

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

Fall 2017 & Spring 2018

(Period Covered)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date Submitted)

**Political Science**  
(Instructional Degree Program)

**Bachelor of Arts Major/Minor**  
(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:

**POLS316 State and Local Government (Asynchronous)**

Total number of students assessed	8		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	6	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	2

**POLS417 The Legislative Process (Blended)**

Total number of students assessed	6		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	6	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:**

Political Science majors were selected from two courses—POLS316 and POLS417— to assess learning outcome 1. Both courses are required courses for the Political Science Liberal Arts and PreLaw concentration. For the combined courses, a total of 14 Political Science majors were assessed, and 86 percent of the students received a “C” or above in the courses. Ten of the 14 students received an “A” or Better. Two students in the POLS316 course received non-passing grades. The reasons for the non-passing grades was numerous missed assignments. Both students will retake POLS316.

**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 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:**

**POLS316 State and Local Government (Asynchronous)**

Total number of students assessed	8		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	6	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	1

**POLS417 The Legislative Process (Synchronous)**

Total number of students assessed	6		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	6	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:**

Political Science majors were selected from two courses—POLS316 and POLS417— to assess learning outcome 2. Both courses are required courses for the Political Science Liberal Arts and PreLaw concentration. For the combined courses, a total of 14 Political Science majors were assessed, and 86 percent of the students received a “C” or above on their essays. Ten of the 14 students received an “B+” or Better. One student the POLS316 course received a non-passing grade for the essay. The reason for the non-passing grade was due to the students not completing the assignment.

**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**

Total number of students assessed	8		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	7	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	1

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:**

Only Political Science majors were assessed for learning outcome 3. Seven of the eight Political Science majors (88 percent) assessed attended at least one civic engagement activity, thus meeting the criteria for learning outcome 3.

**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:**

**POLS417 The Legislative Process (Synchronous)**

Total number of students assessed	6		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	6	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 4:**

Majors were selected from POLS417 to assess learning outcome 4. POLS417 is a required course for the Political Science Liberal Arts and Pre-Law concentration. A total of six Political Science Majors were assessed, 100 percent of the students received a “C” or above in the course. POLS 458 Political Theory and Philosophy or POLS 453 International Relations and Human Rights or POLS 463 Political Economy courses were not taught during the Fall 2017/Spring 2018 Academic year.

**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 for about five years. Dr. Rodriguez hired to teach “Americanist” courses, now splits her time between teaching her assigned courses and PreLaw courses. In the Fall 2017 semester, Dr. Rodriguez was on sabbatical leave, and Dr. Manafy, who teaches International and Comparative courses, was on medical leave until October 2017. In the Spring 2018 semester, Dr. Rodriguez returned, and Dr. Manafy was on medical leave until March 2018. 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 2017, 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). 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.
- 3) In Spring 2018, our department offered various modes of instruction: 1) American National Government was offered as an on-site, in-classroom instruction for first-year students living on campus, and an asynchronous course that extends to students beyond the Las Vegas community who cannot make it onto campus. American National Government serves as a core curriculum class and a recruitment course for our majors and minors. 2) The State and Local Government (a core class for our majors and minors) class was converted to an online asynchronous course reaching majors and non-majors (Social Work, Psychology, and Business Administration) interested in learning about the structure, process, and management of state and local government especially New Mexico. 3) The

Legislative Process class was converted into an online synchronous course reaching students who cannot physically attend classes on-campus but needed a 300-level class to graduate (majors and non-majors)

- 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 increased from 20 majors (Fall 2016) to 24 majors (Fall 2017)—an increase of 4 new students. Also, we awarded three degrees (2017-2018).