

**Ph.D. in Political Science
Academic Assessment Plan
2012-2013**

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Office of the Provost

*University of
Florida*

*Institutional
Assessment*

*Continuous Quality
Enhancement*

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Academic Assessment Plan for Ph.D. in Political Science

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

A. Mission

Graduate Program – Political Science (www.polisci.ufl.edu)

The Political Science Department at the University of Florida is committed to training tomorrow's leaders—in government, business, the law, and higher education. From making local governments work better to changing the way we think about the global community, from meeting the environmental challenge to developing a strong sense of ethics in the political arena, our faculty and students are addressing the most critical problems facing the country today. With broad-based instruction and a variety of innovative programs at the graduate level, we also have been at the forefront of the internationalization of the curriculum at UF. The Doctoral Program in the Political Science Department at the University of Florida seeks to provide both a comprehensive and pluralistic training program for future scholars, researchers and teachers in the discipline of Political Science. This includes assisting students in the development of deep substantive expertise in two of the core fields of political science, including American Government, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. To support the goal of a pluralistic approach and shared common knowledge all students also take four additional core seminars that span the broad field of Political Science. Through our rigorous and comprehensive training we prepare our students to critically engage with both theoretical puzzles in political science and real-world policy issues. In this way our students are able to contribute to both academic scholarship and the solution of real world political and policy dilemmas.

College (<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/about/index.html>)

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences constitutes the intellectual core of the university. Its principal mission is to lead the academic quest to understand our place in the universe, and to help shape our society and environment. Through teaching, research and service, the College continually expands our knowledge and practice in the most fundamental questions in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural and mathematical sciences. At the graduate level, students master a specialized body of knowledge and pursue original research under the guidance of outstanding faculty. As a public institution, the College serves society through its research programs to advance our knowledge and capabilities, through its teaching to prepare tomorrow's leaders, and through its outreach programs to ensure dissemination of the state of the art in areas ranging from languages and literatures, to social behaviors, to the fundamental laws of nature. The College captures the brightest ideals of intellectual inquiry and human values as mirrored in society, and remains ever conscious that it must represent and reflect all segments of society to remain the intellectual core of the university.

University (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog1011/administration/mission.html>)

The University of Florida belongs to a tradition of great universities. Together with its undergraduate and graduate students, UF faculty participate in an educational process that links the history of Western Europe with the traditions and cultures of all societies, explores the physical and biological universes and nurtures generations of young people from diverse backgrounds to address the needs of the world's societies.

The university welcomes the full exploration of its intellectual boundaries and supports its

faculty and students in the creation of new knowledge and the pursuit of new ideas. This accomplished through **teaching**, which is a fundamental purpose of this university at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, **research** and **scholarship**, which are integral to the educational process and to the expansion of our understanding of the natural world, the intellect and the senses and **service**, which reflects the university's obligation to share the benefits of its research and knowledge for the public good. The university serves the nation's and the state's critical needs by contributing to a well-qualified and broadly diverse citizenry, leadership and workforce. These three interlocking elements — teaching, research and scholarship, and service — span all the university's academic disciplines and represent the university's commitment to lead and serve the state of Florida, the nation and the world by pursuing and disseminating new knowledge while building upon the experiences of the past. The university aspires to advance by strengthening the human condition and improving the quality of life.

Shared Mission

The Department of Political Science shares the college and university goals of training our students in teaching, research and service to allow them to excel in their chosen careers and give back to their communities. Through the completion of our program our students learn to be critical consumers of political information and conduct cutting edge research. Graduates will have exceptionally high professional standards and be fully prepared to become leaders in academia, government, non-profit organizations and the professional world.

B. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

SLO Type	Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Degree Delivery
Knowledge	1. Identify, describe and explain the central elements of the scope, the epistemologies & methodologies of political science. Fluency in the core literature of political theory	Satisfactory completion of written assignments in the Conduct of Inquiry, Scope and Epistemologies, and Political Theory core courses demonstrating knowledge of basic concepts in all three areas.	Campus
Knowledge	2. Correctly and effectively utilize quantitative analysis up to OLS regression analysis.	Successful completion of all homework assignments and achievement of a minimum score of B on the final exam and paper in Data Analysis including demonstration of the accurate and effective use of basic statistical analysis tools	Campus
Knowledge	3. Synthesize and explain comprehensively two fields in political science and synthesize core attributes of a third field.	Qualifying exams (with oral and written components) in two fields. Written and oral work evaluated by at least three faculty members in the requisite field. Successful	Campus

		completion of at least two advanced courses in a third field.	
Skills	4. Conduct quantitative and/or qualitative research to address substantive and theoretical questions in political science, constituting an original contribution of knowledge and understanding to the field.	Satisfactory completion of dissertation prospectus as judged by the students supervisory committee by end of eighth semester and then successful defense of completed dissertation by the end of the twelfth semester.	Campus
Professional Behavior	5. Display academic honesty, ethics, collegiality, and cultural sensitivity.	Compliance among employees with FERPA and sexual harassment; attendance at the mandatory department orientation during first year	
Professional Behavior	6. Present original research at professional conferences and workshops. Attend and critique scholarly presentations during regular departmental workshops and speakers' series	Attendance at professional conferences by their eighth semester, regular attendance and participation in departmental workshop, roundtables and guest speaker presentations throughout graduate career.	Campus

C. Research

All students are expected to obtain the skills to enable them to pursue high quality independent and original research culminating in a doctoral dissertation. During this process they are expected to pursue all of the necessary training to enable them to achieve their research goals, including methodological, language or other non-departmental training. Students are encouraged to actively engage with the broader academic community as early as possible through participation in workshops and conferences, including the presentation of their own research. Students are expected to submit their work for publication in scholarly journals as soon as feasible, after consulting and gaining approval and guidance from their advisor/mentor.

Preparation: To support and facilitate these objectives students are assigned a mentor as soon as they are admitted to the program. This faculty member will serve as a guide during the first two years of the program, or until a supervisory committee chair is chosen (end of second year at latest). Mentors, and later supervisory committee chairs assist students in selecting their fields of specialization, the appropriate courses, and provide guidance in all elements of professional development including, but not limited to suggesting suitable outlets of conference presentations and publications, grant opportunities, potentially co-authoring etc.).

All students complete a combination of four required courses covering scope and epistemology, conduct of inquiry, data methods, and political theory. In addition students choose a major field from the four core fields (American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Theory), as well as a second and a third supplemental field from one of these areas or

Methods. Students must complete comprehensive exams in their first and second fields after completing between 5-6 (first fields) and 3-4 (second fields) additional courses.

Once this foundation of knowledge has been achieved students are able to work toward the development of their dissertation prospectus, which provides the theoretical underpinnings for their proposed research and maps out the projected research project. Upon approval of the prospectus students begin to work towards the completion of the dissertation under the supervision of their chair and with the guidance of their full committee.

Departmental support to students is provided through careful advising and mentorship from their first day in the program, annual reviews of their progress in the program via the Graduate Annual Activity Reports (GAARs), and regular evaluations of their work in classes, comprehensive exams and prospectus and dissertation defenses. Additional support is provided through partial funding for participation in academic conferences, competitive research and travel grants, and tuition grants for several external methods training programs (IQRM, ICPSR, etc.).

D. Assessment Timeline

Use this Assessment Timeline template for your plan. Add or delete rows and columns to accommodate your SLOs and assessments.

