

Political Science Major

Data-Based Decisions

Learning Objective 1

To demonstrate factual knowledge about the American political system, its institutional structure, and its basic principles.

We collected information from course syllabi for POLS 1100, U.S. Government and Politics. We determined this course would fulfill Learning Objective 1. We undertook an analysis of grades for POLS 1100 beginning with the Fall 2013 semester and gathered data up to the Fall 2016 semester. We found that more than 85% of our students earned a grade of C- or above. This suggested that the majority of our students were meeting or close to meeting Learning Objective 1.

We also looked at statistics from the IDEA surveys that were sent to our students beginning with the Fall 2013 semester and collected data up to the Fall 2016 semester. The analysis of the data indicated that our department rated Higher or Much Higher than peers in our comparison group. (See outcomes data <http://politicalscience.usu.edu/about/assessment>)

Based on students comments more Power Point slides explaining lecture material have been added on Canvas. The syllabus for this course has been revised to provide a better explanation of the purpose of the quizzes and this has been discussed in class. Additional Supplemental Instruction sessions have been added to assist the students.

Learning Objective 2

To demonstrate understanding of theories critical to the discipline of political science and the history of ideas important to the discipline.

We collected information from course syllabi for POLS 2300, Introduction to Political Theory. We determined this course would fulfill Learning Objective 2. We undertook an analysis of grades for POLS 2300, beginning with the Fall 2013 semester and gathered data up to the Fall 2016 semester. We found that more than 90% of our students earned a grade of C- or above. This suggested the majority of our students were meeting or close to meeting Learning Objective 1.

We also looked at statistics from the IDEA surveys that were sent to our students beginning with the Fall 2013 semester and collected data up to the Fall 2016 semester.

The analysis provided demonstrated that our department rates were Similar or Higher than peers in our comparison group. (See outcomes data <http://politicalscience.usu.edu/about/assessment>)

Based on student comments regarding the grading process for essays in POLS 2300, we made the grading process more transparent by providing a detailed rubric on how they would be assessed.

To help students better understand how theories dating back 2000 years could relate to contemporary politics, an assignment was designed to require students to link material from the reading with current political events. To complete the assignment, students had to find a current event from a major newspaper outlet that addressed a topic they selected from the day's reading.

Learning Objective 3

To demonstrate basic competency in qualitative and quantitative political science research methods and analysis.

We collected information from course syllabi for POLS 3000, Introduction to Political Research. We determined this course would fulfill Learning Objective 2. We undertook an analysis of grades for POLS 3000, beginning with the Fall 2013 semester and gathered data up to the Fall 2016 semester. We found that more than 80% of our students earned a grade of C- or above. This suggested that the majority of our students were meeting or close to meeting Learning Objective 1.

We also looked at statistics from the IDEA surveys that were sent to our students beginning with the Fall 2013 semester and collect data up to the Fall 2016 semester. The analysis demonstrated that our department rates were Similar or Higher than peers in our comparison group.

(See outcomes data <http://politicalscience.usu.edu/about/assessment>)

There will be increased emphasis on causal inference and on understanding object oriented programming. These skills are among the most sought after on the job market according to employer surveys.

Learning Objective 4

To differentiate political ideas and arguments relevant to the most important issues that have defined American and international politics.

We collected information from course syllabi for POLS 4990, Senior Research Seminar. We determined this course would fulfill Learning Objective 4. We undertook an analysis of grades for POLS 4990, beginning with the Fall 2013 semester and gathered data up to the Fall 2016 semester. We found that more than 90% of our students earned a grade of C- or above. This suggested that the majority of our students were meeting or close to meeting Learning Objective 4.

We also looked at statistics from the IDEA surveys that were sent to our students beginning with the Fall 2013 semester and collect data up to the Fall 2016 semester. The analysis demonstrated that our department rated Similar, Higher, and Much Higher than peers in our comparison group. (See outcomes data <http://politicalscience.usu.edu/about/assessment>)

Some students commented that the readings in POLS 4990 were too voluminous and too difficult. Accordingly, some of the scientific articles will be replaced with news articles to make the material more accessible for students while still illustrating how the scientific approach helps us interpret real world events.