

OUTCOME ASSESSMENT
DEPARTMENT
of
HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Political Science Discipline
(Academic Department Name)

Fall 2021, Spring 2022,
Fall 2022, Spring 2023

(Period Covered)

October 2023

(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, law, and the political processes. The political science faculty encourages students to make connections between the theoretical (or textbook) study of government/politics, the application of how government affects their lives in contemporary times and understanding how laws affect their day-to-day lives through educational simulations (such as Moot Court, Mock Trials, Legislative practice), 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:

POLS4190 Public Administration (Fall 2021/Blended)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Total number of students assessed | 5 | | |
| Number of Students Meeting Criterion: | 2 | Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion: | 3 |

Julio Castillo (F) 11/11/2021; Briana Thomas (F) 11/02/2021; and Kanean Toledo (F), 10/28/2021

[Thomas, Briana L.](#)

POLS3160 State and Local Government (Spring 2020/Blended)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|---|---|
| Total number of students assessed | 12 | | |
| Number of Students Meeting Criterion: | 9 | Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion: | 3 |

POLS4170 The Legislative Process (Spring 2020/Blended)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Total number of students assessed | 8 | | |
| Number of Students Meeting Criterion: | 8 | Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion: | 0 |

POLS3120 Political Parties and Behavior (Fall 2020/Blended)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|---|---|
| Total number of students assessed | 10 | | |
| Number of Students Meeting Criterion: | 9 | Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion: | 1 |

POLS4100 The American Constitution (Fall 2020/Blended)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|---|---|
| Total number of students assessed | 11 | | |
| Number of Students Meeting Criterion: | 11 | Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion: | 0 |

POLS3280 Comparative Political Systems (Spring 2021/Blended)

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|-----------------------------------|----|--|--|
| Total number of students assessed | 16 | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|--|--|

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|---|---|
| Number of Students Meeting Criterion: | 16 | Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion: | 0 |
|---------------------------------------|----|---|---|

POLS4180 Administrative Law and Procedure (Spring 2021/Blended)

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|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Total number of students assessed | 7 | | |
| Number of Students Meeting Criterion: | 7 | Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion: | 0 |

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:

Political Science majors were selected from seven courses—POLS3120, POLS3160, POLS3280, POLS4100, POLS4170, POLS4190 and POLS4180— to assess learning outcome one. POLS3160, POLS3280, POLS4100, POLS4170 and POLS4180 courses are required courses for the Political Science Liberal Arts and PreLaw concentration. The POLS3120 course is a required course for the Political Science Liberal Arts concentration, and POLS4180 is a required course for the PreLaw concentration. A total of 71 Political Science majors were assessed between Fall 2019 and Spring 2021. Sixty-six students (or 93 percent) of the students received a “C” or above in the various courses. Fifty-Seven of the 71 students (or 80 percent) received an “A” or Better. Six students in the seven-course received non-passing grades—Two “D,” two “F,” and two withdrawals. The reasons for the non-passing grades was due to students 1) incompletions of assignments, 2) stop attending classes, or 3) withdrawal from the class.

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. Analytical, Critical and Reflective thinking skills

Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Political Science faculty will evaluate assignments using basic descriptive analysis using SPSS on the NMHU Remote Desktop. Students utilized the States database that provides data on the following topics—abortion, civic culture, courts, demographics, education, the economy, elections and representation, gay rights, guns, health and religion. Assignments will be selected from political science majors from one randomly selected 300 or 400-level political science class. The assignments 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 (Zoom)

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|---------------------------------------|----|---|---|
| Total number of students assessed | 11 | | |
| Number of Students Meeting Criterion: | 8 | Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion: | 3 |

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:

Political Science majors were selected from one course—POLS316— to assess learning outcome 2. This course is required for the Political Science Liberal Arts and PreLaw concentration. For the course, a total of 11 Political Science majors were assessed, and 73 percent of the students received a “C” or above on their assignments. Two students received a 60 percent, and one student received a zero for the three assignments. The reason for the non-passing grades 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 | 11 | | |
| Number of Students Meeting Criterion: | 9 | Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion: | 2 |

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:

Only Political Science majors were assessed for learning outcome 3. Nine of the eleven Political Science majors (82 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 POLS3120 Political Parties or Pols 3160 State and local Politics or 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:

POLS3120 Political Parties and Behavior and POLS3160 State and Local Government (Synchronous)

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|---------------------------------------|----|---|---|
| Total number of students assessed | 19 | | |
| Number of Students Meeting Criterion: | 16 | Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion: | 3 |

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 4:

Majors were selected from POL3120 and POLS3160 to assess learning outcome 4. POLS3160 is a required course for the Political Science Liberal Arts and Pre-Law concentration, and POLS3120 is only required for the Political Science Liberal Arts concentration. A total of 19 Political Science Majors were assessed, 84 percent of the students received a “C” or above in the course. Three students received the grade of a “zero” for not completing the project. Those three students stop showing up for class.

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. Rodriquez hired to teach “Americanist” courses, now splits her time between teaching her assigned courses and PreLaw courses. Dr. Rodriquez is the only full-time, tenured faculty member in Political Science. Given this circumstance, 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) Political Science faculty converted American National Government (Core Course), POLS3160 State and Local Government (Major Course) and POLS3140 Introduction to the Law (Major Course) to online asynchronous courses. POLS4170 The Legislative Process was converted from a 16-week course into an 8-week course. The discipline created three new 8-weeks courses—Introduction to Homeland Security, Terrorism and Counter Terrorism, and Case Studies in Public Safety— for the newly created Minor and Certificate program in Public Safety Management. 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. Also, all political science courses are offered for in-class and zoom instruction which extends to students beyond the Las Vegas community who cannot make it onto campus.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Political Science faculty partnered with Dr. Denise Montoya and Max Baca, Associate and Vice President for Finance, Administration, and Government Relations for the New Mexico Highlands University Legislative Leadership Fellowship Program. In the Spring, 2019, and Spring 2020--four Political Science students participated each year.
- 5) Despite our limited resources, the number of Political Science majors increased from 20 majors (Fall 2019) to 23 majors (Fall 2020)—an increase of three new students. Also, we awarded six degrees (2019-2020).