

2015-2016 Annual Assessment Report Template

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Report:

Question 1: Program Learning Outcomes

Q1.1.

Which of the following Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Sac State Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BLGs) **did you assess?** [Check all that apply]

- ☒ 1. Critical Thinking
- ☒ 2. Information Literacy
- ☐ 3. Written Communication
- ☐ 4. Oral Communication
- ☐ 5. Quantitative Literacy
- ☐ 6. Inquiry and Analysis
- ☐ 7. Creative Thinking
- ☐ 8. Reading
- ☐ 9. Team Work
- ☐ 10. Problem Solving
- ☐ 11. Civic Knowledge and Engagement
- ☐ 12. Intercultural Knowledge and Competency
- ☐ 13. Ethical Reasoning
- ☐ 14. Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning
- ☐ 15. Global Learning
- ☐ 16. Integrative and Applied Learning
- ☐ 17. Overall Competencies for GE Knowledge
- ☐ 18. Overall Competencies in the Major/Discipline
- ☐ 19. Other, specify any assessed PLOs not included above:

- a.
- b.
- c.

Q1.2.

Please provide more detailed background information about **EACH PLO** you checked above and other information such as how your specific PLOs are **explicitly** linked to the Sac State BLGs:

We examined two PLOs related to information literacy and critical thinking. These are both BLGs. We used the value rubric for assessing part of the information literacy PLO, but developed our own rubric for the critical thinking PLO. The PLOs are listed below as well as the specific parts of the objective that were assessed.

Q1.2.1.

Do you have rubrics for your PLOs?

- ☐ 1. Yes, for all PLOs
- ☒ 2. Yes, but for some PLOs
- ☐ 3. No rubrics for PLOs
- ☐ 4. N/A

☐ 5. Other, specify:

Q1.3.

Are your PLOs closely aligned with the mission of the university?

- ☒ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No
☐ 3. Don't know

Q1.4.

Is your program externally accredited (other than through WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC))?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☒ 2. No (skip to **Q1.5**)
☐ 3. Don't know (skip to **Q1.5**)

Q1.4.1.

If the answer to Q1.4 is **yes**, are your PLOs closely aligned with the mission/goals/outcomes of the accreditation agency?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No
☐ 3. Don't know

Q1.5.

Did your program use the *Degree Qualification Profile* (DQP) to develop your PLO(s)?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No, but I know what the DQP is
☒ 3. No, I don't know what the DQP is
☐ 4. Don't know

Q1.6.

Did you use action verbs to make each PLO measurable?

- ☒ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No
☐ 3. Don't know

(**Remember:** Save your progress)

Question 2: Standard of Performance for the Selected PLO

Q2.1.

Select **ONE(1)** PLO here as an example to illustrate how you conducted assessment (be sure you *checked the correct box* for this PLO in Q1.1):

Q2.1.1.

Please provide more background information about the **specific PLO** you've chosen in Q2.1.

The Government program has assessed parts of PLO2 Information Literacy and PLO3 Critical Thinking.

PLO2: Information Literacy – Students will locate, identify and evaluate information related to politics and government.

PLO2c: Students critically evaluate information
sources they are using as evidence

PLO 3: Critical Thinking —Students critically examine arguments, claims, and alternative explanations.

PLO3a: Students provide appropriate evidence
to support claims and arguments and recognize
obvious objections and alternative views.

Q2.2.

Has the program developed or adopted **explicit** standards of performance for this PLO?

- ☒ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know
- ☐ 4. N/A

Q2.3.

Please **provide the rubric(s)** and **standards of performance** that you have developed for this PLO here or in the appendix.

Rubric for PLO 3b – Using Evidence in Arguments.

Element	Definition	Benchmark (1)	Milestone (2)	Milestone (3)	Capstone (4)
Use of Evidence	Student is able to recognize and provide appropriate evidence to support claims and arguments.	Little evidence exists to back up student's claims or argument. Evidence is used poorly or is irrelevant to the argument.	Student uses some evidence, but it is insufficient. Main points of the paper are poorly supported.	Student provides sufficient and appropriate evidence to back major portions of their argument.	Student provides compelling evidence to back up argument.

