B.A., Political Science
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
The University of New Mexico

A. College, Department and Date

    1. College: *College of Arts and Sciences*
    2. Department: *Political Science*
    3. Date: *May 13, 2008*

B. Academic Program of Study
B.A. Political Science

C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan
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Brief introduction: The Political Science B.A. program has a flexible structure in which students are able to take courses in whatever sequence fits their interests, needs, and schedule, with the exception of a few upper-division courses with pre-requisites. Students may start out in any class, ranging from POLS 110 to 300 level courses. Often students discover Political Science as a discipline through upper-division topics courses on subjects that catch their interest, after which they "back fill" their departmental core classes (all of which are introductory) during later semesters. As a result, students may be enrolled in comparatively low-level courses in their last semesters before graduating. We do not presently have a capstone requirement for our majors and, hence, nothing resembling a common experience for our Graduating Majors.

Within these circumstances, we plan to assess our introductory courses (in compliance with assessing our contribution to the University's General Education Core Curriculum) as well as assessing those majors who are enrolled in our upper-division classes in the semester that they graduate. Our contribution to the University's General Education Core Curriculum includes four classes: POLS 110, 200, 220, and 240. Our Department core classes overlap with these: POLS 200, 220, 240, 260, 270, and 280. All of these are included in our assessment of our introductory courses.

Three types of instruments are used in this assessment plan: student evaluations of all introductory courses, course assessments of our University core courses, and writing-sample assessments of our graduating majors. Given that the goal of assessment is to improve learning, our assessment plan calls for continual reflection and improvement. For each type of instrument, the measures of the SLOs will be rank-ordered against one another. The weakest SLO (at the bottom of the rank order) will be subjected to due deliberation and discussion of how to improve student learning of that objective. In this way, even high scores across all SLOs in a given year will require reflection on how to make the weakest SLO still stronger. This process is discussed in greater detail in sections 3 and 4.

D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

1. Broad Program Learning Goals for this Degree/Certificate Program

Broad learning goals for this program:

Our graduates should...

A. ...be critical thinkers of political problems who are able to critically reflect on and analyze contemporary political trends and developments.

B. ...have effective communication and strong analytical writing skills.

C. ...have an ability to apply knowledge of political science theories and concepts to real-world cases.

D. ...be prepared to assume the duties of citizenship commensurate with an effective civil society.

2. List of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for this Degree/Certificate Program

A.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments. (*Addresses UNM Area 4, Competency 4.*)

B.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively. (*Addresses UNM Area 1, Competencies 2, 4, 5.*)

B.2. The students will demonstrate strong analytical writing skills. (*Addresses UNM Area 1, Competencies 1, 5, 6 and UNM Area 4, Competency 4*)

C.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science. (*Addresses UNM Area 4, Competencies 1, 2.*)

C.2. The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory. (*Addresses UNM Area 4, Competency 4.*)

C.3. The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds. (*Addresses UNM Area 4, Competency 4.*)

D.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen. (*Addresses UNM Area 4, Competencies 1, 2, 3.*)

E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

All programs are expected to measure some outcomes annually and to measure all priority program outcomes at least once over two consecutive three-year review cycles. Describe below the plan for the next three years of assessment of program-level student learning outcomes.

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Relationship to UNM Student Learning Goals (insert the program SLOs and check all that apply):

University of New Mexico Student Learning Goals				
Program SLOs	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility	Program SLO is conceptually different from university goals.
A.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments.		X		
B.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively.		X		
B.2. The students will demonstrate strong analytical writing skills.		X		
C.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science.	X			
C.2. The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory.		X		
C.3. The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds.		X		
D.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen.	X		X	

2. How will learning outcomes be assessed?

A. <u>What</u>:

Three types of instruments will be applied in the measurement of the above SLOs. Within our introductory courses, both the IDEA student evaluations and course-relevant direct measures will be applied. In particular, instructors will be allowed to choose between embedded exam questions or applying an evaluation matrix to a writing assignment from the course. To assess our graduating majors, those majors who are enrolled in our upper-division classes in the semester that they graduate will be identified. Requests for evaluation of those students will be sent to the relevant instructors who will then apply an evaluation matrix to a writing assignment from the course (see attached Graduating Major Assessment Matrix).

