

Political Science Master's Degree Program
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 master's degree in Political Science 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.

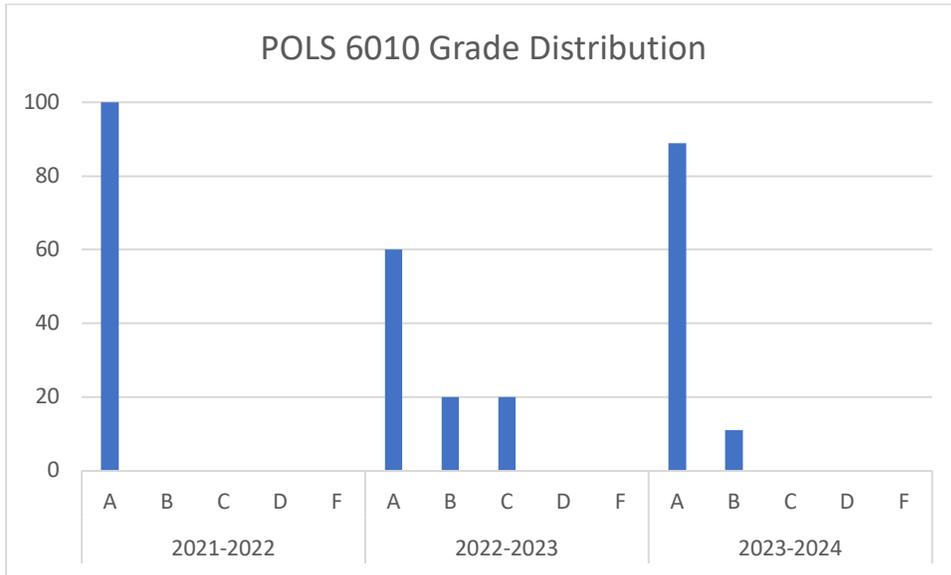
In the pages that follow, you will find a summary of the learning objectives of this program as well as a strategy for measuring how the department performs on those objectives. We rely on course grades as one measure. Course grades reported in the pages ahead are reported as the distribution of grades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

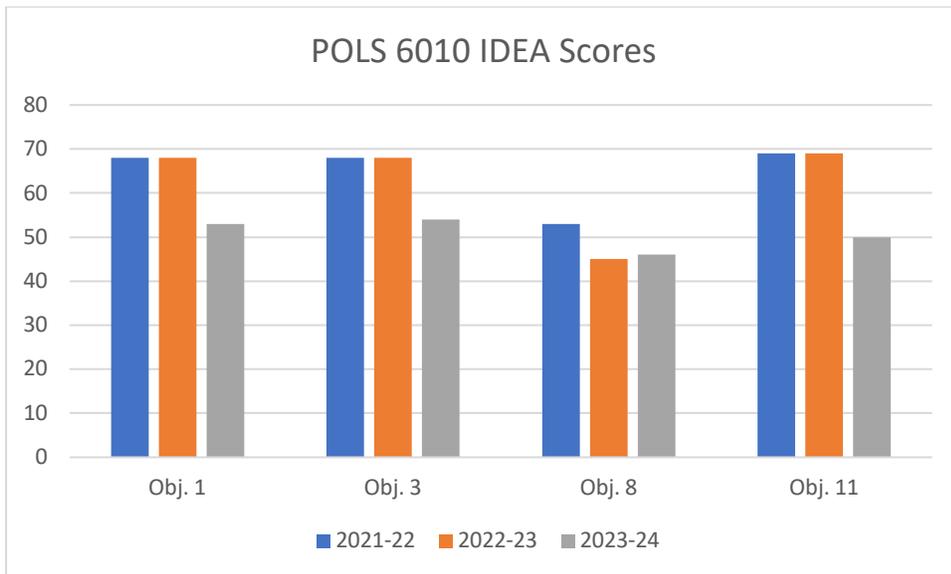
Please reach out to the Department of Political Science with any questions about our assessment data.

Learning Objective 1: Understand research design and methods important to the field and use them to conduct research about significant political questions.