Element	Definition	Benchmark (1)	Milestone (2)	Milestone (3)	Capstone (4)
Evaluation of Evidence	Students critically assesses evidence by examining sources and counter evidence.	Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning. Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation.	Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning. Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly. Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation or evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	Evidence Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion. Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis

We expect at least 50% of our students to reach milestone 3 and 90% to reach milestone 2.

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Q2.4. PLO	Q2.5. Stdnd	Q2.6. Rubric	Please indicate where you have published the PLO , the standard of performance, and the rubric that was used to measure the PLO:
☐	☐	☒	1. In SOME course syllabi/assignments in the program that address the PLO
☐	☐	☐	2. In ALL course syllabi/assignments in the program that address the PLO
☐	☐	☐	3. In the student handbook/advising handbook
☐	☐	☐	4. In the university catalogue
☐	☐	☐	5. On the academic unit website or in newsletters
☐	☐	☐	6. In the assessment or program review reports, plans, resources, or activities
☐	☐	☐	7. In new course proposal forms in the department/college/university
☐	☐	☐	8. In the department/college/university's strategic plans and other planning documents
			9. In the department/college/university's budget plans and other resource allocation documents

☒	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐ 10. Other, specify:

Question 3: Data Collection Methods and Evaluation of Data Quality for the Selected PLO

Q3.1.

Was assessment data/evidence **collected** for the selected PLO?

- ☒ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No (skip to **Q6**)
- ☐ 3. Don't know (skip to **Q6**)
- ☐ 4. N/A (skip to **Q6**)

Q3.1.1.

How many assessment tools/methods/measures **in total** did you use to assess this PLO?

Don't know

Q3.2.

Was the data **scored/evaluated** for this PLO?

- ☒ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No (skip to **Q6**)
- ☐ 3. Don't know (skip to **Q6**)
- ☐ 4. N/A (skip to **Q6**)

Q3.2.1.

Please describe how you collected the assessment data for the selected PLO. For example, in what course(s) or by what means were data collected:

Papers from Government 170, Public Policy Development, were assessed. This course is the closest to a capstone course we have in the Government major. All students are advised to take it in their Senior year and most take it their final semester. Students write a 13-15 page research paper. This is a good way to assess how students acquire, use and evaluate evidence.

(**Remember:** Save your progress)

Question 3A: Direct Measures (key assignments, projects, portfolios, etc.)

Q3.3.

Were direct measures (key assignments, projects, portfolios, course work, student tests, etc.) used to assess this PLO?

- ☒ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No (skip to **Q3.7**)
- ☐ 3. Don't know (skip to **Q3.7**)

Q3.3.1.

Which of the following direct measures were used? [**Check all that apply**]

- ☐ 1. Capstone project (e.g. theses, senior theses), courses, or experiences
- ☒ 2. Key assignments from required classes in the program
- ☐ 3. Key assignments from elective classes
- ☐ 4. Classroom based performance assessment such as simulations, comprehensive exams, or critiques
- ☐ 5. External performance assessments such as internships or other community-based projects
- ☐ 6. E-Portfolios
- ☐ 7. Other Portfolios

☐ 8. Other, specify:

Q3.3.2.

Please **explain** and **attach** the direct measure you used to collect data:

Students in GOVT 170 were assigned a research paper where they had to take a position on a public policy. The paper required them to research the policy and arguments for and against it.



Paper Assignment Spring 2016.docx
15.57 KB



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Q3.4.

What tool was used to evaluate the data?

- ☐ 1. No rubric is used to interpret the evidence (skip to **Q3.4.4.**)
- ☒ 2. Used rubric developed/modified by the faculty who teaches the class (skip to **Q3.4.2.**)
- ☐ 3. Used rubric developed/modified by a group of faculty (skip to **Q3.4.2.**)
- ☐ 4. Used rubric pilot-tested and refined by a group of faculty (skip to **Q3.4.2.**)
- ☐ 5. The VALUE rubric(s) (skip to **Q3.4.2.**)
- ☐ 6. Modified VALUE rubric(s) (skip to **Q3.4.2.**)
- ☐ 7. Used other means (Answer **Q3.4.1.**)

Q3.4.1.

