

OUTCOME ASSESSMENT
DEPARTMENT
of
HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE
Political Science Discipline
(Academic Department Name)

Fall 2017 & Spring 2018

(Period Covered)

March 1, 2020

(Date Submitted)

Political Science

(Instructional Degree Program)

Bachelor of Arts Major

(Degree Level)

MISSION AND GOALS

Mission of the Department of History & Political Science

Historical and political awareness and understanding constitutes one of the chief attributes of a functional and involved citizen of the United States. It is the mission of this department to provide an education that will contribute to the realization of this ideal by every student. We also seek to train graduates to work in a variety of public and private sector jobs, utilizing their historical and political skills and knowledge. Finally, the department is committed to preserving, interpreting, and promoting the unique multicultural heritage of the region.

Department's/Program's Goal(s) in Support of Institutional Mission:

Political science, in the broadest sense, is the study of governments, governing procedures, and political processes. The political science faculty encourages students to make connections between the theoretical (or textbook) study of government/politics and the application of how government affects their lives in contemporary times through educational simulations, civic-engagement projects, and internships designed to extend students' learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Students in political science may seek careers in government, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), teaching, or private industry. The political science major is an excellent preparation for law school or other academic pursuits such as graduate study. It provides pre-professional training for governmental or public sector positions involving policy-making or administration. Representative employers include government agencies at the national, state,

or local levels, nonprofit organizations, corporations, and research institutions.

Program (Student) Outcomes:

- I. **Disciplinary knowledge:** Upon completion of the political science major, students will have learned or strengthened their knowledge of essential concepts of American governmental institutions, political processes and-or international politics and-or law.
- II. **Analytical/Critical Thinking skills:** Upon completion of the political science major, students will be able to reflect, evaluate and analyze data/information, recognize trends or changes over time on a broad range of political issues and concepts.
- III. **Civic Engagement Activities:** Upon completion of the political science major, students will have participated in civic engagement activities to develop a better understanding of community issues and resources, thus cultivating a connection between students and community, whereby students develop a sense of social and political responsibility.
- IV. **Research and Writing Skills:** Upon completion of the political science major, students will be able to write a well-organized and technically correct political science paper that applies relevant theories and concepts, and defends a thesis statement through the process of discovery and application of scholarly evidence.

Student Learning Outcome 1:

Students will have learned or strengthened their knowledge of essential concepts of American governmental institutions, political processes and-or international politics and-or the law.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1:

- 1. Mastery of content knowledge and skills

Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

Grades from a randomly selected 300 and 400-level Political Science class. Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by at least 50% of political science majors receiving a “C” or above in each of the courses.

Summary of Data:

POLS312: Political Parties and Behavior

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	9	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	9	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

POLS328: Comparative Political Systems

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	10	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	10	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

POLS418: Administrative Law and Procedures

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	8	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	8	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:

Political Science majors were selected from three courses—POLS312, POLS328 and POLS418— to assess learning outcome 1. POLS312 and POLS328 are required courses for the Political Science Liberal Arts concentration, and POLS328 and POLS418 is required for the PreLaw concentration. For the combined courses, a total of 27 Political Science majors were assessed, and 100 percent of the students received a “C” or above in the courses. Twenty-two of the 27 students or 81% received an “A-” or Better. Four students (15%) received a “B, or B+” and one student received a “C.”

Student Learning Outcome 2

Students will be able to reflect, evaluate and analyze data/information, recognize trends or changes over time on a broad range of political issues and/or concepts.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2

1. Mastery of content knowledge and skills
2. Effective communication skills
3. Critical and reflective thinking skills

Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Political Science faculty will evaluate essays and case briefs written by political science majors from one randomly selected 300 and 400-level political science class. The essays will be assessed by the accuracy and application of the data/information, and the development or progression of the political issue or concept. A grade of “C” or above will indicate a successful completion of this outcome.

Summary of Data:

POLS312: Political Parties and Behavior

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	10	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	1
Total Number of Students Assessed:	11	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	89%

POLS410 The American Constitution

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	10	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	4
Total Number of Students Assessed:	14	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	71%

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:

Political Science majors were selected from two courses—POLS312 and POLS410—to assess learning outcome 2. Both courses are required courses for the Political Science Liberal Arts and PreLaw concentration. For the POLS312 course, 11 student essays on the American Party System were evaluated. Six students (55%) received an “A” or above; two students received a “B,” and two students received a “C.” One student received an “F.” For the POLS410 course, a total of 14 Political Science majors were assessed on case briefs, and 71 percent of the students received a “C” or above on their case briefs. Ten of the 14 students received an “C” or Better. Four students received a non-passing grade for their case briefs. The reason for the non-passing grade was due to the students not attending class to present their case briefs.

