

**POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR
SELF-STUDY**

**Department of Political Science
John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

Fall 2016

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I. Overview of the Major

A. Introduction

The first version of the major, then known as the Government major, was approved in February, 1993 after the Department was split into a Department of Government, which focused on instruction in political science, and a Department of Public Management, which focused on instruction in that discipline. Early versions of the Government major were narrower in scope than political science majors at most colleges and universities. For example, through 2004, the major required students to take foundation courses in only some of the subfields of political science and select upper-level courses from only one of three concentrations -- Law, Policy and Society, primarily comprised of courses relating to public law; Justice and Politics, primarily comprised of courses relating to political theory; and Urban Affairs and Community Leadership, primarily comprised of courses relating to urban politics and American politics. Numerous courses in the major were offered by departments other than ours, an artifact of the time when there were limits on majors that could be established at the College, resulting in many departments without majors contributing courses to majors offered by other departments. For example, the Government major at that time required students to take two courses in American history and included courses in anthropology, economics, history, philosophy, and sociology.

The major was significantly revised in 2005 and 2009. In the 2005 revision, the major was expanded to include a new concentration in comparative politics and international relations given rising student demand and the growing number of excellent faculty in the Department in these subfields. In addition, and for the first time, the Department added a required capstone course for all majors (POL 409), providing students with the opportunity to design and execute their own original research projects. While POL 409 focuses on the theoretical and methodological issues that students must tackle if they are to become producers of sound research in political science, it, more importantly, develops a number of transferable skills – data gathering and analysis, logical reasoning, critical thinking, and written and oral communication. In the 2009 revision, the name of the major was changed from Government to Political Science to more accurately reflect the focus and direction of the program.

The recommendations generated from our last program evaluation (2010), combined with annual outcomes assessments of the major, led to our most recent revision of the major in 2012. Under this revision, all students take one course in each of the five discipline subfields reflected in the foundations; previously, a course in any four of the five was required. In addition, a number of new courses were developed for the foundations to more accurately represent the breadth of the discipline. These included POL 235 (Judicial Processes and Politics), POL 234 (Introduction to Public Policy) and POL 214 (Political Parties, Interest Groups and Social Movements). Also in this revision, we ensured that the courses available in the foundations represented appropriate sophomore-level courses for the subfields. For example, we previously offered a 200-level constitutional law course as a foundation course, a course more properly offered as a 300-level course in a concentration. Thus, that course was elevated to the 300-level (now POL 301). The 2012 revisions also expanded concentration requirements, mandating that all students complete five courses in their chosen concentration instead of the previous four, including two 300-level courses and a 400-level course. Additionally, given that our assessment reports found that students taking POL 409, the capstone research course, did not come to that course with a sufficient foundation in research methods, the 2012 revision added a required sophomore-level research methods course (POL 225). Given that CUNY policy prohibited us from imposing that requirement on students already enrolled in the major, only in the last year or so have we begun to have the capstone course populated with a majority of students having had POL 225. Finally, the 2012 revision added an optional undergraduate research experience course (POL 385) to the major, providing credit to students working with Department faculty on research projects, both individually and, recently, in small groups. That course has proven to be extremely popular with both students and faculty, providing our majors with a credit-bearing formal research experience and providing faculty with research assistants.

In Fall 2015, the Political Science major enrollment was 462 students, a 12% decrease compared to Fall 2014 (528), but equal to the enrollment in Fall 2011. Much of the recent enrollment drop in Political Science can be attributed to lower numbers in our largest concentration, Concentration A (“Law, Courts and Politics”) where, among students who had declared a concentration, enrollment fell from 208 in Fall 2014 to 141 in Fall 2015, a reduction of 32% (67 students). As this concentration offers courses with the most overlap with courses in the newly-developed Law and Society major, this drop was expected, as some students with an interest in law began to gravitate more toward that major and away from this Political Science concentration. We expect this trend to stabilize, with students still being attracted to Concentration A because of their interest in law, courts and politics combined with a broader interest in political science.

B. Mission Fulfillment

1. What is the mission statement of the major?

The current mission statement of the major is as follows: “The major in Political Science introduces students to the principal fields of inquiry in political science. This major provides a program of study for students considering careers in a variety of fields, including public service, law, community affairs, international relations and politics. Students may select from four concentrations-of-choice: Law, Courts and Politics, which explores the intersection of the legal system and the broader political system; Justice and Politics, which examines the political philosophy and various societal values that underlie contemporary views of justice; American and Urban Politics and Policy, which emphasizes the role of political institutions in shaping solutions to contemporary urban problems; and Comparative/International Politics and Human Rights, which explores the global dimensions of politics and governance.”

We believe the Department might consider a revision of the mission statement to make it more concise and more clearly align it with the major’s learning outcomes.

2. How does the major’s mission relate to the College’s mission?

The major’s mission furthers the College’s mission (available here: <http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/mission-statement>) in the following ways: a) equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue graduate study in a variety of fields; b) equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue careers in the public, private and non-profit sectors; c) preparing students for ethical leadership, global citizenship and engaged service; d) encouraging students to pursue transformative scholarship with faculty; and e) motivating students to consider multiple perspectives and to think critically.

3. In brief, do your assessment findings indicate that the Major is accomplishing its mission?

Yes. Our program introduces our students to the major subfields of the discipline through our foundation requirements. In addition, students are exposed to different methods of inquiry in POL 225, POL 409 and in our undergraduate research experience courses because faculty with different methodological approaches regularly teach these offerings. In addition, the concentration requirements permit students to explore discipline subfields in more depth, thereby aiding students in identifying career interests. Finally, the skills-based requirements in the major provide students with tools to succeed in a wide variety of careers.

C. List the Learning outcomes for the major. Do these outcomes need revision?

The major aims to fulfill its mission through four learning outcomes: 1) Students will initiate, develop, and present independent research (referred to as the *Independent Research* outcome); 2) Students will write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express cogent arguments (the *Effective Writing* outcome); 3) Students will become knowledgeable members of the community capable of reasoned judgments on political issues and ideas (the *Reasoned Judgments* outcome); and 4) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the major subfields of political science, as represented by the major's foundation requirements and concentrations (the *Subfield Knowledge* outcome). These outcomes were developed after the last program evaluation; we do not believe they need revision.

D. Is your curriculum effectively fulfilling the learning outcomes of the major? Point to strengths and weaknesses in the last five years.

Yes. As reflected in our 2015 fifth-year summary assessment report, the major underwent several significant changes in the last five years that were specifically designed to meet the learning outcomes. First, the Department developed a research methods course (POL 225) required of all majors, furthering the *Independent Research*, *Effective Writing* and *Reasoned Judgments* outcomes. Second, the Department removed numerous courses offered by other disciplines from the major, required students to take courses in all five of the major's subfield-based foundation categories (instead of four out of five), and increased the number of credits students are required to take in their concentration from 12 to 15, all furthering the *Subfield Knowledge* outcome. Third, to further the *Independent Research* outcome, we developed the optional undergraduate research experience course (POL 385), where students receive credit for working individually or in small groups with Department faculty on their own projects or as research assistants. These changes moved student performance across these outcomes in a positive direction on nearly every metric presented in the 2015 report.

One issue that has been raised by members of the Department in discussions of assessment results is the need to make POL 225, our research methods course, a formal prerequisite for POL 409, our capstone course. Most students now taking POL 409 have completed POL 225, but we have a few students each semester who take POL 225 and POL 409 in the same semester of their senior year. At our May 2016 retreat, the Department agreed to add POL 225 as a required prerequisite for POL 409, and that will be done this academic year.

An additional issue that has been raised in assessment discussions in the Department is the need to reinforce the skills and concepts taught in POL 225 in subsequent courses leading up to POL 409. Many faculty teaching POL 409 have noted anecdotally how numerous students who come to the class with the research methods course have not retained material taught in that course. Thus, the Department is discussing approaches to reinforce and build on the skills taught in POL 225 in 300-level courses so students are better prepared when they get to POL 409. We expect to develop a formal policy this year.

E. How does the major build on the knowledge and skills learned by students in the College's general education requirements?

The College's general education requirements mandate that students take courses in three areas – the “Required Core” that provides a foundation in vital critical thinking skills, the “Flexible Core” that provides coursework on diversity and on interactions between the U.S. and other nations and cultures around the world, and the “College Option” that provides courses centered around issues of justice, historical analysis, and communication.

A number of POL courses are options in general education. POL 101 (Introduction to American Government and Politics), POL 237 (Women and Politics), and POL 246 (Politics of Globalization and Inequality) are offered in the “Flexible Core.” Additionally, POL 105 (Struggles for Justice in the

Workplace”), POL 318 (The Law and Politics of Sexual Orientation) and POL 320 (International Human Rights) are offered in the “College Option.”

Other courses in the major also are centered in these areas, providing a more advanced exploration than in general education. For example, diversity and interactions of the U.S. with other nations and cultures (an element of the “Flexible Core”) are addressed in such courses as POL 313 (Law and Politics of Race Relations), POL 319 (Gender and Law), POL 257 (Comparative Politics), POL 260 (International Relations) and all courses offered in Concentration D. Issues of justice (part of the “College Option”) are addressed in many courses offered throughout our program including, but not limited to, POL 250 (International Law and Justice), POL 305 (Constitutional Rights and Liberties), POL 344 (Law and Politics of Immigration), POL 375 (Law, Order, Justice and Society) and POL 423 (Selected Topics in Justice). In addition, the students in the major further develop their analytical and writing skills introduced in general education in the research methods course (POL 225) and the major capstone course (POL 409) as well as other advanced courses in the major.

F. Research and Internships: describe the opportunities for supervised internships and for student participation in faculty research.

We believe these areas are significant strengths of the major. We offer three internship programs in the major, all with strong academic components that can be used to meet major requirements (up to six internship credits in these courses can be used to meet major requirements). One is our very popular six-credit New York City Internship program (POL 406), offered every semester, that places students with city, state and federal agencies located in the five boroughs as well as with members of city council, the New York State Assembly and Senate, as well as with members of Congress (all in their local district offices). Although POL 406 is offered in Concentration C only, students from other concentrations are encouraged to participate, as we are very liberal with course substitutions to permit POL 406 to count toward their major requirements. Enrollment in POL 406 last academic year totaled 28 students, down from 36 students from the previous year but an increase from 20 students in 2012-2013.

Beyond POL 406, we offer two other, more competitive, internship programs through the CUNY Edward T. Rogowsky Internship Program in Government and Public Affairs. One (POL 407) is the New York State Assembly Session Intern Program and the New York State Senate Session Assistants Program. Those programs take place over the entire spring semester with students residing in Albany. The other (offered as POL 408) is the CUNY Washington, DC Internship Program that takes place over the summer with students residing in Washington. We regularly have three or four students participating in these programs each academic year, and both programs provide six-credits toward major requirements as well as some elective credits.

