Political Science
Evidence and Use of Evidence of Assessment
2015-2016

Political Science Program Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the program in Political Science will be able to:

- Develop an appreciation of the field of politics.
- Evaluate, design, and apply social science research with respect to political phenomena.
- Understand and critically assess the processes, theories, and outcomes of political institutions and political behavior.
- Demonstrate social scientific information literacy.
- Develop and express ideas in written communication in an effective and scholarly manner.
- Demonstrate oral communication abilities, particularly to convey complex ideas, recognize diverse viewpoints, and offer empirical evidence of an argument.
- Construct and evaluate analytical, comprehensive arguments.

Assessment Data Political Science Outcome #4
2015-2016

Learning Outcome:
Political Science PLO #4: Demonstrate Social Scientific Information Literacy (aligns with Information Literacy core competency).

Outcome Measure:
Final course papers in POL 370 (*Comparative Politics*) written by all political science seniors enrolled in this spring 2016 course. The longitudinal data reflect assessment completed on the final course paper in POL 455 (*Protest and Social Movements in World Politics*) in spring 2015.

Criteria for Success (if applicable):
Average score of 2.75 out of 4.0 (on a scale of 1-4 with 1 being low) in each of the five areas:
- Determine the Extent of Information Needed
- Access the Information Needed.
- Evaluate Information and its Sources Critically
- Use Information Effectively to Accomplish a Specific Purpose
- Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally

Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more):
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 (numbers represent the average score for all seniors):

	Spring 2016	Spring 2015
Determine the Extent of Information Needed	3.2	3.2
Access the Information Needed	3.3	3.0
Evaluate Information and its Sources Critically	2.8	3.2
Use Information Effectively to Accomplish a Specific Purpose	3.2	3.0
Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally	3.7	3.6

Conclusions Drawn from Data:
Our students are performing well in all criteria. However, we would like to continue to hone these skills in our students, pushing them to a greater level of mastery by their senior year.

Changes to be Made Based on Data:
Continue to emphasize the importance of analyzing assumptions and critically evaluating academic sources. We will do this by assigning more annotated bibliographies that ask students to critically assess the academic literature.

Rubric Used

Criterion	Capstone (4)	Milestones (3)	Milestones (2)	Benchmark (1)
Determine the Extent of Information Needed	Effectively defines the scope of the research question or thesis. Effectively determines key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected directly relate to concepts or answer research question.	Defines the scope of the research question or thesis completely. Can determine key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected relate to concepts or answer research question.	Defines the scope of the research question or thesis incompletely (parts are missing, remains too broad or too narrow, etc.). Can determine key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected partially relate to concepts or answer research question.	Has difficulty defining the scope of the research question or thesis. Has difficulty determining key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected do not relate to concepts or answer research question.
Access the Needed Information	Accesses information using effective, well-designed search strategies and most appropriate information sources.	Accesses information using variety of search strategies and some relevant information sources. Demonstrates ability to refine search.	Accesses information using simple search strategies, retrieves information from limited and similar sources.	Accesses information randomly, retrieves information that lacks relevance and quality.
Evaluate Information and its Sources Critically	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.
Use Information Effectively to Accomplish a Specific Purpose	Communicates, organizes and synthesizes information from sources to fully achieve a specific purpose, with clarity and depth	Communicates, organizes and synthesizes information from sources. Intended purpose is achieved.	Communicates and organizes information from sources. The information is not yet synthesized, so the intended purpose is not fully achieved.	Communicates information from sources. The information is fragmented and/or used inappropriately (misquoted, taken out of context, or incorrectly paraphrased, etc.), so the intended purpose is not achieved.
Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally	Students use correctly all of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrate a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.	Students use correctly three of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.	Students use correctly two of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.	Students use correctly one of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.

Assessment Data Political Science Outcome #4
2015-2016

Learning Outcome:
Political Science PLO #5: Develop and express ideas in written communication in an effective and scholarly manner (core competency #1).

Outcome Measure:
Final course papers in POL 370 (*Comparative Politics*) written by all political science seniors enrolled in this spring 2016 course. The longitudinal data reflect assessment completed on the final course paper in POL 455 (*Protest and Social Movements in World Politics*) in spring 2015 and spring 2013.

Criteria for Success (if applicable):
Average score of 2.75 out of 4.0 (on a scale of 1-4 with 1 being low) in each of the five areas:
- Context of and Purpose for Writing
- Argument Development
- Genre and Disciplinary Conventions
- Sources and Evidence
- Control of Syntax, Grammar, and Mechanics

Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more):
6. Specialized Knowledge
7. Broad Integrative Knowledge
8. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
9. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
10. Civic and Global Learning

Longitudinal Data (numbers represent the average score for all seniors):

	Spring 2016	Spring 2015	Spring 2013
Context of and purpose for writing	3.2	3.2	3.7
Argument development	2.8	3.0	2.7
Genre and disciplinary conventions	3.0	3.0	2.8
Sources and evidence	3.2	3.4	3.0
Control of syntax, grammar, and mechanics	3.2	3.6	2.7

Conclusions Drawn from Data:
We have seen some improvement in the criterion of "sources and evidence" since transitioning our students to a standardized – and rigorously enforced – style of citation (author-date Chicago

Manual of Style). Additionally, our students consistently perform well in the first criterion, illustrating their understanding of the purpose and focus of the paper assignment.

Changes to be Made Based on Data:
Continue to emphasize the importance of developing and communicating a sophisticated argument in a paper. We will do this by exposing them to more social science journal articles that effectively convey the author's deep understanding of the research question at hand.

Rubric Used

Criterion	Capstone (4)	Milestones (3)	Milestones (2)	Benchmark (1)
Context of and Purpose for Writing *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).*	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).
Argument Development	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
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions *Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in political science*	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.
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for political science and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible and relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within political science and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for political science and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Control of Syntax, Grammar, and Mechanics	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.