If you used other means, which of the following measures was used? [**Check all that apply**]

- ☐ 1. National disciplinary exams or state/professional licensure exams (skip to **Q3.4.4.**)
- ☐ 2. General knowledge and skills measures (e.g. CLA, ETS PP, etc.) (skip to **Q3.4.4.**)
- ☐ 3. Other standardized knowledge and skill exams (e.g. ETC, GRE, etc.) (skip to **Q3.4.4.**)
- ☐ 4. Other, specify: (skip to **Q3.4.4.**)

Q3.4.2.

Was the **rubric** aligned directly and explicitly **with the PLO**?

- ☒ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know
- ☐ 4. N/A

Q3.4.3.

Was the **direct measure** (e.g. assignment, thesis, etc.) aligned directly and explicitly **with the rubric**?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☒ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know
- ☐ 4. N/A

Q3.4.4.

Was the **direct measure** (e.g. assignment, thesis, etc.) aligned directly and explicitly **with the PLO**?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☒ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know
- ☐ 4. N/A

Q3.5.

How many faculty members participated in planning the assessment data **collection** of the selected PLO?

4

Q3.5.1.

How many faculty members participated in the **evaluation** of the assessment data for the selected PLO?

2

Q3.5.2.

If the data was evaluated by multiple scorers, was there a norming process (a procedure to make sure everyone was scoring similarly)?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know
- ☒ 4. N/A

Q3.6.

How did you **select** the sample of student work (papers, projects, portfolios, etc.)?

We selected all Government majors taking the two sections of GOVT 170 in Spring 2016.

Q3.6.1.

How did you **decide** how many samples of student work to review?

Govt 170 is a required course that all majors must take and most take right before graduation.

Q3.6.2.

How many students were in the class or program?

60 were enrolled in two sections

Q3.6.3.

How many samples of student work did you evaluated?

50

Q3.6.4.

Was the sample size of student work for the direct measure adequate?

- ☒ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know

(**Remember:** Save your progress)

Question 3B: Indirect Measures (surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.)

Q3.7.

Were indirect measures used to assess the PLO?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☒ 2. No (skip to **Q3.8**)
- ☐ 3. Don't Know (skip to **Q3.8**)

Q3.7.1.

Which of the following indirect measures were used? [**Check all that apply**]

- ☐ 1. National student surveys (e.g. NSSE)
- ☐ 2. University conducted student surveys (e.g. OIR)
- ☐ 3. College/department/program student surveys or focus groups
- ☐ 4. Alumni surveys, focus groups, or interviews
- ☐ 5. Employer surveys, focus groups, or interviews
- ☐ 6. Advisory board surveys, focus groups, or interviews
- ☐ 7. Other, specify:

Q3.7.1.1.

Please explain and attach the indirect measure you used to collect data:

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Q3.7.2.

If surveys were used, how was the sample size **decided**?

Q3.7.3.

If surveys were used, how did you **select** your sample:

Q3.7.4.

If surveys were used, what was the response rate?

Question 3C: Other Measures (external benchmarking, licensing exams, standardized tests, etc.)

Q3.8.

Were external benchmarking data, such as licensing exams or standardized tests, used to assess the PLO?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☒ 2. No (skip to **Q3.8.2**)
- ☐ 3. Don't Know (skip to **Q3.8.2**)

Q3.8.1.

Which of the following measures was used? [**Check all that apply**]

- ☐ 1. National disciplinary exams or state/professional licensure exams
- ☐ 2. General knowledge and skills measures (e.g. CLA, ETS PP, etc.)
- ☐ 3. Other standardized knowledge and skill exams (e.g. ETC, GRE, etc.)
- ☐ 4. Other, specify:

Q3.8.2.

Were other measures used to assess the PLO?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☒ 2. No (skip to **Q4.1**)
- ☐ 3. Don't know (skip to **Q4.1**)

Q3.8.3.

If other measures were used, please specify:



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(**Remember:** Save your progress)

Question 4: Data, Findings, and Conclusions

Q4.1.