Given the diverse nature of instructional methods and assignments among the political science faculty, flexibility in direct assessment measures was deemed important. As a result, instructors of our University core courses (POLS 110, 200, 220, and 240) will be asked to do a *guided* course assessment in such a way as to be useful for the B.A. program outcomes assessment. Specifically, these instructors will be asked to evaluate all of their students on all SLOs applicable to their course using an existing assignment (or assignments) in their syllabus. This may take the form of a writing assignment or a series of multiple-choice or short-answer questions embedded in quizzes or exams. For writing assignments, an evaluation matrix will be used (see attached Introductory Course Writing Assignment Assessment Matrix) employing a simple 3-point scale of weak, adequate, and strong.

In the case of embedded questions, a set of guidelines will be given regarding the appropriate form of questions for each SLO that is salient for these classes, as well as guidelines regarding how the number of questions should translate into the 3-point scale (see attached Introductory Course Embedded Question Assessment Matrix and Guidelines for Assessment by Embedded Questions). In the long-term, a test bank of relevant questions for each SLO by course will be developed that will assist instructors in designing their own assessments or may provide a basis for developing a standardized instrument for each introductory course. Embedded questions are not allowed as an instrument for measuring SLOs B1 (effective communication) or B2 (analytical writing skills). Instructors of our other departmental courses (POLS 260, 270, and 280) will be encouraged to do similar guided course assessments.

> *A.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments.*
>
> Means of Assessment 1: IDEA objective 11, "learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view", is in line with this SLO. Data will be collected from our introductory courses regarding this objective. This is an **indirect measure.**

Means of Assessment 2: All students in our University core courses will be rated on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "critical thinking" using either a writing assignment or questions embedded in quizzes or exams (at the instructor's discretion). This is a **direct measure**.

Means of Assessment 3: All graduating majors who are enrolled in upper-division political science classes in their last semester at UNM will be assessed on on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "critical thinking" using a writing assignment from class. (See attached Graduating Major Assessment Matrix.) This is a **direct measure**.

B.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively.
Means of Assessment 1: IDEA objective 8, "developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing", is in line with this SLO. Data will be collected from our introductory courses regarding this objective. This is an **indirect measure**.

Means of Assessment 2: All students in our University core courses will be rated on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "communication skills" using either a writing assignment or an oral presentation (at the instructor's discretion). This is a **direct measure**.

Means of Assessment 3: All graduating majors who are enrolled in upper-division political science classes in their last semester at UNM will be assessed on on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "communication skills" using a writing assignment from class. (See attached Graduating Major Assessment Matrix.) This is a **direct measure**.

B.2. The students will demonstrate strong analytical writing skills.
Means of Assessment 1: Students in our University core courses whose instructor uses a writing assignment as the assessment instrument will be rated on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "analytical writing skills". This is a **direct measure**.

Means of Assessment 2: All graduating majors who are enrolled in upper-division political science classes in their last semester at UNM will be assessed on on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "analytical writing skills" using a writing assignment from class. (See attached Graduating Major Assessment Matrix.) This is a **direct measure**.

C.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science.
Means of Assessment 1: IDEA objective 2, "learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories", is in line with this SLO. Data will be collected from our introductory courses regarding this objective. This is an **indirect measure**.

Means of Assessment 2: All students in our University core courses will be rated on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "understanding of theories and concepts" using either a writing assignment or questions embedded in quizzes or exams (at the instructor's discretion). This is a **direct measure**.

Means of Assessment 3: All graduating majors who are enrolled in upper-division political science classes in their last semester at UNM will be assessed on on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "understanding of theories and concepts" using a writing assignment from class. (See attached Graduating Major Assessment Matrix.) This is a **direct measure**.

C.2. The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory.

Means of Assessment 1: IDEA objective 3, "learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions) ", is in line with this SLO. Data will be collected from our introductory courses regarding this objective. This is an **indirect measure**.

Means of Assessment 2: All students in our University core courses will be rated on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "application of theories and/or concepts" using either a writing assignment or questions embedded in quizzes or exams (at the instructor's discretion). This is a **direct measure**.

