

Outcomes Assessment Plan
Public Affairs: Concentration in Political and Governmental Processes

M.A. Public Affairs, Concentration in Political and Governmental Processes

Plan: Fall 2017 & Spring 2018

New Mexico Highlands University: Mission Statement

New Mexico Highlands University is a public comprehensive university serving our local and global communities. Our mission is to provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to attain an exceptional education by fostering creativity, critical thinking and research in the liberal arts, sciences, and professions within a diverse community.

Mission of the Public Affairs Program

The Master of Arts in Public Affairs is an interdisciplinary program in the Social Sciences that provides academic training for careers in public and private organizations, both nationally and internationally. The multidisciplinary core curriculum includes courses in political theory, social theory and historical thought, human culture and economic theory. These courses foster a comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural environment or public and private organizational policy design and implementation. The program prepares students for professional positions in managerial and leadership roles in government agencies, consulting firms, human services, public-interest organizations and businesses significantly affected by public policies, as well as training them for doctoral studies.

Goals of the Public Affairs Program, Political and Governmental Processes Concentration.

Political and historical awareness and understanding constitutes one of the chief attributes of a functional and involved citizen of the United States. Our goal is to provide an education that will contribute to the realization of this ideal by every student. We seek to train graduates to work in a variety of public and private sector jobs, utilizing their historical and political skills and knowledge.

College/University Goals Supported:

The university aspires to develop broadly literate citizens and leaders, educated in analytical and critical thought and the appreciation of the arts and sciences.

Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose Linkage & Institutional Mission Reference:

The University's commitment to programs focusing on a diverse campus community, especially the rich heritage of regional traditions and cultures. Our program is committed to preserving, interpreting, and promoting the unique multicultural heritage of the region.

Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes:

1. Students exhibit an understanding and appreciation of a multidisciplinary approach in relation to the work they eventually do and the social environments in which they live.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of human behavior in all aspects of politics, government, and political processes through practical application, moving beyond observations to scientific inquiry in the study of politics.
3. Students will develop skills in reading, research, writing, critical and reflective thought, and communication. The acquisition of these skills will prepare graduates of the program for policy-making and administrative positions in governmental and non-governmental organizations, political campaigns and political office, and research/data-oriented positions, advancement into JD or PhD programs.
4. Students will master the scholarly literature and theoretical knowledge in their chosen field of concentration (Political Science).
5. Students will have participated in a civic engagement activity, project-based research, or an internship/practicum for the purpose of developing 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.

Student Learning Outcome 1:

Students exhibit an understanding and appreciation of a multidisciplinary approach to graduate education.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills

Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

Students will successfully complete the program's Interdisciplinary Core requirements earning a B or above in four (4) of the following courses:

- ANTH651 – Seminar: Concepts of Human Culture (3)
- POLS563 -- Political Economy (3)
- POLS654 -- Seminar: The State (3)
- SOC638 -- Advanced Classical Social Theories (3) or SOC 639 Contemporary Sociological Theories
- HIST615 – Contemporary Historical Thought

*A course may be approved for substitution for one of the core requirements which may be considered into the assessment.

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ANTH651 – Seminar: Concepts of Human Culture

Total number of students assessed	1		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	1	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

POLS563 -- Political Economy

Total number of students assessed	1		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	1	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

POLS654 -- Seminar: The State

Total number of students assessed	2		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	2	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

*The course was not offered in the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 Semesters. Two students enrolled in POLS614 Public Policy, a substituted course for the POLS654 course.

SOC638 -- Advanced Classical Sociological Theories or SOC639 Contemporary Sociological Theories

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

HIST615 – Contemporary Historical Thought

Total number of students assessed	1		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	1	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:

A total of three MPA graduate students enrolled in one-to-two interdisciplinary core courses taking four-of-five core courses. All three students acquired a grade of “B” or better in four of the five core classes. The cumulative GPA for the three students was 3.8 or better. Successful completion of this outcome was met.

Student Learning Outcome 2:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of human behavior in all aspects of politics, government, and political processes through practical application, moving beyond observations to scientific inquiry in the study of politics.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills
- Effective use of technology

Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Students will achieve a grade of “B” or above in HIST/POLS620 Research Methods in History & Political Science or POLS 20: Research Methods in Political Science. Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by at least 75% of students earning an “A” or “B.”