Please provide simple tables and/or graphs to summarize the assessment data, findings, and conclusions for the selected PLO for **Q2.1**:

BA GOVT INTR Q4.1

Table 1: Scoring for Government Majors in Govt 170 Papers – Using Evidence (PLO3a) 2016

	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)	Mean	Percent Over 2	N
Graduating Seniors	23.1%	51.3%	23.1%	2.6%	2.94	74.4%	39
All Seniors	22.2%	44.4%	24.4%	8.9%	2.80	66.7%	45
Non-Seniors	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	2.7%	3.00	80.0%	5
Total	22.0%	46.0%	24.0%	8.0%	2.82	68.0%	50

Table 2: Scoring for Government Majors for Govt 170 Papers – Evaluating Evidence (PLO2c) 2016

	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)	Mean	Percent Over 2	N
Graduating Seniors	18.2%	40.9%	25.0%	5.1%	2.82	59.1%	39
All Seniors	17.8%	44.4%	28.9%	8.9%	2.71	62.2%	45
Non-Seniors	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	2.81	60.0%	5
Total	18.0%	44.0%	30.0%	8.0%	2.72	62.0%	50

Table 1: Scoring for Government Majors in Govt 170 Papers – Using Evidence (PLO3a) 2016

	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)	Mean	Percent Over 2	N
Graduating Seniors	23.1%	51.3%	23.1%	2.6%	2.94	74.4%	39

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Q4.2.

Are students doing well and meeting the program standard? If not, how will the program work to improve student performance of the selected PLO?

To assess how the PLOs, we examined all student papers in GOVT 170. Students had to write a 15 page policy analysis, where they used evidence to argue for or against a policy. We separated the students by year and for those who had applied for graduation and were in their last semester. Only 10 percent were not Seniors and 37 of 50 were graduating seniors.

For PLO 3b, using evidence to make arguments, students met our standards. Over 90% were over the level 2 milestone and 74.4% of graduating Seniors met the milestone 3 standard. Students were generally able to find and use appropriate evidence to make arguments for their position. Twenty-three percent of graduating Seniors were thought to have met the capstone level.

For PLO 2b, evaluating evidence, over 90% were over milestone 2 and 59.1% were over milestone 3. This rubric was taken from the information value rubric and not one developed for the department. It was hard to apply this rubric because the assignment was not designed with this goal in mind.

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Q4.3.

For the selected PLO, the student performance:

- ☐ 1. **Exceeded** expectation/standard
- ☒ 2. **Met** expectation/standard
- ☐ 3. **Partially** met expectation/standard
- ☐ 4. Did not meet expectation/standard
- ☐ 5. No expectation/standard has been specified
- ☐ 6. Don't know

Question 4A: Alignment and Quality

Q4.4.

Did the data, including the direct measures, from all the different assessment tools/measures/methods directly align with the PLO?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☒ 3. Don't know

Q4.5.

Were **all** the assessment tools/measures/methods that were used good measures of the PLO?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☒ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know

Question 5: Use of Assessment Data (Closing the Loop)

Q5.1.

As a result of the assessment effort and based on prior feedback from OAPA, do you anticipate *making any changes* for your program (e.g. course structure, course content, or modification of PLOs)?

- ☒ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No (skip to **Q5.2**)
- ☐ 3. Don't know (skip to **Q5.2**)

Q5.1.1.

Please describe *what changes* you plan to make in your program as a result of your assessment of this PLO. Include a description of how you plan to assess the impact of these changes.

Both the Government Major and IR Major in the Government Department found applying the evaluation of evidence difficult. We used part of the Value Rubric for Information Literacy, but it did not really work for our assignments. Students are taught to evaluate evidence, but we don't spend as much time examining the quality of the source of information. This is partly because we emphasize that students should find high quality sources so students don't spend much time in their paper commenting on the source of information. They do a better job evaluating and comparing the quality of divergent evidence. This is something we plan to discuss in upcoming departmental meetings.

Q5.1.2.

Do you have a plan to assess the *impact of the changes* that you anticipate making?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☒ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know

Q5.2.