Beyond these POL internships, the Department also offers a six-credit judicial internship in the Law and Society major (LWS 378) in partnership with the College’s Pre-Law Institute. Also with an academic component, it is a competitive program in which students are placed with trial court judges in New York state courts, many of whom are John Jay graduates. Some Political Science majors also take this internship, and we are very liberal with permitting substitution credit for this internship into the Political Science major.

Although not technically an internship, a related experiential learning option offered for political science credit is through participation in the College’s Model United Nations program, offered as a selected topics course (POL 280). Formally established in the Department in 1999, the Model UN program, open to students across the College, has been very popular and very successful, as the team has won awards in 13 out of 17 competitions since being established (76.5% success rate). The first award was received in 2002, the second in 2005 and the team has been winning ever since, including receiving the top conference award in Spring 2016. Sixteen students were enrolled in POL 280 (Special Topics in Political Science - Model UN) in Spring 2016.

The major also provides significant opportunities for students to engage in undergraduate research opportunities. In 2012, the Department developed an optional three-credit course (POL 385) designed for students to work individually with a faculty member as a research assistant or on their own project. A faculty member can work with up to two POL 385 students each semester, although last year the Provost expanded these undergraduate research opportunities to allow a faculty member to work collaboratively with a group of three or more students. We offer this opportunity as POL 386, also a three-credit course. These research opportunities expose students to scholarly activities in the discipline and increase students' interest in graduate study in political science. Last academic year, nine faculty members worked with 23 students in POL 385 and POL 386.

II. Assessment

A. Summarize the responses to recommendations from the previous self-study and program review. Describe all actions taken.

The previous self-study, conducted in 2009/2010, ended with recommendations to rethink the role of Research Methods in the Major and to rework Concentration C (Urban and Community Leadership) to become focused more explicitly on American Politics.

These items have been accomplished. The Department added a required methods course (POL 225). Yearly assessment reports over the last two years indicate that POL 225 is helping our students fill in a gap in their learning regarding methods. It is not formally listed as a required prerequisite for our capstone course (POL 409), but that change will be proposed this academic year.

To further close the loop on research skills, the Department developed an optional undergraduate research component for students in the major seeking to enhance their mastery of research concepts and skills before POL 409. This Supervised Undergraduate Research Experience (POL 385) allows students to work with individual faculty members (in an independent study model) on academic-level research while earning academic credit. Faculty in the Department have taken advantage of this opportunity and further expanded its applicability to different research settings like small groups and project-based research teams. There are now three versions for optional research experiences: (1) POL 385: Supervised Research Experience I; (2) POL 386: Supervised Research Experience II; and (3) POL 387: Faculty Mentored Research.

Concentration C has been reworked as Urban and American Politics, and the required foundation courses are now Introduction to Urban Politics (POL 206) and Introduction to Public Policy (POL 234). Further, we have added required foundation courses explicitly in American Politics, Category E: Political Parties, Interest Groups and Social Movements (POL 214); U.S. Congress (POL 215); and The American Presidency (POL 220).

While these were the only explicitly mentioned recommendations in the previous self-study, that program assessment process also encouraged the Department to look critically at the major and restructure other elements of the curriculum. For instance, the major used to require students to take two history courses, which we phased out in the 2012 revisions. In addition, we developed a course in judicial process and politics as a Foundation course and revised our constitutional powers and civil liberties courses into offerings at the 300-level (POL 301 and POL 305). Before, they were offered at the 200-level (constitutional powers) and 400-level (civil liberties). Further, we have now created required 400-level courses in each concentration so that students must take two 400-level courses before graduating (POL 409 and the 400-level course in their concentration). In the 2012 major revision, we also began requiring students to take at least one course in subfields of political science represented by the Concentrations (Foundation Courses A-E) rather than only 3 out of 4 as under the previous version of the major. Finally, based on new faculty hires we have been lucky enough to expand the courses we offer at the 300-level to include essential topics like International Organizations (POL 322), Politics of Transnational Crime (POL 325), Politics of International Security (POL 328), Government and Politics

of the Middle East (POL 331), Voting and Public Opinion (POL 302), and the Law and Politics of Immigration (POL 344).

In short, the 2009/2010 self-study process ushered in a series of changes to the major that culminated with a sweeping revision of the curriculum in 2012. We feel that this redesigned curriculum aligns better with our learning outcomes and presents our students with a much more holistic approach to studying political science.

B. Student Learning: List the learning goals of the program and briefly summarize and analyze the key findings of assessment over the last five years. What specific changes have been made as the result of assessment? What specific changes are in process? When will these be implemented? What additional information or assessment tools should be considered in the assessment plan for the next self-study?

The following list includes the learning outcomes of the major. Under each outcome, we have summarized the assessment activities results from the last five years. These summaries reference items from the assessment rubrics, which are included in the assessment reports contained in Appendix E to this report.

1. Students will initiate, develop, and present independent research (*Independent Research*).

Independent Research was assessed in 2010-2011 and 2013-2014. Student performance has improved on all aspects of the outcome, except "Limitations," which was not assessed in 2010-2011. Looking only at performance in POL 409, student performance has improved in "Topic Selection," "Propose Solutions/Hypotheses," "Analysis," and "Conclusions." Across these two assessments, the percentages of students who failed to meet expectations decreased by 18.3, 36.7, 11.6, and 1.7 points on each item respectively. Student performance declined slightly on "Existing Knowledge" and "Design Process," where the percentage of students failing to meet expectations increased by 3.3 and 5 points respectively. Improving student performance is at least partially due to the creation of POL 225, which formally introduces research skills and emphasizes these aspects of research.

2. Students will write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express cogent arguments (*Effective Writing*).

Effective Writing was assessed in 2010-2011 and 2012-2013. On "Context for Writing," "Sources and Evidence," and "Syntax and Mechanics" students improved writing between taking 200-level foundation courses and the capstone (the percentage failing to meet expectations declined 7.2, 22.8, and 26 points on each item respectively). For "Context" and "Syntax," items that are more particular to the writing process and less intertwined with research skills, we believe improvement stems primarily from students becoming better writers as they progress from the 200 to the 400-level offerings. "Content Development" and "Disciplinary Conventions," which include organization of the work, are, like the use of existing sources, more closely related to the research process, at least in the way this process is taught in POL 225 and POL 409. We are comfortable concluding, based also on anecdotal evidence, that the improvement of students over time on these items (declines in failing to meet expectations of 9.3 points and 26.4 points respectively) reflects instruction-based improvement in writing skills.

3. Students will become knowledgeable members of the community capable of reasoned judgments on political issues and ideas (*Reasoned Judgments*).

Reasoned Judgments was also assessed in 2010-2011 and 2012-2013. As on *Independent Research*, student performance on *Reasoned Judgments* has improved on nearly every item over time.

Unlike with writing skills, all of the aspects of *Reasoned Judgments* are related to research skills. As research skills have improved over time, so have critical thinking skills as assessed through the *Reasoned Judgments* learning outcome. Between 2011 and 2013, the percentage of students failing to meet expectations declined 26.2 points on “Explanation of Issues,” 7.6 points on “Evidence,” 50.7 points on “Student’s Position,” which includes the development of arguments and hypotheses, and 23 points on “Conclusions.” Student performance declined slightly on “Influence of Context,” where the percentage failing to meet expectations increased by 7.2 points.

4. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the major subfields of political science, as represented by the Major’s foundation requirements and concentrations (*Subfield Knowledge*).

Students performed extremely well on all four aspects of *Subfield Knowledge* assessed through the rubric. Student performance was best on “Factual Knowledge.” 94.8% of the sample at least met expectations with 50% of students exceeding expectations. Student performance was also very high on “Knowledge of Theories” and “Literature.” On both items, 84.5% of the sample at least met expectations with 34.5% and 48.3% exceeding expectations on each item respectively. Student performance was lowest, although still high, on “Application of Theories” with 77.6% of the sample at least meeting expectations.

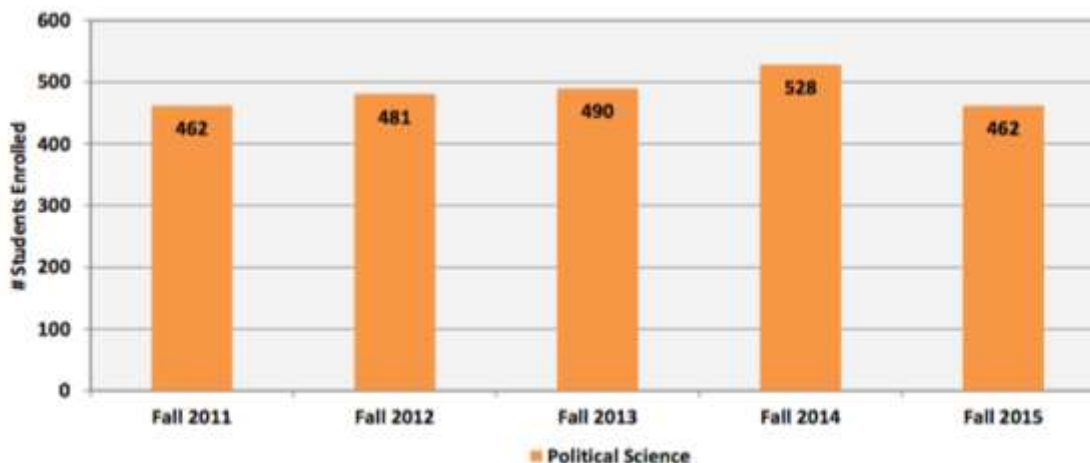
The Political Science major has undergone several significant changes in the last five years based on assessment results. Assessment reports over the last five years have discussed several of these changes, the creation of POL 225, our introductory research course, among them. The introduction of POL 225 is significant, but only one part of these changes. POL 225 was introduced as part of a revision to the major, which became operative as of the fall 2012 semester. In addition to requiring students to take this introductory research course, the Department removed several courses offered by other disciplines from the major, required students to take courses in all five of the major’s foundation categories (instead of four out of five), and increased the number of credits students are required to take in their concentration from 12 to 15. The Department has introduced a number of new courses, several of which are offered at the 300-level. The Department has also added several new faculty members, complementing our already outstanding faculty. All of these changes, informed by regular assessment, are responsible for moving student performance in a positive direction on nearly every metric.

Currently, the Department is gathering information from the faculty regarding writing instruction and is taking steps toward curricular adjustment in this area. A review of this information and recommendations for the curriculum and individual courses are expected by the end of this academic year. In addition to addressing writing skills, there remains the question of how these skills and others are demonstrated by students at the 300-level. Assessment thus far has looked at the capstone, 200-level foundation courses, and POL 101. Future assessments will include work from 300-level courses to provide a complete picture of skill and knowledge development in the major.

C. Enrollment, Retention and Graduation: Describe and analyze the five year enrollment, retention, and graduation patterns in the major.

