

**HISTORY & POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**Political Science Core Competencies**  
**Critical Thinking**  
**2023-2024**

**Learning Outcome:**

Critical Thinking: Students will be able to examine, critique and synthesize information in order to arrive at reasoned conclusions.

**Outcome Measure:**

Research paper written during the student's final two years at PLNU (must be from an upper-division course). This paper is then edited, revised, and reworked in the Senior Seminar course in the student's senior year.

Formerly used: ETS Proficiency Profile Exam (2014-2023)

**Criteria for Success:**

Minimum average of 2.75 (out of 4) for each criteria of AAC&U rubric.

**Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):**

1. Specialized Knowledge
2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
5. Civic and Global Learning

**Longitudinal Data:**

**Percentage of Students Marginal or Proficient**

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
ETS Proficiency Profile Level 2 Critical Thinking	88.9%	80.0%	78.9%	90.9%	57.1%	84.2%	78.9%	95.2%	78.6%

As of 2023-24, ETS data is no longer used to measure this core competency.

Semester	N	Explanation of Issues	Evidence	Influence of Context	Student's Position	Conclusions
Spring 2024	9	3.56	3.11	3.11	3.17	3.22

HPS: CC Data – International Studies, 2023-24

**Conclusions Drawn from Data:**

Our HPS students have historically performed well with regard to this learning outcome.

**Changes to be Made Based on Data:**

None at this time, other than to monitor the longitudinal data.

**Rubric Used:** PLO 2\_Critical Thinking Assessment Rubric for International Studies Program (modeled after AAC&U Critical Thinking Assessment Rubric)

**Rubric Used**

**IS\_PLO2\_Critical Thinking Assessment Rubric for International Studies**

Students who complete the program in political science will be able to: **Understand and critically assess the processes, theories, and outcomes of global institutions and systems.** This PLO #2 aligns with core competency #4 (Critical Thinking).

*Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.*

Criterion	Capstone (4)	Milestones (3)	Milestones (2)	Benchmark (1)
<b>Explanation of issues</b>	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
<b>Evidence</b> <i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i>	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
<b>Influence of context and assumptions</b>	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
<b>Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</b>	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis /hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.
<b>Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)</b>	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.

**HISTORY & POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**Political Science Core Competencies**  
**Written Communication**  
**2023-2024**

**Learning Outcome:**

Written: Students will be able to effectively express ideas and information to others through written communication.

**Outcome Measure:**

Research paper written during the student's final two years at PLNU (must be from an upper-division course). This paper is then edited, revised, and reworked in the Senior Seminar course in the student's senior year.

Formerly used: ETS Proficiency Profile Exam (2013-2023)

**Criteria for Success:**

Minimum average of 2.75 (out of 4) for each criteria of rubric

**Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):**

1. Specialized Knowledge
2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
5. Civic and Global Learning

**Longitudinal Data:**

**Percentage of Students Marginal or Proficient**

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<b>ETS Proficiency Profile Level 2 Writing</b>	100.0%	80.0%	84.2%	81.8%	78.6%	84.2%	57.9%	76.2%	78.6%

As of 2023-24, ETS data is no longer used to measure this core competency.

Semester	N	Context and Purpose	Argument	Genre/Discipline Conventions	Sources and Evidence	Grammar & Mechanics
Spring 2024	9	3.78	3.17	3.39	3.50	3.44

HPS: CC Data – International Studies, 2023-24

**Conclusions Drawn from Data:**

Our HPS students experienced a significant decline in this outcome two years ago, but it looks like that may have been an anomaly. Their scores are back up to typical levels, though we would like to see that number continue to climb.

**Changes to be Made Based on Data:**

Spend additional intentional time on writing skills in POL2070 and continue to monitor the data.

**Rubric Used:** IS PLO4\_ Written Communication Assessment Rubric for International Studies (based on AAC&U Written Communication Value Rubric)

**Rubric Used** **IS\_PLO4\_ Written Communication Assessment Rubric for International Studies**

Students who complete the program in political science will be able to: **Develop and express ideas in written communication in an effective and scholarly manner.** This PLO #4 aligns with core competency #1 (Written communication).

*Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.*

Criterion	Capstone (4)	Milestones (3)	Milestones (2)	Benchmark (1)
<b>Context of and Purpose for Writing</b> <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, whether or not they did the assignment as asked in the prompt, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
<b>Argument Development</b>	Offers a sophisticated, relevant, and compelling argument to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's deep understanding	Offers a sophisticated, relevant, and compelling argument that explores ideas within the subject matter	Offers an appropriate and relevant argument	Offers an appropriate but simple argument
<b>Genre and Disciplinary Conventions</b> <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in international studies</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to political science, including organization, content, presentation, formatting, proper citation, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to political science, including organization, content, presentation, citation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to political science, including basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
<b>Sources and Evidence</b>	Demonstrates skillful use of high- quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for international studies and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible and relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within international studies and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for international studies and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
<b>Control of Syntax, Grammar, and Mechanics</b>	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

**HISTORY & POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**Political Science Core Competencies**  
**Quantitative Reasoning**  
**2023-2024**

**Learning Outcome:**

Quantitative Reasoning: Students will be able to solve problems that are quantitative in nature.

