

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan
Political Science B.A.
 College of Liberal Arts
 6 May 2021

Political Science Mission Statement: The Department of Political Science provides a rigorous quality education that prepares students for professional success meeting the diverse challenges of citizenship and public policy in a changing local, national and global environment.

Political Science Visionary Goal Statement: The Department of Political Science will have its students recognized as significant contributors to society through their service to community, professional skills in the workplace, participation in political processes and policy development, and knowledge of governance. The Department itself will be recognized as providing high quality programs, diverse participatory opportunities, and relevant coursework delivered by dedicated faculty who themselves are identified as accomplished experts in their fields.

Intended Objectives/Outcomes	Assessment Criteria and Procedures	Implementation (what, when, who)
Knowledge of the discipline 1. Knowledge of core concepts and theories of the main political science sub-fields of American Government and Politics, Public and Constitutional Law, Comparative Politics, Political Theory and International Relations. 2. Exposure to different ways of thinking about government and politics associated with diverse historical and cultural contexts, ideologies, economic systems and governing structures. 3. Awareness of theories and practices related to contemporary studies of political science. Familiarity with a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods used to produce, understand and analyze the data used in governance, policy-making and political science scholarship.	1. Students are required to take at least one course from four of the five subfields to graduate. 2. Students' breadth as noted in #1 is complimented by the PS GER options that are survey courses designed to expose students to diverse contexts. 3. All students are required to take and pass PS222 Political Science Research Methods. This classes introduce students to different approaches to social science research methods that are relevant to understanding politics and policy processes. 1-3 Are evaluated through three mechanisms in addition to the requirements of the major. (A) An exit survey provided to graduating seniors asks both about the student's experience with the depth of the discipline as well as their understandings of theory and practice; (B) The Internship option PS475 provides students with exposure to different ways organizations and individuals think about government and politics; (C) the Thesis option PS499 specifically requires students to use more than one subfield in their	1. This is implemented by a student's enrollment in the major. 2. Enrollment in the major secures breadth as noted in #1. 3. PS222 was only offered every other Autumn for many years but is now available to students each Autumn. We offer it both online and live. 1-3 (A) The exit survey has been designed by faculty and is administered online to preserve anonymity. (B) PS475 is available for students Autumn, Spring, and Summer. It is the responsibility of the Chair to manage these internships (C) PS499 is available also Autumn, Spring, and Summer. Students select a faculty member to work with individually. Every two years all student thesis produced are reviewed by the Department Chair and faculty for consistency and quality.

Submitted by: Jeremy Speight, Dept. Chair

	problem definition, research question and design.	
Problem solving 1. Students should be able to recognize assumptions, evaluate arguments and draw conclusions. This includes an awareness of how politics and policy shape problem definition and solution sets.	1. Students must pass classes. In addition, students complete either PS499 or PS475 as a capstone and both directly evaluate a student's capacity to recognize and evaluate social, political, and policy problems. As optional opportunities the Political Science Department hosts and encourages several clubs: Pi Sigma Alpha – the Political Science Honor Society; Model United Nations; Model Arctic Council; research opportunities with faculty on grants.	1. Each course taught focuses, in its subfield, on recognizing, defining, and evaluating problems. These are scaled of course to 100, 200, 300, 400 levels and tied to their content. For example, PS669 Arctic Politics and Governance deconstructs the Arctic as a space, place, and location of people in order to make students aware of how different people define and act in the North. Public Policy PS403/603 specifically addresses problem development and solutions for public programs. Both the PS499 and PS475 focus students in their capstone on problem solving. The former through extensive writing about a political subject, the latter through experiential learning that includes a final report.
Ethical knowledge 1. Students should be able to identify moral dilemmas and distinguish between legal, illegal, ethical, and unethical behavior.	1. Students are required to take and pass PS300X for their GER ethics requirement. In addition, students learn about ethics from their other PS courses, such as campaign finance from American Government 101 or democratic practices and conundrums related to equity from PS202 Democracy and Global Society.	1. PS300X Ethics and Society has been taught Autumn, Spring, and Summer as well as in Maymasters and Wintermasters both live and online in order to ensure all our students have an opportunity to take the course and succeed in it.
Communication 1. Written – Students should be able to develop a paper using cogent arguments and opinions supported by evidence on topics pertaining to their field of study. 2. Oral – Students should be able to deliver professional presentation and answer questions related to it with confidence.	1. Most PS classes are writing intensive classes, these classes are spread out through the subfields so students who take and pass them will have ample opportunity to improve their written work. The two capstone experiences also provide assessment of writing. PS499 Senior thesis option would be the stronger of the two, although students for PS475 Internship in Public Affairs still need to have good written communication. 2. Many PS classes also provide opportunities for improving student oral communication.	We review senior theses every two years for consistency. The Department Chair evaluates each internship completed. As noted above, online exit surveys are managed by the Chair through the administrative assistant. For 1 and 2 these classes are offered by different faculty throughout the academic year.

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	The two capstone experiences also provide assessment of oral communication. Successful completion of PS475 Internship in Public Affairs indicates strong professional oral communication skills. For 1 and 2 the Exit Survey asks about both the written and oral preparation the students received; so we receive direct student feedback upon completion of the major beyond our own in-class assessments.	As optional opportunities to develop communication skills the Political Science Department hosts and encourages several clubs annually: Pi Sigma Alpha – the Political Science Honor Society; Model United Nations; Model Arctic Council; research opportunities with faculty on grants or pursuant to students' interests via URSA. It should also be noted that since PS is a part of the Arctic and Northern Studies (ACNS) backbone we have many courses that are 400/600 level stacked. In each case faculty design two separate syllabi, but the experience for undergrads to witness the excitement and rigor of the graduate students also elevates their communication. These stacked classes are offered each semester but not generally during Summer.
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