

**Spring 2006 Semester Assessment Report Form  
DUE October 31, 2006**

**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](mailto:bea.babbitt@unlv.edu).

**\*\*\*Please submit the report electronically to [bea.babbitt@unlv.edu](mailto:bea.babbitt@unlv.edu)**

1. Program Information

Program	Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
Department	Political Science
College	Liberal Arts
Program Assessment Coordinator	Dr. David F. Damore
Semester Data Collected	Spring 2006
Report Submitted by	Dr. David F. Damore
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Date Submitted	October 31, 2005

2. According to the Assessment Plan for this program, what were the planned assessments to be conducted during the Spring 2006 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?
8 outcomes out of a total of 8 outcomes evaluated this semester.		
1. Development of critical thinking skills necessary for the evaluation of social scientific concepts.	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	20% to 30% improvement between the Pre and Post Tests and agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their critical thinking skills improved
2. Development of persuasive writing skills.	Program Exit Surveys	Agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their persuasive writing skills improved
3. Knowledge of the research process in the	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	20% to 30% improvement between the Pre and Post Tests and agreement

social sciences		from a majority of students who completed the program that their understanding of the research process improved
4. Development of the skills for sophisticated information consumption	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	20% to 30% improvement between the Pre and Post Tests and agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their information processing skills improved
5. Comprehension of the obligations and expectations of citizenship.	Program Exit Surveys	Agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their understanding of the expectations of citizenship improved
6. Knowledge of the interplay between preferences and institutions for shaping political outcomes.	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	20% to 30% improvement between the Pre and Post Tests and agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their understanding of the factors shaping political outcomes improved
7. Comprehension of the multiple motivations and constraints underlying political behavior.	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	20% to 30% improvement between the Pre and Post Tests and agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their understanding of the factors underlying political behavior improved
8. Identification of the multi-causal nature that characterizes the social world.	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	20% to 30% improvement between the Pre and Post Tests and agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their understanding of the multi-causal nature that characterizes the social world improved

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

During the spring of 2006, the Department of Political Science used two instruments to assess student learning. For all lower division course offerings required for the undergraduate major (PSC 100, 101, 200, 211, 231, and 302), as well as PSC 407I a ten question multiple choice test, unique to each course, was administered at the start (n =

1490) and end of the semester (n = 1443). The purpose of this assessment instrument was to measure student learning over the course of the term by examining differences between the pre and post tests. The second assessment instrument consisted of an exit survey administered to all students graduating in the spring and summer of 2006 with either a major or minor in Political Science (n = 27).

Turning first to the assessment of the program's lower division offerings, which are presented in Table 1 below, the results are largely mixed. Specifically, the table summarizes the overall course means (out of a possible 10) for both the pre and post tests and the differences between the two tests. With the exception of one section of PSC 101, all classes assessed demonstrated improvement from the start to the end of the term (summarized in the Difference column). However, the improvement across courses and across sections for the same courses was uneven. For instance, some sections of PSC 100 (The Nevada Constitution) showed significant improvement (over thirty percent), while others did not. The variation is greatest among different sections of PSC 101 (Introduction to American Politics). At the same time, it is difficult to read too much into the results because there is also a great deal of variation in the pre test scores. This is most notable for the various sections of PSC 200 (Survey of Political Theory) and PSC 231 (World Politics) where the pre-test course means are quite high, leaving little room for improvement. The results also indicate no systematic differences between courses taught by full time faculty as compared to courses taught by lectures or part time instructors. Similarly, there appears to be no systematic differences between courses that meet once a week, as compared to those that meet on multiple days.

Table 2 provides a summary of the assessment of program learning requirements for students graduating with either a major or minor in Political Science in either the spring or summer of 2006. Specifically, the table displays the frequencies gleaned from a series of questions taken from the program exit survey asking students to rate how well the program fulfilled their expectations, as well as how the program helped them master the learning outcomes indicated above. Across the board, the 27 students who completed the exit survey indicated satisfaction with the program and more importantly, that completion of the program instilled the skills encompassed in the learning. Specifically, over 85% of program graduates felt that the program fulfilled their expectations; nearly 90% either agreed or strongly agreed that the program improved their critical reasoning skills; over 96% either agreed or strongly agreed that the program strengthened their persuasive writing skills and improved their understanding of how preferences and institutions affect political outcomes, as well as improved their understanding of the factors that underlie political behavior; 100% agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped them to better understand the social scientific research process and improve their ability to understand sophisticated political information; just under three quarters either agreed or strongly agreed that the program help them to better understand the obligations and expectations of citizenship; over 95% either agreed or strongly agreed that the program help them to better understand the multi-causal nature that characterizes the social world; and nearly 89% either agreed or strongly agreed that completion of the program helped them better understand how multi-culturalism shapes political outcomes in the international arena.

