

Political Science Assessment Plan

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Year		Target course(s) for Assessment Data
	2015-2016	2016-17	
Learning Outcome 1	x	x	PSCI 499R
Learning Outcome 2	x	x	PSCI 499R
Learning Outcome 3	x	x	PSCI 499R
Learning Outcome 4	x	x	PSCI 499R

Learning Outcomes

There are four basic learning outcomes and four specific to the options offered in the Department of Political Science.

The four basic outcomes are that students should be able to:

1. Evaluate conflicting arguments;
2. Assemble empirical evidence and analyze normative concepts;
3. Make reasoned conclusions from evidence;
4. Communicate orally and written effectively, credit and cite sources.

Scoring Rubrics and Thresholds

Outcomes 1-4 will be evaluated on a four-point scale as Excellent (4), Good (3), Fair (2), or Poor (1).

The department will be assessed as achieving student outcomes successfully if all scores for both basic outcomes and overall improvement are in the range of (2) or better.

Outcome 1: Evaluate conflicting arguments

- a) Poor means that the students did not demonstrate an ability to evaluate conflicting arguments. Conflicting arguments may have been identified, but the evaluation component was absent, confusing, or too superficial to convey any intellectually meaning evaluation.
- b) Fair means that the student identified conflicting arguments and made a cogent argument for and against each one. The paper may have some grammatical or spelling errors.
- c) Good means that the student identified conflicting arguments, made cogent arguments for and against and the content of the arguments demonstrated some intellectual depth. Few or no grammatical or spelling errors.
- d) Excellent means that the student identified conflicting arguments, made cogent arguments for and against, demonstrated intellectual depth as well as some innovative or original thinking. No grammatical or spelling errors.

Outcome 2: Assemble empirical evidence and analyze normative concepts

- a) Poor means that the student did not demonstrate an ability to assemble evidence and analyze normative concepts. Assembled evidence was incomplete or was not effectively evaluated and/or the normative concept was poorly explained.
- b) Fair means that the student assembled relevant evidence, proposed the relevant normative concept, and cogently analyzed the evidence vis vis the concept.
- c) Good means that the student assembled relevant evidence, proposed the relevant normative concept, and analyzed the evidence vis-à-vis the concept, demonstrating some intellectual depth. Few or no grammatical or spelling errors.
- d) Excellent means that the student assembled relevant evidence, proposed the relevant normative concept, and analyzed the evidence vis-à-vis the concept, discussing with intellectual depth the extent to which the evidence supports the concept and demonstrating innovative or original thinking. No grammatical or spelling errors.

Outcome 3: Make reasoned conclusions from evidence

- a) Poor means that of the three elements – thesis statement, evidence, and conclusion linking the two – some or all of these elements are absent or too weak to achieve the outcome.
- b) Fair means that all three elements are present, the thesis is clear, there is adequate evidence pertaining to the thesis statement, and the conclusion effectively links the evidence and thesis statement together.
- c) Good means that the thesis statement is clear, sharp, and focused; adequate and appropriate evidence is marshaled to evaluate the thesis, and the conclusion links the two. The paper overall reflects a high degree of intellectual depth and substance.
- d) Excellent means that all three elements are outstanding or exceptional and the paper reflects not only intellectual depth, but also innovative or original thinking.

Outcome 4: Communicate orally and written effectively, credit and cite sources

- a) Poor means that the student's performance on written and oral work does not demonstrate the level of competence expected from a college-educated individual. Thinking is superficial, intellectually shallow, and/or unclear or confused. Sources are improperly credit and cited.
- b) Fair means the student's performance on written and oral work demonstrates a minimum level of competence; the work is structured in a logical manner, moving from thesis to conclusion, presentation is clear and sources are properly credited and cited.
- c) Good means that the student's performance on written and oral work is competent (as described for "fair"), intellectually engaging, and substantive.

Sources are properly credited and cited. There should be very few and only minor grammatical or spelling errors.

- d) Excellent means that the student's performance on written and oral work is outstanding; including competence as described above, demonstrates intellectual substance, and shows evidence of original or innovative thinking. Sources are properly credited and cited. There are no grammatical or spelling errors.