2012-2013 Undergraduate Academic Assessment Plan

Political Science

Liberal Arts & Sciences

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Political Science – Liberal Arts and Sciences
Undergraduate Academic Assessment Plan

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Political Science at the University of Florida closely aligns with the UF and CLAS mission to produce scholarly research, creative works, and outstanding students. Through teaching, research, and service, the Department of Political Science is committed to educating and training tomorrow's citizens and leaders in government, the law, business, civil society, and higher education; to creating new ideas and knowledge; and to contributing to the effectiveness of the public sphere. From making local governments work better to meeting environmental challenges, from changing the way we think about the global community to developing a strong sense of public ethics, our faculty and students seek to understand and address the most critical political issues of the day. Our students learn basic information about United States and world politics, how theoretical perspectives help us understand historical and contemporary political phenomena, and how that understanding can be applied in research and political action. Our broad-based, undergraduate instruction and innovative graduate programs contribute to a diverse, effective, and empowered citizenry and the internationalization of the university curriculum. Our students, with an enhanced grasp of content knowledge, ability to think critically, and communicate effectively will serve and lead in the state of Florida, the country, and the world.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

New /Revised SLOs, 2013-2014	2011-2012*, 2012-2013* SLOs
Content	
Identify, describe and define basic factual information and analytical concepts concerning political systems.	Knowledge of government and politics in the U.S. and elsewhere.
Critical Thinking	
Analyze political issues and phenomena using political science concepts, theories, and methods through internships and research projects.	Use critical analytic and research skills to study government and politics.
Communication	
Use argument and evidence effectively to communicate original analysis of political phenomena.	Articulate information and ideas in speech and in writing about government and politics.

*Undergraduate catalog dates

Curriculum Map

Curriculum Map for:

Political Science   College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Key: **I**ntroduced   **R**einforced   **A**ssessed

Courses SLOs	CPO2001	POS2041	INR2001	POT2002	INR3603	POS3204	PAD3003	POS4734	PAD4940	POS4940	POS4931	POS4905	POS4970
Content Knowledge													
#1	I	I	I	I	R	R	R	R,A Research Project	R,A Internship Report	R,A Internship Report	R,A	R,A Research Project	R,A Thesis
Critical Thinking													
#2	I	I	I	I	R	R	R	R,A Research Project	R,A Internship Report	R,A Internship Report	R,A	R,A Research Project	R,A Thesis
Communication													
#3	I	I	I	I	R	R	R	R,A Research Project	R,A Internship Report	R,A Internship Report	R,A	R,A Research Project	R,A Thesis

Assessment Cycle

Department intends to annually collect and review data obtained through direct and indirect assessment methods. If curricular changes are deemed necessary, they will be initiated by June and implemented as soon as all the necessary approvals are obtained through the UCC process.

Assessment Cycle Chart

Assessment Cycle for:

Political Science   College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Analysis and Interpretation: [September-October]
Improvement Actions: Completed by [May 15]
Dissemination: Completed by [July 1]

Year / SLOs	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Content Knowledge						
#1	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Critical Thinking						
#2	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Communication						
#3	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Methods and Procedures

SLO Assessment Matrix for 2012-2013

2012-13 Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Measurement Procedure
Knowledge of government and politics in the U.S. and elsewhere.	Research proposal; internship report; research project; thesis	Rubric
Use critical analytic and research skills to study government and politics.	Research proposal; internship report; research project; thesis	Rubric
Articulate information and ideas in speech and in writing about government and politics.	Research proposal; internship report; research project; thesis	Rubric

1. Direct Assessment

   The Department of Political Science will rely on the embedded method of assessments - i.e. on assignments in the already existing courses – for its direct assessment. First, we will monitor progress of Political Science majors in three courses that serve as gateways to our three certificate programs: INR3603 – Theories of International Relations for the Certificate in International Relations, POS 3204 – Political Behavior for the Certificate in Political Campaigning, and PAD 3003 – Introduction to Public Administration for the Certificate in Public Affairs. On average, one third of our majors (80-100 students per year) pursue these certificate programs, providing us with a respectable sample to review students' knowledge of key concepts in political science and their analytical abilities. See **Appendix 1** for Historical enrollment data in courses selected for review (R) and assessment (A).