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

Conclusions and Discoveries

The major discoveries and conclusions taken from the assessment instruments administered in the spring of 2006 are the clear disjuncture between the performance of those students who take the department's lower division undergraduate offerings and those who complete their major or minor in Political Science. Specifically, students enrolled in the department's lower division offerings demonstrated inconsistent performances. To some degree, this may reflect problems with the measurement instruments administered to the lower division courses (which are being revamped for subsequent reports), as well as the fact that for the vast majority of students who are enrolled in the introductory course this is the only contact they will have with the Department of Political Science. Thus, many of these students may have little interest in the discipline and may look at these courses as nothing more than the means to fulfill general education requirements. In contrast, students who choose to major in Political Science and who successfully complete the department's major and minor requirements have much greater interest in the study of politics and not surprisingly, this interest translates into these students seeing much greater value in their chosen area of study.

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 is making some changes to the program in response to the data collected from the assessment instruments. For the lower division courses, the survey instruments are being revamped so as to more accurately gauge students' learning. In addition, during the fall of 2006 some of the instructors who regularly teach PSC 101 have pooled their test questions into a larger database that will allow faculty members to develop exams from a shared question database. This, in turn, should increase the consistency in course content across instructors. Depending upon how well this works for PSC 101, the department may implement a similar approach for the department's other lower division offerings. For the department's upper division courses, the most frequently made suggestion in the exit surveys was to increase course offerings. While the department is hindered in its ability to offer as many courses as it would like to (because of the department's unfavorable faculty to major ratio; the second worst in the College of Liberal Arts), this year the department is recruiting two positions in Comparative Politics. The addition of these new faculty members, coupled with the recent hiring of a senior faculty member (who will begin in the fall of 2007) should allow the department to better serve its major and minor clientele. At the same time, given the overwhelming satisfaction that the department's graduates express with the undergraduate program, the department sees no reason to implement any additional changes at this time.

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

The information was distributed to all instructors teaching undergraduate courses in the Department of Political Science, as well as the Dean's Office in the College of Liberal

Arts. In addition, the results of the exit surveys for spring 2006 are posted on the Department of Political Science web page.

**TABLE 1**  
**POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT PRE AND POST TEST SUMMARY**  
**SPRING 2006**

Course	Course Number	Pre Mean	N	Post Mean	N	Difference
<i>NV Constitution</i>	100-OM1	5.4	55	6.6	51	1.2
<i>NV Constitution</i>	100-OM2	4.1	48	5.8	50	1.7
<i>NV Constitution</i>	100-OM4	4.9	31	8.2	28	3.3
<i>NV Constitution</i>	100-OM5	5.2	11	9	11	3.8
<i>NV Constitution</i>	100-OM6	4.1	25	6.7	22	2.6
<i>NV Constitution</i>	100-OM7	4.9	41	6.4	42	1.5
<i>NV Constitution</i>	100-OM8	4	11	7.2	8	3.2
<i>NV Constitution</i>	100-OM9	4.4	5	6.4	10	2
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-001	4.7	38	7.1	32	2.4
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-002	4.9	49	7.5	47	2.6
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-003	5	48	7.2	48	2.2
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-004	4.9	54	6.9	54	2
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-005	5.8	40	7.4	47	1.6
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-006	5	38	6.4	47	1.4
<b>Intro Amer. Gov't</b>	101-007	4.1	41	5.3	32	1.2
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-008	5.6	49	6.2	54	0.6
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-009	5.1	122	5.8	135	0.7
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-010	4.9	50	6.1	40	1.2
<b>Intro Amer. Gov't</b>	101-011	4.7	45	5.4	53	0.7
<b>Intro Amer. Gov't</b>	101-012	5.6	43	7.3	45	1.7
<b>Intro Amer. Gov't</b>	101-013	5.5	31	6.1	27	0.6
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-014	5.7	45	6.1	37	0.4
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-015	5.5	35	5.3	30	-0.2
<u>Intro Amer. Gov't</u>	101-016	4.8	25	5.4	22	0.6
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-017	4.4	28	6.7	26	2.3
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-018	4.6	44	6.6	43	2
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-019	5.3	21	7.1	16	1.8
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-020	5.2	17	7.5	13	2.3
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-021	4.5	15	6.7	10	2.2
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-701	5.7	10	7.6	11	1.9
<i>Intro Amer. Gov't</i>	101-702	5.6	10	6	6	0.4
Survey Pol. Theory	200-001	7.7	29	8.9	29	1.2
Survey Pol. Theory	200-002	7.3	27	8	22	0.7
<b>Survey Pol. Theory</b>	200-003	7.1	27	7.1	28	0
<i>Comparative Gov/Politics</i>	211-001	5.5	43	6.1	37	0.6
Comparative Gov/Politics	211-002	5.1	46	5.6	40	0.5

