

Date Received _____

**Semester Assessment Report Form: Spring 2008 Data
DUE October 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	Spring 2008
Report Submitted by	Dr. Kenneth E. Fernandez
Phone/email	702-895-4029/kenneth.fernandez@unlv.edu
Date Submitted	October 30, 2008

2. According to the Assessment Plan for this program, what were the planned assessments to be conducted during the Spring 2008 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	18	48.6
A-	5	13.5
B	2	5.4
B-	1	2.7
B+	8	21.6
F	2	5.4
WH	1	2.7
Total	37	100.0

II. Student Course Evaluations

The overall course evaluation averages for the graduate classes were above average to high: 3.12; 3.29; 3.34; 3.72

III. Comments of students in teaching evaluations.

Generally, the student comments on the graduate courses were very strong. This report will focus on the critical comments for future improvement of the curriculum. The most common criticism was the amount of work (being too much). In looking at the syllabi of the graduate courses in the Spring of 2008 I do not think that too much work is being assigned. Other comments include:

- Clear expectations on assignments
- Stronger organization of the course
- Provide more modern, contemporary, or timely material or examples
- More explanation of SPSS statistical software
- Teach more than one statistical software package in research method courses
- More material on the application of research in the real world

IV. Comments of Students in Focus Group and Interviews

Generally, the comments received in the focus groups and individual interviews were not about any courses or course material, but rather about the graduate program itself.

- Students wish there was better communication (formal or informal) about the career options and career guidance in fields relevant to political science and/or Ethics and Policy Studies. This could include training in interviews, creation of curriculum vitae, and even internship opportunities.
- Similarly, students wished there was a better mentoring process (formal or informal) between the faculty and students.
- Students wanted more courses offered.
- Students suggested that if limits in faculty size prevent more courses then hybrid or online courses may allow the department to offer more courses in more fields.
- Political Science M.A. students stated they would like a little more information and guidance about the written and oral examinations option for the M.A. degree.

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. The most common suggestion was better communication between faculty and graduate students and a stronger mentoring relationship to provide opportunities to ask questions about research projects, the field, and careers.

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 recently created a PhD. Program in political science that just began in the Fall of 2008. The department will wait until future assessment reports can incorporate information from the new PhD program before making any programmatic changes. One modest change proposed for the graduate program is to have better rotation in the faculty teaching graduate classes. This will expose graduate students to more faculty and increase opportunities for faculty/student interaction and mentoring.

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.