

Department of Political Science
Five Year Program Assessment Plan

Program Mission

The Department of Political Science strives to provide students with learning opportunities and analytical reasoning and problem-solving skills that promote their knowledge of politics, their understanding of the American and global political societies, their ability to become independent, moral decision-makers, and their standing as members of their communities both local and global.

Learning Outcomes

Upon graduation, majors in Political Science will:

Be able to express oneself effectively using the tools and theories of political science. (Direct measure)

Be able to write a thesis driven essay. (Direct measure)

Have an understanding of civic engagement through work experience, study abroad, or engagement with the media. (Indirect Measure)

AY 2013-2014

At the end of the spring semester, collect ungraded/uncommented upon writing samples by ten randomly selected junior and senior majors assigned in Seminar within the last month of the semester. Include in this sample the assignment and any grading guidelines.

Using the rubric (see below), the instructor and one other member of the Department (chair unless s/he is teaching the seminar) reviews the papers. The review will consider: knowledge of political science, methodology, success at writing a thesis driven paper, and the students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge.

The two readers will compare findings and produce a report detailing the strengths and weaknesses uncovered and, if appropriate, propose suggestions aimed at alleviating the problems and re-enforcing the successes. This should be completed by the end of May.

An average score for each item of the rubric will be attached to the report. The report will be distributed to all Department members over the summer to allow for implementation of recommendations. Part of the report will include a survey of the junior/senior members of the Seminar and a survey of alums three and ten years out from graduation administered during the spring term.

AY 2014-2015

Discuss the 2013-14 report and how to monitor any recommended changes.

At the end of the fall semester, collect five randomly chosen ungraded/uncommented upon writing samples by junior and senior majors assigned in each 300 level class completed within the last month of the semester. Include in this sample the assignment and any grading guidelines.

The Department should divide up the papers among the full-time faculty members and form pairs consisting of the course instructor and one other member. Using the rubric, each group should review the papers and prepare recommendations based upon their analysis. In February, the Department will meet, compare findings and the chair will prepare a report, a set of recommendations to address problems and help support successes, and attach the average of the combined scores. In April, the Department will meet and develop a plan to address the identified issues during the next year and review if any changes are needed to address changes made in previous year. Part of the report will include the results from a survey of alums administered during the spring term.

2015-2016

Discuss the 2014-15 report and how to monitor any recommended changes.

At the end of the spring semester, collect ungraded/uncommented upon writing samples by ten randomly selected junior and senior majors assigned in Seminar within the last month of the semester. Include in this sample the assignment and any grading guidelines.

Using the rubric (see below), the instructor and one other member of the Department (chair unless s/he is teaching the seminar) reviews the papers. The review will consider: knowledge of political science, methodology, success at writing a thesis driven paper, and the students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge.

The two readers will compare findings and produce a report detailing the strengths and weaknesses uncovered and, if appropriate, propose suggestions aimed at alleviating the problems and re-enforcing the successes. This should be completed by the end of May.

An average score for each item of the rubric will be attached to the report. The report will be distributed to all Department members over the summer to allow for implementation of recommendations. Part of the report will include a survey of the junior/senior members of the Seminar and a survey of alums three and ten years out from graduation administered during the spring term.

2016-2017

Discuss the 2013-14 report and how to monitor any recommended changes.

At the end of the fall semester, collect five randomly chosen ungraded/uncommented upon writing samples by junior and senior majors assigned in each 300 level class completed within the last month of the semester. Include in this sample the assignment and any grading guidelines.

The Department should divide up the papers among the full-time faculty members and form pairs consisting of the course instructor and one other member. Using the rubric, each group should review the papers and prepare recommendations based upon their analysis. In February, the Department will meet, compare findings and the chair will prepare a report, a set of recommendations to address problems and help support successes, and attach the average of the combined scores. In April, the Department will meet and develop a plan to address the identified issues during the next year and review if any changes are needed to address changes made in previous year. Part of the report will include the results from a survey of alums administered during the spring term.

2018-2019

This year the Department will reflect on the findings of the four years of assessment and review the curriculum as a whole to see if it needs major or minor revisions.

Junior/Senior survey to be administered at the end of the seminar

Background information:

What is your gender?

Are you a commuter? Yes No

Are you a transfer student? Yes No

Did you major in another field before becoming a Political Science Major? Yes No

Are you a double major? Yes No

Do you have a minor? Yes No

If yes, how many?

Please check the response with which you most agree.

1. My coursework in political science provided a logical, complete and appropriate course of instruction.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

2. I was satisfied with the quality of my political science instruction.

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3. I received enough personal interaction with the political science faculty, including advising.

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4. The political science major improved my writing skills.

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5. The political science major improved my analytical skills.

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6. The political science major improved my research skills.

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7. Political science training will further my career goals.

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B. Briefly respond to the following:

1. What was your favorite course? Why?

2. What was the greatest strength of the program?

3. What was the greatest weakness of the program?

4. Did you take an internship program and/or study overseas? Did these experiences enrich your understanding of politics and the importance of civic engagement?

Alumni Survey

What is your gender?

Were you a commuter? Yes No

Were you a transfer student? Yes No

Did you major in another field before becoming a Political Science Major? Yes No

Were you a double major? Yes No

Did you minor? Yes No

If yes, how many?

1. What are your current professional pursuits?
2. How well did your Political Science major (or Politics Major) prepare you for them?
3. How have your career plans changed since graduation? If so, how and why?
4. Has your assessment of the department changed since you graduated? If so, how and why?
5. What do you know now that you wish you had known when you were here?
6. Based on these questions and your experiences since graduation, what might the department do differently in the future?
7. Are you actively engaged in any civic activities? If yes, did the major prepare you for it and/or help you understand the importance of service?

Essay Feedback Form

Key to Grades: 1 = Good 2 = Satisfactory 3 = Unsatisfactory

	1	2	3	
Essay answers the question				Essay isn't relevant to the question
Essay is well-structured				Material isn't organized well
A good range of sources used				Essay does not reflect wide enough reading
Topic covered in depth				Analysis is too shallow
Argument supported by evidence				Too many unsupported statements
Sources used critically				Sources relied upon without critical thought
Sophisticated use of theoretical literature				Inattentive to theoretical literature
Originality/Independent thought				Simple repetition of text material
Good use of quotations				Quotations not incorporated into argument
Good referencing/bibliography				Poor referencing/bibliography
Correctly and Fluently written				Poor syntax, grammar or spelling
Well presented				Untidy

Comments: