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.
   __STRONGLY AGREE  __ AGREE  __ NEUTRAL  __ DISAGREE  __ STRONGLY DISAGREE

3. I received enough personal interaction with the political science faculty, including advising.
   __STRONGLY AGREE  __ AGREE  __ NEUTRAL  __ DISAGREE  __ STRONGLY DISAGREE

4. The political science major improved my writing skills.
   __STRONGLY AGREE  __ AGREE  __ NEUTRAL  __ DISAGREE  __ STRONGLY DISAGREE

5. The political science major improved my analytical skills.
   __STRONGLY AGREE  __ AGREE  __ NEUTRAL  __ DISAGREE  __ STRONGLY DISAGREE

6. The political science major improved my research skills.
   __STRONGLY AGREE  __ AGREE  __ NEUTRAL  __ DISAGREE  __ STRONGLY DISAGREE
7. Political science training will further my career goals.

__STRONGLY AGREE __ AGREE __ NEUTRAL __ DISAGREE __ STRONGLY DISAGREE
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

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