On average, between Fall 2011 and Fall 2015, 70 new freshman and 53 new transfer students came to the College as Political Science majors annually. These students (with any attrition) and students in other majors switching to Political Science make up the major enrollment. As represented in Figure 1, the Political Science major enrollment steadily grew in size from 462 in Fall 2011 to 528 in Fall 2014, representing about a 14.3 percent increase in the overall size of the major. This upward trend, however, stopped in Fall 2015 when total enrollment dropped back down to 462. If we were to only compare 2011 with 2015, the conclusion would be that the Political Science major remained constant in terms of overall enrollment.

Figure 1
Total Enrollment in the Political Science Major, 2011-2015



Much of the change, we believe, can be attributed to the growth of the Law and Society major that began admitting students in fall 2012, but which has grown dramatically in more recent years, with enrollment now greater than the Political Science major. Much of the reduction in Political Science represented in Figure 1 is the result of lower enrollment in our largest concentration, Concentration A (“Law, Courts and Politics”), where, among students who had declared a concentration, enrollment fell from 208 in fall 2014 to 145 in fall 2015, a reduction of 30% (63 students). As this concentration offers courses with the most overlap with courses in the Law and Society major, this reduction was expected, as some students with an interest in law gravitated more toward the growing Law and Society major and away from this Political Science concentration. We expect this trend to stabilize with students who have an interest in law, courts and politics but who also want a broader exposure to the Political Science discipline still being attracted to Concentration A. However, we should continue to monitor this.

Figure 2 below shows the number of degrees awarded in the Political Science major from 2010-11 through 2014-2015. What is most intriguing is the consistency of the program, graduating around 90 majors each year. The high was 98 in 2013-14 (with 2010-11 and 2014-15 both having 97), while the lowest number of degrees awarded was 88 in 2011-12.

The number of degrees awarded also reinforced our consistent enrollment numbers. Political Science generally gains about 100 or so new majors each academic year (from first-time freshman and transfer students). Yet, we graduate about 90+ students each year. In doing so, we have not experienced any significant issues to compensate for significant shifts (too many or too few) in the overall enrollment of the students in our major.

Beyond the recruitment of majors through the College’s Open House, our recruitment for the major focuses on students enrolled in the introductory course, POL 101 (American Government and Politics), given that many non-majors take this course to meet their general education requirements. These efforts have included class visits as well as writing a personal letter of congratulations to each student earning an “A” in this class, that includes a suggestion that he or she consider Political Science as a major if still undecided. Additionally we use two social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) to provide information about our program and opportunities for our majors, and these may also help recruit new majors.

Figure 2
Degrees Awarded in the Political Science Major,
AY 2010 through AY2014

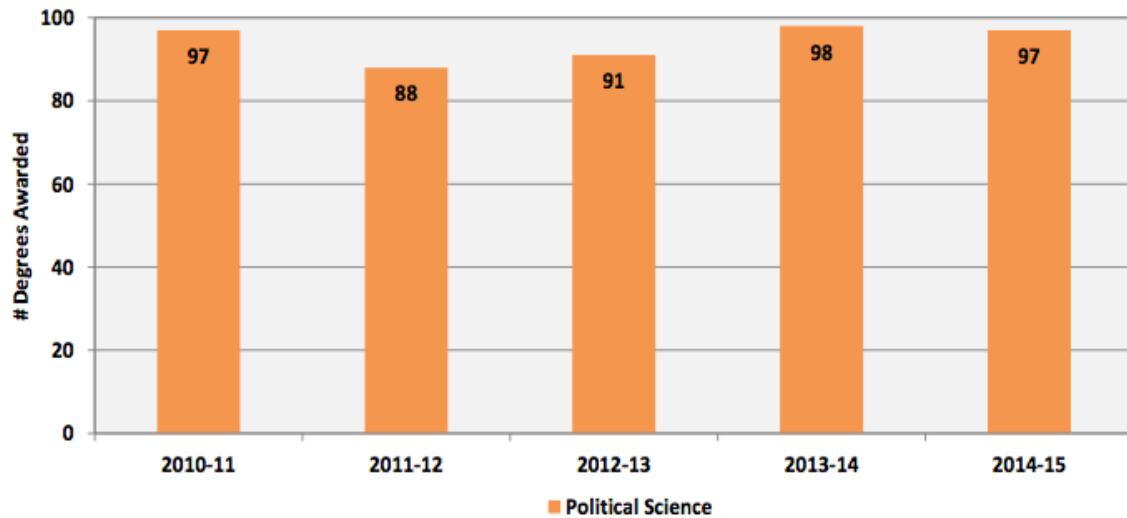


Figure 3
Average Time to Degree Completion
for Political Science Majors, AYs 2010-2014

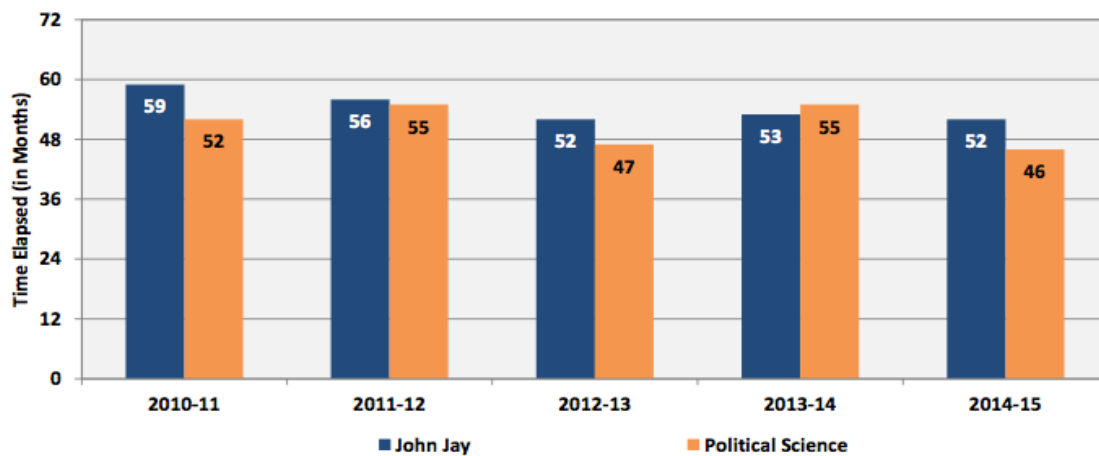


Figure 3 suggests Political Science majors, on average, took about 4.25 years to complete the degree from 2010-2015 (transfer students are included in this average), below the College average of 4.53 years. During this time period, there were two notable exceptions. In the 2012-13 and 2014-15 academic years, students completing the degree did so in just under four years (47 and 46 months, respectively). The only year that the average time for degree completion was above the college average

was 2013-14, when Political Science majors graduated about 2 months later than the overall college average of 53 months.

D. Trends in Graduate Outcomes: Using the OIR data on post-graduation employment and your program's data on alumni (if kept), describe trends in employment, post-graduate, and professional education of students who have graduated from your major.

Figure 4 below reflects that 18.4 percent of our majors are pursuing further education one year after graduation, almost twice as high as the College-wide percentage. Furthermore, Figure 5 below indicates that while 61 John Jay students were enrolled in law school one year after graduation, 11 of that 61 are Political Science majors, approximately 20% of the total of the John Jay number. Political Science graduates are obviously both interested in and well prepared for graduate study.

Figure 4
Bachelor Degree Recipients Pursuing Further Education
One Year after Graduation, AY2010 through AY 2014

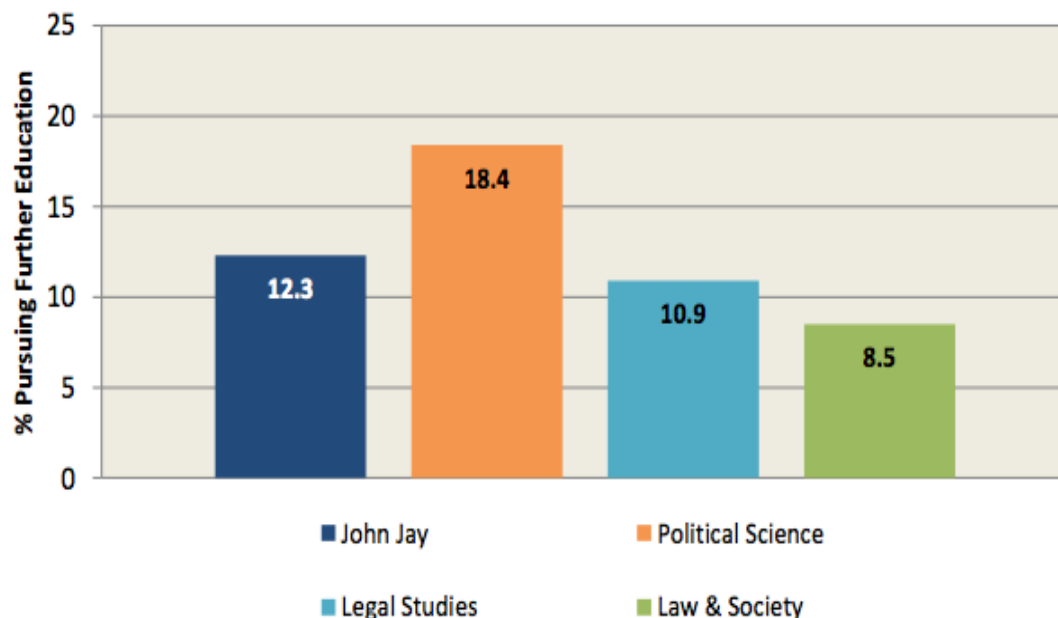
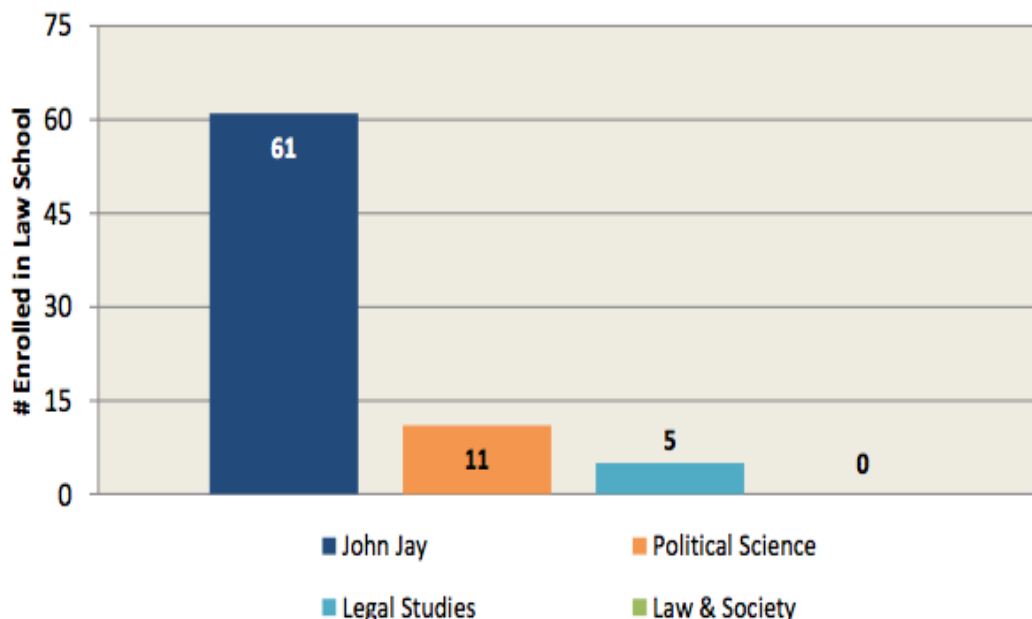


Figure 5
Bachelor Degree Recipients Enrolled in Law School
One Year after Graduation, AY 2010 through AY2014



Unfortunately, we do not conduct alumni surveys, and the information that OIR gathers on this topic is limited. We can look at surveys of the major and consider the results on such questions as: “The major provides services/information that helps students find employment related to the major” or “The major provides services/information that helps students pursue further study.” With a sample size of 105, 73.4% strongly agreed with the first statement and 68.1% strongly agreed with the second. Further, 84.7% strongly agreed that the major had “provided me with preparation for my future professional work” and 91.7% strongly agreed that the major had “provided me with preparation for further study.” While an alumni survey could be useful to the major, these limited results certainly suggest that the Political Science major positively affects students’ post-graduation opportunities.