<i>Comparative</i>						
<i>Gov/Politics</i>	211-003	5.3	36	6.5	28	1.2
World Politics	231-001	6.8	43	8.2	47	1.4
World Politics	231-002	6.5	39	7.8	48	1.3
<i>World Politics</i>	231-003	5.8	30	6.7	35	0.9
Research Methods	302-001	5.5	22	6	19	0.5
Pol/Problems in Dev Areas	407I-001	5.7	23	7.8	13	2.1
			1490	1443		

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Note: Underline = one day a week courses; italics = part time instructors; bold = lecturers.

**TABLE 2**  
**LEARNING OUTCOME FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS FROM PSC EXIT**  
**SURVEYS, SPRING AND SUMMER 2006**

**Did the program fulfill your expectations?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	4	14.8	14.8	14.8
	Yes	23	85.2	85.2	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	

**Pursuing a degree in political science at UNLV strengthened my critical reasoning skills (e.g., the ability to use logic and reasoning in solving problems).**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither agree or disagree	3	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Agree	16	59.3	59.3	70.4
	Strongly agree	8	29.6	29.6	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	

**Pursuing a degree in political science at UNLV strengthened my persuasive writing skills (e.g. the ability to articulate, support, and defend an argument).**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither agree or disagree	1	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Agree	17	63.0	63.0	66.7
	Strongly agree	9	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	

**Pursuing a degree in political science at UNLV helped me to understand the research process in the social sciences**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	16	59.3	59.3	59.3
	Strongly agree	11	40.7	40.7	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	

**Pursuing a degree in political science at UNLV improved my ability to understand sophisticated political information communicated through the media and scholarly writing.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	12	44.4	44.4	44.4
	Strongly agree	15	55.6	55.6	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	

**Pursuing a degree in political science at UNLV helped me to better understand the obligations and expectations of citizenship.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither agree or disagree	7	25.9	25.9	25.9
	Agree	11	40.7	40.7	66.7
	Strongly agree	9	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	

**Pursuing a degree in political science at UNLV improved my understanding of the role of preferences and institutions for shaping political outcomes.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither agree or disagree	1	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Agree	13	48.1	48.1	51.9
	Strongly agree	13	48.1	48.1	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	

**Pursuing a degree in political science at UNLV allowed me to comprehend the factors that motivate and constrain political behavior.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither agree or disagree	1	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Agree	16	59.3	59.3	63.0
	Strongly agree	10	37.0	37.0	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	

**Pursuing a degree in political science at UNLV helped me to recognize the multi-causal nature that characterizes the social world.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither agree or disagree	4	14.8	14.8	14.8
	Agree	13	48.1	48.1	63.0
	Strongly agree	10	37.0	37.0	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	

**Pursuing a degree in political science at UNLV helped me to better understand the role of multiculturalism in shaping international political exchanges and outcomes.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	1	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Neither agree or disagree	2	7.4	7.4	11.1
	Agree	9	33.3	33.3	44.4
	Strongly agree	15	55.6	55.6	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	