Total number of students assessed	2		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	1	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	1

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:

Two students were assessed for outcome 2. One students acquired a grade of “B” for POLS620. The second students received an “Incomplete” for the course and has until Fall 2018 to complete the class. One students successfully met outcome 2.

Student Learning Outcome 3:

Students will develop skills in reading, research, writing, critical and reflective thought, and communication. The acquisition of these skills will prepare graduates of the program for policy-making and administrative positions in governmental and non-governmental organizations, political campaigns and political office, and research/data-oriented positions, advancement into JD or PhD programs.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills

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- Critical and reflective thinking skills
- Effective Use of Technology

1st Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

Students will achieve a grade of “B” or above in two of the following courses: POLS563: Political Economy or POLS654 Seminar in The State or POLS519 Public Administration or POLS614 Seminar in Public Policy. Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by at least 75% of students earning an “A” or “B.”

POLS614 Seminar in Public Policy

Total number of students assessed	3		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	3	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3.1:

One student enrolled in POLS563 and two students enrolled in POLS614. The three students achieved a grade of “B+” or better for the courses. Successful completion of 3.1 was met.

2nd Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

Student secured a position with:

- a) policy-making and/or administrative governmental or non-governmental organizations,
- b) a political campaign/s,
- c) a political office, or
- d) a research/data-oriented positions, or
- e) advancement into JD or PhD program.

Total number of students assessed	5		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	4	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	1

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3.2:

Five students were assessed for outcome 3.2.

- 1) Two students were accepted to UNM Law School;
- 2) One of the students secured a positions at the New Mexico Department of Transportation.
- 3) One student is submitting applications to Ph.D. programs.
- 4) The fifth student is actively seeking employment.

3rd Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

Students fill out surveys (see Attachment B) at or after their comprehensive exam or defense, including questions asking them to comment on the program’s impact on their research, writing, and analytical skills. Criteria for success, majority rating program as excellent or good in all three areas.

Total number of students assessed	5		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	5	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3.3:

The survey is being revised and upon completion will be emailed to the students. Upon receipt of the completed surveys, the results will be interpreted and the 2017-2018 Outcome Assessment Report will be updated.

Student Learning Outcome 4:

Students will master the scholarly literature and theoretical knowledge in their chosen field of concentration (Political Science).

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 4:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills

1st Means of Assessment for Outcome 4:

Each faculty evaluator will complete the examination rating form (see attachment A) of the graduating students’ work product (written comprehensive examination, professional paper or thesis). Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by an overall (total rating) of rating of good or excellent on the relevant evaluative measure.

Each faculty evaluator will complete the examination rating form (see attachment A) of the graduating students’ work product (written comprehensive examination, professional paper or thesis). Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by an overall (total rating) of rating of good or excellent on the relevant evaluative measure.

Total number of students assessed	5		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	5	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 4.1:

Three students completed their program of study by taking and completing the comprehensive examination successfully. Two students completed their program of study by completing their professional paper successfully. The examination rating form (attachment A) only applies to students completing his or her thesis, a new examination form will be developed for students completing his/her comprehensive exam or professional paper.

2nd Means of Assessment for Outcome 4:

Students fill out surveys (Attachment B) at or after their comprehensive exam or defense, including a question about the program’s impact on their mastery of the literature relevant and theoretical knowledge to their programs of study. Criterion for success, majority rating program as excellent or good in all three areas.

Total number of students assessed	5		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	5	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 4.2:

The survey is being revised and upon completion will be emailed to the students. Upon receipt of the completed surveys, the results will be interpreted and the 2017-2018 Outcome Assessment Report will be updated.

Student Learning Outcome 5:

Students will have participated in a civic engagement activity, project-based research, or an internship/practicum for the purpose of developing 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 5:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills

Means of Assessment for Outcome 5:

The student survey (Attachment B) includes a question addressing their participation in a civic engagement activity, project-based research, or internship/practicum. Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by at least 50% of graduating students participating in one or more of those activities.

Total number of students assessed	5		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	5	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 5:

The survey is being revised and upon completion will be emailed to the students. Upon receipt of the completed surveys, the results will be interpreted and the 2017-2018 Outcome Assessment Report will be updated.