III. Addressing Ethical and Current issues

A. How does the major address recent developments and areas of new scholarship in the discipline? (i.e., the use of computerized databases in public management, the growing use of community policing, increased focus on cybercrime and terrorism, or the development of state constitutional law. Examples of new scholarship might include feminist and multi-cultural perspectives, sociological theories, or critical legal studies, etc.)

Faculty who teach in the major are active scholars who are up-to-date on current research in political science, and they routinely incorporate new scholarship into their own courses, special topics courses (POL 280), and the 400-level courses in each concentration (POL 420, POL 423, POL 440, and POL 450). Students are exposed to these scholarly developments most consistently in our five Foundations categories, with courses required of all students. For example, POL 234 (Public Policy), as developed

and taught by Professor Rutledge, draws on her extensive research on food and agricultural policy in the United States and internationally, a topic on which she published recently in her book, *Feeding the Future: School Lunch Programs as Global Social Policy*. Food studies is relatively new area of study and in this class our students are exposed to this exciting new development in scholarship.

Another example is POL 214 (Parties, Interest Groups, and Social Movements), which introduces students to the role and outcomes of political parties, interest groups and social movements in American politics. In Professor Majic's version of the course, students are introduced not only to the more traditional scholarship and theories about these entities, but also to new scholarship on social movements, such as her recently published monograph about the sex worker rights movement (*Sex Work Politics: From Protest to Service Provision*).

The major also addresses current political developments/topics through new and evolving scholarship, particularly in our more specialized concentration courses. First, while issues of race and racism have always been part of American politics and society, they have come to the fore of the political agenda, as the police killings of Black men and women have sparked protests nation-wide. In our Department, courses such as POL 313 (The Law and Politics of Race Relations) and POL 280 (Special Topics: Race and Politics, which was also taught as POL 440, the 400-level course in Concentration C) address issues of race. POL 313 provides students with an opportunity to understand the politics of race and racism in the United States through the examination of major court decisions and legislation affecting minority groups, while POL 280/440 critically examines the role that racial and ethnic categories have in shaping individual and group political engagement and identity formation in the United States and beyond.

Second, in light of the recent Supreme Court case legalizing same-sex marriage, POL 318 (Law and Politics of Sexual Orientation) provides students with an opportunity to understand the law and politics affecting lesbians and gay men in the United States. Professor Daniel Pinello, who developed and regularly teaches POL 318, incorporates significant material from his new book into the course (*America's War on Same-Sex Couples and their Families*). Third, with issues of immigration at the forefront of public debates and the 2016 presidential election contest, POL 344 (The Law and Politics of Immigration) exposes students to the full range of topics that help them develop and articulate their own positions on contemporary immigration politics.

Fourth, in New York City and nationwide, Muslims and persons from the Middle East have been interrogated, detained and often blamed for domestic and international terrorism. In light of these trends, POL 280 (Special Topics: American Islam)¹, POL 331 (Government and Politics in the Middle East), and POL 362 (Terrorism and International Relations) provide broader contextual examinations of the politics, cultures and institutions of Muslims in contemporary, pluralistic American society; cover modern political history of and issues of central importance in contemporary politics in the Middle East; and consider the international political implications of terrorist activity, respectively. Also, implications of terrorist actions and counter-terrorist measures for international relations and human rights are addressed in POL 320. In addition, since the 2016 presidential election featured a female presidential nominee, POL 237 (Women and Politics) invites students to explore the presence of women in political institutions and how a range of political and policy issues pertain to women. And finally, POL 280 (Special Topics: The 2016 Election) is being team-taught by Professor Arbour in Fall 2016 as a unique course that provides students with the opportunity to study the election in "real time."

In addition to incorporating new areas of scholarship and addressing recent political developments, our major also exposes students to a range of cutting-edge methodological practices in the discipline, particularly in POL 409, the major's capstone research course. For example, Professor Osorio's version of POL 409 is taught in a computer classroom to help students gain familiarity with R

¹ Professor Bowen is developing this into a permanent course to be offered in the major.

and Stata, specialized software for statistical analysis and data visualization. In contrast to this version of POL 409, Professor Majic's and Professor Varsanyi's versions introduce students to predominantly qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, such as interviewing. The diversity of methodological approaches in Political Science research is the way our major counters the conception that positivist quantitative research dominates the discipline.

B. How does the major prepare students with particular job skills or bodies of knowledge specified by the communities of practice related to the major?

With an urban campus in the heart of New York City, the Political Science major is maximizing its position to prepare students for future careers and studies in governance and politics, public service, public policy and advocacy in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. For students who will pursue advanced studies in Political Science, the major provides a rigorous curriculum to develop basic skills in research, effective writing and critical thinking. Faculty throughout the major are committed to advising students in the major and counseling them on graduate school and career opportunities. The largest portion of our majors aspires to attend law school and begin careers in law. However, to give students wider career options, faculty have promoted other graduate school opportunities, organized trips to out-of-state graduate schools and recently sponsored "Beyond Law School" events with invited speakers who work in alternative careers.

The major's key strategy to prepare students interested in careers in public service, advocacy and law is to emphasize experiential learning through internships at the city, state and national levels and through the Model United Nations Club. Four internship courses are available to Political Science majors. The public affairs internships, POL 406, POL 407 and POL 408 (see I. F. above), offer internships in New York City politics and government (POL 406), New York State Assembly and Senate Session (POL 407) and Washington, D.C. (POL 408). POL 406 provides students with a rigorous seminar in New York City politics and policy. Students develop critical reasoning skills through seminar discussions and weekly writings that connect seminar readings to observations in the placements. They also develop public speaking skills through formal presentations to peers. Between 2011 and 2016, POL 406 has placed between 20-32 (see Table 1) students every year in internships including those with New York City Council members, Council offices such as Participatory Budgeting, the NYC Comptroller, Public Advocate, Manhattan Borough President, district offices of the New York State Assembly members and Senators, district offices of U.S. Representative and Senators and various New York City executive departments. Students have also interned in law-related agencies including the U.S. Social Security Administration – Office of the General Counsel, the New York City Law Department and the Manhattan Office of the New York State Attorney General, and nonprofits such as Sanctuary for Families, which provides legal and social services for immigrant families in need.

POL 406 is an excellent vehicle for placing Political Science majors into entry-level careers. Some students are invited to work full or part-time in extended and sometimes paid internships in their offices, for example, at the Manhattan Borough President's Office and NYC Law Department. Other students are hired as permanent staff by their offices or use their new professional networks to locate public service jobs. Examples of post-internship hires include those by the NYC Department of Investigations, NYS Senator Jesse Hamilton, U.S. Rep. Dan Donovan, U.S. Rep. Joseph Crowley, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, NYC Department of Planning, NYC Department of Finance, NYC Comptroller, Health and Hospitals Corporation and the NYC Public Advocate.

Students can also gain extraordinary exposure to careers in state politics and government by participating in the CUNY New York State Assembly and Senate Session Internship (POL 407). Between the Spring 2012 and Spring 2016 semesters, 16 students won these internship awards, enabling them to work full time in Albany with State Senators and Assembly members over a semester while studying New York State government, politics and policy with professors on-site. In addition, eight students won prestigious CUNY Washington, D.C. summer internship awards (POL 408), taking full-time positions on

Table 1
Enrollments in Public Affairs and LWS Internships, 2011-2016
(Political Science Majors/Total)

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	Fall 2016	Total
POL 406	16/20	13/20	22/32	16/24	13/28	8/14	88/138
POL 407	NA/1	3/7	1/4	1/1	2/3	-----	7/16
POL 408	0/3	1/1	0/0	0/1	0/2	1/1	2/8
LWS 378	2/12	2/18	7/25	7/29	9/26	5/14	32/124
Total	18/36	19/46	30/61	24/55	24/59	14/29	129/286
% POL majors	(50%)	(41.3%)	(49.2%)	(43.6%)	(40.7%)	(48.3%)	(45.1%)

Capitol Hill and in executive agencies including the Departments of Commerce and Education. Albany and Washington, D.C. interns have sometimes developed their professional networks to secure jobs in New York City in the district offices of state or national elected officials. They have also discovered interests in specific public policy areas that led to graduate school for Master in Public Policy programs including the MPP at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Texas-Arlington, or Master in Public Administration programs. Many students have subsequently attended law schools (including at New York University, George Washington University, Hofstra University, St. Johns University, and University of Indiana) or business school, most recently at the American University. In addition, these internships have propelled some of our students to elective office. For example, the current mayor of Rochester, Lovely Warren, was a Political Science major who participated in the POL 407 Albany internship, notes on her city website, “[m]y internship with New York State Assemblyman David Gantt is part of what inspired me to pursue public service....”²

For students with an interest in legal professions, the Department, in conjunction with the John Jay College Pre-Law Institute, offers LWS 378 which pairs rigorous law and society studies, academic training in writing and critical thinking skills, while placing students in local courts, district attorneys’ offices, or into other public law internships. While most students in LWS 378 are law and society majors, since Fall 2011, 32 Political Science majors have also participated, and they receive substitution credit toward their major requirements.

For exposure to careers in international politics, qualified students may join the Model United Nations program. Students undergo intensive training to familiarize themselves with the mission, organs, procedures and activities of the United Nations system and conduct research on the policies of their assigned country in critical issue areas that relate to the work of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights/humanitarian affairs. In order to perform their role effectively, students must hone their writing and analytical skills in the preparation of their position papers and their public

² <http://www.cityofrochester.gov/internships/>

speaking and negotiating skills since they have to advance their country's agenda in different settings (Security Council, General Assembly, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR) and convince fellow delegates to adopt resolutions drafted by them. These skills are necessary for graduate and law school studies, and indispensable for those seeking careers in international organizations, whether intergovernmental (United Nations, OAS, OSCE, INTERPOL) or non-governmental (Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, Amnesty International, OXFAM, MSF, IRC).