Measure 1: Grade Distribution for POLS 6010



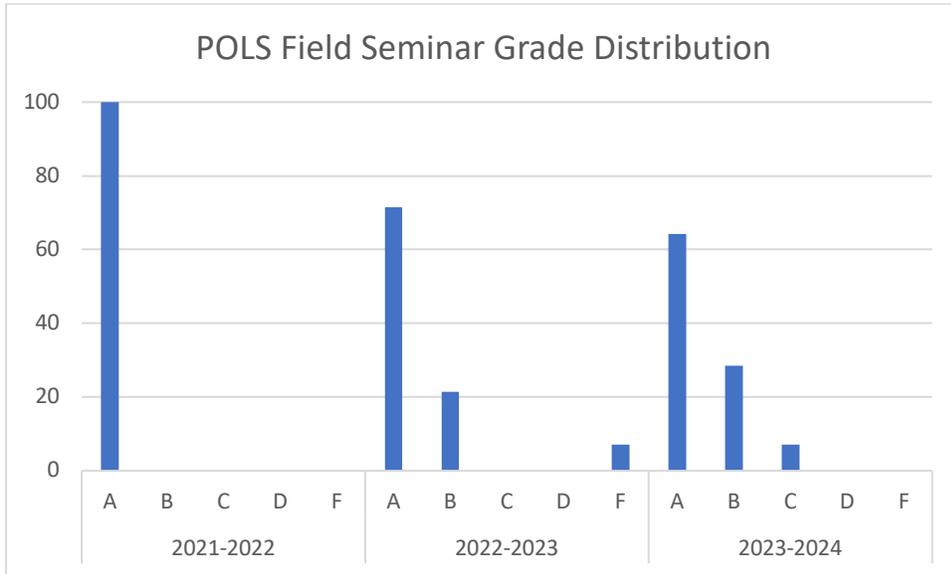
Measure 2: IDEA Student Evaluations for POLS 6010¹



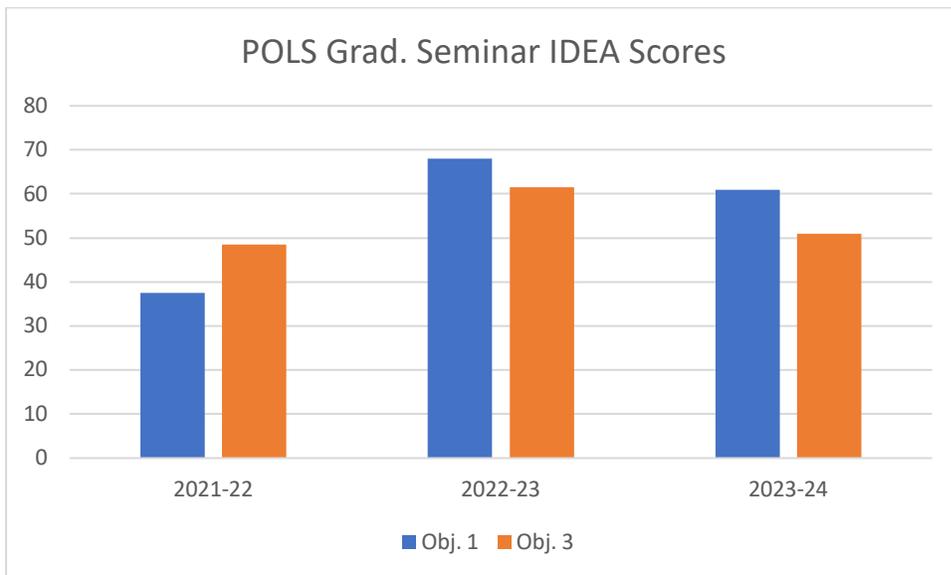
¹ Note: We selected IDEA learning objectives relevant to assessing factual knowledge on the subject. Specifically, Objective 1 is Gaining a basic understanding of the subject, Objective 3 is Learning to apply course material, Objective 8 is Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing,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

Learning Objective 2: Demonstrate familiarity with scholarly literature in the student’s specific field of inquiry.

Measure 1: Grade Distributions for field seminars in American, Theory, Comparative and IR classes



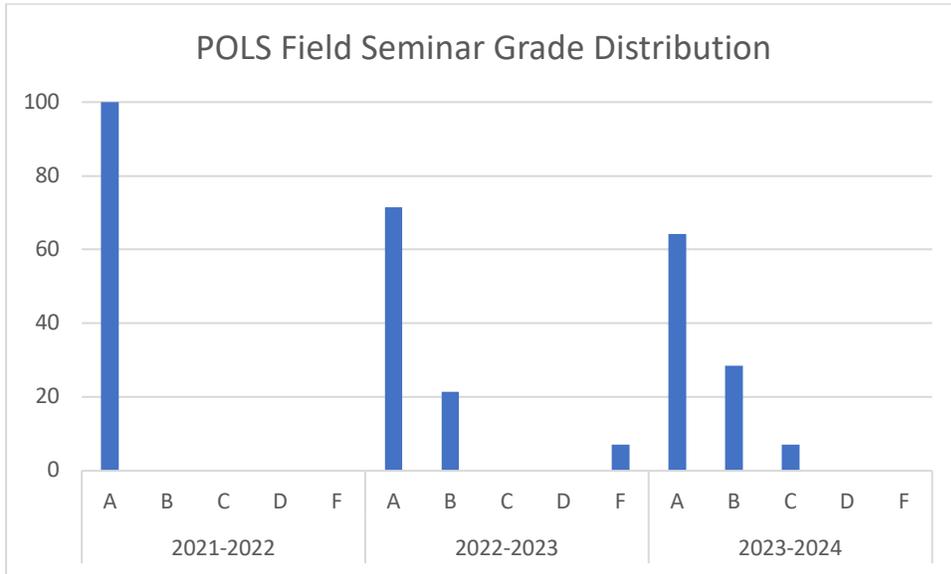
Measure 2: IDEA student evaluation scores for American, Theory, Comparative and IR classes²



