



Political Science | 2016-2017 Assessment Plan

1. Please review last year's assessment results (2015-2016) as well as the Academic Program Assessment Report with the faculty in your program. How does your program plan to take these results into consideration in future programmatic planning?

We discussed results of embedded assessments performed during the last academic year (2015-2016) at our Fall 2016 faculty meeting. The general consensus was that the majority of our students are on target as far as our programmatic learning outcomes are concerned and our assessment plan is working.

2. Please review your program's Learning Outcomes. Do any of them need to be updated or clarified?
 - a. Please provide brief indications of the kinds of assessment that might be used to assess each outcome.

Even though there was little disagreement that most of our students do meet programmatic learning outcome as we define and measure them, our main discussion at our Fall 2016 meeting centered around the assessment plan rubric that we received from the Office of the Provost and the Assessment Council. We were particularly interested in how our learning outcomes measure against the university mission outcomes and how we can best capture teaching about diversity in our core classes. We came to the conclusion that the way we define diversity is different from the more traditional definitions. In Political Science, we teach diversity as diversity of ideological positions, institutional settings, not only in terms of gender and race/ethnicity and other demographic aspects of diversity (but we do have these discussions in our courses as well). We agreed to either add a 6th learning outcome to our assessment of core classes or to think about including courses explicitly dealing with diversity (Urban Politics and Gender and the Law, for example), to the programmatic core that each student is required to take as part of political science major. I believe, for now, we will refine the learning outcomes we are assessing in already existing core courses (please see new Learning Outcome # 4 in the tables below) and will think about curricular modifications in the Spring.

- b. Please compare your Learning Outcomes to the University's main learning objectives. Which programmatic outcomes match university mission outcomes?

As discussed above, our learning outcomes aligned well with several of the University's main learning outcomes, including problem-focused education, critical thinking, and engaged citizenship. But we need to better think about measuring diversity that we do teach in all our core courses and in some of the elective courses. We also need to make decision if we just

want to add a new learning outcome to be measured or to include diversity-centered electives to our course sequences and measure diversity learning outcome in the most direct fashion (please see our new Learning Outcome # 4 in the tables below which will be pilot assessed this academic year).

3. Which outcome will you assess this year (2016-2017)?

We will assess the following learning outcomes.

For American politics content courses:

Learning Outcome	Learning outcome is not met (Level One)	Learning outcome is met (Level Two)	Learning outcome is exceeded (Level Three)
1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of and ability to analyze U.S. government institutions, political processes, and behavior.			
2. Students will exhibit an ability to evaluate political institutions and processes from the perspective of democratic principles, including majority politics, the protection of minority rights, and the value of due process.			
3. Students will show an ability to think critically and a capacity to use political science research. This includes an understanding of social science research methods and elementary statistical concepts, and the ability to use professional resources such as journals, indexes, and government documents.			
4. Students will be able to demonstrate familiarity with the demographic diversity of the US and the problems faced by different demographic groups in the American democracy.			
5. Students will be able to qualify for graduate study in political science, public policy, public administration, law, international affairs, or related fields or to qualify for entry level employment requiring competence in governmental and political processes, or for teaching government.			
6. Students will demonstrate ability to write clearly and effectively.			

For international politics content courses:

Learning Outcome	Learning outcome is not met (Level One)	Learning outcome is met (Level Two)	Learning outcome is exceeded (Level Three)
1. Students will exhibit knowledge of and ability to analyze government institutions, political processes, and behavior in select Western and non-Western countries.			
2. Students will show an ability to evaluate variables essential for transition to and consolidation of democracy, including historical, institutional, political cultural, and behavioral factors, as well as structural obstacles to democratization.			
3. Students will demonstrate an ability to think critically and a capacity to use political science research. This includes an understanding of social science research methods and elementary statistical concepts, and the ability to use professional resources such as journals, indexes, and government documents.			
4. Students will be able to describe different democratic institutional arrangements, changes in traditional national identities (due to migration, growing ethnic and racial diversity and gender equality), and existing ideological diversity in a variety of global settings.			
5. Students will be able to qualify for entry level employment requiring competence in governmental and political processes.			
6. Students will demonstrate ability to write clearly and effectively.			

For political theory content courses:

Learning Outcome	Learning outcome is not met (Level One)	Learning outcome is met (Level Two)	Learning outcome is exceeded (Level Three)
1. Students will exhibit knowledge of and ability to analyze and critique the history of political theory, including ancient, modern and contemporary thinkers			
2. Students will demonstrate an ability to approach political questions from a theoretical and historical perspective, including discussing questions of method, form and context			
3. Students will show an ability to think critically and a capacity to use political theory research. This includes an understanding			

of the core questions and approaches, as well as key figures in political theory as a part of political science			
4. Students will show an understanding of how different contemporary and historical political issues are assessed by different philosophical and ideological traditions.			
5. Students will be able to qualify for entry level employment requiring competence in governmental and political processes.			
6. Students will demonstrate ability to write clearly and effectively.			

4. Which technique will you use to assess this outcome?

We routinely perform embedded assessments of all written work students produce in our required UL courses for the major (research papers, debate papers, reaction papers, policy memoranda, legal briefs, etc.). It is based on the rubric (see above) that is applied to all core courses during a given semester. Each political science faculty member is well versed in our assessment procedures by now and the process is well established as part of our program.

5. Which course or group of students will you assess on the outcome chosen above and when?

Every semester we collect data (see above) on all political science students (majors only) taking required UL political science classes.

In the Fall, our assessed classes include:

- a. Constitutional Law
- b. Political Theory
- c. Political Behavior
- d. Comparative Politics

In the Spring, our assessed classes include:

- a. American Political Thought
- b. Congress
- c. Comparative Politics
- d. Foreign and Defense Policies

These classes, collectively, represent all required political science classes, so we are assessing most our students in any given academic year.

	Learning outcome 1	Learning outcome 2	Learning outcome 3	Learning outcome 4	Learning outcome 5	Learning outcome 6
Comparative Politics Fall 16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Political Behavior Fall 16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Political Theory Fall 16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Constitutional Law Fall 16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Comparative Politics Spring 17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foreign and Defense Policies Spring 17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Congress Spring 17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
American Political Thought Spring 17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