   In addition, we will directly assess students in the following courses:

   a) POS4931 Special Topics - **Oral Presentation** *or* **Poster/Power Point Presentation** *or* **Research Project**
   b) POS4940/PAD 4940 Political Science Internship/Court Internship) – **Internship Report** (research paper that blends the relevant academic literature with insights gained from student's internship)
   c) POS4905 Independent Study – **Research Project** developed in close collaboration with a faculty member
   d) POS4734 Research Methods – **Research Project**
   e) POS4970 Honors Thesis – **Thesis** based on original research and evaluated by a faculty mentor/faculty panel.

   Each of the above options requires that students directly address connections between political concepts, theories and methods and/or political experience. Since Department of Political Science has

no required upper-division courses, the selected courses do not allow us to directly assess all of our majors. However, we believe that the sample of more than 50 percent of our majors who are regularly enrolled in these courses (twice the size of the recommended sample of 260 for 750 students – See **Appendix 1**) would be representative enough. The assignments listed above will enable faculty members to assess students' ability to put political knowledge to work in internships or research projects and to effectively use argument and evidence to communicate original analysis of political phenomena in speech and in writing. See **Appendix 2** for Department Rubric on specific assignments.

2. Indirect Assessment

The Department of Political Science will rely on an biennial SERU surveys for its indirect assessment. SERU survey allows us to compare our Department's performance with that of our social science peers (both at UF and at other research universities). If the University or CLAS move towards an exit survey system (and facilitate its distribution to graduating seniors), we will rely on a set of questions selected from SERU survey to assess our performance on annual basis. See **Appendix 3** for selected survey questions from SERU reports.

Assessment Oversight

See page 7 of the "Developing an Undergraduate Academic Assessment Plan" guide.

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Appendix 1

Enrollment Numbers in Courses Selected for Assessment

	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Sum 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Sum 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Sum 2013
INR 3603	**46**	**90**	**22**	**70**	**45**	**22**	**39**	**57**	
POS 3204				30			37		
PAD 3003		42	25		45	49			67
POS 4734	22	10		20	19		19	25	
PAD 4940				1			1	1	
POS 4940	25	40	28	11	29	47	30	11	12
POS 4931	376	193		268	278		209	284	
POS 4905	4	8		3	11	1	13	17	
POS 4970	5	21		4	18			17	3
	478	404	75	407	445	119	348	412	82
			957			971			842*

*As of 4/26/13

Appendix 2

DEPARTMENT RUBRIC ON RESEARCH PROJECTS (POS4734, POS4905, POS4931)

Research Projects will be judged on readability, the appropriateness of the research question, the suitability of the design for that question, the interpretation of the analysis, and (if appropriate) the feasibility of extending the analysis in an Honors Thesis.

An **A** Research Project is extraordinary work that more than fulfills the requirements of the assignment. The project has a clearly articulated research question, a thorough review of the existing literature on the subject appropriate research design for the question being asked, evidence to support or disprove proposed arguments/hypothesis, and analysis that adequately addresses all aspects of the project's original findings. The project shows great promise for further research.

A B Research Project is clearly above-average and more than meets the requirements of the assignment. The project has a clearly articulated research question and an appropriate research design for the question being asked, However, the project may have some gaps in the review of the existing literature and/or in the evidence that supports or disproves proposed arguments/hypothesis. Consequently, the analysis may seem less convincing than the project's research question and research design might have promised. The project shows promise for further research but have to be revised.

