

POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT 2010-11

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, PLNU

DEPARTMENTAL MISSION STATEMENT:

The Department of History and Political Science seeks to emphasize rigorous analysis of political structures, historical changes and continuities, and human relationships; to train students in the craft of communicating their ideas orally and in writing with precision and formal organization; and to equip students for immediate entry into either graduate or law school or a chosen career [from Catalog].

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The program learning outcomes [created November 2006; revised July 2011] for the Political Science program are the following:

1. Students will develop an appreciation of the field of politics.
2. Students will conduct, evaluate, and apply social science research with respect to political phenomena.
3. Students will understand the processes, theories, and outcomes of political institutions and political behavior.

CURRICULUM MAP:

The current version [July 2011] of this map is attached (page 2). It is being modified as we gain a clearer understanding of where and why to put a “D”, an “M”, or leave blank.

MULTI-YEAR ASSESSMENT PLAN:

A multi-year assessment plan has not yet been created.

Curriculum Map – History Major (as of May 2011)

Point Loma Nazarene University		LO 1	LO 2	LO 3
POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR		...develop an appreciation of the field of politics.	...conduct, evaluate, and apply research	...understand processes, theory, outcomes
Course	Course Title			
LOWER-DIVISION REQUIREMENTS				
POL101	Introduction to Political Science	I		
POL165	American Government			I
POL230	Introduction to International Relations			I
POL270	Scope and Methods of Political Science		I, D	
UPPER-DIVISION CORE REQUIREMENTS				
American Government				
<i>Four units from:</i>				
POL341	Campaigns and Elections in an Electronic Age	D		D
POL380	Congress and the Presidency	D		D
Global Politics				
<i>Four units from:</i>				
POL420	United States Foreign Policy			D
POL435	Global Governance		D	M
Comparative Government				
POL370	Comparative Politics		M	D
Political Theory				
POL321	Western Political Thought			D
Capitals Program				
POL390	American Capitals Program	D		
	OR			
POL391	World Capitals Program	D		

Internships				
POL460	Internship in Political Science	M		
ELECTIVES: 8 units from:				
POL301	Transitions to Democracy	D		M
POL320	U.S. Constitution and Civil Liberties Law			
POL325	American Political Thought			
POL330	The Development of Feminist Thought	D		D
POL341	Campaigns and Elections in an Electronic Age	D		D
POL351	War and Peace Studies			
POL360	Urban Politics	D		D
POL380	Congress and the Presidency	D		D
POL415	Women and Politics	D		D
POL420	United States Foreign Policy			D
POL435	Global Governance		D	M
POL437	International Economics			
POL438	International Law			D
POL441	Issues in Public Policy	D		M
POL442	Contemporary Issues in World Politics			D
POL444	Contemporary Political Ideologies	D		D
POL450	Issues of Global Human Rights		D	D
POL455	Protest and Social Movements in World Politics		D	D

2010-11 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT AND CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

The assessment project for the Political Science program in 2010-11 was to revise program learning outcomes, construct a curriculum map based on these outcomes, and to analyze from a big-picture perspective how well the current curriculum addresses the desired outcomes.

The revision of the outcomes and map was accomplished during a July 2011 meeting of Political Science faculty. Program learning outcomes used by Political Science departments at other institutions and suggested by the American Political Science Association were used as guides to constructing appropriate outcomes. The Political Science faculty members agreed on three outcomes (see page 1), with the understanding that they may include additional outcomes in the future and with the understanding that we might want to change a word or two in these outcomes (especially the verbs).

A curriculum map was then created using these program learning outcomes. There was some confusion about how to fill in the boxes. There are two or three courses that have not been taught in the past three years that we are trying to figure out if we will keep in the curriculum (POL325, POL351, and POL438). We also found it difficult to identify the distinction between when a “D” (to be developed) or an “M” (mastery) was most appropriate.

SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTED

The analysis of the curriculum map revealed several conclusions regarding the current curriculum.

1. Our introductory courses align neatly with our PLOs. The introductory courses actually provide a good structural introduction to the PLOs we seek our students to achieve.
2. A lack of clear mastery courses. No course is strictly considered a “capstone” course where the student is expected to have mastered an outcome after progressing through a series of courses. We were able to come up with some courses where we would be able to measure outcomes and we labeled these “M,” but this was more of a practical compromise than an acknowledgment that a particular class really was a mastery-level course. The Internship is probably the closest to actually being a mastery course. A capstone course may (a) make assessment easier and more consistent and (b) take some of the “mastery” pressure off of other courses that are not truly mastery courses.
3. The curriculum map does not adequately reflect the sub-disciplines. Political Science curriculums almost universally cover four sub-disciplines: American, Comparative, International Relations, and Theory. A student who have fulfilled the obligations of a Political Science BA must have mastery in 1 or 2 of these and deep exposure to all four. If we were honest about our PLOs, each one should be divided into four parts relating to the sub-disciplines. However, assessing 12 PLOs is unrealistic. We need to figure out a method of assessing the PLOs while still preserving the sub-disciplines.

USE OF RESULTS