Program Annual Assessment Report
Academic Year: 2017-2018

Program Name: Political Science    Program Director/Coordinator: C. LaForge (F); K. Rees (S).    Assessment Coordinator: K. Rees

Program Mission:
The Political Science program at IU East believes that its primary mission is to pursue, transmit and translate knowledge of the political aspects of the human endeavor. The program strives to achieve this mission by relating this knowledge to the real world in pedagogical, critical and constructive means to encourage genuine political engagement that meets global and social needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Program Learning Outcomes (Identify at least three—attach page if more)</th>
<th>B. Assessment Tools for Measuring PLOS –</th>
<th>D. Performance Targets</th>
<th>E. Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Students will be able to describe the history, organization, and function of politics from a social scientific perspective. (3 sub-PLOs) | Direct Measures  
Exit exam questions (20) | Direct Measures  
70% of students in the Proficient Progress or above categories. | Direct Measures  
Overall: 62.5% (n=5, N=8) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories.  
FA 2017: 100% (n=3, N=3) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories.  
SP 2018: 40% (n=2, N=5) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories.  
Transfer: 57% (n=4, N=7) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories.  
Native: 100% (n=1, N=1) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories. |
| Indirect Measures  
Exit survey self-evaluation of PLO attainment. | Indirect Measures  
70% of students reporting “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability. | Indirect Measures  
Overall: 100% (n=8, N=8) of the students reported “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability.  
FA 2017: 100% (n=3, N=3) of the students reported “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability.  
SP 2018: 100% (n=5, N=5) of the students reported “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability.  
Transfer: 100% (n=7, N=7) of the students reported “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability.  
Native: 100% (n=1, N=1) of the students reported “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability. |
| 2. Students will appraise the primary philosophical and | Direct Measures  
Exit exam questions (14) | Direct Measures  
70% of students in the Proficient Progress or above categories. | Direct Measures  
Overall: 25% (n=2, N=8) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories. |
theoretical frameworks guiding the study of politics. (3 sub-PLOs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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3. Students will explore the extent and impact of diversity on individuals and government systems. (3 sub-PLOs)

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<td>Exit exam questions (4)</td>
<td>70% of students in the Proficient Progress or above categories.</td>
<td>Overall: 38% (n=3, N=8) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories. FA 2017: 66% (n=2, N=3) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories. SP 2018: 20% (n=1, N=5) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories. Transfer: 29% (n=2, N=7) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories. Native: 100% (n=1, N=1) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories.</td>
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Indirect Measures
Exit survey self-evaluation of PLO attainment. 70% of students reporting “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability. Overall: 100% (n=8, N=8) of the students reported “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability. FA 2017: 100% (n=3, N=3) of the students reported “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability. SP 2018: 100% (n=5, N=5) of the students reported “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability. Transfer: 100% (n=7, N=7) of the students reported “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability. Native: 100% (n=1, N=1) of the students reported “strongly agree” or “agree” with PLO-linked statement of ability. |
4. Students will critically evaluate political information and data based upon the quality of the argument and evidence and will learn to communicate that analysis through written and oral methods. (3 sub-PLOs)

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<tr>
<td>Exit exam questions (7)</td>
<td>70% of students in the Proficient Progress or above categories.</td>
<td>Overall: 75% (n=6, N=8) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories. FA 2017: 100% (n=3, N=3) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories. SP 2018: 60% (n=3, N=5) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories. Transfer: 71% (n=5, N=7) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories. Native: 100% (n=1, N=1) of the students scored in the proficient progress or above categories.</td>
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**Program Reflection Questions:**

1. What evidence do you have that students achieved your PLOs during this assessment cycle?

   - While most PLOs were not met by most the students for the AY2017-2018 assessment cycle, the trend of improvement in direct assessment continues:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AY2015-2016</th>
<th>AY2016-2017</th>
<th>AY2017-2018</th>
<th>% change AY2016-17 to 17-18.</th>
<th>Delta to 70% attainment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLO1 attainment %</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>+27</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO2 attainment %</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO3 attainment %</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO4 attainment %</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>+14</td>
<td>MET</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The increased attainments may be partially explained by increased student and instructor familiarity with the exit exam since it was implemented for the first time in AY2015-2016. We also made minor revisions to the exit exam for AY2017-2018 which aligned the questions.
asked more directly with the course learning outcomes of relevant courses. If improvements continue at the same pace for PLO1 and improve in response to revisions to PLOs, CLOs, and exit exam questions for PLOs 2 and 3, we expect 70% attainment of PLOs in approximately two cycles.

