Sensorveiledning / Exam guide
SOS2501, FALL – 2012

The Norwegian Society SOS2501 in general:
This is a one semester 15 points course. The students are mainly exchange students from foreign universities visiting Norway for a shorter period of time. They have had several lecturers during this course and the curriculum covers a wide field (both sociology and political science with a focus on Norway). During the course each student has written two papers. The exam provides questions both from sociology and political science.

2 out of 4 tasks should be answered, and both have to be passed in order for the candidate to pass the exam. The two answers are given approximately the same weight. Most of the questions are wide, but the students are expected to delimit their answers by arguing their choices.

Question 1
Give a brief account of the father’s quota. What is accomplished? Discuss possible outcomes if Norway gets a conservative Government after the next election and the father’s quota is abolished.
This topic has been covered by Kristine Smeby in her lecture and in her lecture notes and is covered by several articles by Brandth and Kvande in the curriculum. In this assignment the candidate is both asked to account for – and to discuss the topic. In the first part of the question, the candidate is expected to account for the Norwegian father’s quota; 12 weeks of paid parental leave exclusively for fathers. The curriculum is not updated on the expansion of the father’s quota, but this is covered by lecture/lecture notes. The candidate could first mention what characterizes the Norwegian parental leave: 1) Right to leave from work in order to provide daily care for one’s children. 2) Precondition: Parents must have been employed six of the last ten months before birth. “Daddy days”: Welfare leave for father in connection with birth, 2 weeks. Father’s quota: Paid leave reserved for father, 12 weeks. Parental leave: Paid leave that may be shared by the parents. Either 27 weeks with 100 % pay or 37 weeks with 80 %. The candidate should also mention that 9 weeks is reserved for mother, 10 weeks is reserved for father, and that 27/37 weeks are shared. In this statement, the candidate should also mention how the parental leave is used in Norway.
The father’s quota was introduced in 1993 by the Labor party, the first in the world, then 4 weeks, consensus among the political parties, not too controversial. Other Scandinavian countries followed.
From the 1970s Norwegian fathers could take 12 of total 18 weeks parental leave, but they did not use this opportunity until the father’s quota was established.
In the second part of the question, the candidate is expected to explain the objectives of the fathers’ quota and the cash-for-care system we have in Norway. The candidate is expected to mention that the fathers’ quota is part of the Norwegian parental leave. Then the candidate could mention that the objectives of the fathers’ quota are 1) To promote fathers’ participation at home, 2) To promote more equal distribution of the burdens and benefits of working life between mothers and fathers and 3) To strengthen the father-child relationship.
The candidate should also mention to what extent it is used in Norway. 4% used it before it was introduced. 91% in 2005. Who uses it and who does not? Father’s tend to take more leave if they work in public sector or/and when mother’s education and income is high. It would be possible to discuss the last part of the assignment using the knowledge of how it is used and the objectives. Nobody knows what will happen if the father’s quota is abolished after the next election. The answer is open. The candidate is supposed to argue if they think the father’s quota is now an integrated part of fathering or if fathers will go back to the use before 1993 or somewhere in the middle. Good candidates base their arguments on scientific knowledge.

**Question 2**

*Give a brief account of the Norwegian whaling business. On the basis of the article “Norway, the United States, and Commercial Whaling: Political Culture and Social Movement Framing” (Bailey 2009), discuss how international anti-whaling movements and Norwegian environmental organizations have different approaches and different results regarding framing their issues towards public opinion and resource-management in the international community and towards nations that still do whaling – and those who fight against it.*

This topic has been covered by Hillevi Strand in her lecture, in her lecture notes, and of course in the article by Bailey (2009).

The first part of the question is very open as to how far back in history the candidate should go, but they are not expected to go further back than 1982 when the International Whaling Commission (IWC) decided to abandon commercial whaling. This decision took effect in 1986. Norway along with some other nations voted against (USSR, Japan, Peru). Scientific and aboriginal whaling continued. In 1993 Norway resumed their commercial whaling as the only country that can openly do so without violating international law after voluntarily having suspended whaling since 1987. Norway resumed export of whale products in 2001.