On average, the Model UN team includes about 16-20 students each academic year. An application and evaluation process is used to ensure participation by the best and brightest in the College. The team won its first award in 2002, the second in 2005 and has been winning every year since then. This past year, the team won the conference's highest award.

Data tracking participants are not available, but of the 20-30 students who have remained in touch with the Model UN program, about 95-98% of them have gone either to graduate or law school. About 20% of them practice law, 30% of them have gone on to work for an NGO or in the private sector. Approximately 20-30% currently work for the public sector.

As also reflected in Table 1, enrollments in POL 406-8 indicate that many of the non-Political Science majors are Political Science minors and majors in closely related programs such as Law and Society and International Criminal Justice, also supported by the Political Science Department. The proportion of Political Science majors participating in the internships, however, has remained at or below 50% in recent years. Given the important career-building opportunities that internships provide, one observation that we might draw from the data is that more Political Science majors could be recruited to participate in the programs. Although the internship is offered in a single Concentration, we need to make students in other Concentrations more aware that they can participate in the internship and receive substitution credit in their Concentrations.

C. How does the major address issues of gender, race, and ethnicity?

Our major addresses issues of race, gender and ethnicity explicitly in at least seven courses. Regarding gender, POL 237 (Women and Politics) has students consider the presence of women in political institutions and how a range of political and policy issues pertain to women. POL 319 (Gender and the Law) examines the constraints and limitations of law to achieve equality, justice and freedom in matters related to gender. Issues of gender are also addressed in POL 318 (Law and Politics of Sexual Orientation), which provides students with an opportunity to understand the law and politics affecting lesbians and gay men in the United States. In these courses, gender issues are also examined as they intersect with race. For example, POL 237 covers the concept of intersectionality, which exposes how vectors of oppression, such as racism and sexism, interact to compound each other for certain groups.

Our major also considers race most explicitly through POL 313 (The Law and Politics of Race Relations) and POL 280/440 (Race and Politics), described above. Race and its intersection with ethnicity are also covered in POL 344 (The Law and Politics of Immigration), which traces the development and impact of immigration law and policy in the U.S. and explores historical political debates over immigration. Finally, POL 280 (American Islam) considers Islam's ethnic composition and related public discourses in the United States.

In addition, many of our courses that do not explicitly and centrally address issues of race, gender and/or ethnicity variously cover these topics to some extent. For example, POL 280 (Special Topics: The 2016 Election) considers gender in the election in light of Hillary Clinton's candidacy, and POL 234, which is focused on public policy, considers racial disparities in American welfare reform. POL 206 (Urban Politics) explores the political determinants of racial and spatial segregation in urbanization processes and the roles of immigration, race and ethnicity in core city and regional politics. Professor Bockmeyer, for instance, addresses the politics of race in policing suburban municipalities, incorporating the case of Ferguson and St. Louis, Missouri after the shooting of Michael Brown there in 2014.

D. How does the major address ethical or moral issues and questions?

There are several courses in the Political Science major in which instructors seek to advance students' critical and abstract thinking skills, facilitate problem solving and enhance their ability to reflect on normative dilemmas encountered by contemporary societies. POL 270 (Political Philosophy) analyzes fundamental ideas used in reasoning about politics, such as liberty, justice, equality, and political obligation. Perspectives on these and many other concepts are evaluated and compared. POL 273 (Western Political Thought) also introduces students to key ethical tenets of Western political thinking and asks students to apply them to their everyday activities.

In POL 273 and POL 375 (Law, Order, Justice and Society), Professor Roger McDonald aims to expand students' awareness of fundamental moral and ethical debates in politics. The regulation of sexual relations and marriage, for instance, is discussed in light of the debate between the rigorous moral demands of classical natural law teachings and the modern natural rights that are found in Lockean liberalism. And in another example, the moral quandaries of leadership are studied by contrasting Machiavellian realism and Kant's idealistic statesmanship. The principled ground of justice, and disputes about its meaning and political implications, are explored in classic texts from Plato and Aristotle to John Rawls. Marxist criticisms of capitalism are used to explore questions of economic justice.

In other courses, such as Professor Zabyelina's version of POL 260 (International Relations), students advance their understanding of international ethics—an area of international relations theory that concerns the extent and scope of ethical obligations among states. Students learn about realism, liberalism, constructivism, and Marxism, among other theories, which help them understand the predominant ethical traditions in international relations. The course prepares students to go beyond reporting facts without sufficient discussion, interpretation, or evaluation by encouraging them to interpret evidence and apply moral and ethical reasoning to its evaluation.

Our faculty are dedicated to research ethics and have worked continuously to promote ethical research values, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness. All courses in the major comply with the City University of New York Policy on Academic Integrity (<https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/academicaffairs/integrity-policies>) that makes academic dishonesty punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and even expulsion. Students are encouraged to attend the Writing Center workshops (<http://jjcweb.jjay.cuny.edu/writing/workshops.htm>) on documenting sources and avoiding unintentional plagiarism (e.g., patch writing). In addition, professors recommend that students attend the Lloyd Sealy Library workshops (<https://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/workshop-calendar/month>) to help them find reliable sources online or in print.

Political Science majors are required to complete POL 409 (Colloquium for Research in Government and Politics), where students initiate, develop and present independent work related to government, politics and the state. In the final research paper, students are expected to demonstrate familiarity not only with relevant literature in the subfield but also general competence in research, including the ethical standards that govern research.

Some faculty members who teach POL 409 have required that students complete the CITI Training in the Protection of Human Subjects (<https://www.citiprogram.org/>) to ensure that research protects the rights and welfare of human subjects. Students who conduct research with human subjects are also required to have their research participants sign consent forms to confirm that they agree to participate and are aware of any potential risks. Given that the CITI training is a fairly long e-module that students usually complete outside class time, some faculty members have chosen to reiterate the fundamentals of the CITI training in class. Professor Majic, for instance, routinely gives a lecture in her POL 409 class on ethical principles and guidelines for research involving human subjects.

IV. Internal Coherence and Structure of the Major

A. How does the program ensure consistency across courses offered in multiple sections?

The primary difficulty for the major regarding course-section consistency arose a number of years ago in the introductory American Government course (POL 101), a class technically not part of the major itself, but the prerequisite for almost all of the Department's other courses. We generally offer over 20 sections of that course each semester. The disparities of content in POL 101 were addressed more than a decade ago by adoption of a common curriculum for the course (See Appendix A). This curriculum specifies what the Department deems the essential content for the course, though instructors remain free to supplement these subjects if they wish. As most sections of the course are taught by adjuncts—albeit many who are long-term instructors of the class—consistency is supplied by the Chairperson's conveyance and discussion of the common curriculum with new adjuncts and by review of instructors' syllabi and practices through class observations by full-time faculty.

Consistency in other multiple-section courses is largely assured by 1) the fact that relatively few of such courses are taught by more than one instructor each term; and 2) discussions among faculty within the Department's subfields of appropriate content for such classes.

B. What courses within the major, if any, appear to be outdated, and in need of revision, elimination, or replacement?

This problem does not affect many courses within the Political Science major as, in most cases, recent political developments (such as new legislation, court decisions, international agreements or conflict, etc.) are easily incorporated into the substance of existing classes. The same can be said regarding most academic research in the discipline. Also, the 2012 revision of the major discussed in Section I above included an assessment of the curriculum, leading to the elimination of some courses from the major and the development of others.

Currently, though, Professor Bockmeyer has judged that both the recent literature on comparative urban politics and the two-city international study required in the 200-level Comparative Urban Political Systems are sufficiently demanding to raise that class to the 300-level. That revision also will provide an additional and much needed 300-level option in Concentration C.

Based upon assessment of student research capabilities in the POL 409 Research Colloquium, the most pressing concern of the Department in this area is to ensure that research-focused reinforcement occurs in the 300-level concentration courses that lie between the required 200-level research course (POL 225) and POL 409. Discussion of this issue is central to the Department's agenda this academic year.

C. Provide average enrollment data for students in the major in each course listed as part of the major for the last four years. Considering these data, are courses offered frequently enough and in enough sections for students to meet major requirements?

Table 2 provides the average number of Political Science majors enrolled in courses in the major *per semester* during the 2012-16 academic years, calculated *for those years in which the listed course was offered* (the Registrar has not provided enrollment data for the Spring 2016 semester, so annual calculations would have been skewed by that omission. Fractions have been rounded to the nearest whole number.)

Table 2
Average Semester Enrollments of
Political Science Majors in Courses in the Major
Fall 2012-Fall 2015

Course	Average POL major enrollment/semester		Course	Average POL major enrollment/semester
Foundation			Concentration C	
POL 235	51		POL 203	21
POL 270	25		POL 210	8
POL 273	34		POL 237	9
POL 206	36		POL 302	10
POL 234	23		POL 406	9
POL 257	41		POL 407	1
POL 260	22		POL 408	1
POL 214	21		POL 203	21
POL 215	29			
POL 220	19			
Res. methods			Concentration D	
POL 225	43		LLS 220	4
			POL/LLS 242	12
Concentration A			POL 246	7
POL 301	18		POL 250	6
POL 305	21		POL/LAW 259	8
POL 308	8		POL 320	16
POL/LAW 313	27		POL 325	5
POL 316	4		POL 331	3
POL 318	7		POL 362	6
POL 319	18		POL 450	13
POL 344	34			
POL 420	21		Capstone	
			POL 409	56
Concentration B				
LAW/PHI 310	8			
POL/SOC 278	6			
POL 371	6			
POL 375	22			
POL/PHI 423	1			

Many of the courses reflected in Table 2 also are offered in other majors, so low enrollment of Political Science majors in a particular course does not necessarily reflect low demand. For example, POL/LAW 259 is a required course in the International Criminal Justice major but an optional course in the Political Science major; thus, it is fully enrolled every semester but with many more students from ICJ than from POL.

Overall, these data indicate that the Department has, over the last four years, offered a

sufficient number of course sections for students to meet major requirements. But, since the cap on sub-400 level courses is typically 36 students, course availability may become an issue for majors in certain 200-level Foundation courses. Only one section of POL 257, Comparative Politics, has been offered in some recent semesters. On the other hand, the jump in enrollments for POL 235, the sole Foundation class for Concentration A, has led to scheduling two sections of that course each semester since Spring 2015.

The real problem of course availability is posed by the POL 409 Research Colloquium, required of all seniors in the major. The enrollment cap for the course is 24. The teaching, grading and research supervision demands the course imposes on faculty are intense, but the Department is determined to offer sections of that course with full-time faculty only. Accordingly, to distribute that responsibility equitably, the Department recently approved a plan to require full-time faculty in the program to teach one section of POL 409 on a rotating basis. As a result, unless they choose to teach POL 409 more often, full-time faculty will teach a course section approximately once every three years.