A C Research Project is average work that solidly meets the requirements of the assignment. However, the project's research question may need further fine-tuning and the research design either does not follow directly from the question or allows fro too many alternative explanations, Furthermore, the project may have some gaps in the review of the existing literature and/or in the evidence that supports or disproves proposed arguments/hypothesis. Consequently, the analysis may seem less convincing than the project's research question and research design might have promised. The project would need substantial revisions if it were used in further research.

DEPARTMENT RUBRIC ON INTERNSHIP REPORT (POS4940/PAD4940)

Satisfactory (S):

Student completes the required minimum of 150 hours on the job with his or her internship supervisor. Student submits to Turnitin.com a weekly journal highlighting his or her activities on the job, as well as a 10-12 page paper critically reflecting on his or her experiences. For a satisfactory grade, drawing on the suggested readings provided by the faculty supervisor, student compares and contrasts his or her experiences with the findings of political scientists, answering the following questions: What scholarship is compelling? What scholarship appears to be dated or possibly inaccurate? How does the student's own internship experience inform the scholarly literature?

Unsatisfactory (U):

Student fails to meet the 150 hour on-the-job requirement and fails to submit a satisfactory journal or paper, as detailed above.

DEPARTMENT RUBRIC ON ORAL PRESENTATIONS/POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS

Presentations will be evaluated according to their ability to successfully present evidence/data in support of the main thesis/argument and, consequently, to persuasively communicate concepts in political science/theory/international relations to wider audiences.

An **A** Presentation is extraordinary work that more than fulfills the requirements of the assignment. Students will have a clearly established purpose for presenting, excellent understanding of their audience, and an outstanding ability to communicate their evidence either visually or orally in a dynamic and persuasive manner. They will use well-designed posters, Power Points or oral presentations and demonstrate a number of delivery skills.

A B Presentation is clearly above-average and more than meets the requirements of the assignment. Students will have a purpose for presenting, good understanding of their audience, and a solid ability to communicate their evidence either visually or orally. They will use posters, Power Points or oral presentations and demonstrate a number of delivery skills. They may, however, be less dynamic and/or persuasive than their evidence/arguments would warrant.

A C Presentation is average work that solidly meets the requirements of the assignment. However, students may have some difficulties in establishing the purpose for presenting, understanding of their audience, and/ or ability to communicate evidence either visually or orally in a dynamic and persuasive manner. Students' posters, Power Points or oral presentations may not effectively communicate their intended ideas.

DEPARTMENT RUBRIC ON HONORS THESIS

Students seeking high and highest honors must complete a thesis. The following are the requirements for completing a thesis in the Department of Political Science:

1. **Grade point average** - Student must have a 3.5 or better upper division grade point average to be eligible for the honors program.

2. **POS 4934 Honors Preparation** - May be combined with another upper-division political science course taught by the student's proposed thesis advisor. More typically, students take honors preparation with a professor they have already taken a course with. A less common option is to find an advisor who you have not taken a class with, so long as the professor is willing to advise you. Students will receive a letter grade for this course. Assignments and grades are at the discretion of the thesis advisor. Students must see the department's honors coordinator to register for this course, which is governed by the University's add/drop policy.

3. **POS 4734 Research Methods in Political Science** (3 credits) - See course catalogue for description or click [here](#) to go to the Registrar's course description page. Students must see the department's honors coordinator to register for this course, which is governed by the University's add/drop policy.

4. **POS 4970 Senior Thesis** (2-4 credits, variable)- Written under the direction of the student's thesis advisor. Students will receive a letter grade for this course. Assignments and grades are at the discretion of the thesis advisor. Students must see the department's honors coordinator to register for this course, which is governed by the University's add/drop policy.

DESIGNATION OF HONORS:

Thesis nominated for **Highest Honors** will be evaluated by a faculty panel through a blind review process. **Highest Honors** will be awarded to extraordinary Honors Thesis, which demonstrate mastery of relevant academic literature, incorporate original research, and make a contribution to the field of political science. It is generally expected that the thesis worthy of Highest Honors could result in an article of publishable quality in academic journals.