The decision to resume commercial whaling became an international subject of controversy mainly because “small” Norway protested against the international opinion. The reasons for this is mainly cultural and political linked. The students may mention Norway’s position being outside the European Union. They may mention this in connection with Norway’s rights in the Norwegian economic zones. Politically to resume whaling have been an important issue that states Norway’s power to manage what is at their disposal. The business was resumed after heavy scientific research stating that the minke whales were not in the process of becoming extinct. (Norway also started whale counting every spring and every single whaleboat was to bring a veterinary when hunting). Economically Norway as such does not profit much from this business. Whaling is season work (during the summer) and only 35 whaling boats were registered with a quota in 2005 (4-8 persons per boat). In 2005 the total quota was 797 minke whales (651 in the Norwegian economic zone and 145 around Jan Mayen – out of these were 639 shot). The students are not expected to cover for all these numbers, only to mention that the business is relatively small economically (NGP). (But historically whaling has been a major industry in the early 1900’s; then mainly in Antarctica). In their discussion they may mention the heated international debate that went on and some of the agents and their arguments pro/contra. (For example exploitation or not, scientific proof good/ not good enough, controlled by, international or Norwegian matter, sentimental, unnecessary or reasonable, natural resource, whalers/city dwellers, Greenpeace etc.). To answer the last part of the assignment they do need to draw on the article by Bailey (2009). Key members of Norway’s environmental movement support Norwegian whaling. Cultural differences between USA and Norway on the issue of animals. See Bailey’s article (2009) for the explanations for the discussion.
Question 3

*What is the “Challenge of the gradient”, which is often referred to in the health literature? Give a brief account and discuss.*

This assignment is covered by Terje Eikemo’s lecture. In his notes and the curriculum: Huijts, T. And T. Eikemo (2009): “Causality, social selectivity or artefacts? Why socioeconomic inequalities in health are not smallest in the Nordic countries” In: *European Journal of Public Health*. Vol. 19, issue 5 (pp. 452 -453)

http://eurpub.oxfordjournals.org/content/19/5/452.full.pdf+html

Non of the students answered this question.

Question 4.

*What is meant by the Norwegian Government’s High North policy? Give examples and discuss.*


Key words: presence (maintaining settlements and being present, activity: (fisheries, other industries, tourism) and knowledge.

The Governments objectives: sustainable growth and development, region build up: promising employment and opportunities in the northern region, international cooperation, environmental management and research, close collaboration with Russia, offer expertise and provide research in collaboration with the Russians when it comes to oil drilling; give a suitable framework for petroleum activities Europe, continue managing the fisheries and other living marine resources and controlling illegal fishing. Safeguard livelihoods, traditions and cultures of indigenous peoples, exercise authority in a credible, consistent and predictable way.

Rich maritime resources, high biological production. Fish and other important species have been and will continue being harvested in the future to come, “if they are managed in a sustainable way”. New opportunities are related to the large oil and gas resources. In the future the Barents’ Sea may become the most important oil/gas resource in Europe. This means large economical potentials, also when it comes to collaboration with the Russians (this is also a challenge).

Fewer fishermen are involved in the fisheries and oildrilling could have a large impact when it comes to providing a new job-market in the Northern regions.

When other oil-fields are reaching their peak, oil-drilling in this region may be necessary.

Offshore technology and expertise will be moved towards the North and create tremendous opportunities for those living in this area. It will also put Norway in the position of being an interesting collaborating partner internationally. The gas/oil resources on the Russian border will also become an advantage for Norwegians in the petroleum sector by providing their knowledge in this field.

There are several other potentials as well; tourism, polar research, environmental research, maritime research, Svalbard of international interest etc.
Challenges: The main challenge is to maintain a sustainable balance between vulnerable marine environment (the high biological production and fish nurseries) and petroleum production. Securing the environment is of high priority. Another challenge is to secure the people living in the northern parts of Norway. There have been great changes in the traditional industry belonging to this area, and the wish is no further depopulation. The locals should benefit from the expected opportunities. Another challenge is to secure the Russian petroleum industry (not an easy task considering the Cold War, but developing in a positive direction). (There are also some important challenges here concerning the danger of old radioactive material. Radioactive waste is a threat to the biological environment in the North and need to be taken care of. It is also a challenge to preserve the untouched wilderness of Svalbard. The high North is also very vulnerable considering climate change. Destructions in the environment here will affect the whole world. It is also important for Norway to continue to determine the developments in the High North. Several nations are interested in the developments here; both environmental and economical. The rich energy sources may give rise to political pressure internationally.

The question is very open and the candidate is not expected to discuss all of the strategy, but some.