D. Are there courses in the major that have not been taught in the past 3 years? (Consider all courses, even those offered by other departments).

The only course in the major that has not been taught in the past three years is POL 316, The Politics of Rights. The course was newly developed by a faculty member who, shortly after its inclusion the major, left the College. Typically, such a new course would eventually attract other faculty to participate in its teaching, but the seedtime was not sufficient. Because the course is also included in the Law and Society major, the Department anticipates that at least one of the new hires in that program beginning Fall 2017 might revive the course.

Of major courses offered by other departments, AFR 270 (History of African-American Social & Intellectual Thought), an elective for Concentration B students, has not been offered in the past three years. It is scheduled for Fall 2017.

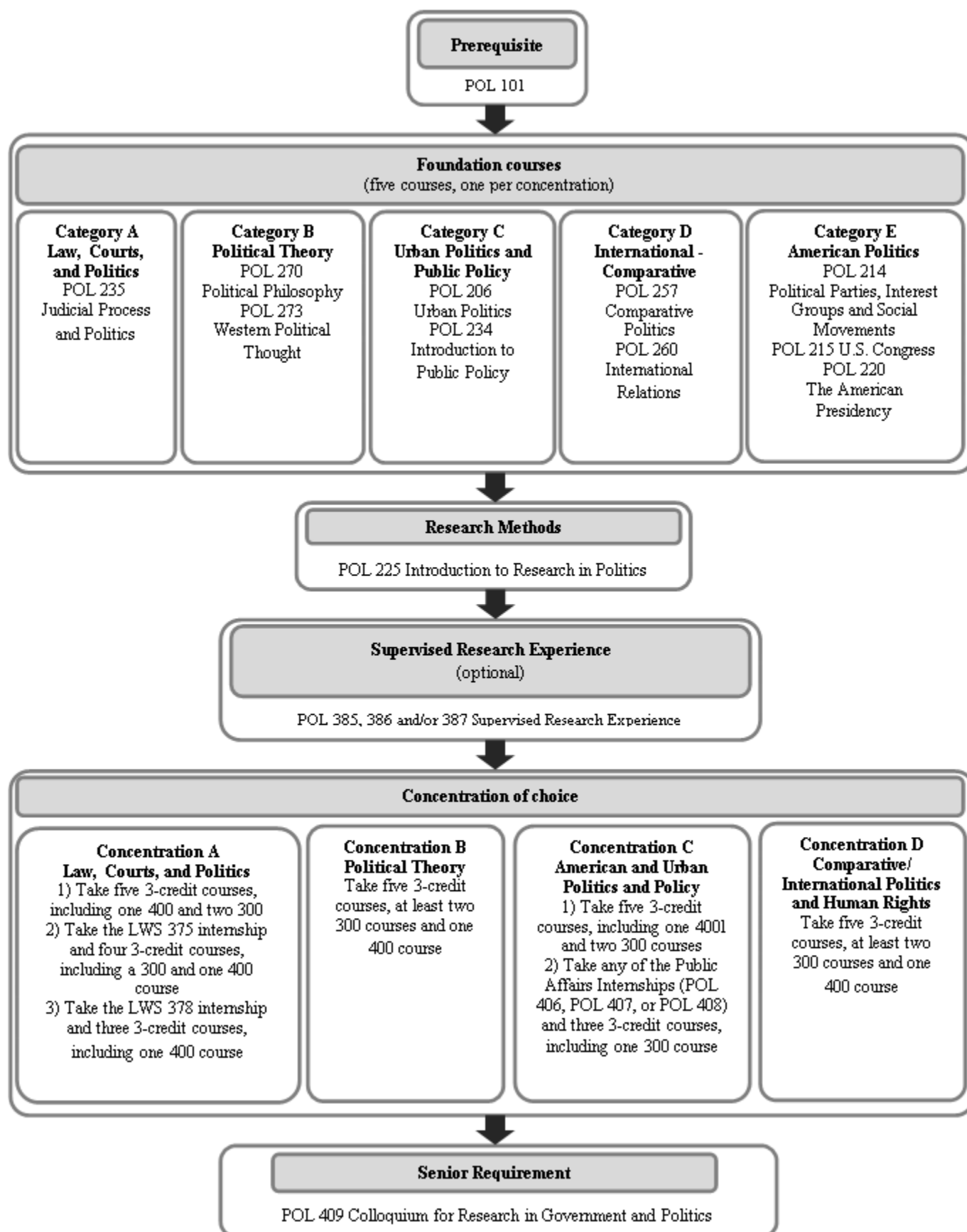
E. Sequencing

To meet the major's learning outcomes, course progression is structured in five stages. This sequence helps students acquire substantive knowledge in main subfields of Political Science and develop analytical skills. As illustrated in the figure on the following page, the concatenation of courses offers conceptual, factual, methodological, and analytical training for students at distinct levels.

All Political Science majors must first take POL 101, American Government and Politics, a prerequisite for practically all courses in the major. In this course, students gain familiarity with the institutional design and processes of the US political system, and most take it as part of their general education requirements

In the first part of the major, students take one course in each of five Foundation areas, representing major subfields of the discipline. Starting in 2012, the second part requires students to take the 200-level research methods class, Introduction to Research in Politics (POL 225). This course introduces students to the main strategies that political scientists use to understand political phenomena. Students in this course are exposed to qualitative and quantitative research approaches, and gain familiarity with key concepts and strategies used for evaluating scholarly research and understanding the complexities of political behavior.

In the third stage, students get the opportunity to increase their level of expertise in one of the four areas of concentration in the major: Concentration A, Law Courts, and Politics; Concentration B, Justice and Politics; Concentration C, America and Urban Politics and Policy; and Concentration D, Comparative/International Politics and Human Rights. In each area of concentration, students have a



broad menu of courses to analyze more in depth distinct topics related to their specific field of interest; within their concentration students must take several upper level courses, including a topic-specific senior seminar.

Finally, the fourth part requires students to take Colloquium for Research in Government and Politics (POL 409). This course offers students the chance to conduct, design, develop, and present their own independent research project. In line with the learning outcomes of the major, the capstone course is intended to strengthen of the student's analytical and research skills. However, faculty members who taught the capstone course in the last few years have identified a consistent trend indicating that a substantial proportion of students struggle to meet the objectives of the POL 409 course. Students in general have solid substantive foundations in specific areas of study; however, there are shortcomings related to the student's writing abilities and familiarity with core analytical concepts and strategies to assess the validity and consistency of arguments and evidence, which constitute core analytical and research skills.

An option for all students in the major is our Undergraduate Research Experience offerings through which majors can work individually with faculty (POL 385 and POL 386) or in small groups (POL 387). Students participate in these offerings by invitation of the supervising faculty member and generally do so during their junior and/or senior years.

The areas of opportunity related to the student's analytical skills as well as their competence to conduct independent research have been broadly discussed in the Department. The Department is currently defining an action plan to reinforce the development of writing, critical, and research skills throughout the curricula. Included in this is a discussion of the linkages we should have between the 400-level requirements in the major concentrations and POL 409. However, there does not seem to be a need to substantially alter the major structure or course sequence since most of these reforms will be implemented as additional skill development strategies within the courses already offered in the major.

F. Tracks or Concentrations:

1. If the major has tracks or concentrations explain the rationale for having them.

The Political Science major contains four concentrations: Law, Courts and Politics; Justice and Politics; American and Urban Politics and Policy; and Comparative/International Politics and Human Rights. The concentrations-of-choice in the major are designed to allow our students to pursue their specific interests by specializing in certain subfields within the discipline of Political Science. While the traditional subfields of the discipline are International Relations, Comparative Politics, American Politics, and Political Theory, the structure of the major concentrations also was influenced by the mission of the College and the expertise of faculty in the major. While many faculty believe the concentrations are a strength of the program, some faculty have expressed opposition to having concentrations because it forces students to specialize within the major. This issue was discussed at our retreat in the Spring 2016 semester where the Department decided to continue with concentrations, but it is a matter that can be addressed in future deliberations over the structure of the major.

Each of the concentrations of choice emphasizes a distinct and significant area of Political Science study.

- The Law, Courts and Politics concentration, unlike other law-related programs at the College, emphasizes the political contexts within which law develops. Particular attention is placed on those political and historical factors that help to explain contemporary American law, the structure and behavior of legal institutions and actors, and the impact of legal doctrines.
- The Justice and Politics concentration is designed to allow students to focus on political theories, political philosophers, and political concepts directly relevant to the mission of the College.

Emphasis is placed on how canonical and contemporary political theory is relevant to contemporary American society and government, and, in particular, to the criminal justice system.

- The American and Urban Politics and Policy concentration focuses on American government and governance. In addition, Concentration C includes courses that focus on the particular problems for local government in urban areas.
- The Comparative/International Politics and Human Rights concentration offers students the opportunity to explore international relations and other political systems. This concentration explores the global dimensions of politics and governance, with particular emphasis on justice and human rights issues.

2. Provide enrollment data for each track or concentration.

Data on the number of students in each track or concentration as of Fall 2012 and Fall 2015 are presented in Table 3. There has been a slight drop in total enrollment, with Concentration enrollment decreasing in

Table 3
Enrollment in Political Science Major by Concentration
Fall 2012 and Fall 2015

Concentration	Enrollment Fall 2012	Enrollment Fall 2015
A	271 (56%)	141 (51%)
B	72 (15%)	16 (6%)
C	47 (10%)	38 (14%)
D	91 (19%)	79 (29%)
None declared	n/a (see note below)	188 (see note below)
TOTALS	481	462

Note: In 2015, students could declare a Political Science major and delay declaring a concentration, but that option was not available in 2012. Fall 2015 percentages are of those majors with a declared concentration.

Concentration B and Concentration A. The change in Concentration B (Political Theory) may be a result of the development of a Philosophy major at the College, which began enrolling students in 2012. The decrease in Concentration A enrollment was expected with the approval of the Law and Society major in 2012 and its subsequent growth, as students likely to enroll in that Concentration are the most likely to be attracted to that major. We expect enrollment in the Concentration to stabilize in the near future.

G. Compare the curriculum for this major with similar majors offered at other colleges both within and outside of CUNY. Are there ideas from other programs worthy of adoption?

To compare our Department's curriculum to comparable programs, we selected five institutions that are both within and outside of CUNY and are either private or public universities (Hunter College, City College of New York, SUNY-Albany, SUNY-Binghamton, and UCLA). Some of these institutions were identified as John Jay's peer cohort in the latest Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Survey. Please refer to Appendix B for the chart that maps each institution's curriculum.

