

Law & Constitutional Studies Program, Department of Political Science
Assessment Outcomes Data
10-31-2024

The Department of Political Science is committed to delivering an excellent learning experience in the fundamentals of our discipline. We regularly evaluate how our students are performing in our classes and in our programs more broadly. This particular document considers the undergraduate bachelor's degree in Law & Constitutional Studies offered by our department.

In this iteration of our assessment process, we have reviewed the learning objectives and our measures of those objectives. In reviewing them, we have found they remain appropriate objectives and measures for the current cycle, though we will continue to review and discuss ways to improve our programs and our assessment of them.

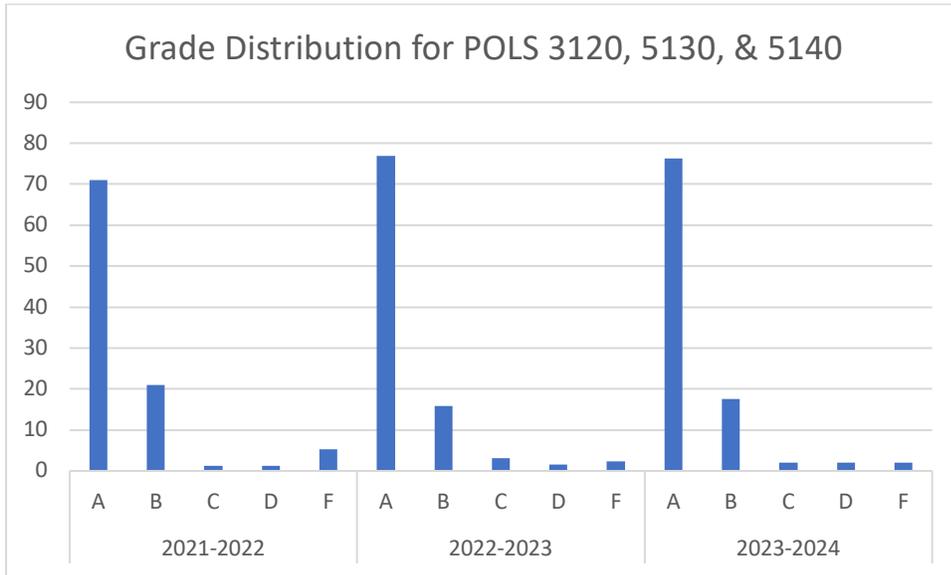
In the pages that follow, you will find a summary of the learning objectives of this program as well as a strategy for measuring how the department performs on those objectives. We rely on course grades as one measure. Course grades reported in the pages ahead are reported as the distribution of grades for all classes identified on the chart in the given academic year.

As a second measure, we also rely on specific student responses to the IDEA assessment. These are not general measures of student satisfaction. Rather, they are specific indicators of self-reported progress students have made on learning objectives that are foundational to our program. As a result, we will consider different IDEA indicators that have particular bearing on the objective at hand. For this purpose, we have sampled one course for which the learning objective is assessed per semester and then we average those scores across the two semesters in an academic year as a summary measure.

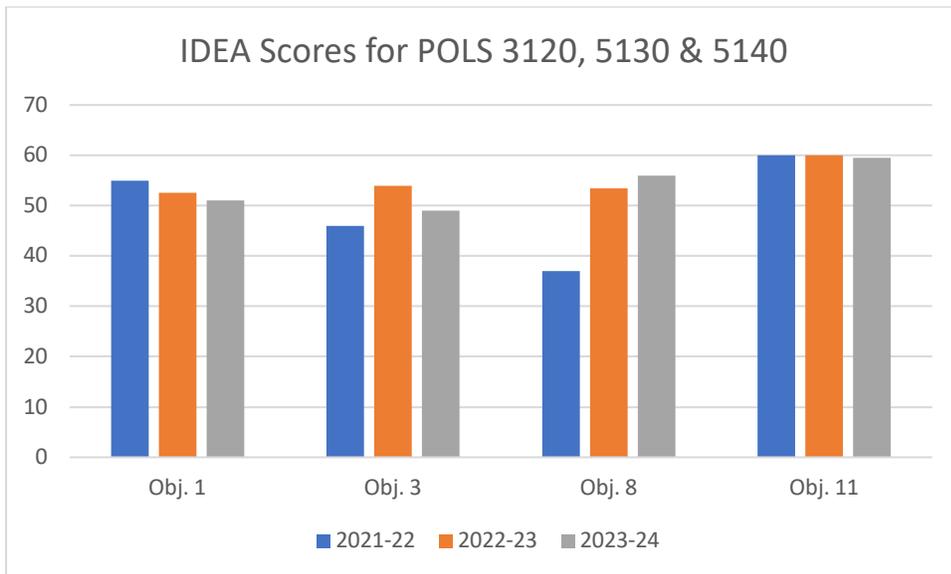
Please reach out to the Department of Political Science with any questions about our assessment data.

