



Academic Learning Compact

Political Science

Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration is to serve the State of Florida through excellent educational opportunities involving outstanding teaching, quality research, and effective civic engagement. The department focuses its resources to provide both undergraduate and graduate students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities for understanding, participating in, and managing the institutions, processes, and behaviors characteristic of national and international politics and public affairs. With excellent instruction as the highest priority, the department also supports extensive interaction with external constituencies through local, regional, state, and national professional service, and applied and theoretical research. The department is dedicated to maintaining program effectiveness for both students and community partners through continuous self-assessment.

Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates will be able

Content/Discipline-Specific Knowledge/Skills

- Understand the sources and uses of power and its relationship to political events, outcomes and processes.

By review of the department, this outcome will not be assessed again.

- Understand the principles of the rule of law and its effects on political relationships, actors, institutions and policy.
- Understand the role of public policy, the policy-making process, the political and environmental factors which affect its development and its effects on political events, actors, and institutions. Understanding means to recognize the importance of public policies and their impacts on political institutions and actors. Students will be able to explain and analyze the impacts of different public policies.
- Understand the various types of political ideology and the relationship of specific ideologies to political processes and policy development.
- Understand the general types of political behaviors and the factors that cause them and relate those behaviors to specific political actions and outcomes.
- Demonstrate Knowledge of American Government
- Demonstrate knowledge of concepts in comparative and international politics.
- Demonstrate knowledge of concepts in political theory and research design.
- Writing: Possess writing skills needed to communicate clearly and effectively; convey information essential to the discipline in an orderly and understandable manner.

Communication Skills

- Possess the verbal and writing skills needed to communicate clearly and effectively, make persuasive, professional presentations and convey information essential to the discipline in an orderly and understandable manner.
- Understand and be able to use normative and empirical analysis tools in the study of political science.

Critical Thinking Skills

- Be able to effectively apply critical thinking and problem solving skills to political issues.

Assessment Approaches

Due to feedback from faculty and a discussion at departmental retreat last year, the undergraduate program changed our assessment approach. Starting in calendar year 2015, the department went to a Pre-Test Post Test model involving content areas of American Government, Comparative/International Relations and Theory/Design. We continue to assess writing/communication and critical thinking as well. The new learning outcomes reflect these changes. The Pre-Post test model involves ALL students taking assessment test/quizzes in our first research class POS 3733 with questions from the Educational Testing Service recommended by the UNF Director of Institutional Advancement and Assessment. These questions are given by content area block (Amer. Gov, Comparative/International Relations, Theory/Design) - along with a Critical Thinking block of questions. All students take 10 randomly selected questions from each area block. The measurement in each area is the mean for all students of how many questions out of 10 in each block they answer correctly. For the writing assessment, an essay question that asks students to analyze the power of the federal government is used. A sample of these papers are assessed by 2 faculty members using the same rubric involving clarity, logic, evidence and writing mechanics. The results will reflect the mean of these evaluations between the two graders/coders. For this year, the writing assignment will be examined in the Senior Seminar class. Next year - a pre-test/post test approach will be used for assessing writing as well and the number of graders will increase.

This new approach will give our department data that is more reliable and understandable. It also reaches ALL of our students in the major.