

Assessment Report for GSU Core Curriculum

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Course(s): POLS 1101	Cycle/year: 2016-2017	Submission date: 10/02/2017

Core Curriculum Area Learning Outcome

Area E: Social Sciences: Students effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior and how historical, economic, political, social, and/or spatial relationships develop, persist, and/or change. (We refer to this as "SLO 1.1.")

Discipline-Specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's): By the end of the semester, students will demonstrate knowledge of

1. the constitutions, history, institutions, and processes of American government and politics. (SLO 2.1.)
2. the development, contemporary status, and normative basis of fundamental civil liberties and civil rights. (SLO 2.2.)
3. opportunities for political participation at the local, state, and national levels. (SLO 2.3.)
4. normative arguments in favor of democratic government and political participation. (SLO 2.4.)

Assessment Measures and Targets

All SLO's are assessed through a required (and graded) multiple choice exam administered online (via iCollege) during the last week of each semester. The exam is worth neither more nor less than 5% of each student's final grade.

- A. **(Discipline-Specific Learning Outcomes - 15 common multiple choice questions.)** These assess the students' ability to retain, explain and compare specific information (facts, concepts, perspectives), so as to be able to apply the information to different situations/cases/examples.
- a. The questions (which were written by POLS GSU Committee with members from the Atlanta and Perimeter Campuses) tap into SLOs 2.1-2.4 (by way of the need to identify, define and illustrate before being able to apply and analyze)
 - b. The department seeks a pass rate of 60% for each individual common question. In addition the department also seeks to achieve a target of 75% of students earning a grade of C or higher in the course.
 - c. We specifically assess student objective knowledge of
 - i. the constitutions, history, institutions, and processes of American government and politics. (SLO 2.1)
 - ii. the development, contemporary status, and normative basis of fundamental civil liberties and civil rights. (SLO 2.2)
 - iii. opportunities for political participation at the local, state, and national levels. (SLO 2.3)
 - iv. normative arguments in favor of democratic government and political participation. (SLO 2.4)
- B. **(Core Curriculum Area Learning Outcome - Area E: Social Sciences - 15 scenario-based objective multiple choice questions.)** These questions on the exam require students to analyze certain aspects of the complexity of human political behavior and of how political and social relationships develop, persist, and/or change.

These demonstrate the students' ability to analyze a set of complex issues in American Government as well as their ability to recognize different perspectives on the causes of an issue and/or to compare and contrast different solutions to the issue.

- A. The scenarios and accompanying questions (which were written by POLS GSU Committee with members from the Atlanta and Perimeter Campuses) collectively tap into SLOs 1.1 and 2.1-2.4.

- B. The department seeks a pass rate of 75% for each of the questions (not knowledge but skills-based; can they demonstrate analysis rather than do they know certain facts)

Assessment Administration (Data Collection and Sampling Plan)

All sections of POLS 1101 across both colleges are administering the same questions:

- a. Both sets of questions are administered in form of an iCollege assessment (one quiz encompassing all questions). To this end, the Perimeter and Atlanta POLS Faculty have shared an assessment folder where a template of the assessment is kept with the start and end dates of the assessment taking place during the same time period (last two weeks of semester). By allowing the template to be prepared, stored and then exported to the various faculty who teach POLS 1101 across the different GSU campuses we ensure ease of use for instructors as well as ease of data export for reporting purposes.
- b. At the beginning of the semester, the Perimeter and Atlanta assessment coordinators send instructions to all POLS 1101 instructors on how to import the quiz into their iCollege course (as well as the reminder to make the quiz 5% of their overall course assessment)
- c. At the end of the semester, the Atlanta and Perimeter assessment coordinators send instructions to all POLS 1101 instructors on how to export the assessment results and email to mevans33@gsu.edu for analysis.

Assessment Findings

Each instructor returns a document to mevans33@gsu.edu with a summary of the question statistics (prepared through a specific iCollege reporting function, instructions for which are sent to all instructors); the data are then combined and analyzed in the aggregate.

I. Discipline-specific knowledge questions:

1. The departments seek a correct response rate of 60% for each individual common knowledge question. **Target met:** The average rate for all students across the 15 questions was 87.6%, and, for each of the common knowledge questions, the rate was above 60% (ranging from 62% to 98%). Indeed, on 14 out of 15 questions, the correct response rate was 74% or higher.
2. The department also seeks to achieve a target of 75% of students earning a grade of C or higher in the course. **Target met:** Of all POLS 1101 sections (Perimeter and Atlanta colleges combined), 83.9% of students earned a grade of C or higher.

II. Scenario-based questions (analysis)

1. The departments seek a pass rate of 60% for all the scenario questions combined. **Target met:** the average score for all students across the 15 questions is 85.1% (ranging from 66% to 96%).
2. The departments seek a pass rate of 60% for each individual scenario.
 - a. Scenario 1: **Target met:** 90.6%
 - b. Scenario 2: **Target met:** 82.9%
 - c. Scenario 3: **Target met:** 82.0%

Analysis/Interpretation of Assessment Findings

I. Knowledge specific questions:

1. Students are exceeding our target levels of common discipline-specific knowledge across all sections and colleges.
2. While grades are not standard assessment tool, it is nonetheless reassuring to see a large percentage of students achieving a grade of C or higher.

II. Scenario-based questions (analysis)

1. Students show strong ability to interpret and analyze information through our scenario questions. Students exceeded the departmental target of 60% on all questions, and far exceeded that target on all but one question.

Impact of Past Changes Based on Assessment Findings

This is the first full cycle where Perimeter and Atlanta colleges administered the same assessments. Close cooperation between coordinators from Perimeter and Atlanta colleges in creating the assessment has resulted in a solid measurement process. So far, the main impact has been to strengthen close cooperation (achieved and ongoing) and this will be helpful in continuous fine-tuning of assessment tools.

Sharing and Discussion of Assessment Findings

Close cooperation between Atlanta and Perimeter coordinators to assess ease/difficulty of administering assessment across sections has resulted in relatively smooth distribution of assessment and explanation of how to administer assessment and how to report completed assessments to coordinator.

We will continue to share our findings with our respective assessment sub-committees, undergraduate committees and the larger departments and would welcome opportunity for joint information sharing across all core classes.

Intended Changes Based on Current Assessment Findings (Action Plan)

Potential problems:

1. After gathering data for one or two more semesters, question wording on the knowledge questions and the scenarios for the applied questions will need to be evaluated and edited as needed.
2. Administering assessment through iCollege could lead to students taking screen shots and sharing questions. It will be important to consider coming up with a larger stock of questions and scenarios that assess same SLOs with different phrasing. We should observe for one or two more semesters to see if there is unexplained improvement in grades across all sections.
3. Although response rates are higher than in previous semesters, there is still a lot of room for improvement. We will be more diligent in following-up with faculty to assure higher response rates.

Data for above numbers:

Average Scores on Core Assessment (Spring 2017)

Overall	Knowledge Questions	Scenario Questions	N
86.37%	87.55%	85.14%	2424

Average Scores for Each Question by All Sections (Spring 2017)

Question #	Correct Response Rate
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Knowledge Questions	
1	90%
2	96%
3	79%
4	95%
5	83%
6	90%
7	97%
8	85%
9	90%
10	98%
11	89%
12	74%
13	95%
14	62%
15	88%
Scenario 1	
16	86%
17	90%
18	96%
19	85%
20	97%
Scenario 2	
21	87%
22	94%
23	66%
24	86%
25	82%
Scenario 2	
26	89%
27	77%
28	91%
29	86%
30	66%
N	2424