Program Ph.D. in Political Science

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Assessment	Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3
SLOs			
Knowledge			
SLO 1	In-class participation (oral communication skills, demonstration of comprehension)	Written final projects (demonstration of comprehension and ability to interpret material)	
SLO 2	Weekly homework (knowledge of basic concepts and tools)	Final exam/project (ability to integrate formal skills into empirical analysis)	
SLO 3	Written field exams (comprehensive general knowledge of fields)	Oral field exams (ability to express knowledge and engage in discourse on subject)	Annual review of Graduate Annual Activities Reports by Grad. Coord. & Advisor
Skills			
SLO 4	Oral defense of prospectus (create high quality independent research project)	Annual review of Graduate Annual Activities Reports (GAARs) by Grad. Coord. & Advisor	Dissertation defense (ability to conduct independent original research)

Professional Behavior			
SLO 5	Successful completion of professional ethics survey	Completion of FERPA and Sexual Harassment training modules	
SLO 6	Tracking of participation in departmental events	Annual review of Graduate Annual Activities Reports (GAARs) by Grad. Coord. & Advisor	

E. Assessment Cycle

Use this Assessment Cycle template for your plan. Add or delete rows as needed to accommodate your SLOs.

Assessment Cycle for:

Program Ph.D. in Political Science College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Analysis and Interpretation: May 1 – July 15

Program Modifications: Completed by: August 31

Dissemination: Completed by September 30

SLOs	Year	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Knowledge							
Scope, Conduct and Theory				X	X	X	X
Statistical Analysis				X	X	X	X
Comprehensive exams				X	X	X	X
Skills							
Dissertation prospectus					X		X
Dissertation					X		X
Professional Behavior							
Ethics/diversity/privacy training				X	X	X	X
Profession comportment and responsibilities				X	X	X	X

F. Measurement Tools

Measurement tools vary depending on the skill being evaluated and some skills require multiple methods to effectively assess. The evaluation of core KNOWLEDGE achievements is primarily accomplished through careful review of the materials created by students. This occurs through individual faculty evaluation of research papers completed as part of a course and committee review and assessment of the written and oral components of the comprehensive exams (see Appendices A and B for associated assessment rubrics). While papers (and courses) are graded on a standard letter scale, comprehensive exams are scored as “high pass,” Pass” or “Not Pass.” Students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.4 and must not receive 2 grades or more below a B- to remain in “good standing within the program. To obtain a high pass the two non-chair committee members must independently nominate a student by writing to the chair of the exam committee. Students who fail to pass an exam twice (whether the same exam two times or fail once in each field) are not permitted to continue in the program.

Assessment of the core SKILLS occurs via the student’s completion and defense of both a dissertation prospectus and a dissertation. Both elements are developed by the student, under the guidance of his/her dissertation advisor with initial and continuing input from the student’s full committee. It is necessary to present and defend both elements to the full committee, which evaluates the student’s work and providing a pass, conditional pass or not pass judgment (on the basis of a the rubric presented in Appendix C). Students who fail to pass either element may re-present their work as necessary until it is accepted.

In addition, each year the Graduate Coordinator and each student’s individual advisor/chair conducts a review of the Graduate Academic Activities Report (GAAR) completed by all students annually. This tool is used to evaluate student progress in the program and the timely completion of all required and suggested elements (Appendix D).

Fulfillment of the PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR SLOs is measure by successful completion of the departmental and/or university ethics, diversity and privacy training programs/courses and active participation in departmental speakers programs and workshops. Student participation is evaluated annually through the review of the GAARs.

G. Assessment Oversight

Here, list the names and contact information of those who oversee the assessment process in your program. Add or delete rows as needed.

Name	Department Affiliation	Email Address	Phone Number
Amie Kreppel	Political Science – Graduate Coordinator	kreppel@ufl.edu	273-2399
Sue Lawless-Yanchisin	Political Science – Graduate Secretary	suzily@ufl.edu	392-0262
Michael Martinez	Political Science – Chair	martinez@ufl.edu	392-8902