**Outcome Measure:**

During the 2023-24 school year we were exploring adequate replacement assessment tools for this core competency as the University no longer uses the ETS assessment tool. There is no measure or assessment for this core competency this year, but one will be in place for 2024-25.

Formerly used: ETS Proficiency Profile Exam (2013-2023)

**Outcome Measure:**

None in 2023-24.

**Criteria for Success (how do you judge if the students have met your standards):**

None in 2023-24.

**Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):**

1. Specialized Knowledge
2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
5. Civic and Global Learning

**Longitudinal Data:**

**Percentage of Students Marginal or Proficient**

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<b>ETS Proficiency Profile Level 2 Math</b>	66.7%	80.0%	57.9%	90.9%	67.3%	68.4%	63.2%	66.7%	82.1%

As of 2023-24, ETS data is no longer used to measure this core competency.

**Conclusions Drawn from Data:**

Our HPS students have not hit the benchmark for six of the last nine years, but our nine year average (71.5%) is satisfactory.

HPS: CC Data – Political Science, 2023-24

**Changes to be Made Based on Data:**

We will continue to closely monitor the longitudinal data. We will also encourage our students to utilize more quantitative research methods in their projects.

**Rubric Used:** No rubric for 2023-24. The rubric included below will be the one applied starting in 2024-25.

**Assessment Rubric for International Studies and Political Science Core Competency  
#3 (Quantitative Reasoning)**

Students who complete the program in international studies or political science will be able to: solve problems that are quantitative in nature.

*Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.*

Criterion	Capstone (4)	Milestones (3)	Milestones (2)	Benchmark (1)
<b>Interpretation</b> <i>Ability to explain information presented in quantitative forms (e.g., graphs, diagrams, tables, words)</i>	Provides accurate explanations of information presented in quantitative forms. Makes appropriate inferences based on that information. <i>For example, accurately explains the trend data shown in a graph and makes reasonable predictions regarding what the data suggest about future events.</i>	Provides accurate explanations of information presented in quantitative forms. <i>For instance, accurately explains the trend data shown in a graph.</i>	Provides somewhat accurate explanations of information presented in quantitative forms, but occasionally makes minor errors related to computations or units. <i>For instance, accurately explains trend data shown in a graph, but may miscalculate the slope of the trend line.</i>	Attempts to explain information presented in quantitative forms, but draws incorrect conclusions about what the information means. <i>For example, attempts to explain the trend data shown in a graph, but will frequently misinterpret the nature of that trend, perhaps by confusing positive and negative trends.</i>
<b>Representation</b> <i>Ability to convert relevant information into various forms (e.g., graphs, diagrams, tables, words)</i>	Skillfully converts relevant information in a way that contributes to a further or deeper understanding.	Competently converts relevant information into an appropriate form and in a way that furthers the quantitative nature of the research.	Completes conversion of information but resulting portrayal is only partially appropriate or accurate or quantitatively-based.	Completes conversion of information but resulting portrayal is inappropriate or inaccurate.
<b>Application / Analysis</b> <i>Ability to make judgments and draw appropriate conclusions based on the quantitative or qualitative analysis of data, while recognizing the limits of this analysis</i>	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for deep and thoughtful judgments, drawing insightful, carefully qualified conclusions from this work.	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for competent judgments, drawing reasonable and appropriately qualified conclusions from this work.	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for workmanlike (without inspiration or nuance, ordinary) judgments, drawing plausible conclusions from this work.	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for tentative, basic judgments, although is hesitant or uncertain about drawing conclusions from this work.
<b>Communication</b> <i>Expressing quantitative or qualitative evidence in support of the argument or purpose of the work (in terms of what evidence is used and how it is formatted, presented, and contextualized)</i>	Uses quantitative information in connection with the argument or purpose of the work, presents it in an effective format, and explicates it with consistently high quality.	Uses quantitative information in connection with the argument or purpose of the work, though data may be presented in a less than completely effective format or some parts of the explication may be uneven.	Uses quantitative information, but does not effectively connect it to the argument or purpose of the work.	Presents an argument for which quantitative evidence is pertinent, but does not provide adequate explicit numerical support. (May use quasi-quantitative or quasi-qualitative words such as "many," "few," "increasing," "small," and the like in place of actual quantities.)