The more modest gains in PLOs 2 and 3 compared to PLOs 1 and 4 likely reflect the relative unfamiliarity of the subject matter to students. This is especially the case with transfer students who may not have taken any political theory or comparative/IR courses prior to enrolling at IUE. Several graduating seniors in Spring 2018 were only taking their first upper division theory course in the same semester, which potentially didn’t give students an opportunity to consolidate the knowledge gained in that coursework prior to the exit exam.

Another explanatory factor for the lower CP/IR performance is that the exit exam tests both CP and IR competencies, but the major requires coursework in only one of the two competencies. As our course offerings in these fields stabilize, we plan to focus on the areas where these two subfields converge for PLO assessment.

The exit survey this spring also yielded some variation in responses at the sub-PLO level (which is not recorded in the overall reporting above), which suggests that students are being more reflective about their learning attainment. This could be due to having included more reflective assignments in POLS courses throughout the curriculum, rather than primarily in upper division courses and the senior seminar course.

2. In what ways will you analyze and use evidence of student learning to improve learning in the next cycle?

- We now have three years of data, so can perform some longitudinal analyses. Additionally, we continue the process begun last year of aligning course syllabuses to program learning outcomes, and are coordinating our introductory level courses (Y103, Y105, Y107 and Y109) so that material is introduced in parallel and self-reinforcing ways, where possible.

- Based on the 2016-2017 data, we revised syllabuses and course content for courses at a variety of levels (including Y105, Y109, Y382, Y377, and others) to reinforce core PLOs more intentionally. We will do the same for AY2018-2019 based on the 2017-2018 data. We also continued developing signature assignments for each upper division course that target specific PLOs and which are being incorporated into the Senior Seminar curriculum as starting points for revision. This proved effective with the Y382, modern political philosophy, course. There was clear evidence of student learning from original drafts to final submissions for these assignments. We will use the experience from the Y382 signature assignments to formulate signature assignments for the upper divisions courses taught in AY2018-2019, which will provide a foundation for revision in the senior seminar course and which will be structured to link directly to measurable PLOs.

- We will incorporate the signature assignments in the senior seminar course into our formal assessment framework using an assessment rubric. This will allow a richer characterization of student attainment of each PLO, in conjunction with the multiple choice exam.

- We will begin developing review modules and optional assignments for the Senior Seminar course to provide students opportunities for directed self study as they prepare for the exit exam and other PLO-linked assignments in the senior seminar course.

-- The political science program faculty continues to review assessment data on a semesterly basis. We meet at the beginning and end of each semester to discuss assessment goals and assessment progress each semester and to collaborate on revisions to PLOs and assessment instruments.
3. How will you ensure shared responsibility for student learning and for the assessment of student learning in the next cycle?

We will continue the collaborative process established over AY2016-2017 and refined over AY2017-2018. Specifically, each AY,

- The faculty discuss and jointly develop recommendations to increase student learning, with a minimum of two assessment-focused program-level meetings each semester, with additional meetings as necessary.
- The faculty works collaboratively to collect assessment data.
- The assessment coordinator shares results with all program faculty each semester, and provides an “executive summary” of strengths and weaknesses (this typically takes place verbally at one of the semesterly meetings described above).

Faculty currently collaborate on capstone course teaching responsibilities, and will continue to work together on evaluation of signature assignments, with the goal of adding more robust types of PLO assessment within the senior seminar course. The signature assignments as developed are and will be explicitly linked to specific PLOs.