Appendix A: Research Paper – Common General Assessment Rubric

Evaluation → Objective ↓	Unacceptable (0pts)	Marginal (1pt)	Acceptable (2pts)	Good (3pts)	Exceptional (4pts)
Paper/research objectives	Absence of any statement of paper or research objectives	Vague or incomplete presentation of paper/research objectives	Summary statement of research/paper objectives, but not fully developed	Clear statement of research/paper objectives, moderately well developed	Clear and thorough presentation of paper/research objectives
Organizational Structure	Absence of any presentation of structural outline of paper	Incomplete, vague or confusing presentation of paper structure	Basic outline of organizational structure of paper presented	Full structure of paper clearly articulated	Extremely clear, well-structured and thorough presentation of organization of paper
Literature Review	Absence of any substantive literature review	Partial, incomplete review of relevant literature and/or inclusion of irrelevant literature	Basic survey of most relevant literature with few if any irrelevant works discussed	Well-organized review of the majority of the relevant literature, correctly referenced.	Comprehensive well organized and fully referenced literature review of appropriate scholarship
Theoretical framework and/or hypotheses	Absence of discussion of the theoretical framework/hypotheses to be tested	Superficial/incomplete presentation of theoretical framework/hypotheses to be tested	Basic presentation and discussion of the core theoretical framework /hypotheses	Good presentation and discussion of the theoretical framework and/or hypotheses	Extremely clear, very well articulated and structured presentation and discussion of theoretical framework/hypotheses
Argumentation and/or data analysis and methodology	Absence of any supporting arguments or data and explanation of methodology	Minimal argumentation and/or data analysis provided to support theoretical framework/hypotheses	Moderate argumentation and/or data analysis provided to support theoretical framework/hypotheses	Good, well developed argumentation provided to support theoretical framework / hypotheses	Clear and comprehensive presentation of supporting arguments and/or data as well as methodology
Overall presentation	Very poorly formatted, no pg. #s, title, etc., as well as egregious grammatical and/or spelling errors	Many grammatical and /or spelling errors and multiple formatting weaknesses	Minor grammar and/or spelling errors, small formatting concerns	Thoroughly spell-checked and proof-read, few if any errors. Basic formatting rules followed	Nearly perfect in terms of grammar/spelling and formatting /presentation.
Overall evaluation	0pts - 5pts	6pts - 10pts	11pts - 15pts	16pts - 20pts	20pts - 24pts

Appendix B: Comprehensive Exams General Assessment Rubric

Evaluation → Objective ↓	Not Pass (0 pts)	Pass (1 pt)	High Pass (2 pts)
Broad knowledge of field			
Literature	Weak and/or inchoate knowledge, significant gaps in knowledge of core texts	Sufficient familiarity with core texts in the field. Good ability to link diverse texts and knowledge of evolution of the theoretical arguments in the literature	Outstanding and comprehensive knowledge of core literature, as well as familiarity with significant secondary texts. Exceptional ability to link diverse texts and theoretical arguments in the literature
Core debates	inability to fully explain or engage with core debates within the field	Clear ability to explain and engage with core debates in the literature	Thorough knowledge of, and ability to engage with and contribute to the core debates in the field
Outstanding issues	inability to demonstrate knowledge and/or comprehension of significant outstanding issues in the field	Substantial knowledge of areas of outstanding debate within the field, clear ability to contribute to debates	Comprehensive knowledge of outstanding debates, substantial ability to contribute to theoretical debates
Sub-field knowledge			
Literature	Weak and/or inchoate knowledge, significant gaps in knowledge of core texts	Sufficient familiarity with core texts in the field. Good ability to link diverse texts and knowledge of evolution of the theoretical arguments in the literature	Outstanding and comprehensive knowledge of core literature, as well as familiarity with significant secondary texts. Exceptional ability to link diverse texts and theoretical arguments in the literature
Core debates	inability to fully explain or engage with core debates within the field	Clear ability to explain and engage with core debates in the literature	Thorough knowledge of, and ability to engage with and contribute to the core debates in the field
Outstanding issues	inability to demonstrate knowledge and/or comprehension of significant outstanding issues in the field	Substantial knowledge of areas of outstanding debate within the field, clear ability to contribute to debates	Comprehensive knowledge of outstanding debates, substantial ability to contribute to theoretical debates

Appendix B: Comprehensive Exams General Assessment Rubric (continued)