How have the assessment data from the last annual assessment been used so far? [**Check all that apply**]

	1. Very Much	2. Quite a Bit	3. Some	4. Not at All	5. N/A
1. Improving specific courses	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
2. Modifying curriculum	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
3. Improving advising and mentoring	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
4. Revising learning outcomes/goals	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
5. Revising rubrics and/or expectations	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Developing/updating assessment plan	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
7. Annual assessment reports	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
8. Program review	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
9. Prospective student and family information	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
10. Alumni communication	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
11. WSCUC accreditation (regional accreditation)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
12. Program accreditation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
13. External accountability reporting requirement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
14. Trustee/Governing Board deliberations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
15. Strategic planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
16. Institutional benchmarking	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
17. Academic policy development or modifications	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
18. Institutional improvement	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

19. Resource allocation and budgeting	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
20. New faculty hiring	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
21. Professional development for faculty and staff	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
22. Recruitment of new students	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

23. Other, specify:

Q5.2.1.

Please provide a detailed example of how you used the assessment data above:

Last year, we assessed quantitative reasoning by examining research papers in GOVT 100 which is our methods course. We discussed the results at our faculty retreat. Students did well on their methodology papers, but we thought there was room for improvement. We discussed that many of our students were taking the methodology course when they were Seniors and it would be useful for them to have this course before taking upper division electives where they could apply their knowledge. To help facilitate this we began advising student to take GOVT 100 earlier. We also began offering more sections because part of the problem was that students could not get into GOVT 100 until they were Seniors. We have not assessed yet whether students are taking GOVT 100 earlier. The department is also discussing whether to offer a second methods course for students interested in writing a more in-depth paper using methodological skills. As a result, he professor teaching GOVT 100 in Spring 2016 recruited select students to continue their research project in a GOVT 199 in Fall 2016. At least one student has taken advantage of this opportunity.

(Remember: Save your progress)

Additional Assessment Activities

Q6.

Many academic units have collected assessment data on aspect of their program *that are not related to the PLOs* (i.e. impacts of an advising center, etc.). **If** your program/academic unit has collected data on program *elements*, please briefly report your results here:



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Q7.

What PLO(s) do you plan to assess next year? [Check all that apply]

- ☐ 1. Critical Thinking
- ☐ 2. Information Literacy
- ☐ 3. Written Communication
- ☐ 4. Oral Communication
- ☐ 5. Quantitative Literacy
- ☐ 6. Inquiry and Analysis
- ☐ 7. Creative Thinking
- ☐ 8. Reading
- ☐ 9. Team Work
- ☐ 10. Problem Solving
- ☐ 11. Civic Knowledge and Engagement

- ☐ 12. Intercultural Knowledge and Competency
- ☐ 13. Ethical Reasoning
- ☐ 14. Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning
- ☐ 15. Global Learning
- ☐ 16. Integrative and Applied Learning
- ☐ 17. Overall Competencies for GE Knowledge
- ☒ 18. Overall Competencies in the Major/Discipline
- ☐ 19. Other, specify any PLOs not included above:

- a.
- b.
- c.

Q8. Please attach any additional files here:

Q8.1.

Have you attached any files to this form? If yes, please list every attached file here:

Research Paper Assignment GOVT 170

Government Major Program Learning Objectives

Curriculum Map

Program Information (**Required**)

P1.

Program/Concentration Name(s): [by degree]

BA Government & International Relations Conc

P1.1.

Program/Concentration Name(s): [by department]

Government & International Relations BA

P2.

Report Author(s):

Jim Cox

P2.1.

Department Chair/Program Director:

Nancy Lapp

P2.2.

Assessment Coordinator:

Jim Cox

P3.

Department/Division/Program of Academic Unit

Government

P4.

College:

College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies

P5.

Total enrollment for Academic Unit during assessment semester (see Departmental Fact Book):

N/A

P6.

Program Type:

- ☒ 1. Undergraduate baccalaureate major
- ☐ 2. Credential
- ☐ 3. Master's Degree
- ☐ 4. Doctorate (Ph.D./Ed.D./Ed.S./D.P.T./etc.)
- ☐ 5. Other, specify:

P7. Number of **undergraduate degree programs** the academic unit has?

3

P7.1. List all the names:

Government

Government IR concentration

Government and Journalism

P7.2. How many concentrations appear on the diploma for this undergraduate program?

Don't know

P8. Number of **master's degree programs** the academic unit has?

