

Date Received _____

**Semester Assessment Report Form: Fall 2007 Data
DUE March 31, 2008**

Directions: Please complete a form for each of the programs within your department. This form was designed to provide a format for assessment reporting and should not be used to limit the amount of information provided. Each box that is attached to each of the sections is designed to adjust to varying lengths. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Bea Babbitt at x51506 or via email at: bea.babbitt@unlv.edu.

*****Please submit the report electronically to bea.babbitt@unlv.edu**

1. Program Information:

Program	Masters of Arts in Political Science
Department	Political Science
College	Liberal Arts
Program Assessment Coordinator	Dr. Kenneth E. Fernandez
Semester Data Collected	Fall 2007
Report Submitted by	Dr. Kenneth E. Fernandez
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Date Submitted	March 31, 2008

2. According to the Assessment Plan for this program, what were the planned assessments to be conducted during the Fall 2007 semester? You may want to copy and paste from this program's assessment plan.

Which outcomes for this program were measured?	How did you measure the outcomes?	What results did you expect? If the students performed well what would their performance look like, i.e. percentages, means, or comparisons to a national standard?
7 outcomes were evaluated this semester.		
1. Development of critical thinking skills necessary for the evaluation of social science concepts.	Instructor course grades of student performances. Student comments and evaluation of course in teaching evaluations. Interviews with graduate students.	Passing grades in core research methods and related courses. Positive evaluations of course by students.

<p>2. Knowledge of the research process in the social sciences.</p>	<p>Instructor course grades of student performances. Student comments and evaluation of course in teaching evaluations. Interviews with graduate students.</p>	<p>Passing Grades in core research methods and related courses. Positive evaluations of course by students.</p>
<p>3. Development of the skills and knowledge needed for informed information consumption.</p>	<p>Instructor course grades of student performances. Student comments and evaluation of course in teaching evaluations. Interviews with graduate students.</p>	<p>Passing grades in core research methods and related courses. Positive evaluations of course by students.</p>
<p>4. Development of knowledge of the multiple motivations and constraints underlying political behavior.</p>	<p>Instructor course grades of student performances. Student comments and evaluation of course in teaching evaluations. Interviews with graduate students.</p>	<p>Passing Grades in core research methods and related courses. Positive evaluations of course by students.</p>
<p>5. Development of an understanding of the multi-causal nature that characterizes the social world.</p>	<p>Instructor course grades of student performances. Student comments and evaluation of course in teaching evaluations. Interviews with graduate students.</p>	<p>Passing grades in core research methods and related courses. Positive evaluations of course by students.</p>
<p>6. Application of the social science research process.</p>	<p>Instructor course grades of student performances. Student comments and evaluation of course in teaching evaluations. Interview with graduate students.</p>	<p>Passing Grades in core research methods and related courses. Positive evaluations of course by students. Students expressing a positive understanding of the application of course objectives and assignments to the research process (i.e. M.A. thesis)</p>
<p>7. Upon completion of the program students will have knowledge of the theoretical and methodological development and controversies within the discipline.</p>	<p>Completion of thesis or written and oral exam.</p>	<p>Positive (Passing) evaluation of thesis or exam committee.</p>

3. Results. What are the results of the planned assessments listed above? Describe below or attach to the form.

Results			
I. Student Grades			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	A	32	58.2
	A-	8	14.5
	B	5	9.1
	B+	8	14.5
	C+	1	1.8
	WD	1	1.8
	Total	55	100.0
II. Student Course Evaluations			
<p>The overall course evaluation averages for the graduate classes were high: 3.41, 3.51, 3.71, 3.76, 3.77</p>			
III. Comments of students in teaching evaluations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course was very comprehensive, was extensive in scope • Assignments were useful • Course used timely, real-world examples and topics • Course was challenging course • Enlightening, informative • Course was helpful for future thesis work • Course prepares political science students for future thesis and research work • Homework reinforces learning • Applies directly to graduate research • Great exposure to classical theories • Challenged with the reading material • More emphasis on practical “problem-solving” of policy issues needed • Group projects, more writing assignments • More open/less biased discussion environment • More structured discussion • Less discussion and Less student presentations/more lecture • Readings assignments should be more sophisticated (graduate leve) • A need for more material on qualitative research • Need the use of computers in class 			

IV. Comments of Students in Interviews

- Consistently, students responded that the courses and course assignments were preparing them for their thesis research: hunting down information, collecting data, choosing an appropriate method, etc.
- Several students mentioned that they wish they had better training and feedback in professional and technical writing.
- Some students had expected that the program would provide more practical training or specialized application (e.g., campaign and elections, more policy analysis).
- Some students felt that there was an ideological or methodological bias in some courses and wanted instructors to be more open to differing opinions.

4. Conclusions and Discoveries. What conclusions or discoveries were made from these results? Describe below or attach to the form.

Conclusions and Discoveries

The main goal of the assessment of the graduate program is to assess whether our graduate students are making adequate progress through the program and that the program and its curriculum are preparing students to begin work on their thesis. Overall students expressed through their evaluations and comments that they were satisfied with the program and felt that the courses were challenging and were providing them the skill necessary to complete their thesis. Some suggestions from students focused on writing skills rather than research skills. A few students stated that the thesis requires a type of technical or professional writing and they wished they had better training and feedback with such writing (e.g., assignment of a professional paper or offering a thesis writing course). In addition, some were hoping for more practical training and experience in the field of political science.

5. Use of Results. What program changes are indicated? How will they be implemented? If none, describe why changes were not needed.

At the present time, the Department of Political Science does not plan to make any major changes to the program. The reason for this is that the department has submitted a proposal to significantly overhaul the graduate program. Specifically, the proposal is for a PhD. in political science that would shift the focus of the graduate program from a general political science degree to a specialized degree in global studies. At the present time, the proposal is waiting approval from the administration. As a consequence, any attention that the department would devote to the MA program is likely to be short lived because when the PhD. comes on line the emphasis of the graduate program will change dramatically (e.g., more rigorous admission standards; a well defined plan of study; and increased expectations of student performance).

Student suggestions for a professional paper requirement or a thesis writing course will be brought to the attention of the department and is an issue that may be resolved once the PhD program has begun.

6. Dissemination of Results, Conclusions, and Discoveries. How and with whom were the results shared?

The information was distributed to all full time faculty members in the Department of Political Science. In addition, the report is posted on the Department of Political Science web page.