4. How will you evaluate and improve your effectiveness in assessing student learning in the next cycle?

- The faculty will review the performance thresholds for the indirect learning assessments to determine if more granularity is necessary (exit survey). For the 2016-2017 AY, we added a question to capture transfer/non-transfer status. For 2017-2018, we have reviewed the sub-PLO indirect outcomes at the beginning of semester program level assessment meeting, since these more specific questions tend to offer a wider range of responses. At the same meeting we discussed the spread between “strongly agree” and “agree” which is not captured in the reported data.

- The assessment-related meetings during the 2017-2018 AY yielded substantial revisions to PLOs which will be reflected in our assessment activity and in our CLO design in the 2018-2019 AY.

- We will continue to collect formative and indirect assessment data in our courses, which we began explicitly collecting in 2017-2018.

- The faculty will continue to integrate signature assignments across the upper division courses and link those assignments to Senior Seminar portfolio assignments and PLOs. We will assess the effectiveness of these assignments each semester.
**Proposed Action Plan to Improve Student Learning:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
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| 1.     | Continued integration of *signature assignments* from each upper division course into Senior Seminar portfolio. Formalize review and feedback to student process (formative assessment).  
| 2.     | Building on the minorly revised senior exit exam from Fall 2017/Spring 2018, incorporate more substantial revisions into the 2018-2019 exam that reflect the evolution of our program in practice, including alignment with appropriate Bloom’s Taxonomy outcomes. |
| 3.     | Develop formalized assessment mechanism (e.g. rubrics and reporting pathway) for evaluation of senior seminar artifacts from a program assessment perspective in addition to student evaluation. |
| 4.     | Build review modules in the Senior Seminar course that reinforce the material that students covered in previous courses, introduce the learning outcomes that they will be assessed on in their revised assignment, and review some of the materials they will see in their post-test.  
| 5.     | Incorporate direct and indirect assessment instruments into core upper division courses to reinforce, and provide early data about student attainment of, PLOs assessed in Senior Seminar course. |
| 6.     | Continue 2017-2018 AY project of developing expanded evaluation rubrics for course assignments (including discussion posts, journal entries, and course papers) that are clearly and explicitly linked to appropriate PLOs (whether via PLO-linked CourseLOs, or to PLOs directly). Consider linking to Mastery Paths on Canvas. |
| 7.     | More rigorous application of the QM rubric to all online classes, to ensure that students are receiving a consistent educational experience within the program. Raising the QM credentials of all TT POLS faculty to QM Certified Reviewer level or higher. Work with all program faculty to harmonize look-and-feel between courses (and to coordinate content where possible, especially at the introductory level).  
- Major progress AY2017-2018: POLS-Y 205 is going up for formal QM review. We plan to undertake self-reviews of intro level courses in AY2018-2019. |
| 8.     | Continued and expanded use of quizzes and reflection assignments (for credit and not for credit) with questions directly linked to PLOs in intro and upper division classes. This is expected to improve student engagement with, and retention of, (PLO-linked) course material, and may help provide objective indicators of student performance that would close the gap between direct and indirect evaluations. |
Assessment Tools. These include all the ways you measure your students’ learning, and can be divided into direct measures and indirect measures.

Direct Measures. Assessment tools that measure your students’ competence in the knowledge areas identified in your program’s learning outcomes. Students directly demonstrate their abilities by completing essays, exams, portfolios, capstone assignments and similar work.

Indirect Measures. Assessment tools that measure your students’ reflections on or perceptions of the learning experience, such as alumni surveys or interviews.

Mission. This is a concise statement of the values and principles which guide your program. Your program’s goals and objectives should proceed from or fit within this vision.

Here’s one model: The mission of (your program) is to (your program’s primary purpose) by providing (your primary functions/activities) to (your students). – From Assessment.uconn.edu/docs/HowToWriteMission.pdf

Performance Targets. These are the levels of skill that you determine students need to meet in order to display competence.

Program Learning Outcomes or PLOs. These are “specific abilities, knowledge, values and attitudes that you want students in your program to possess,” according to the UCF Academic Program Assessment Handbook (2005). They should be specific and measurable. Example: Student will be able to analyze complex cultural and historical themes from a variety of literary periods and cultures.