Learning Objective 1: To demonstrate knowledge about the structure of the American legal system, and how it affects law, politics and public policy.

Measure 1: Grade Distribution for POLS 3120, 5130, and 5140, which cover this material.



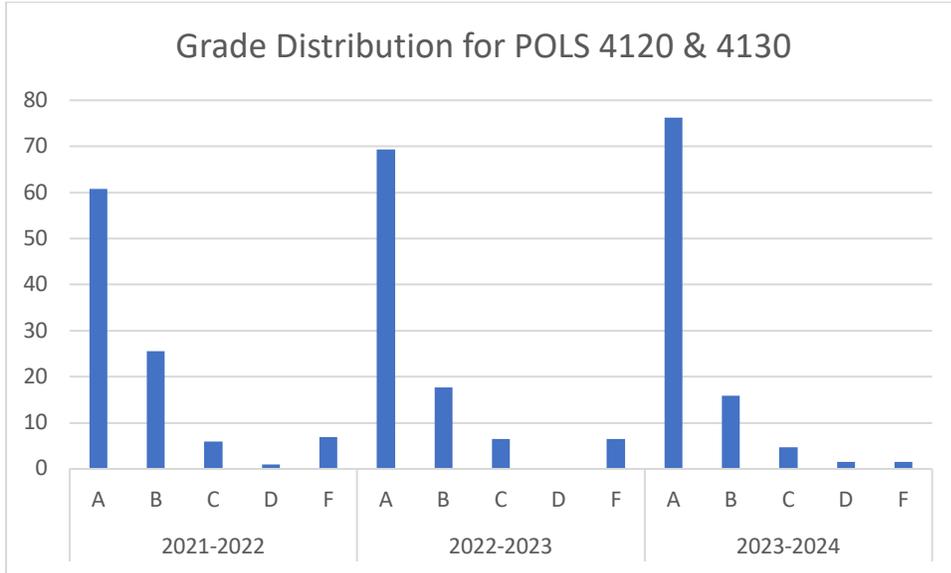
Measure 2: IDEA Student Evaluations for POLS 3120, 5130, and 5140.¹



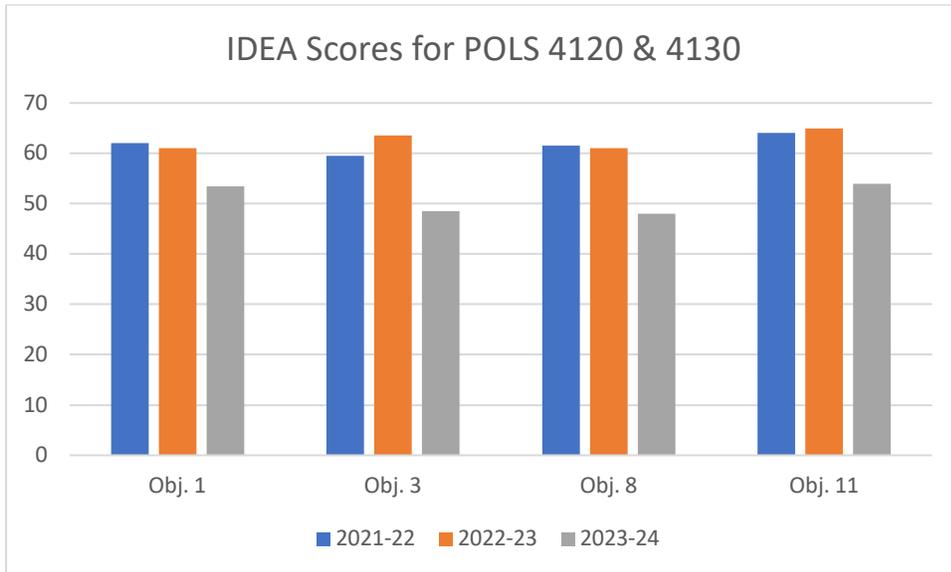
¹ Note: We selected IDEA learning objectives relevant to assessing factual knowledge on the subject. Specifically, Objective 1 is Gaining a basic understanding of the subject, Objective 3 is Learning to apply course material, Objective 8 is Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing, and Objective 11 is Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Learning Objective 2: To demonstrate understanding of fundamental principles and theories of American constitutional law and politics.