Means of Assessment 3: All graduating majors who are enrolled in upper-division political science classes in their last semester at UNM will be assessed on on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "application of theories and/or concepts" using a writing assignment from class. (See attached Graduating Major Assessment Matrix.) This is a **direct measure**.

C.3. The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds.

Means of Assessment 1: All students in our University core courses will be rated on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "evaluation of theories" using either a writing assignment or questions embedded in quizzes or exams (at the instructor's discretion). This is a **direct measure**.

Means of Assessment 2: All graduating majors who are enrolled in upper-division political science classes in their last semester at UNM will be assessed on on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "evaluation of theories" using a writing assignment from class. (See attached Graduating Major Assessment Matrix.) This is a **direct measure**.

D.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen.

> Means of Assessment 1: IDEA objective 1, "gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends)", is in line with this SLO. Data will be collected from the following introductory courses regarding this objective: POLS 200, 220, 240, and 270. These courses focus on factual knowledge that is generally considered "citizenship knowledge" such as the make up of American government (200), comparative institutional design (220), the make up of the international system (240), and knowledge of public policy (270). This is an **indirect measure**.

> Means of Assessment 2: All students in our University core courses will be rated on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "citizenship knowledge" using either a writing assignment or questions embedded in quizzes or exams (at the instructor's discretion). This is a **direct measure**.

> Means of Assessment 3: All graduating majors who are enrolled in upper-division political science classes in their last semester at UNM will be assessed on on a 3-point scale (weak, adequate, or strong) regarding "citizenship knowledge" using a writing assignment from class. (See attached Graduating Major Assessment Matrix.) This is a **direct measure**.

B. Who:

Students in our University core courses (POLS 110, 200, 220, and 240) will be assessed directly and indirectly. Direct assessments will follow a rotation among the four courses, discussed in Section 3. All students in our department core courses (POLS 200, 220, 240, 260, 270, and 280) will be assessed indirectly and instructors will be encouraged to engage in direct assessment as well. Indirect assessments (IDEA student evaluation) will take place every semester. The ability to compare different measures gives high validity to assessment of these introductory courses; this is discussed more in Section 4.

Only graduating majors taking upper-division courses in their final semester will be included in this assessment plan. For Spring 2008, there are 59 graduating majors taking between one and five upper-division courses for a potential of 111 assessments. If we averaged the assessment scores for those students taking more than one upper-division course, this represents 63% of our graduating majors this semester. This is not a genuine random sample of our graduating majors. Those majors who completed their departmental upper-division requirements and chose not to take another upper-division course in their final semester would not be included. It is not clear, however, what direction this non-random component would push the results. It is possible that stronger students are likely to finish their upper-division requirements earlier, but it is (perhaps equally) possible that weaker students are more likely to set up their schedules to "back-fill" their last semester with only lower-division courses. By being as inclusive as possible (i.e., assessing all graduating majors in all

our upper-division courses rather than sampling on that population), we feel that we are minimizing possible validity problems with this assessment.

3. **When will learning outcomes be assessed? When and in what forum will the results of the assessment be discussed?**

The indirect measures (IDEA student evaluations) will be collected every semester for the introductory courses and passed along to the departmental outcomes assessment coordinator at the beginning of the following semester.

Direct measures of our University core courses will be collected on a rotational basis based on the schedule below. The logic behind this schedule is that POLS 220 & 240 are part of the same departmental core "choice basket" and, so, should be assessed at the same time. The alternation is designed to give the departmental outcomes assessment coordinator more time per instructor in helping design course assessments that also meet the needs of the departmental program assessment. The departmental outcomes assessment coordinator will remind the Chair near the beginning of each semester as to which University core courses are to be assessed and ask the Chair to send an appropriate memo to the appropriate instructors. The departmental outcomes assessment coordinator will receive the results of these course assessments at the end of the semester.

Course	S2008	F2008 & S2009	F2009 & S2010	F2010 & S2011
POLS 110	X		X	
POLS 200	X		X	
POLS 220	X	X		X
POLS 240		X		X

Direct measures of our other introductory courses are optional but encouraged. Thus, they would occur sporadically. The Chair will send an appropriate memo to the instructors of these courses (POLS 260, 270, & 280) at the beginning of each semester.

