

Political Science BA 2006 Assessment Plan

Name of Program: Political Science BA

Program Director: Jana Everett

Email Address of Program Director: jana.everett@cudenver.edu

Person Completing Assessment Plan: same

Email address of Person Completing Plan: same

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1. Program's educational goals or objectives:

The BA degree in political science emphasizes knowledge and understanding of:

- the values and beliefs that constitute the Western political tradition, and alternative ideologies and belief systems;
- the institutions and processes of the American political system and its strengths and weaknesses as we enter the 21st century;
- other political systems, both Western and non-Western, which are members of the world community, our allies and competitors in international relations, and through comparative analysis a source of insight into American society and politics;
- the patterns of interaction among members of the world community, the causes of war and peace, and the sources of international conflict and cooperation; and
- the domestic and international policy issues facing the United States and the world community, and the ability to make reasoned judgments - integrating facts and values, means and ends - regarding policies to address those problems.

2. **Student learning objectives:** Describe the desired student learning outcomes in terms of knowledge objectives, skill objectives, and (if applicable) dispositional objectives.

By the time of completion of the political science major, students will be able to:

1. Place themselves in conversation with multiple philosophical perspectives, including those outside of the traditional Western canon, by developing their own positions and by seeing how their positions build from and contribute to these perspectives.
2. Reflect on the relationship between theory and practice and explore a potential career path through engagement in an internship, service learning, or other experiential learning.
3. Evaluate conflicting arguments, assemble and present empirical evidence using appropriate methods of research and data analysis, and make reasoned conclusions from the evidence available.
4. Demonstrate their knowledge about the American political system, other political systems, and international relations.
5. Engage in critical thinking.
6. Express their views effectively in written and verbal communication.

3. **Assessment methods or techniques:** Put a check mark next to the measurement methods that will be used.

- X Written papers or reports
- X Oral presentations
- X Internship supervisor reports

4. **Sampling:** Describe the sampling methods to be used – i.e., from whom will the assessment data be collected?

Each academic year, a sample of final papers in the following courses will be collected:

1. 4000-level Political Theory
2. 4000-level American Politics
3. 4000-level Comparative Politics
4. 4000-level International Relations
5. PSC 3011 Research Methods
6. A service learning course or a group of internships

Each fall semester, the faculty will decide on the specific courses from which samples of papers will be drawn and which faculty members will assess each set papers. Each year a sample of papers will be drawn from a political theory, research methods and internship/service learning class and also from one of the following: 4000-level comparative, American, or international course.

To assess oral communication, each fall semester the faculty will decide on the specific courses in which this will be assessed. In these courses, the professor will assess oral presentations using the presentation rubric and check list.

Supervisor reports for internships will be evaluated

5. **Data collection methods:** Describe how data will be collected, by whom, and when:

<u>Type of Data</u>	<u>To Be Collected By</u>	<u>When</u>
See above		

6. **Assessment scoring methods:** Describe how the assessments will be scored (e.g., calculations of total scores on objective tests; determination of categorical scores via the use of a scoring rubric on open-ended tasks, etc.), by whom, and when:

<u>Type of Scoring</u>	<u>To Be Scored By</u>	<u>When</u>
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Scoring rubrics will be used for all of the categories of courses. Rubrics have been developed for Research Methods, Experiential Learning and Oral Presentations. In Spring 2007, rubrics will be developed for the remaining outcomes.

7. **Data interpretation plans:** Describe what types of criteria will be used to interpret the data, and how data will be aggregated:

The criteria will be set out in the rubrics. Interpretations of the data from the 6 categories of courses will be summarized. Two of the outcomes (engage in critical thinking and express their views effectively in written and verbal communication) will be assessed across all of the categories of courses and the remaining outcomes will be assessed in one category of courses. The findings will be summarized in a report sent to the Outcomes Assessment Office and to all political science faculty members.

8. **Use of information** (the "feedback loop"): Describe how the information will be summarized and reported; to whom it will be reported; and how it will be used to make programmatic recommendations and decisions.

At the beginning of each fall semester, the outcomes report will be discussed in a faculty meeting, and the faculty will make programmatic recommendations and decisions to address areas needing improvement.

7. **Major responsibility for tasks:** For steps 5-8, indicate who will take major responsibility for ensuring that the tasks are completed:

Data Collection: Faculty members teaching the courses that are being assessed.

Assessment Scoring: Developing rubrics for American, Comparative, International and Theory—the faculty in those areas.

Data Interpretation: A faculty member in the appropriate area whose class is not being assessed.

Reporting and “closing the feedback loop”: Chair

8. **Assessment evaluation:** Indicate how the assessment plan will be periodically reviewed by program faculty and, if necessary, revised.

Every 3 years, the faculty will review the assessment plan and revise if necessary.