Don't know

P8.1. List all the names:

Government Masters' Program

P8.2. How many concentrations appear on the diploma for this master's program?

Don't know

P9. Number of **credential programs** the academic unit has?

0

P9.1. List all the names:

P10. Number of **doctorate degree programs** the academic unit has?

N/A

P10.1. List all the names:

When was your **assessment plan...**

	1. Before 2010-11	2. 2011-12	3. 2012-13	4. 2013-14	5. 2014-15	6. No Plan	7. Don't know
P11. developed?	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P11.1. last updated?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

P11.3.

Please attach your latest **assessment plan**:



Assessment PLO Government Major.docx
12.55 KB

P12.

Has your program developed a **curriculum map**?

- ☒ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No
☐ 3. Don't know

P12.1.

Please attach your latest **curriculum map**:



cur map Govt 16.docx
16.75 KB

P13.

Has your program indicated in the curriculum map where assessment **of student learning** occurs?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No
☒ 3. Don't know

P14.

Does your program have a capstone class?

- ☐ 1. Yes, indicate:
☒ 2. No
☐ 3. Don't know

P14.1.

Does your program have **any** capstone project?

- ☐ 1. Yes
☒ 2. No
☐ 3. Don't know

Paper Assignment
Government 170
Spring 2016
Professor Cox

The research paper is a major component of your class grade. In this paper you will evaluate a policy proposal that addresses one of the five policy areas listed at the end of the syllabus. I will evaluate your paper on the quality of your analysis and evidence. Your paper and debate issue will be the same, but your paper should be more specific. You need to pick a more specific topic in that general area to analyze. The paper should be around 13-15 pages double-spaced with one-inch margins. Your paper should have the following elements, but you do not have to use these as headings or organize your paper in exactly this way.

Is there a problem? – To what extent does a problem exist? How do differing values impact whether we see a problem? Do you find the evidence used to argue a problem exists convincing?

Solution – What solution do you propose to solve the problem? Focus on one solution and explain how it will work.

Will this solution solve the problem? – You should present and evaluate the evidence presented by both sides. *Some question to think about:* Will the proposal create other problems? Are the arguments for against the reform persuasive? What kind of evidence do supporters use to make their case? Does one side have better evidence than the other?

Is the solution feasible? Does this proposal have any chance of becoming law or policy? What obstacles does it face?

Evaluation – Given the arguments presented above you need to provide an overall assessment of the policy proposal. *Some question to think about:* Is this a good direction to move policy? Are there some aspects you like about the policy and others you do not?

Outlines and Sources

You need to turn in an outline of your paper and at least five possible sources on March 30th. You will share and talk about your outline with your groups on that day. If you do not turn in an outline your final paper grade will be penalized half a grade. Your outline should contain a thesis statement and the structure of your argument. You do not need to follow this for your final paper. This is meant to get you started.

Evidence and Sources

To address the questions above you will need to have multiple quality sources. The Internet and other electronic sources make it easier to find information than in the past, however you should not rely solely on a Google search for information on your topic. You should also look for more scholarly sources, which will require you to use library search engines and other resources. Your paper should have peer-reviewed or academic-journal sources. A policy analysis with only journalistic sources is not well researched. If a newspaper or magazine article discusses a study, then try to find the original source for that study. Do not rely on journalistic descriptions of research. You should also make assessments regarding the quality of the evidence you have found. The library is offering workshops on electronic databases. You can find the times and dates on the library website. Things to think about when weighing evidence:

Where does the evidence come from? Does the person or organization have expertise in the area they are writing about? Is the person writing objective or are they trying to promote a particular policy agenda? If someone concedes a point from the other side, this can often make us more confident the point is true. For example, if an economist who is well-known for advocating lower taxes concedes that tax cuts do not increase revenue, then this provides stronger evidence that the claim tax cuts increase revenue is false.

Is the evidence based on one study or is there a consensus among experts? In a controversial area of policy many studies will be done by academics and policy advocates. Do not cherry-pick the studies that agree with your position. Look for literature reviews of many studies, which point out consensus or points of disagreements among experts.

If there are disagreements among experts, who do you think makes the better case? For example, how much fraud goes on in the food stamp program? When the two sides talk about fraud are they using the same definition? Do they rely on good sources of evidence or is there evidence mainly anecdotal?