**HISTORY & POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**Political Science Core Competencies**  
**Oral Communication**  
**2023-24**

**Learning Outcome:**

Oral Communication: Students who complete the program in political science will be able to demonstrate oral communication abilities, particularly to convey complex ideas, recognize diverse viewpoints, and offer empirical evidence of an argument. Political Science PLO #5 aligns with oral communication core competency.

**Outcome Measure:**

In 2017, 2018, and 2020 assessment was completed on video résumés submitted by senior political science students. In 2014 and 2019, assessment was completed on presentations by senior political science students. Since 2021, we have been assessing the video résumés submitted by all political science seniors in the spring Senior Seminar course.

**Criteria for Success:**

Minimum average of 2.75 (out of 4) for each criteria of rubric

**Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (highlight one or more):**

1. Specialized Knowledge
2. Broad and Integrative Knowledge
3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
4. Applied and Collaborative Learning
5. Civic and Global Learning

**Longitudinal Data:**

**Oral Communication Value Rubric - Average Student Scores:**

Semester	N	Organization	Language	Delivery	Complexity	Diverse Viewpoints	Empirical Evidence	Central Message
Fall 2014		2.8	3.3	3.2	NA	NA	3.3	3.0
Spring 2017		4.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	NA	4.0	4.0
Spring 2018		4.0	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.3
Spring 2019		4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0
Spring 2020		3.67	3.67	3.39	3.56	3.61	3.78	3.33
Spring 2021	13	3.54	3.38	3.33	3.50	3.58	3.58	3.54
Spring 2022	8	3.19	3.21	2.92	2.83	3.02	3.51	3.00
Spring 2023	8	3.88	3.69	3.25	3.44	3.38	3.31	3.38
Spring 2024	9	3.61	3.72	3.28	3.67	3.50	3.67	3.83

**Conclusions Drawn from Data:**

This was the fourth year that we assigned this task as part of the Senior Seminar class, which means that there was a larger sample size and students did not “opt in” as in earlier years, so recent scores are more representative of the communication skills of our graduating political science students.

The scores are strong, indicating that our students leave PLNU with strong oral communication skills, which aligns with what we hear from employers and internship providers.

**Changes to be Made Based on Data:**

Have in-person discussions with our students about the “why” behind a video résumé and the importance of being concise, engaging, and confident. Otherwise, no changes at this time, other than to collect and monitor the longitudinal data.

**Rubric Used:** PS\_PLO5\_Oral Communication Assessment Rubric for Political Science (based on AAC&U Oral Communication Value Rubric)

**HISTORY & POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**Political Science Core Competencies**  
**Information Literacy**  
**2023-24**

**Learning Outcome:**

Information literacy: Political science PLO 4. Students who complete the program in political science will be able to demonstrate social scientific information literacy. Political Science PLO 4 aligns with Information Literacy Core Competency.

**Outcome Measure:**

Research paper written during the student's final two years at PLNU (must be from an upper-division course). This paper is then edited, revised, and reworked in the Senior Seminar course in the student's senior year.

**Criteria for Success:**

Minimum average of 2.75 (out of 4) for each criteria of rubric

**Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (highlight one or more):**

1. Specialized Knowledge
2. Broad and Integrative Knowledge
3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
4. Applied and Collaborative Learning
5. Civic and Global Learning

**Longitudinal Data:**

Semester	N	Determine Extent of Information Needed	Access Needed Information	Evaluate Information & Sources	Use Information for a Purpose	Access/Use Ethically & Legally
Spr 2015		3.2	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.6
Spr 2016		3.2	3.3	2.8	3.2	3.7
Spr 2017		3.3	3.3	2.7	2.3	3.7
Spr 2018		2.8	2.8	3.4	3.4	3.3
Spr 2019		3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	4.0
Spr 2020		3.33	3.11	3.28	3.44	3.83
Spr 2021	13	3.5	3.53	3.11	3.46	3.73
Spr 2022	8	2.88	2.88	3.17	3.33	3.54
Spr 2023	8	3.44	3.25	3.06	3.06	3.75
Spr 2024	9	3.44	3.39	3.17	3.22	3.78

**Conclusions Drawn from Data:**

Our students are performing well but we'll continue to work with them in this area, especially with regard to moving them away from an overreliance on Internet sources to more academic, peer-reviewed sources.

**Changes to be Made Based on Data:**

We will encourage them to consult with our Ryan Library liaison, utilize interlibrary loan, and visit the UCSD and SDSU libraries as a way to broaden the scope of their academic research. We also need to look for better tools to provide the students about how to use sources in all classes (rather than just the *Scope and Methods* course). Finally, we would like to work with them more in the area of evaluation, so that they go beyond just obtaining the academic work and really use it to deepen their answering of their research question (e.g. with a really robust and insightful literature review section in their papers).

**Rubric Used:** AAC&U Information Literacy Value Rubric.