Student Learning Outcome 3:

Students will have participated in civic engagement activities to develop a better understanding of community issues and resources, thus cultivating a connection between students and community, whereby students develop a sense of social and political responsibility.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3:

1. Mastery of content knowledge and skills
2. Effective communication skills
3. Critical and reflective thinking skills

Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by at least 50% of political science majors attending at least one civic engagement activity.

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	15	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	15	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:

Political Science majors were assessed for learning outcome 3. All 15 students assessed attended at least one civic engagement activity— attended a political campaign activity or local/county/state/tribal public policy-making meeting or attended a court hearing.

Student Learning Outcome 4

Students will be able to write a well-organized and technically correct political science paper that applies relevant theories and concepts, and defends a thesis statement through the process of discovery and application of scholarly evidence.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 4:

1. Mastery of content knowledge and skills
2. Effective communication skills
3. Critical and reflective thinking skills
4. Effective use of technology

Means of Assessment for Outcome 4:

The final research project in POLS 410 American Constitution or POLS 419 Public Administration or POLS 417 Congress and The Legislative Process and POLS 458 Political Theory and Philosophy or POLS 453 International Relations and Human Rights or POLS 463 Political Economy will be used for this assessment. Political Science faculty will evaluate the final research project by the accuracy of the date/information, the progression of the argument is logical and coherent, the applicability of the concepts and the use of relevant sources to support the thesis/argument, and the writing is technically correct (minimal mistakes involving grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure, and references are cited (format/ uniformity/ appropriateness). A grade of “C” or above will indicate a successful completion of this outcome.

Summary of Data:

POLS410 American Constitution

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	12	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	2
Total Number of Students Assessed:	14	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	86%

POLS453 International Relations, Human Rights, and Law

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	0	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	2	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	0

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 4:

Majors were selected from POLS410 to assess learning outcome 4. POLS410 is a required course for the Political Science Liberal Arts and Pre-Law concentration. A total of 14 Political Science Majors were assessed, 86 percent of the students received a “C” or above in the course. POLS453 was taught, but faculty member did not provide any assessment materials and has retired from the position. POLS417, POLS458, and POLS463 were not taught in the Fall 2018 or Spring 2019 semester.

Utilization of Results:

The Outcomes Assessment process provided the Political Science faculty with useful information for the development of the Political Science major.

- 1) The Political Science PreLaw program draws the vast majority of our majors, and the department has been without a PreLaw Faculty member since Fall 2015. Dr. Rodriguez hired to teach “Americanist” and Latino Studies courses, now splits her time between teaching her assigned courses and PreLaw courses. Dr. Manafy, the second Political Scientist retired in Spring 2019. Given these circumstances, The Department of History and Political Science continuously works to improve their program: 1) to increase the number of Majors and Minors, 2) to retain and graduate Majors and Minors, and 3) to expand courses by offering innovative instruction.
- 2) In Fall 2018 and Spring 2019, two contingency faculty were hired to teach POLS3280 Comparative Political Systems and POLS4180 Administrative Law and Procedures. Both faculty experts in their field offered to Political Science majors a fresh and new perspective in Political Science and Law. Both courses drew 13 students majors and non-majors. three Political Science elective classes were converted from a 16-week course into an 8-week course (Rise of the Radical Right and US Foreign Policy, The American & Russian Systems, and Political Economy).
- 3) In Fall 2018, our department offered various modes of instruction: 1) POLS3120 Political Parties and Behavior and POLS3140 Introduction to the Law were offered as asynchronous course that extends to students beyond the Las Vegas community who cannot make it onto campus. Both courses serve as core curriculum classes for the

Political Science Liberal Arts or PreLaw concentration for our majors and minors; 2) Both the POLS3120 and POLS3140 online asynchronous course reached majors and non-majors (Social Work, Psychology, Business Administration, and Criminal Justice) interested in learning about the political process and law. By diversifying, the courses it allowed for Political Science majors and non-majors to take additional upper division courses for completion of their programs of study or meet the 45-hours of upper division course needed to graduate.

- 4) A Political Science requisite is that students participate in a community/civic engagement activity. To satisfy this requirement each student attended and observed various court trials or local, county, tribal and state governmental meetings, and wrote a letter to a newspaper, or their local/state representative regarding an issue/problem in their local community. By attending lawmaking meetings or court trials, students observed and gained a better understanding of the inter-working of these governmental entities. Students participating in community/civic engagement activities develop a better understanding of community issues and resources, thus cultivating a connection between students and community, whereby students develop a sense of social and political responsibility. These students' network and meet professionals in the fields for future practicums/internships and possible job opportunities.
- 5) Despite our limited resources, the number of Political Science majors remains at about 22 majors (Fall 2018). We also awarded five degrees (2018-2019).