Utilization of Results:

The Outcomes Assessment process provided the Political Science faculty with useful information for the development of the MA in Public Affairs, concentration in Political and Governmental Processes.

- 1) Little to no resources are allocated to the recruitment into the Graduate program. Many of our undergraduate students, upon completion of their BA in Political Science and who meet the requirements for the graduate program, are accepted into the Public Affairs program. Given our limited resources, in particular—one-to-two Political Science faculty in a given semester—the interdisciplinary core courses provide our students with the opportunity to take classes from Historians, Sociologist and Anthropologists; as a result, students obtain a comprehensive approach to the study of political processes, governmental entities, and community.
- 2) The research courses (POLS520 and POLS620) along with Public Administration and Public Policy provide students with the necessary tools to apply historical research techniques to public policy issues. Moreover, the acquisition of quantitative methods provides students with the skills need for policy analysis and evaluation. Also, students in Political Science have benefitted from their training in GIS. Political Science faculty are interested in developing a certification in GIS for the Social Sciences.
- 3) The successful outcome—four of five graduate students (80 percent)—continuing into Law School or a Ph.D. program or secure a job in the state government suggests that the courses we are providing students are preparing them for excellent job opportunities in their fields on interest.

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- 4) Our department has discussed creating a four-plus-one Master degree program for students who receive a BA in Political Science and move into our Public Affairs Master's program. Also, our department has had informal meetings with the Business department to create an MA in Business and Public Administration. Both "new" programs would generate an increase in graduate students for the Department of History and Political Science.

(Attachment A)

Examination Rating Form of Candidate for Outcomes Assessment Public Affairs/Political Science

Student: _____ Semester: _____

Evaluator: _____ Work product: _____

Each evaluator will rate the candidate by assign a number from 1 to 5 for each of the categories below. A mark of “1” is the lowest (poor), and a mark of “5” is the highest (excellent).

1. Command of the Subject Matter	1	2	3	4	5
2. Application of the Subject Matter	1	2	3	4	5
3. Factual accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
4. Organization (chronology, logical progression)	1	2	3	4	5
5. Clarity of expression and argument	1	2	3	4	5
6. Review of literature (completeness, critical thought)	1	2	3	4	5
7. Original contribution to the field	1	2	3	4	5

Total Points: _____

Comments:

(Attachment B)

Survey of Graduating Students

Public Affairs/Political Science

New Mexico Highlands University

Please help us to evaluate and improve the Public Affairs Program by responding to the following questions. All responses will remain anonymous. **Note: PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE SHEET.**

1. Name _____ ID N° _____.

2. Program Evaluation (please use reverse side if necessary)

2.1. Considering what you learned while in the Public Affairs program at Highlands, what has been most useful or helpful to you?

2.2. To what extent did your experience in the Public Affairs Program assist you in:

	Poorly		Extremely Well		
Understanding the literature of the discipline	1	2	3	4	5
Critical analysis of written arguments	1	2	3	4	5
Appreciating cultural diversity	1	2	3	4	5
Writing clearly	1	2	3	4	5
Developing the skills necessary for research	1	2	3	4	5

2.3. Is there something you wish you had learned while at Highlands that was not included in your Master's program?

2.4. How would you rate the Public Affairs Program in terms of:

	Poor		Fair		Excellent
Quality of courses offered	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of courses offered	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of courses offered	1	2	3	4	5
Accessibility and approachability of faculty	1	2	3	4	5
Education and qualification of faculty	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of academic advising	1	2	3	4	5

2.5. Did you participate in any civic engagement activity, project-based research, or internship/practicum during your graduate studies? Yes or No

2.6. What recommendations would you make concerning the Public Affairs Program at Highlands?

2.7. Looking back, are you pleased you chose to pursue a Master's in Public Affairs?
Please explain.

2.8. In your opinion what is the academic quality of:

	Poor		Fair		Excellent
The Public Affairs Program overall:	1	2	3	4	5
Your specific area of concentration:	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

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Please return this questionnaire to Dr. Rodriguez in Douglas Hall N° 248. Thank you very much for your assistance.

* Please answer these questions only if they are relevant to your experience in the program and concentration.