Higher Honors

Thesis receiving **Higher Honors** will be evaluated by a faculty member who has served as the thesis advisor. Higher Honors will be awarded to above-average thesis, which meet the requirements for an A Research Project (see above rubric on Research Projects) but would not meet the standard of publishable quality expected of the Highest Honors Thesis.

It is possible that students may complete the course work and a thesis and not obtain high or highest honors.

Appendix 3

Survey Questions for Indirect Assessment (from SERU)

Evaluation of the Major

16. Were the following factors very important to you in deciding on your major?

Intellectual curiosity
(1) - Yes   (2) - No
Prepares me for a fulfilling career
(1) - Yes   (2) - No
Complements desire to study abroad
(1) - Yes   (2) - No
Parental desires
(1) - Yes   (2) - No
Easy requirements
(1) - Yes   (2) - No
Allows time for other activities
(1) - Yes   (2) - No
Provides international opportunities
(1) - Yes   (2) - No
Prestige
(1) - Yes   (2) - No
Couldn't get into my first choice of major
(1) - Yes   (2) - No
Interest in subject area
(1) - Yes   (2) - No
Prepares me for graduate/professional school

(1) - Yes   (2) - No
Other
(1) - Yes   (2) - No

17. Thinking back over your coursework this academic year, how often were you REQUIRED to do the following?

Recognize or recall specific facts, terms and concepts
(1) - Never   (2) - Rarely   (3) - Occasionally   (4) - Somewhat often   (5) - Often   (6) - Very often

Explain methods, ideas, or concepts and use them to solve problems
(1) - Never   (2) - Rarely   (3) - Occasionally   (4) - Somewhat often   (5) - Often   (6) - Very often

Break down material into component parts or arguments into assumptions to see the basis for different outcomes and conclusions
(1) - Never   (2) - Rarely   (3) - Occasionally   (4) - Somewhat often   (5) - Often   (6) - Very often

Judge the value of information, ideas, actions, and conclusions based on the soundness of sources, methods and reasoning
(1) - Never   (2) - Rarely   (3) - Occasionally   (4) - Somewhat often   (5) - Often   (6) - Very often

Create or generate new ideas, products or ways of understanding
(1) - Never   (2) - Rarely   (3) - Occasionally   (4) - Somewhat often   (5) - Often   (6) - Very often

18. Thinking back on this academic year, how often have you done each of the following?

Used facts and examples to support your viewpoint
(1) - Never   (2) - Rarely   (3) - Occasionally   (4) - Somewhat often   (5) - Often   (6) - Very often

Incorporated ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments
(1) - Never   (2) - Rarely   (3) - Occasionally   (4) - Somewhat often   (5) - Often   (6) - Very often

Examined how others gathered and interpreted data and assessed the soundness of their conclusions
(1) - Never   (2) - Rarely   (3) - Occasionally   (4) - Somewhat often   (5) - Often   (6) - Very often

Reconsidered your own position on a topic after assessing the arguments of others
(1) - Never   (2) - Rarely   (3) - Occasionally   (4) - Somewhat often   (5) - Often   (6) - Very often

19. Please answer the following questions about your major.

Do you understand how the requirements of your major combine to produce a coherent understanding of a field of study?
(1) - Yes   (2) - No

Are the program requirements well defined?
(1) - Yes   (2) - No

Are department rules and policies clearly communicated?
(1) - Yes   (2) - No

Is the description of the major in the catalog accurate?
(1) - Yes   (2) - No

Are there open channels of communication between faculty and students regarding student needs, concerns, and suggestions?
(1) - Yes   (2) - No

Are students treated equitably and fairly by the faculty?
(1) - Yes   (2) - No

Do faculty clearly explain what constitutes plagiarism and its consequences?
(1) - Yes   (2) - No