Direct measures of our graduating majors will occur every semester. The departmental outcomes assessment coordinator will work with the office staff to identify our majors who are graduating and enrolled in an upper division course. The Chair will then send an appropriate memo and accompanying Graduating Major Assessment Matrices to the appropriate instructors. The departmental outcomes assessment coordinator will receive the completed matrices at the end of the semester.

Given that most of the measures will not be reported to the outcomes assessment coordinator until after the end of each semester, analysis and discussion of academic year (AY) data will take place at the beginning of the next AY. Thus, the undergraduate committee will meet to discuss the previous AY's data and make whatever recommendations they feel are appropriate to the faculty as a whole, who will then

consider the report and recommendations of the undergraduate committee at a department meeting in the Fall semester for implementation in the Spring semester. This is discussed in more detail in Section 4.

4. **What is the unit's process to analyze/interpret assessment data and use results to improve student learning?**

All faculty and instructors will be involved in the gathering of evidence for our outcomes assessment. The outcomes assessment coordinator will collect the reports for a given AY and then summarize and analyze the data for dissemination to the undergraduate director and the undergraduate committee. The summary reports will be generated for the program as a whole (see Summary Report of Outcomes Assessment, B.A. Political Science), each subfield (see Subfield Summary Report of Outcomes Assessment, B.A. Political Science), the University core courses (see Summary Report of Outcomes Assessment, University Core Courses, Political Science), and our department core courses (see Summary Report of Outcomes Assessment, Department Core Courses, Political Science). For each of these reports, the weakest measure of an SLO by measure type will be highlighted for discussion within the undergraduate committee. Particular attention will be paid to an SLO that is weak across several measures.

Given the weaknesses highlighted in the reports, the undergraduate director will discuss the assessment results with the undergraduate committee with regard to the severity of the weaknesses (is one SLO weak on every measure, across all introductory courses, across all subfields, and among graduating majors?) and engage in a triage process, coming to collective agreement about what SLO is the program's weakest overall. The undergraduate committee will then discuss why this SLO is weak and what might be done to make it stronger. The undergraduate director will summarize this discussion and make a formal recommendation for improving this SLO in a report to the faculty. This recommendation may be with respect to the assessment process itself, the curriculum, or pedagogy. (If a subfield exhibits a pattern of weakness different from the pattern program-wide, the undergraduate director will communicate this finding to the Chair, who may then choose to convene an *ad hoc* meeting of the relevant subfield faculty to discuss this weakness.) The faculty will then consider the report and recommendation of the undergraduate committee at a department meeting in the Fall semester for implementation in the Spring semester.

The department chair, in consultation with the undergraduate director and the departmental outcomes assessment coordinator, will prepare an outcomes assessment report for the office of outcomes assessment that summarizes the measures of the SLOs for the previous AY, summarizes the department's discussion regarding the undergraduate director's report, and describes what changes (in assessment instruments, curriculum, or pedagogy) were approved by the faculty.

Course	Univ. Core	Dept. Core	Most Salient SLOs	Most Salient IDEA Objectives	Direct Measures
110: The Political World	X		A1, B1, B2, C1, D1	2, 8, 11	X
200: American Politics	X	X	A1, B1, C1, D1	1, 2, 8, 11	X
220: Comparative Politics	X	X	A1, B1, C1, D1	1, 2, 8, 11	X
240: International Politics	X	X	A1, B1, C1, D1	1, 2, 8, 11	X
260: Political Ideas		X	A1, B2, C2, C3, D1	2, 3, 8, 11	optional
270: Public Policy & Admin.		X	A1, B1, C1, D1	1, 2, 8, 11	optional
280: Political Analysis		X	A1, B2, C2, C3	3, 4, 8, 11	optional
Upper-division Courses*			A1, B2, C2, C3, D1		X

* - Only graduating majors in these courses.