In our comparative assessment of all six institutions, we identified several strengths in John Jay's Political Science curricular offerings. First, we offer a two-course methods sequence which not only meets the College's emphasis on undergraduate research, but also makes our program relatively unique among its peers. Our students must complete POL 225 (Introduction to Research in Political Science),

which teaches students the basics of how to write a research paper, and also must complete POL 409 (Colloquium for Research in Political Science), in which students undertake an original research project. This sequence allows students to learn and develop their research skills, an undertaking which will serve them well long after they leave John Jay.

The structure of our program reflects a carefully sequenced major that ensures students receive a breadth of knowledge, as well thematic and generic depth in a specific area. This practice is similar to our peer institutions under study. All of the other programs under study include some type of distribution requirement, and four of them require a set of introductory courses. Our program is relatively unique in offering more choices for students in their foundation courses than do other programs.

We are also relatively unique among our peer institutions in requiring a capstone experience for students. Our students are required not only to take POL 409, but also a capstone 400-level course in their concentration. No other program under study requires a capstone experience in a concentration as we do (though SUNY Albany recommends it to students).

In sum, compared to other programs, our major at John Jay has more structure for students. Other programs offer students greater flexibility in choosing their coursework, which comes at the expense of concentrating on a specific subfield of Political Science. At the Department's most recent retreat, a majority of the Department believed it important that our students focus on a particular subfield of Political Science and supported continuing the required Concentration structure of the major.

V. Faculty

A. Demographics

1. How many faculty teach in the major and what are their ranks? Provide a table or pie chart. What is the percentage of full-time to part-time faculty coverage in the major?

There are twenty-one full-time faculty members in the Department of Political Science and, as of Fall 2016, twenty adjunct faculty. A distribution of the ranks of full-time faculty in the Department is set out in Figure 6.

Table 4
Distribution of Full-Time Faculty
Department of Political Science
Fall 2016

Full Professor	3 (14%)
Associate Professor	10 (48%)
Assistant Professor	7 (33%)
Lecturer	1 (5%)

All but one member of the full-time faculty teach in the major (Professor Yarbrough teaches courses in the Law and Society major only). However, the extent to which members of the Department meet their teaching responsibilities through Political Science courses varies significantly.

Many departmental faculty meet their College teaching responsibilities by teaching in other undergraduate programs offered at John Jay and in graduate programs offered at the College and at the CUNY Graduate Center. For example, Professor Carmalt teaches almost exclusively in the Law and Society major governed by the Department, teaching an international human rights course in the Political Science major only once every few years. In addition, two faculty in the Department, Professors Michel and Zabyelina, were specifically hired to support the interdisciplinary International Criminal Justice major at the College, so many of their teaching obligations lie there. Furthermore, with the reductions in full-time faculty hiring in recent years, combined with the College's desire to increase enrollment in its graduate programs, the College has turned to many faculty teaching in undergraduate programs like ours to meet the need for graduate course coverage. While the Chairperson has ultimate control over teaching schedules of faculty in the Department, there has been a long history of supporting the professional goals of faculty who would like to teach in other programs and to support, within limits, other College programs needing coverage for their courses. While it has been rare for the Chairperson to refuse a request from a faculty member to teach a course in another program during a particular semester, it does occur when there are pressing needs for course coverage in the Political Science program. However, the Department believes that increased reliance on faculty teaching in undergraduate programs like Political Science to support faculty needs elsewhere in the College—in graduate and other programs-- is not sustainable without causing significant harm to the undergraduate programs that also rely on these full-time faculty.

The impact of these arrangements on full-time faculty coverage of Political Science courses is significant. For example, in the 2015-2016 academic year, full-time faculty in the Department taught a total of 315.9 course credits across all programs at the College and University, but only 214 credits or 67.74% came from courses in the Political Science major. Thus, approximately one-third of departmental faculty teaching time is devoted to programs outside the major. In addition, many of our full-time faculty contribute to the administration of programs and other initiatives at the College for which they are receiving course releases, are able to buy out courses through research grants, or are eligible for new faculty course releases provided under the collective bargaining agreement.

As a result of these conditions, the Department has relied on its strong group of adjunct faculty to teach many courses in the major, from the introductory POL 101 (American Government and Politics) to the 400-level courses required in the concentrations. Table 4 below sets out the percentages of adjunct course coverage over the past six semesters

Table 4
Adjunct Course Coverage in the
Political Science Major, 2013-2016

Semester	Percentage of POL course sections taught by adjunct faculty
Fall 2013	47.45% (28/59)
Spring 2014	49.23% (32/65)
Fall 2014	45.07% (32/71)
Spring 2015	42.46% (31/73)
Fall 2015	49.29% (35/71)
Spring 2016	48.75% (39/80)

While these percentages reflect adjunct coverage of all courses across the major, they do not reflect adjunct coverage in individual concentrations in the major. For example, needs in other College programs have led to fewer full-time faculty teaching courses in Concentration D compared to other concentrations, as many faculty who teach in Concentration D spend considerable course time supporting the International Criminal Justice major, the M.A. program in International Crime and Justice, the Political Science Ph.D. program at the CUNY Graduate Center, or running highly valued centers at the College, including the Center for International Human Rights. Specifically, from Fall 2103 through Spring 2016, 57% of courses offered in that Concentration were staffed by adjunct faculty, with some individual courses being staffed exclusively by adjunct faculty over that period. This situation is likely to become more acute once the recently approved Human Rights M.A. program begins offering courses, many of which will be staffed by Political Science faculty who primarily contribute to Concentration D.

2. What are the hiring needs of the major over the next five years?

One solution to the full-time faculty coverage issues outlined above is to increase full-time faculty hiring, and the College has slowly started to do that after a lull in hiring caused by budget constraints. As part of those efforts, the Provost last year requested that all academic departments develop five-year hiring plans. The Department submitted its plan in the spring, and that portion of the plan relating to hiring in the political science major is attached as Appendix C (the Department also governs the Law and Society major, so the hiring plan also addressed that program). In the plan, we outlined our needs for two new faculty lines in Concentration D to increase full-time faculty coverage of courses offered in that concentration, and to allow a full-time faculty member to step in as the advisor for our very successful Model U.N. program after the adjunct faculty member now serving as advisor, Jacques Fomerand, retires in the coming years. Given the success of that program,³ and the increasing student demand, the Department believes that it is very important to have a smooth transition to a new adviser at the full-time faculty level once Professor Fomerand retires.

Beyond the need for new faculty lines in Concentration D, the hiring plan also addressed the need to replace the Department's sole lecturer, Professor Roger McDonald, after he retires in two years. As a lecturer, Professor McDonald regularly teaches nine courses each academic year, and his rotation includes nine different Political Science courses, including our foundation courses in political theory. So, his loss will be significant in terms of course coverage. While College policy dictates that we are not guaranteed his faculty line when he retires, we believe it is crucial that we do so given the impact his departure will have on full-time faculty coverage in the major.

B. Teaching

1. Are there any areas of expertise that are not sufficiently represented among the faculty of the major?

We offer a course in Middle East politics (POL 331), but there is no full-time faculty member trained in that area; thus, the few times we have offered it recently, it has been with an adjunct faculty member. In addition, we have a need for a faculty member in security studies, broadly defined. Finally, we have a need for a faculty member in state and local politics; we offer that course now with an adjunct-faculty member.

³ See previous discussion of the Model United Nations Program.

2. How are teaching assignments in the major made?

As the first step in the development of course schedules for an upcoming semester, full-time faculty provide the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson with a preferred list of courses and teaching days/times. These faculty preferences are given significant weight; however, assignments outside of preferences must sometimes be made because of student demand or the need to staff course sections with full-time faculty. For example, the Department is committed to offering our capstone research course (POL 409) with full-time faculty only. To ensure teaching assignments to this course are equitable, the Chairperson recently instituted a policy to rotate all full-time faculty through the course, resulting in each full-time faculty member teaching a section approximately once every three years unless requested more often. Members of the Department support this new policy.

Course sections not covered by full-time faculty are assigned to adjunct faculty. Our group of regular adjuncts usually can cover the remaining sections offered in any semester, but, if not, additional adjuncts are hired for those sections, usually through the Political Science Ph.D. program at the CUNY Graduate Center.

3. What does the department/program do to help faculty improve student learning?

Untenured faculty and adjunct faculty are observed in the classroom. In addition, the annual outcomes assessment process identifies levels of success with regard to learning outcomes of the major, and these annual results are shared at the first Department meeting of the fall semester, beginning a discussion over successive Department meetings of steps that can be taken to address any noted deficiencies. Also, the Department recently began a “Teaching and Learning Brown Bag” series to bring in speakers to discuss teaching and learning issues in an informal setting.

4. Are classroom assignments planned and reviewed systematically to support the alignment of curriculum and learning goals?

The outcomes assessment results are discussed by the full Department each year, and that includes recommendations of efforts faculty can undertake through assignments to address any issues raised in the reports. In addition, recurring issues (e.g., the need to improve student writing) are regularly discussed by faculty in Department meetings as well as in small groups the Department may ask to meet, development possible solutions, and report back to the full Department.

5. What percentage of faculty teaching in the major participate in outcomes assessment each year?

The annual outcomes assessment report for the major is drafted by one of the major coordinators, who reports her or his findings to the full Department at a meeting early in the fall semester. Many faculty in the Department may contribute student work from their classes to the major coordinator drafting the report. In addition, once the report is drafted, the major coordinator shares the results with the full Department, all of whom are involved in formulating approaches to address the report’s findings.

6. How does the major assure that all classes have a quality syllabus which includes the areas specified in the College’s *Guidelines for Model Syllabus*?

The teaching observations of untenured faculty and adjuncts include the review of the faculty member’s syllabus to ensure it meets College standards. In addition, all newly hired adjunct faculty must submit their syllabi for review by the Chairperson before the semester begins to ensure compliance with the College syllabus guidelines.

7. How does the major assure that course content adheres to official course descriptions listed in the *Undergraduate Bulletin*?

Periodically, all faculty in the major are asked to review the *Undergraduate Bulletin* descriptions of the courses they regularly teach to confirm that course content is consistent with course descriptions, and, if not, consider a course revision. The most recent widespread review took place after the last program evaluation, and the Department will conduct it once again after this evaluation.

C. Advisement

1. What is done to advise students about the course requirements of the major?

Our Department has taken a number of steps to advise students about the course requirements in the major. We have ensured that both the Department and College webpages, which list the course requirements, are up to date. Our Department also has created major checklists and a four-year plan outlining the courses, which are available for all students. We also assign two faculty members to advising, and they hold regular office hours each week that are open to students on a first come, first served basis. Before students meet with advisors, they must print out copies of their transcripts and degree audits, which encourages them to look at the course requirements and take more ownership of their academic journeys. As well, we have participated in the College-wide sophomore advising initiatives (mandatory advising, class visits, etc.) where we provide the aforementioned major checklists and four-year plans to students. In an attempt to increase the number of students we advise, we have begun sending advisors into every single Foundations course each semester (usually ten courses) to conduct group advising; in these sessions the structure of the major is outlined, students are asked to fill out their individual major checklist and there is a question-and-answer session. We also believe that these sessions will increase the number of students who seek out individual advising as they now have a personal connection to an advisor.