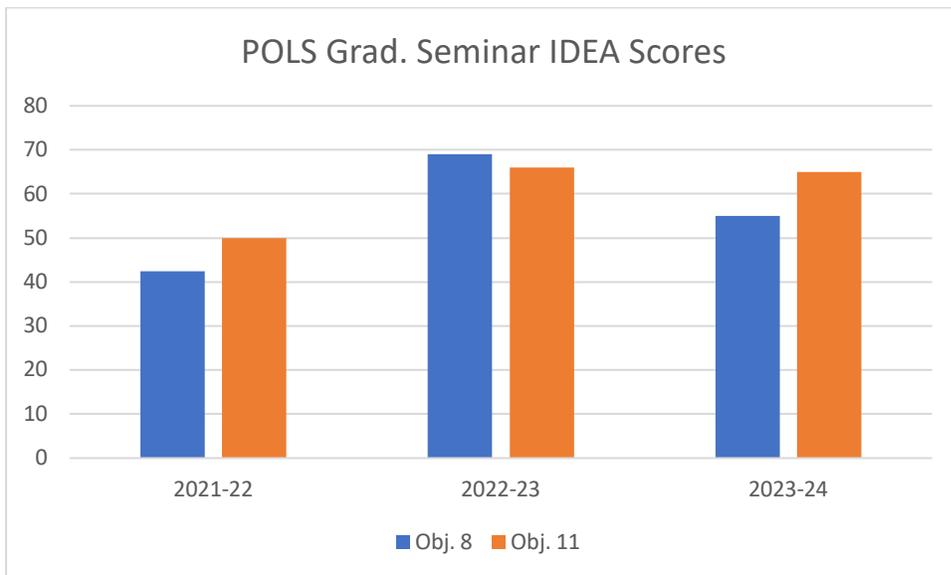
² Note: We selected IDEA learning objectives relevant to assessing factual knowledge on the subject. Specifically, Objective 1 is Gaining a basic understanding of the subject, and Objective 3 is Learning to apply course material.

Learning Objective 3: Effectively apply critical thinking and analytical skills to address significant issues in the political world.

Measure 1: Grade Distributions for field seminars in American, Theory, Comparative and IR classes



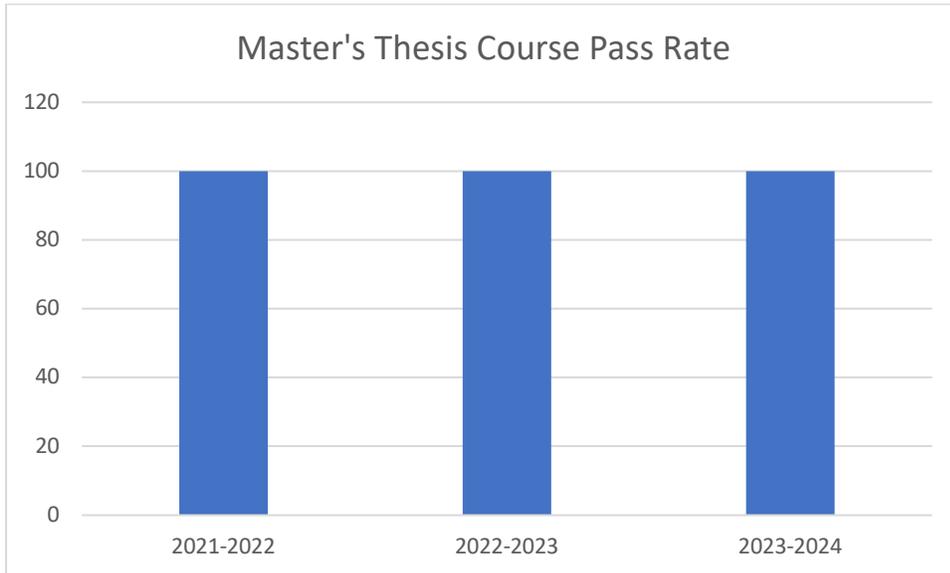
Measure 2: IDEA student evaluation scores for American, Theory, Comparative and IR classes³



³ Note: We selected IDEA learning objectives relevant to assessing factual knowledge on the subject. Specifically, 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: Write clearly and cogently about political questions, using appropriate language in the discipline, and be able to construct organized and coherent verbal presentations on political topics.

Measure 1: Pass/Fail rates for master's thesis research course



Data-driven Decision-making

In light of data received on grades and IDEA evaluations, we have made a number of adjustments and improvements. We have adjusted some course content in POLS 6010 and made a change of instructor to modernize the curriculum. We've also used grades and IDEA evaluations to refine assignments and tasks with improved instructions that allow for improved course grade performance without compromising the academic integrity of the course. We will continue to monitor the effects of these changes on progress students make on relevant goals.