Explicit time-line for data collection, summary, analysis, and discussion:

Semester	Data Collection	Summary & Analysis	Internal Reporting & Discussion	External Reporting
Fall 2008	On-going collection of (1) IDEA student evaluation data, (2) direct measures of University core courses, and (3) direct measures of Graduating Majors.			
Spring 2009		Summary & analysis of all measures for Fall 2008.	Meeting of the undergraduate committee to discuss the process and potential changes to the outcomes assessment plan. Report of summary & analysis from the undergraduate director & undergraduate committee to the department.	Report of summary, analysis, discussion, and changes from the Chair to office of outcomes assessment.
Fall 2009		Summary & analysis of all measures for AY 2008-9	Report of summary & analysis from the undergraduate director & undergraduate committee to the department.	
Spring 2010				Report of summary, analysis, discussion, and changes from the Chair to office of outcomes assessment.
Fall 2010		Summary & analysis of all measures for AY 2009-10	Report of summary & analysis from the undergraduate director & undergraduate committee to the department.	
Spring 2011				Report of summary, analysis, discussion, and changes from the Chair to office of outcomes assessment

INTRODUCTORY COURSE WRITING ASSIGNMENT ASSESSMENT MATRIX
Department of Political Science
B.A. Program

Semester: Fall/Spring _____   Course: ☐110 ☐200 ☐220 ☐240 ☐260 ☐270 ☐280

Instructions: As part of the Department's program of outcomes assessment, we evaluate our students' learning along several dimensions. Using one of your existing course assignments as a writing sample appropriate for this evaluation, please rate each student's performance using the following criteria. Please use this report form to summarize the results of your assessment by reporting the _percent_ of students, for example, rating "strong" on critical thinking, etc. If an evaluation of a particular measure is not appropriate given this assignment, please draw a line through that row to so indicate. You may find it convenient to keep a running tally within the matrix and tabulate totals when you are done grading.

Type of assignment:
☐ In-class essay   ☐ Take-home exam   ☐ Research paper   ☐ other: _____

Average length of writing sample: _____ pages   Number of students assessed: _____

Summary of All Students' Performance

	Weak	Adequate	Strong
1. Critical thinking			
2. Communication skills			
3. _Analytical_ writing skills			
4. _Understanding_ of theories and concepts			
5. _Application_ of theories and/or concepts			
6. _Evaluation_ of theories			
7. Citizenship knowledge			

The above measures are linked to the following student learning objectives:
1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments.
2. The students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively.
3. The students will demonstrate strong analytical writing skills.
4. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science.
5. The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory.
6. The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds.
7. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen.

INTRODUCTORY COURSE EMBEDDED QUESTION ASSESSMENT MATRIX
Department of Political Science
B.A. Program

Semester: Fall/Spring _____   Course: ☐110 ☐200 ☐220 ☐240 ☐260 ☐270 ☐280

Instructions: As part of the Department's program of outcomes assessment, we evaluate our students' learning along several dimensions. This may be done by embedding questions relevant to as many of the dimensions as possible into your quizzes and/or exams. It is advisable to use several questions for each dimension when using this method of assessment. See the attached Guidelines for Assessment by Embedded Questions. *Please submit your questions (by learning objectives, below) electronically to the departmental outcomes assessment coordinator when submitting this report.*

Please use this report form to summarize the results of your assessment by reporting the *percent* of students, for example, rating "strong" on critical thinking, etc. If an evaluation of a particular measure is not appropriate for this course, please draw a line through that row to so indicate.

Type of embedded questions:
☐ Multiple choice   ☐ Fill in the blank   ☐ Short answer   ☐ other: _____

Number of students assessed: _____

Summary of All Students' Performance

	Number of questions in the assessment	Weak	Adequate	Strong
1. Critical thinking				
2. *Understanding* of theories and concepts				
3. *Application* of theories and/or concepts				
4. *Evaluation* of theories				
5. Citizenship knowledge				

The above measures are linked to the following student learning objectives:
1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments.
2. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science.
3. The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory.
4. The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds.
5. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen.

