Department: Political Science

Assessment Coordinator: Professor Shirin Deylami/Professor Sara Weir

Departmental Mission: The mission of the Political Science Department is to provide programs that foster critical, independent thinking about politics and public life that will prepare our students for responsible citizenship in a democracy. Courses provide an understanding of political concepts and the organization and functioning of political systems. Our major programs equip students with the ability to understand political theories and to gain knowledge and experience through written work, lectures, reading, active learning and internships. The department offers courses that are a central part of Western's General University Requirements and that are requirements for other programs and joint majors in the college and in the University. In addition, the department plays an important role in the broader arena of civic education in the university, the community and the state.

Department Student Learning Outcomes: Upon graduation, (Department or Program) majors will be able to:

1. possess substantive knowledge in the student’s area of concentration
2. exhibit analytical skills in interpreting data
3. identify value conflicts in public issues
4. attain writing proficiency
5. engage in independent research
6. demonstrate critical, independent thinking about politics and public life

GUR (liberal arts & sciences) Student Learning Outcomes:

7. ____________
8. ____________
Political Science (cont.)

Student Learning Outcomes (Departmental and GUR) Assessed This Year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Measures</th>
<th>SLOs Assessed</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual learning assessment</td>
<td>1, 2 and 6</td>
<td>Too often basic concepts, terms and theories were taught for the first time in advanced, upper division courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection papers exploring what has been learned by students in internships (PLSC 443/444)</td>
<td>3, 4, 5 and 6</td>
<td>The inclusion of a 'learning objectives' statement at the beginning of the internship syllabi and a formal paper reflecting student learning (guided by the departmental objectives).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changes based on assessment findings:

Assessment of conceptual learning helped us decide to offer all core courses at the 200 level and to add more 300 level courses. This insures that less remedial work is included in advanced courses (ex. senior seminars).

The results from the internship reflection papers are currently being assessed.