# Program Assessment Plan

**American University**

**Academic Program: SIS: International Affairs: US Foreign Policy - MA**

**Contact Person for Assessment:** Shoon Murray

**Unit's Primary Department:** US Foreign Policy

**COLA Reader -1:** Chana Barron

**COLA Reader -2:** Betsy Cohn

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## Learning Outcome: Theory

Describe and distinguish among the major schools of thought in USFP and exhibit ability to apply them to explain policy events.

**Outcome Year:** 2012-2013

**Start Date:** 09/11/2012

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Measure</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Schedule/Cycle</th>
<th>Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Measures: Course products: written final exam and/or research paper. <strong>Measure Type:</strong> Written Assignment</td>
<td>95% of students exhibit basic knowledge of major theoretical perspectives, using a random sample of final exams and/or research papers from previous two semesters of SIS 689 &quot;Foreign Policy: Theories of Decisionmaking.&quot;</td>
<td>Reviewed Spring 2010 (completed). Review next Spring 2013.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Measure: Course evaluations for required courses. <strong>Measure Type:</strong> Survey</td>
<td>75% of students indicate that the learning objectives for the course are clear and that the assignments contribute to meeting those objectives.</td>
<td>Reviewed Spring 2010 (completed). Review next Spring 2013.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Measure: Student focus groups. Explore students' perspectives about where the program is meeting its objectives, and where it needs improvement, as well as other student concerns. <strong>Measure Type:</strong> Focus Group</td>
<td>No target identified.</td>
<td>Review annually in May.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course syllabi <strong>Measure Type:</strong> Other</td>
<td>Courses are being taught consistently across professors and terms</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## Learning Outcome: Institutions and Processes

Describe and distinguish among the institutions and processes at the core of foreign policy decision making and exhibit ability to apply them to explain foreign policy events.

**Outcome Year:** 2012-2013

**Start Date:** 09/11/2012

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Measures: Course research products, professional exercises, and exams. <strong>Measure Type:</strong></td>
<td>95% of students exhibit basic knowledge of major institutions and processes, using a random sample of course products, research papers, professional exercises, and exams.</td>
<td>Reviewed Spring 2010 (completed). Review next Spring 2013.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</table>
### Assessment Plan

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<tr>
<td>Written Assignment</td>
<td>sample of final exams (or if necessary papers) from previous two semesters of SIS 682 &quot;Foreign Policy: Institutions and Processes.&quot;</td>
<td>75% of students indicate that the learning objectives for the course are clear and that the assignments contribute to meeting those objectives. Reviewed Spring 2010 (completed). Review next Spring 2013.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Measure: Course evaluations for required courses. Measure Type: Survey</td>
<td>75% of students indicate that the learning objectives for the course are clear and that the assignments contribute to meeting those objectives.</td>
<td>75% of students indicate that the learning objectives for the course are clear and that the assignments contribute to meeting those objectives. Reviewed Spring 2011 (completed). Review next Spring 2014.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Measure: Student focus groups. Explore students’ perspectives about where the program is meeting its objectives, and where it needs improvement, as well as other student concerns. Measure Type: Focus Group</td>
<td>No target identified.</td>
<td>No target identified.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course syllabi Measure Type: Other</td>
<td>Courses are being taught consistently across professors and terms</td>
<td>Courses are being taught consistently across professors and terms</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</table>

### Learning Outcome: History

Describe the major continuities and changes in US foreign relations, especially since the turn of the 20th century.

**Outcome Year:** 2012-2013  
**Start Date:** 09/11/2012  
**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course syllabi</td>
<td>Courses counted for the history requirement teach similar concepts and events</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Measure Type:** Other

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#### Learning Outcome: Economics

Apply concepts and theories from international economics to explain the workings of and issues of USFP.

- **Outcome Year:** 2012-2013
- **Start Date:** 09/11/2012
- **Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

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<tr>
<td>Direct Measures: Course research products, professional exercises, and exams.</td>
<td>95% of students exhibit basic knowledge of international economics as it applies to the institutions and tactics of the United States, using a random sample of final exams (or if necessary papers) from previous two semesters of SIS 615 &quot;Fundamentals of US Foreign Economic Policy.&quot;</td>
<td>Reviewed Spring 2011 (completed). Review next Spring 2014.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measure Type:** Written Assignment

Indirect Measure: Course evaluations for required courses.

