Regarding the workload, some OLC members based on their personal experience suggest that the reading requirement on the textbook with 250 pages of the course is very intense.
- Research Method: Wasted Relations
    - The course received score below 6 and 3 responses.
    - Improvements:
      1. Students feel that the course does not have a clear outline.
      2. The course does not have enough focus on the actual course topic.
      3. Students were dissatisfied with the online teaching structure.
    - Some OLC members suggest that if those improvements above are communicated more at the beginning, that might manage students' expectations, especially since as it was just mentioned a lot of people do not know what the outline and content is.
    - The problem occurs among all Research Method courses, for example, the Wasted Relations sounds like to learn about wasted relations but not about research methods in wasted relations. It has to do with students not having a good idea of what research methods entails up until this point, because most of them have never taken a class in research methods.

### 3. Issues with PRINS

- Some OLC student members say that how the course is managed in general is not satisfactory, including the workload, structure, and students' expectations.
  - According to the personal experience of some OLC members, some tutors cannot explain the content of the tutorial clearly. Although this problem has been raised many times, the tutors are not very receptive.
  - The timing of the reports for many of the presentations was changed, which resulted in a delay to mid-June for PRINS' consultation reports written by students and submitted to organisations that students consult in theory.
  - The issue is that many of the presentation dates were fixed at the beginning of the semester when the schedule was released and last week or two weeks ago, many people were told and realized that the presentation had been moved a week forward.
  - People have presentations on the 20th of June that they were not aware of and not even the tutors themselves were aware of this change until last week. And the tutors have also been not receiving the information of the changes. Both students and tutors are supposed to have all the information earlier.

- The syllabus was changed without any announcement.
- When students complete PRINS, it is also equivalent to completing the study of international studies, so it is difficult for OLC to make timely feedback and solutions in this regard.
- One of the courses is named consultancy, but according to the research goal, the university does not allow students to do consultancy. In the course of the start-up session, students are only briefly taught some definitions and then directly set some projects to work on.

### 3. Walk-in Session

- Regarding the Walk-in Session, OLC student members have done a lot of promotions and advertisements among students before. But the only venue that could be rented at the time was the Living Lab on the Schouwburgstraat. OLC student members finally canceled the session considering the convenience and accessibility of the venue for students to come
- However, the new Walk-in session has been confirmed for May 23rd in Wijnhaven.

### 4. Language in Practice

- People are not sure what the course is supposed to be or what is supposed to be going on.
- Some OLC members have an issue with Swahili in practice in particular, the tutor asked the students for leave for various reasons. In the original 12-class course, the students only were offered 6 to 7 classes.
- The students found the class to be very unhelpful, and the ultimate goal of the class was for students to complete a portfolio, but they have only been doing this for half a semester since mid-term. The tutor will give feedback group by group in every class after giving the task, which causes other students to not know what to do during the class.
- Students considered the final report of the language course to be too demanding, and Swahili has a more difficult and stricter set of requirements compared to other language courses. The mid-term results were released too late.
- Some OLC members point out that most of the courses in BAIS are run by a single institute. If there are three or four different groups that are supposed to oversee this one course, then it is very hard to coordinate it. In the case of language in Practice, the people involved in coordinating and teaching the course include LIAS, some language tutors and others. This leads to difficulties in coordination as the course is not run by a single institute.

### 5. Additional Issues

- Thesis Seminar, a suggestion from OLC to Programme Board

- Some OLC members suggest that the thesis seminars are a bit too heavy for the instructors. Some of the institutes gave to some of the thesis seminar instructors, a lot of people, which makes it almost impossible. It causes many students to drop out.
- The reason of low course evaluation responding rate from students
  - OLC members discussed with students about declining evaluation responses, and students responded that even though they gave evaluations, they still did not get any feedback on what would happen to their evaluation responses.
  - OLC has always written reports based on course evaluations given by students each semester to improve the problems that were reflected and provided feedback to students in the form of newsletters.
  - Many students only log in to their student mailboxes irregularly, and don't check the newsletter very often.
  - Some OLC members suggest using the Walk-in Session to hear more voice from the students and have the immediate conversation to get information on students' complaints and concerns.
- Some students cheat on online exams
  - Some tutor had a little bit of difficulty with the online exams trying to find ways to keep students from cheating on them.
  - From some OLC student members' perspective, tutors should let the students apply the knowledge that they have gotten in class, and they will find a way to do that anyway if they want to cheat and collaborate with each other.

Secretary

Date of approval

---

Sirius HE

4 JULY 2022