The following are rough guidelines for an assessment of student learning in your course using questions embedded in quizzes or exams. All the questions should be relevant to your course, and it is appropriate to include these questions in the calculation of the students' grades. It is not necessary to assess all five learning objectives, but please try to assess three or more learning objectives. For each learning objective, use at least four objective (i.e., correct/incorrect) questions that you identify as appropriate *before* you administer the exam. If you use short-answer questions (requiring a sentence or two), you may be able to make a small scale with each (2 or 3 points with partial credit). If you do so, please use at least two short-answer questions for each learning objective. The table on the next page provides guidelines for converting the responses to your questions into the 3-point scale on the Introductory Course Embedded Question Assessment Matrix report.

1. Critical thinking

It is difficult to assess critical thinking through multiple choice questions. Short-answer questions (requiring a sentence or two at least) are better suited to assessing critical thinking. In either case, the question should not be answerable by memory alone. Questions that give the students a scenario or cue them with a theoretical argument and then ask for an *extrapolation* of that scenario or theoretical argument are appropriate for assessing critical thinking.

2. Understanding of theories and concepts

Questions that ask students to correctly identify, describe, or understand theories or concepts are appropriate for assessing this learning objective.

3. Application of theories and/or concepts

This learning objective explicitly calls for the students to "be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory." As such, questions must either raise a theory and ask for the correct identification of a case or data pattern, or it must present details of a case or data pattern and ask for the correct identification of the theory or concept.

4. Evaluation of theories

It is difficult to assess theory evaluation through multiple choice questions. Short-answer questions (requiring a sentence or two at least) are better suited to assessing this learning objective. This learning objective presumes that the students understand theories that they are asked about. Evaluation questions might present the students with a theory and relevant evidence (or data results) and then ask the student whether the theory is supported by the given evidence. Another alternative is to present the students with a theory and ask what sort of evidence would support and/or refute the theory or, conversely, present the students with some specific evidence and ask what theory (or theories) from the class are supported and/or refuted by this evidence. Yet another alternative is to present the students with two theories and ask about the comparative internal consistency of those theories, or to ask about the internal consistency of one theory.

5. Citizenship knowledge

Citizen knowledge is perhaps most open to assessment by embedded questions. Questions regarding relevant political actors and the relationships with other actors, relevant institutions and their workings, and relevant issues are all appropriate for assessing citizen knowledge.

The following table provides guidelines for converting the responses to your questions into the 3-point scale on the Introductory Course Embedded Question Assessment Matrix report. It presumes that you use objective questions (i.e., multiple choice or fill in the blank) that can be judged either correct or incorrect. You may, however, create a small scale for each of two or more short-answer questions with partial credit and combine the scores for use with this table. Examples of each are provided below.

Number of questions in the assessment	Number answered correctly corresponding to 3-point scale:		
	Weak	Adequate	Strong
4	0-1	2-3	4
5	0-1	2-3	4-5
6	0-2	3-4	5-6
7	0-2	3-5	6-7
8	0-2	3-5	6-8
9	0-3	4-6	7-9
10	0-3	4-7	8-10
11	0-3	4-7	8-11
12	0-4	5-8	9-12

Example 1: You created five multiple-choice questions to assess "understanding of theories and concepts" and ten multiple-choice questions to assess "citizenship knowledge" relevant to your course material. You keep track of the responses and found that 18 of your 50 students got 1 or fewer of the five understanding-theory questions correct, 25 students got 2 or 3 of the understanding-theory questions correct, and 7 students got 4 or more understanding-theory questions correct; 16 of your 50 students got 3 or fewer of the ten citizenship-knowledge questions correct, 21 students got between 4 and 7 citizenship-knowledge questions correct, and 13 students got 8 or more citizenship-knowledge questions correct. For "2. Understanding of theories and concepts" on the matrix, you would report that the number of questions in the assessment was 5, 36% of students were weak, 50% were adequate, and 14% were strong. For "5. Citizenship knowledge" on the matrix, you would report that the number of questions in the assessment was 10, 32% of students were weak, 42% were adequate, and 26% were strong.