What type of study was done? A statistical study done with a small sample is less persuasive than a large-scale field experiment.

Do we really know enough to predict what will happen? Sometimes we don't really know what the impact of a policy change will be and the claims from both sides are speculative. In these cases, the choice of moving forward is more a question of risk acceptance and values. For example, many people argued against the 1996 welfare reform because we did not know what would happen and we would be putting poor children at risk. Others argued that it was an acceptable risk because the program was failing so badly.

Citation of sources

Any ideas or facts that you draw from someone else must be properly cited. Students who turn in papers with no sources or where the sources are not properly cited will receive a zero on the paper. More serious cases of plagiarism can lead to an F in the class. You should use **Chicago** style in your citation.

Writing

A well written paper does a better job of conveying your argument and a poorly written one. Here are some suggestions and common problems that I see that you should avoid.

Have a clear introduction that lays out your argument for the reader.

Subheadings are useful to help organize the paper for your reader.

Do not abuse quotes- Quotes should be used sparingly and not dropped into the middle of a paragraph with no explanation given for why it is relevant. I want to see your analysis and writing.

Do not use overly long or short paragraphs. Each paragraph should develop one idea and then connect to the next one. Long paragraphs are a sign of disjointed and confused thinking while short paragraphs demonstrate you have not thought through your idea or do not have enough material to develop it.

Assessment Program Learning Objectives Government Major – 2015/16

PLO1: Communication—Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively about politics and government.

PLO1a: Students should be able to express themselves coherently in writing about politics and government.

PLO2: Information Literacy – Students will locate, identify and evaluate information related to politics and government.

PLO2a: Students can use the library and web resources to find information relating to government and politics.

PLO2b: Students can properly cite sources used in their research.

PLO2c: Students can critically evaluate information sources they are using as evidence.

PLO 3: Critical Thinking —Students need to be able to critically examine arguments, claims, and alternative explanations.

PLO3a: Students will provide appropriate evidence to support claims and arguments and recognize obvious objections and alternative views.

PLO3b: Students identifies and evaluates the context and underlying assumptions of competing arguments.

PLO4: Core Knowledge of Politics and Government --- Students should be familiar with key concepts and knowledge in the areas of American politics and Government, international relations, and political theory.

PLO4a: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the working American politics and institutions. Students will analyze current political and policy issues using theories from political science.

PLO4b: Students will explain and apply key concepts and theories in international relations.

PLO4c: Students will explain and apply key concepts in political theory.

PLO5: Quantitative Knowledge - Students will be able to analyze quantitative data and write up research findings.

PLO5a: Developing Hypotheses- Student states a clear and testable hypothesis and explains why it is plausible.

PLO5b: Research methodology and analysis- Student uses an appropriate research design and explains data, independent and dependent variables.

PLO5c: Interpretation and presentation of results - Student presents and interprets the results by explaining how it is linked to their hypotheses.

GOVERNMENT	PLO 1: Communication	PLO 2: Information Literacy			PLO 3: Critical Thinking		PLO 4: Core Knowledge			PLO 5: Quantitative Analysis		
	PLO 1a	PLO 2a	PLO 2b	PLO 2c	PLO 3a	PLO 3b	PLO 4a	PLO 4b	PLO 4c	PLO 5a	PLO 5b	PLO 5c
	writing	acquire info	cite	evaluate	argument	evidence	American	Theory	IR	Hyp.	Methods	Interp.
GOVT 1	I	I	I	I	I	I	I					
GOVT 100	D	D	D	D	D	D				I,D,M	I,D,M	I,D,M
GOVT 110/111	D	D	D	D	D	D		D,M				
GOVT 120A/120B	D		D	D	D	D	D					
GOVT 130	D	D	D	D	D	D			D,M			
GOVT 170	M	M	M	M	M	M	M					
Electives	M	M	M	M	M	M						
Timeline												
First Round	2011	2011	2011	2016	2011	2014	2017	2017	2017	2015	2015	2015
Second Round	2018	2018	2018	2018	2019	2016	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021
Expected Over 2	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%

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D = DEVELOPING
M = MASTERED

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