

Program Assessment Report

Political Science

2010-2011

➤ *Program Mission*

The mission of the Political Science Program is to cultivate, foster, and ingrain in our students a comprehensively broad and appropriately inclusive understanding of politics and governance in terms of the four traditional primary fields of political science— American politics and government, political theory, comparative politics, and international relations— while supporting at the same time the ability of our faculty to actively contribute to the development of knowledge in their respective political science fields through the scholarly endeavors of systematic research, professional presentation, and resultant publication.

➤ *Program Goals*

- To provide students with the ability to conceptualize and contextualize political issues
- To provide students with the ability to understand the structures and dynamics of political life
- To provide students with the ability to pursue new knowledge regarding politics and government
- To provide students with the skills of citizenship
- To develop new knowledge in the discipline of political science and to disseminate such knowledge through publication and participation in scholarly meetings

➤ *Student Learning Objectives*

- Students have an appropriate working knowledge of the scope and methods of political science
- Students have a sound and appropriately comprehensive knowledge of political institutions and dynamics in the United States
- Students have a sound and appropriately comprehensive knowledge of global and comparative political institutions and dynamics
- Students have a sound and appropriately comprehensive knowledge of the history of political thought and its key concepts
- Students are able to successfully analyze complex issues and problems
- Students are able to successfully analyze complex texts and arguments
- Students are able to successfully design and conduct research projects in political science
- Students are able to successfully formulate and evaluate policy options

➤ *Assessment Methods*

Student progress toward the program's learning objectives is assessed in individual courses through the use of graded exams, essays, research papers, and presentations. Faculty members select the mix of tests and assignments appropriate for the assessment of student learning in particular areas based on their individual expertise. At the completion of the Spring Term, grade statistics from individual courses are correlated to student learning objectives using the curriculum map.

At the end of each Spring Semester, graduating Political Science majors are offered the opportunity to complete an exit survey, requesting information about their perception of their progress toward the program's learning objectives. Graduating majors are also asked to provide information about their working hours, study habits, and family responsibilities.

At the completion of Spring Semester, a year-end meeting of the Department Chair and members of the Department Curriculum Committee will be held for the purpose of evaluating data on student learning and the implications and significance thereof, as well as periodic review of the utility and effectiveness of the Program Assessment Plan as presented here. Data compiled from course grade statistics are used to provide objective measures of student learning—this method constitutes direct assessment of student learning. Data compiled from the exit survey are used to evaluate students’ own perceptions of progress toward learning objectives—this method constitutes indirect assessment of student learning. Copies of both sets of data will be kept in a continuing file maintained by the Department Chair and will be updated on an annual basis.

➤ *Direct Assessment*

Curriculum Map

Political Science Majors	Scope and methods: 2000	US institutions and dynamics: 3210, 3220, 3225, 3235, 3250, 3304, 3320, 3330, 4214, 4230, 4311, 4315, 4940	Global institutions and dynamics: 2030, 3400, 3410, 3430, 3444, 3600, 4060, 4640, 4650, 4654	History of political thought and key concepts: 3000, 3010, 3030, 3055, 4050, 4055,
Knowledge of scope and methods	H (high salience) Exams	M (medium salience)	M	M
Knowledge of US institutions and dynamics	M	H Exams	M	M
Knowledge of global and comparative institutions and dynamics	M	M	H Exams, research papers	M
Knowledge of history of political thought and key concepts	H Exams	M	M	H Exams, essays
Analyze complex issues and problems	H Exams	H Exams, research papers	H Exams, research papers	H Exams, essays, presentations
Analyze complex texts and arguments	M	M	M	H Exams, essays
Design and conduct research	H Research paper outlines	H Research papers	H Research papers	M
Formulate and evaluate policy options	M	H Research papers	H Research papers	M

Median Student Performance

	Scope and methods: 2000	US institutions and dynamics: 3210, 3220, 3225, 3235, 3250, 3304, 3320, 3330, 4214, 4230, 4311, 4315, 4940	Global institutions and dynamics: 2030, 3400, 3410, 3430, 3444, 3600, 4060, 4640, 4650, 4654	History of political thought and key concepts: 3000, 3010, 3030, 3055, 4050, 4055,
Political Science Majors	B	B	B	B

➤ *Indirect Assessment*

(see attached)