Do faculty provide prompt and useful feedback on student work?
(1) - Yes   (2) - No

20. How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your educational experience in the major?

Variety of courses available in your major

(1) - Very dissatisfied	(2) - Dissatisfied	(3) - Somewhat dissatisfied	(4) - Somewhat satisfied	(5) - Satisfied	(6) - Very satisfied

Quality of lower-division courses in your major

(1) - Very dissatisfied	(2) - Dissatisfied	(3) - Somewhat dissatisfied	(4) - Somewhat satisfied	(5) - Satisfied	(6) - Very satisfied

Quality of upper-division courses in your major

(1) - Very dissatisfied	(2) - Dissatisfied	(3) - Somewhat dissatisfied	(4) - Somewhat satisfied	(5) - Satisfied	(6) - Very satisfied

Advising by faculty on academic matters

(1) - Very dissatisfied	(2) - Dissatisfied	(3) - Somewhat dissatisfied	(4) - Somewhat satisfied	(5) - Satisfied	(6) - Very satisfied

Advising by student peer advisers on academic matters

(1) - Very dissatisfied	(2) - Dissatisfied	(3) - Somewhat dissatisfied	(4) - Somewhat satisfied	(5) - Satisfied	(6) - Very satisfied

Advising by school or college staff on academic matters

(1) - Very dissatisfied	(2) - Dissatisfied	(3) - Somewhat dissatisfied	(4) - Somewhat satisfied	(5) - Satisfied	(6) - Very satisfied

Advising by departmental staff on academic matters

(1) - Very dissatisfied	(2) - Dissatisfied	(3) - Somewhat dissatisfied	(4) - Somewhat satisfied	(5) - Satisfied	(6) - Very satisfied

Quality of faculty instruction

| (1) - Very dissatisfied | (2) - Dissatisfied | (3) - Somewhat dissatisfied | (4) - Somewhat satisfied | (5) - Satisfied | (6) - Very satisfied |

Quality of teaching by graduate student TA's

| (1) - Very dissatisfied | (2) - Dissatisfied | (3) - Somewhat dissatisfied | (4) - Somewhat satisfied | (5) - Satisfied | (6) - Very satisfied |

Availability of courses for general education or breadth requirements

| (1) - Very dissatisfied | (2) - Dissatisfied | (3) - Somewhat dissatisfied | (4) - Somewhat satisfied | (5) - Satisfied | (6) - Very satisfied |

Availability of courses needed for graduation

| (1) - Very dissatisfied | (2) - Dissatisfied | (3) - Somewhat dissatisfied | (4) - Somewhat satisfied | (5) - Satisfied | (6) - Very satisfied |

Access to small classes

| (1) - Very dissatisfied | (2) - Dissatisfied | (3) - Somewhat dissatisfied | (4) - Somewhat satisfied | (5) - Satisfied | (6) - Very satisfied |

Access to faculty outside of class

| (1) - Very dissatisfied | (2) - Dissatisfied | (3) - Somewhat dissatisfied | (4) - Somewhat satisfied | (5) - Satisfied | (6) - Very satisfied |

Ability to get into a major that you want

| (1) - Very dissatisfied | (2) - Dissatisfied | (3) - Somewhat dissatisfied | (4) - Somewhat satisfied | (5) - Satisfied | (6) - Very satisfied |

Opportunities for research experience or to produce creative products

| (1) - Very dissatisfied | (2) - Dissatisfied | (3) - Somewhat dissatisfied | (4) - Somewhat satisfied | (5) - Satisfied | (6) - Very satisfied |

Educational enrichment programs (e.g., study abroad, internships)

| (1) - Very dissatisfied | (2) - Dissatisfied | (3) - Somewhat dissatisfied | (4) - Somewhat satisfied | (5) - Satisfied | (6) - Very satisfied |

21. How many professors do you know well enough to ask for a letter of recommendation in support of an application for a job or for graduate or professional school?