- 75% of students indicate that the learning objectives for the course are clear and that the assignments contribute to meeting those objectives.
- Reviewed Spring 2011 (completed).
- Review next Spring 2014.

**Measure Type:** Survey

Indirect Measure: Student focus groups.

Explore students’ perspectives about where the program is meeting its objectives, and where it needs improvement, as well as other student concerns.

- No target identified.
- Review annually in May.

**Measure Type:** Focus Group

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#### Learning Outcome: Contemporary Debates

Analyze contemporary foreign policy debates and issues.

- **Outcome Year:** 2012-2013
- **Start Date:** 09/11/2012
- **Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

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<tr>
<td>Randomly drawn student work from all classes taught by full-time faculty (except for our theory class).</td>
<td>95% of students do a good job or better of analyzing contemporary foreign policy debates.</td>
<td>Reviewed Spring 2012. Review next Spring 2015.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</table>

**Measure Type:** Final Paper/ Final Project
Assessment Plan

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<tr>
<td>Course syllabi.</td>
<td>75% of syllabi cover contemporary debates.</td>
<td>Reviewed Fall 2011 (completed). Review next Spring 2015.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measure Type: Other

Indirect Measure: Student focus groups. Explore students’ perspectives about where the program is meeting its objectives, and where it needs improvement, as well as other student concerns.

Measure Type: Focus Group

No target identified. Review annually in May. Yes

Learning Outcome: Professional Skills

Demonstrate selected professional skills (e.g. analyzing policy issues, writing policy memos, coordinating team-based projects, giving policy briefings).

Outcome Year: 2012-2013
Start Date: 09/11/2012
Outcome Status: Active Learning Outcome

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short professional written work in the form of a policy brief or executive summary and the oral presentation of that work.</td>
<td>95% of students earn a good or better evaluation from participating faculty.</td>
<td>Reviewed Spring 2012. Review next Spring 2015.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measure Type: Final Paper/ Final Project

Course syllabi

Measure Type: Other

75% of syllabi include exercises that hone professional skills such as memo writing, formal briefing, or simulations.

Reviewed Fall 2011 (completed). Review next Spring 2015. Yes

Indirect Measure: Student focus groups. Explore students’ perspectives about where the program is meeting its objectives, and where it needs improvement, as well as other student concerns.

Measure Type: Focus Group

No target identified. Review annually in May. Yes

Learning Outcome: Research, Analysis and Writing

Execute academic research or professional analytical projects that integrate empirics and theory, as appropriate, and write their findings in a clear and effective manner.

Outcome Year: 2012-2013
Start Date: 09/11/2012
Outcome Status: Active Learning Outcome

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Measure: Sample of SRP's from those students choosing that capstone option; and sample of practica written products from students choosing the other capstone option.</td>
<td>95% doing superior or good work.</td>
<td>Faculty will review at the end of every spring semester.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Measure Type: Final Paper/ Final Project

Indirect Measure: Student focus groups. Explore students’ perspectives about where the program is meeting its objectives, and where it needs improvement, as well

No target identified. Review annually in May. Yes
as other student concerns.

**Measure Type:**
Focus Group

### Learning Outcome: Language
Proficiency in a foreign language. This is a learning outcome for all SIS graduate students but is outside our field of control.

- **Outcome Year:** 2010-2011
- **Start Date:** 11/12/2010
- **Outcome Status:** Active Program Outcome

### Learning Outcome: Concentration
Students can choose a concentration in national security policy or in a related field (drawing on courses from International Politics, Comparative and Regional Studies, International Communication, International Peace and Conflict Resolution, International Development, International Economic Policy, Global Environmental Politics).
This learning outcome is for all SIS graduate students but it is outside of our field of control.

- **Outcome Year:** 2010-2011
- **Start Date:** 11/12/2010
- **Outcome Status:** Archived Learning Outcome