Measure 1: Grade Distributions for POLS 4120 and POLS 4130, which cover this material



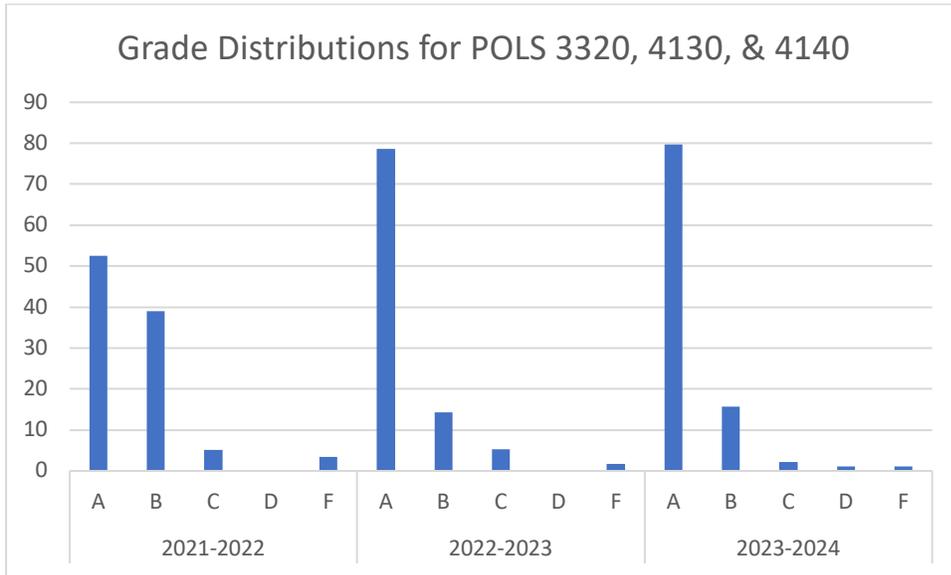
Measure 2: IDEA student evaluation scores for POLS 4120 and POLS 4130²



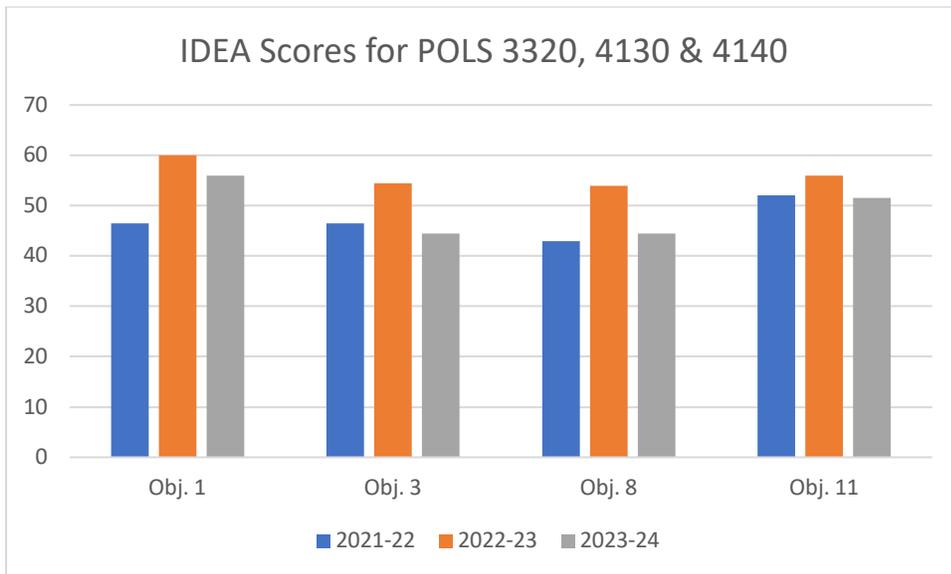
² Note: We selected IDEA learning objectives relevant to assessing factual knowledge on the subject. Specifically, Objective 1 is Gaining a basic understanding of the subject, Objective 3 is Learning to apply course material, Objective 8 is Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing, and Objective 11 is Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Learning Objective 3: To demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate ideas and arguments relevant to the founding of American constitutionalism.

Measure 1: Grade Distributions for POLS 3320, POLS 4130, and POLS 4140, which cover this material.