Example 2: You created two short-answer questions to assess "evaluation of theories", using an assessment scale of two points for each. (NOTE: It is perfectly appropriate to apply a different grading scale if you choose to do so.) With this example, the scores from both short-answer questions make a 0 to 4 scale, for which you can determine "weak", "adequate", and "strong" cut-points using the table above. You keep track of the responses and found the following:

	Question 2 Scores		
Question 1 Scores	0	1	2
0	4	5	6
1	3	7	8
2	1	2	14

Thus, 12 (= 4 + 5 + 3) of your 50 students got a score of 0 or 1 between the two questions, 24 (= 6 + 7 + 8 + 1 + 2) got a score of 2 or 3, and 14 got a score of 4. For "4. Evaluation of theories" on the matrix, you would report that the number of questions in the assessment was 2 *but using a 0-4 scale*, 24% of students were weak, 48% were adequate, and 28% were strong.

GRADUATING MAJOR ASSESSMENT MATRIX
Department of Political Science
B.A. Program

Semester: Fall/Spring _____   Course level: ☐300   ☐400

Subfield: ☐ American   ☐ Comparative   ☐ International   ☐ Political Theory   ☐ Public Policy

Student's name: _____

Instructions: As part of the Department's program of outcomes assessment, the student named above has been identified as one of our graduating seniors who is presently enrolled in your course. Using one of your existing course assignments as a writing sample appropriate for this evaluation, please rate the student's performance using the following criteria. If an evaluation of a particular measure is not appropriate given this assignment, please draw a line through that row to so indicate.

Type of writing sample:

☐ In-class essay   ☐ Take-home exam   ☐ Research paper   ☐ Honors thesis   ☐ other:_____

Length of writing sample: _____ pages

	Weak	Adequate	Strong
1. Critical thinking			
2. Communication skills			
3. *Analytical* writing skills			
4. *Understanding* of theories and concepts			
5. *Application* of theories and/or concepts			
6. *Evaluation* of theories			
7. Citizenship knowledge			

The above measures are linked to the following student learning objectives:

1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments.
2. The students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively.
3. The students will demonstrate strong analytical writing skills.
4. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science.
5. The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory.
6. The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds.
7. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen.

Summary Report of Outcomes Assessment, B.A. Political Science
Academic Year _____ - _____

Student Learning Objectives	IDEA[1]	Introductory Course Evaluations		Graduating Majors[4]
		Embedded Questions[2]	Writing Assignments[3]	
A.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments. (IDEA 11)				
B.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively. (IDEA 8)				
B.2. The students will demonstrate strong analytical writing skills.				
C.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science. (IDEA 2)				
C.2. The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory. (IDEA 3)				
C.3. The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds.				
D.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen. (IDEA 1)				
Number of sections (and/or students):				

The weakest score for each measure (column) is highlighted.

1: The average score across introductory courses on a 5-point scale.
2: The average percent adequate or strong across introductory courses.
3: The average percent adequate or strong across introductory courses.
4: The percent adequate or strong for graduating majors.

Subfield Summary Report of Outcomes Assessment, B.A. Political Science

Academic Year _____ - _____

Subfield: _____

Student Leaning Objectives

	Introductory Course Evaluations			Graduating Majors[4]
Student Leaning Objectives	IDEA[1]	Embedded Questions[2]	Writing Assignments[3]	
A.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments. (IDEA 11)				
B.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively. (IDEA 8)		███		
B.2. The students will demonstrate strong analytical writing skills.	███	███		
C.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science. (IDEA 2)				
C.2. The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory. (IDEA 3)				
C.3. The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds.	███			
D.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen. (IDEA 1)				
Number of sections (and/or students):				

The weakest score for each measure (column) is highlighted.

1: The average score across introductory courses on a 5-point scale.
2: The average percent adequate or strong across introductory courses.
3: The average percent adequate or strong across introductory courses.
4: The percent adequate or strong for graduating majors.

