Program Assessment Plan

American University

Academic Program: SPA: CLEG - BA

Contact Person for Assessment: Kimberly Cowell-Meyers

Program Mission: The study of political science is an integral part of the liberal arts education at American University. Political science empowers students by teaching them to identify and define important issues in the world around them and to think critically about these issues. Political science also helps students improve their analytical and problem-solving skills by teaching them to develop and evaluate arguments using different methods of analysis. In exposing students to cultures, values, ideas and perspectives that differ from their own, the study of political science provides opportunities for students to investigate human society and understand their role as responsible citizens in today's diverse world.

Political science is often understood as the study of current events or contemporary political history. But the discipline of political science applies theories, concepts, and methods to the study of political phenomena. Our students study the nature of justice and equality, the conditions that are necessary for democracy to flourish, the reasons for and alternatives to war, the challenges of balancing national security and civil liberties, the role of gender in public life, the effect of interest groups on public policy and on elections, the causes of revolution, poverty and crime. They may do so in the traditional classroom setting or they may learn through experience in the laboratory of Washington politics through internships with think-tanks, in congressional offices, political parties, campaigns, and interest groups. Our students also learn the methods of social science research and engage in their own original empirical research as part of their degree program.

The Govt Dept is host to a highly active faculty. They are members of professional political science associations, educational organizations and are active scholars, publishing in a wide-variety of fields and forums. Recent books include work on school desegregation, British political parties, the philosophy of Montaigne, ethnic conflict, US foreign policy in Central America, democracy in Mexico, the family in Cairo, the American presidency, leadership in the US Congress, among others.

The Govt major requires students to take key foundation courses as an introduction to the subfields of political science, American politics, comparative, international relations, political theory and methodology. A 54 hour major, the govt major allows students choice about the upper level courses through which to complete their studies, including through study abroad programs and related courses in the social sciences.

We also offer an interdisciplinary major in communications, legal insts, economics and govt that trains students in each of these fields and allows them to develop the practical training necessary to deal with social problems as public issues.

Because our students are trained to question traditional interpretations of the political world, to wrestle with fundamental problems, and develop their own ideas about the forces that guide politics, they are prepared for careers in a wide-variety of fields. Recent AU political science graduates have gone on to careers in local, state, and federal governments, public agencies, non-profit organizations, international organizations, business, politics, and advanced studies in graduate and law schools.

Unit Website Address: http://www.american.edu/spa/gov/index.cfm

Unit's Primary Department: Government

Are there any changes in your assessment method?: Yes

Learning Outcome: Knowledge 2012-

Demonstrate interdisciplinary knowledge and understanding of key theories, concepts, and issues surrounding the study of political institutions and processes from the four foci of the major: Communications, Law, Economics, and Government.

Outcome Year: 2012-2013
Start Date: 08/27/2012
Outcome Status: Active Learning Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Assessment Plan

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<td>Sample of portfolio of 1-4 papers from seniors (from work in 300-400 level courses), scored by faculty in each of the four depts on a rubric that would evaluate critical thinking, interdisciplinarity of knowledge and skills in analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating information.</td>
<td>85% of students will perform satisfactorily on the rubric items.</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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**Learning Outcome: Critical Thinking/Writing 2012-**
Demonstrate critical thinking, written and oral communication skills

**Outcome Year:** 2012-2013  
**Start Date:** 08/27/2012  
**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

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<td>85% of students will perform above a threshold scored by rubric</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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**Learning Outcome: Research Skills 2012-**
Demonstrate competence in analyzing, interpreting and evaluating information within the realm of public policy

**Outcome Year:** 2012-2013  
**Start Date:** 08/27/2012  
**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

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<td>85% of students will perform satisfactorily on each rubric item</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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**Learning Outcome: Application to Actual Politics 2012-**
Apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the major to the practice of actual politics and policy-making

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**Start Date:** 08/27/2012  
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<td>Positive external review from organization with which student is interning</td>
<td>95% of our students will receive positive reviews from internship supervisors</td>
<td>Annually</td>
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<td>Students will report their degree of satisfaction with their academic program, their overall experience at AU and pride in being an AU graduate on the Graduate Census conducted by OIR.</td>
<td>90% of students will either agree or strongly agree with the three prompts.</td>
<td>OIR conducts this survey annually.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td><strong>Measure Type:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
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### Learning Outcome: Explain Laws 2010-2011

Explain the law surrounding cases recently before the U.S. Supreme Court or at the highest level of appellate review. These cases integrate the disciplines of communication, law, economics and government.

**Outcome Year:** 2010-2011  
**Start Date:** 06/30/2010  
**Outcome Status:** Archived Learning Outcome

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<td>Direct Measure: Performance in GOVT-489, the CLEG Capstone seminar, which integrates the disciplines of communication, law, economics and government, as assessed by faculty teaching the course. Measure includes assessment of all assignments for all students.</td>
<td>85% of students successfully meet the learning outcome.</td>
<td>The faculty teaching the capstone seminar will assess the performance of the students in the course at the end of each spring semester. The success of the learning outcomes will be reported to the chair of the department. The assessment will be shared with and discussed by the entire faculty of the Department of Government in their annual assessment meeting to review the learning outcome for the undergraduate curriculum.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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| Indirect Measure: The Government Department Faculty will meet annually to discuss the progress of students in their ability to meet the learning objectives established each year for the CLEG capstone course. The annual meeting will provide the faculty with the opportunity to discuss the overall CLEG curriculum, as well as the capstone course. | No target identified. | Annually. | Yes |
| **Measure Type:** | | | |
| Other | | | |

### Related Courses
- GOVT-489 - CLEG Seminar
Learning Outcome: Explain Court Cases and Issues 2010-2011
Summarize and present issues both orally and verbally from one point of view in one of the cases studied.

Outcome Year: 2010-2011
Start Date: 06/30/2010
Outcome Status: Archived Learning Outcome

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Measure Type: Other

Related Courses
- GOVT-489 - CLEG Seminar

Learning Outcome: Defend Viewpoint 2010-2011
Answer questions both orally and verbally to defend the point of view presented by the appellant or appellee in the case.

Outcome Year: 2010-2011
Start Date: 06/30/2010
Outcome Status: Archived Learning Outcome

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Measure Type: Other

Related Courses
- GOVT-489 - CLEG Seminar
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**Measure Type:**
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