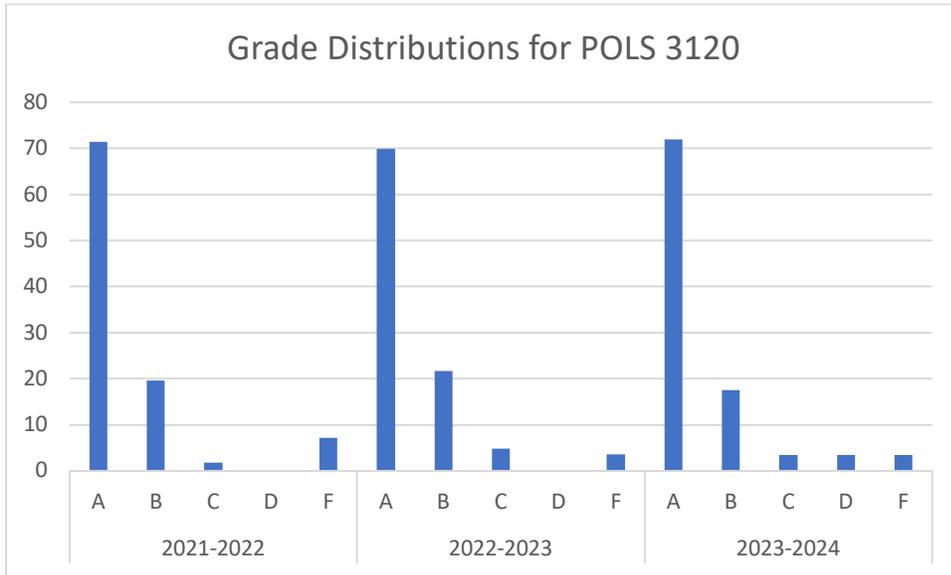
Measure 2: IDEA student evaluation scores for POLS 3320, POLS 4130, and POLS 4140³



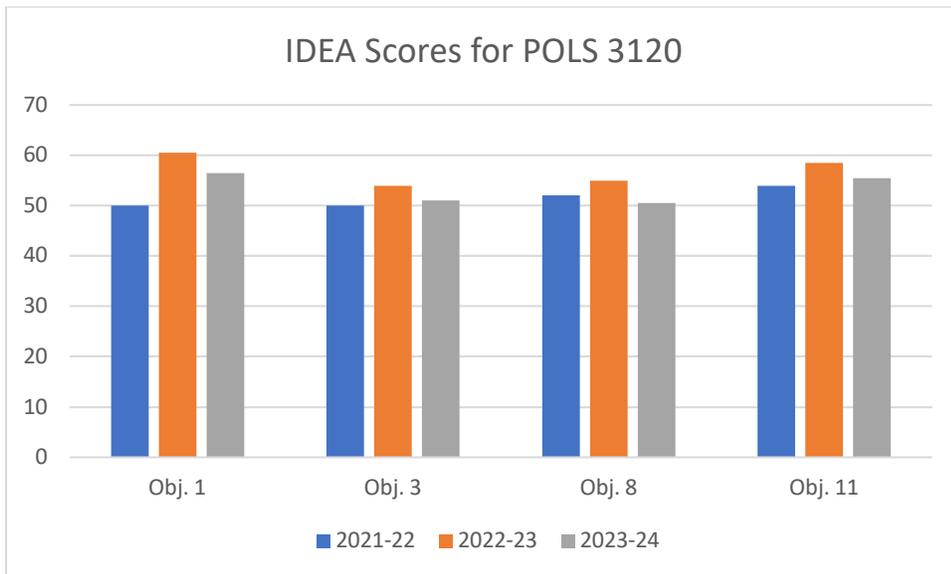
³ Note: We selected IDEA learning objectives relevant to assessing factual knowledge on the subject. Specifically, Objective 1 is Gaining a basic understanding of the subject, Objective 3 is Learning to apply course material, Objective 8 is Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing, and Objective 11 is Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Learning Objective 4: To demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing in the context of addressing significant issues in American law and politics.

Measure 1: Grade Distributions for POLS 3120, which covers this material



Measure 2: IDEA student evaluation scores for POLS 3120⁴



⁴ Note: We selected IDEA learning objectives relevant to assessing factual knowledge on the subject. Specifically, Objective 1 is Gaining a basic understanding of the subject, Objective 3 is Learning to apply course material, Objective 8 is Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing, and Objective 11 is Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Data-driven Decision-making

In light of data received on grades and IDEA evaluations, we have made a number of adjustments and improvements. One adjustment in this program includes increasing depth on topics (and decreasing breadth) to enhance analytical ability of students by making them think more carefully about the topics at hand. Another is to increase classroom expectations to require more oral and written communication components in core Law & Constitutional Studies courses. We've also had changes in the frequency of assessments to help students be prepared to demonstrate what they've learned more efficiently. We will continue to monitor the effects of these changes on progress students make on relevant goals.