Summary Report of Outcomes Assessment, University Core Courses, Political Science

Academic Year _____ - _____

Student Learning Objectives	Introductory Course Evaluations											
	IDEA[1]				Embedded Questions[2]				Writing Assignments[3]			
	POLS 110	POLS 200	POLS 220	POLS 240	POLS 110	POLS 200	POLS 220	POLS 240	POLS 110	POLS 200	POLS 220	POLS 240
A.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments. (IDEA 11)												
B.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively. (IDEA 8)												
B.2. The students will demonstrate strong analytical writing skills.												
C.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science. (IDEA 2)												
C.2. The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory. (IDEA 3)												
C.3. The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds.												
D.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen. (IDEA 1)												
Number of sections (and/or students):												

The weakest score for each measure (column) is highlighted.
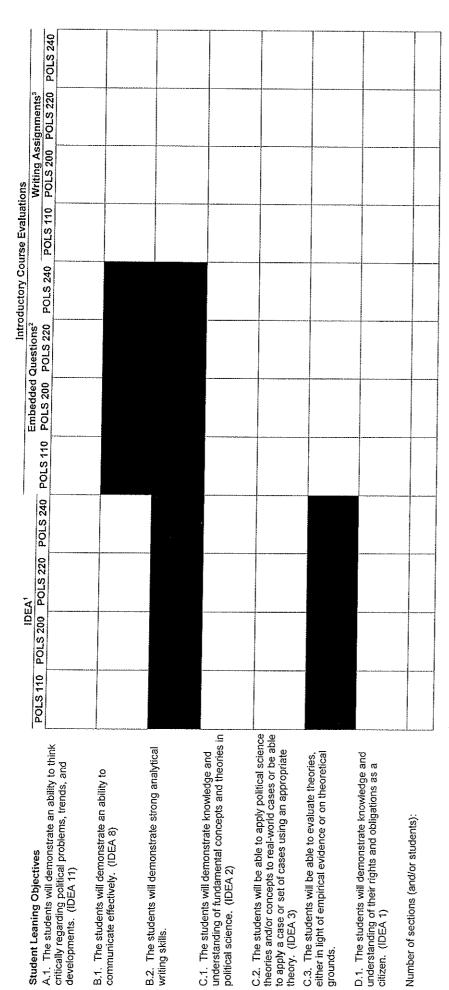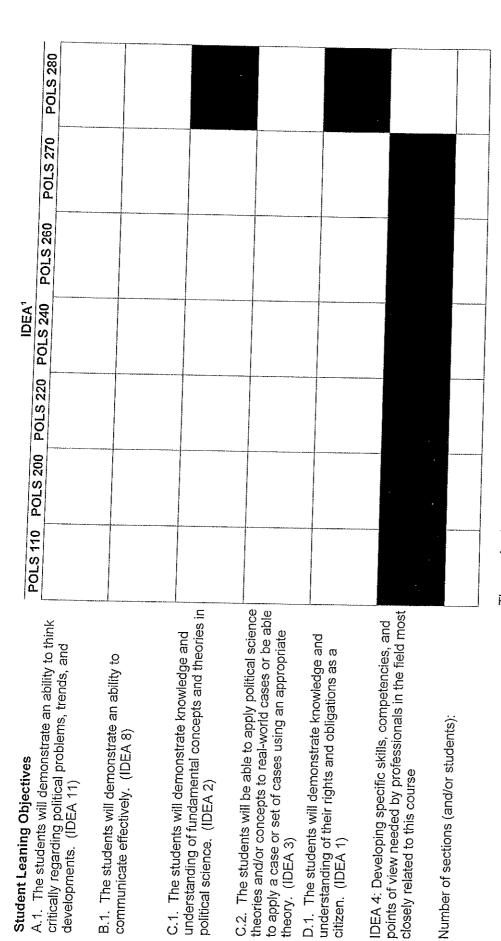
1: The average score across introductory courses on a 5-point scale.
2: The average percent adequate or strong across introductory courses.
3: The average percent adequate or strong across introductory courses.

Summary Report of Outcomes Assessment, Department Core Courses, Political Science

Academic Year _____ - _____

Student Learning Objectives

	IDEA[1]						
	POLS 110	POLS 200	POLS 220	POLS 240	POLS 260	POLS 270	POLS 280
A.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments. (IDEA 11)							
B.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively. (IDEA 8)							
C.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science. (IDEA 2)							■
C.2. The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory. (IDEA 3)							
D.1. The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen. (IDEA 1)							■
IDEA 4: Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course	■					■	
Number of sections (and/or students):							

The weakest score for each measure (column) is highlighted.

1: The average score across introductory courses on a 5-point scale.