Evaluation → Objective ↓	Not Pass (0 pts)	Pass (1 pt)	High Pass (2 pts)
Topic Specific Expertise			
Literature	Weak and or inchoate knowledge, significant gaps in knowledge of core texts	Sufficient familiarity with core texts in the field. Good ability to link diverse texts and knowledge of evolution of the theoretical arguments in the literature	Outstanding and comprehensive knowledge of core literature, as well as familiarity with significant secondary texts. Exceptional ability to link diverse texts and theoretical arguments in the literature
Core debates	inability to fully explain or engage with core debates within the field	Clear ability to explain and engage with core debates in the literature	Thorough knowledge of, and ability to engage with and contribute to the core debates in the field
Outstanding issues	inability to demonstrate knowledge and/or comprehension of significant outstanding issues in the field	Substantial knowledge of areas of outstanding debate within the field, clear ability to contribute to debates	Comprehensive knowledge of outstanding debates, substantial ability to contribute to theoretical debates
Overall evaluation	0pts - 8pts	9pts - 13pts	14pts-18pts

Appendix C: Prospectus and Dissertation Assessment Rubrics

Evaluation → Objective ↓	Not pass (0pts)	Conditional Pass (1pt)	Pass (2pts)
Research Question	Poorly formulated research question. Unclear goals and scope of research	Research questions presented, but with some ambiguity present. Scope and goals of research not fully delineated	Very well defined research question, with clear goals and well defined scope.
Literature Review	Substantially incomplete review of the relevant literature, little or no secondary literature covered	Largely complete presentation of core literature, but with some important gaps	Comprehensive review of literature, including substantial secondary sources
Theoretical framework	Underdeveloped theoretical framework, with poorly defined or absent hypotheses	Theoretical framework and hypotheses presented, but with some weaknesses, holes and questions	Well developed theoretical framework with clearly defined hypotheses
Methodology	incomplete or absent presentation or explanation of methodology to be employed	Methodological plan presented, but either incomplete or with questionable parameters	Well constructed methodological structure
Workplan and timeline	Absent or unrealistic work plan and/or timeline for dissertation completion	incomplete or not entirely realistic work plan and/or timeline.	Realistic, well structured and organized work plan for dissertation completion
Overall presentation	Poorly formatted, basic grammar and/or style errors. Absent or incomplete table of contents and/or bibliography	Generally acceptable presentation with some weaknesses in grammar, style or with incomplete bibliography/table of contents	Clear, well structured and professional presentation including table of contents and full bibliography
Overall evaluation	0pts - 5pts	6pts - 9pts	10pts - 12pts

Appendix D: Graduate Annual Activities Report

Figure 1. University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric

Related resources are found at <http://www.ua.assessment.edu>

Program:

Year:

Component	Criterion	Rating			Comments
		Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
Mission Statement	Mission statement is articulated clearly.				
	The program mission clearly supports the College and University missions, and includes specific statements describing how it supports these missions.				
Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Assessment Measures	SLOs are stated clearly.				
	SLOs focus on demonstration of student learning.				
	SLOs are measurable.				
	Measurements are appropriate for the SLO.				
Research	Research expectations for the program are clear, concise, and appropriate for the discipline.				
Assessment Map	The Assessment Map indicates the times in the program where the SLOs are assessed and measured.				
	The Assessment Map identifies the assessments used for each SLO.				
Assessment Cycle	The assessment cycle is clear.				
	All student learning outcomes are measured.				
	Data is collected at least once in the cycle.				
	The cycle includes a date or time period for data analysis and interpretation.				
	The cycle includes a date for planning improvement actions based on the data analysis.				
	The cycle includes a date for dissemination of results to the appropriate stakeholders.				

University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric, continued

Component	Criterion	Rating			Comments
		Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
Measurement Tools	Measurement tools are described clearly and concisely.				
	Measurements are appropriate for the SLOs.				
	Methods and procedures reflect an appropriate balance of direct and indirect methods.				
	The report presents examples of at least one measurement tool.				
Assessment Oversight	Appropriate personnel (coordinator, committee, etc.) charged with assessment responsibilities are identified				