2. What percentage of sophomores between 30-50 credits in your program have you advised on a per semester basis?

We have increased sophomore advising from 25 to 50 percent of sophomores per semester. To further improve this percentage, we have instituted a process of visiting classes with large sophomore populations (our Foundations classes) to provide information about the major and advising.

3. What is done to advise students about careers for which this major serves as a preparation? How does the department work with communities of practice to make the major relevant to the work world?

We have created a major flyer that is available to students that lists a number of careers for which Political Science serves as preparation, and this document is available online and in paper copy, in the Department (faculty advisors also have copies of this document for students). During our Department's regular advising hours, we also frequently discuss career options with our Political Science majors.

Many of our students aspire to practice law. So, faculty in our major connect students to the Pre-Law Institute, and they also support students as they apply for various law school preparation programs (for example, by writing letters of recommendation for students applying to the Ronald Brown program). However, we also know that the legal job market is limited, and law school may not be the best option for many students, and so our Department has also hosted an annual panel event titled "Beyond Law School: Career Options for Liberal Arts Majors," where we bring in friends and colleagues who work in

non-legal fields (e.g., finance, the nonprofit sector, etc.) to discuss their career paths with students and provide networking opportunities.

As well, our major offers three internship programs (POL406/07/08) where students work in either NYC government agencies, the state legislature, or in Washington, DC. Here, they receive firsthand exposure to how government works, and many of these students subsequently parley this experience into careers in government agencies.

We do not work specifically with any community of practice.

4. What is done to advise students about graduate and professional school admissions?

To advise students about graduate and professional school admissions, our faculty members often discuss this process in their classes and/or during individual meetings with students, during their office hours. As well, our faculty advisors also discuss the graduate admissions process with interested students during advising meetings. In addition, we urge students interested in law school to register with the College's Pre-Law Institute so they are assigned a College pre-law adviser and are notified of the Institute's many programs. We also urge students interested in other types of graduate programs to register with the College's Center for Post-Graduate Opportunities. Finally, we promote the annual Graduate and Law School Fairs at the College to our majors through flyers and our social media accounts.

5. What strategies are employed to create a sense of community among majors (i.e. student clubs, external speakers, meetings, lounge, etc.).

Our Department employs a number of strategies to create a sense of community among majors. Our top performing students are invited to (and do) join Pi Sigma Alpha, the Political Science honor society, which hosts speakers and other activities for its majors. We put a significant amount of effort into the honor society, and last year, we had our largest class of inductees (34). As well, we also sponsor the Political Science Students Club at the College, which is open to all majors (and other students) who are interested in political issues.

In addition to these student-run groups, our Department also brings in political scientists from CUNY and beyond to discuss and develop their research projects through our monthly Brown Bag lunch series, which students are invited to attend. As well, our Department hosts a speaker at least once per semester to discuss political topics with students. Most recently, for example, Professor Brian Arbour arranged for a visit by Bill Hemmer from FOX News to speak with students about the 2016 election.

Unfortunately, we do not have a lounge space where students may congregate.

6. How does the faculty communicate with majors as a group?

Faculty mainly communicate with majors as a group through mass emails, although the efficacy of this is likely limited, given how few students check their John Jay emails. Additionally, we have a very dynamic Department Facebook page and Twitter account, where we post events for majors who follow/subscribe to these. As well, when we have to communicate with majors about advising and other issues that impact large groups, we coordinate class visits to our Foundations and other well-populated courses (see above).

D. Scholarship

1. Summarize scholarly achievements by all faculty teaching in the major in the last five years.

Faculty publications for the last five years are summarized in Appendix D. Other achievements are presented in faculty biographies available on the Political Science Department website (<http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/faculty-staff-department/political-science>).

2. How do the research strengths of the faculty support the curriculum?

Members of the Department strongly believe that scholarly activities by faculty enhance our teaching and are essential to providing outstanding instruction to our students. As a result, faculty are able to teach courses in their areas of research, and we encourage faculty to develop courses in their areas of expertise when none exist in the program. Some examples are POL 308 (State Courts and State Constitutional Law), POL 318 (Law and Politics of Sexual Orientation), POL 344 (Law and Politics of Immigration), POL 210 (Comparative Urban Political Systems), POL 232 (Media and Politics), POL 237 (Women and Politics), POL 246 (Politics of Globalization and Inequality) and POL 362 (Terrorism and International Relations).

The major includes a special topics course (POL 280) that can be used for credit in any concentration, so many faculty interested in developing a course oftentimes will first teach it as a POL 280 offering.

VI. Resources

A. Describe College resources (personnel, equipment and supplies, facilities, etc.) necessary to support the major.

The program needs additional personnel. Our need for more full-time faculty is addressed in our five-year hiring plan (Appendix C). In addition, we believe the program could be strengthened by having a dedicated major advisor in addition to our faculty advisors. The current advising model at the College includes the Academic Advisement Center, staffed with outstanding and committed advisers, focusing on advising in general education and major coordinators and chairpersons who provide the bulk of advising services to our majors. We believe more students could be reached through advisement if the College also hired advising staff specifically dedicated to individual majors or our groups of majors.

With regard to physical resource needs, all full-time faculty members in the major currently occupy offices in our suite in the New Building (9.65). However, once two new faculty members in our expanding Law and Society major arrive next year, we will reach capacity in the suite, with no full-time faculty office available for new hires. Professor Roger McDonald has expressed his intention to retire in the near term. So, that will open one additional office, but our future hiring plan across both the Political Science and Law and Society programs will require at least five additional full-time faculty offices. The possibility of moving the business office suite that abuts our suite on the 9th floor has come up in some discussions at the College. If this occurs, some of those offices could be used for full-time faculty offices for our programs.

B. Discuss the Library and other relevant resources such as computer facilities and laboratories.

In terms of library resources, those available to Political Science majors are sufficient, particularly given the library's limited funding and its continuing emphasis on building its electronic resources. Much of its materials on reserve and in circulation are, understandably, more focused on criminal justice than libraries at other liberal arts institutions. Some faculty in the major have run into issues with electronic

books available through the library when the library's subscription for electronic books is restricted to use by one patron at any one time. That restriction severely limits use of these electronic resources in class settings, but library staff have agreed to look into ways to relax the restrictions for those electronic resources most used by Political Science faculty in their classes. In addition, faculty in the major have identified a Roper Center for Public Opinion Research membership as an additional electronic resource they would like to see available through the library. The membership would provide unlimited access to all data archived at the Center.

Overall, the library's biggest strength is its faculty, who provide outstanding service to faculty in the major. If resources are not available through John Jay, library faculty routinely assist faculty members to locate materials using inter-library loan or contacts at other academic libraries in the New York City area.

Although we are aware of the College's space constraints, we also believe student success in the Political Science program would be enriched with a dedicated student computer lab in or near the departmental offices. Many members of the Department provide undergraduate research opportunities through College programs and grants, but with no space dedicated to these activities (faculty meet with students in their office or our conference room). We feel that student research experiences would be enhanced with a small computer lab in proximity to their faculty mentors.

C. Describe the adequacy of current resources and discuss resource needs over the next five years.

Described and discussed in Part IV (A) and Part IV (B) above.

VII. Summary and Recommendations

A. Outline key findings from the self-study, including the primary program strengths and challenges, and priorities the program has identified for improvement.

We believe the revision of the major in 2012 based on recommendations generated from our last program evaluation (2010), combined with annual outcomes assessments of the major, has been a success. Under this revision, all students must take one course in each of the five discipline subfields reflected in the foundations; previously, a course in any four of the five was required. Also, we ensured that the courses available in the foundations represented appropriate sophomore-level courses in the subfields. In addition, because our assessment reports found that students taking POL 409, the capstone research course, did not come to that course with a sufficient foundation in research methods, the 2012 revision added a required sophomore-level research methods course (POL 225). Finally, the 2012 revision added an optional undergraduate research experience course (POL 385) to the major, providing credit to students working with Department faculty on research projects, both individually and, recently, in small groups. That course has proven to be extremely popular with both students and faculty, providing our majors with a credit-bearing formal research experience and providing faculty with research assistants. In short, we believe we are now providing students with a coherent and well-sequenced program.

However, we do face some challenges. First, while POL 225 has improved student preparation for our major capstone course (POL 409), faculty teaching POL 409 have found that some students come to that with POL 225 have forgotten many of the concepts and skills taught in POL 225. Thus, we need to provide more reinforcement of these concepts and skills in our 300-level courses. Second, we need to be continuing our discussions of the variety of ways POL 409 can be taught, particularly given that all faculty now will teach this course. Third, while we now have 400-level courses in each of the concentrations, more thought needs to be given to the ways in which these courses relate to POL 409. Fourth, as has been the case for some time, many of our students lack necessary written and oral communication skills. While faculty largely have been dealing with this on an individual basis in their classes, there needs to be a greater collective discussion of effective pedagogical approaches for all

faculty to take across the curriculum. Fifth, we need to address how we may provide an even stronger academic component to the very successful Model United Nations program, by, for example, linking an existing or new fall semester course with the spring Model United Nations conference in the spring (we also have targeted a future full-time faculty hire for this program). Sixth, although a minority in the Department believe that our students are not well-served by being forced to choose among concentrations, it may be wise to have more discussions on this issue as we consider future revisions of the major.

Beyond these curricular matters, a growing issue we face is the extent to which faculty in the program have been increasingly asked to support other programs at the College, particularly graduate programs that are staffed with faculty from undergraduate programs like ours. This shifts faculty effort away from our major, requiring that more courses in the major be staffed by adjuncts. While we recognize that other majors depend more heavily on adjunct instructors than we do, the negative long term effect of shifting of full-time faculty resources to other programs without new hiring in our major will be significant.

VIII. Next Program Planning and Assessment Cycle

Outline the program's plan for improvement over the next five year period. Which improvements are possible by reallocating existing resources and which can be addressed through additional resources?

The following recommendations were developed from this self-study (there is a need for additional resources where noted):

Personnel:

- Implement five-year hiring plan submitted to the Provost in Spring 2016 (additional resources)
- Discuss with the administration the hiring/assigning of College advisors to support major advising (additional resources)

Curriculum/Pedagogy:

- Develop recommendations for the reinforcement of concepts and skills learned in POL 225 in 300-level courses and adopt an action plan for their implementation
- Further develop resources to support faculty teaching POL 409 and discuss how it should, if at all, be linked with 400-level courses in each of the concentrations and adopt an action plan for any recommendations.
- Once information from faculty on writing instruction in their courses is compiled and analyzed, develop recommendations and adopt an action plan for their implementation.
- Investigate whether the major requirements create barriers to timely completion of degree requirements or lead to an inordinately large number of course substitutions.
- Address how we may provide a stronger academic component to the Model United Nations program.

- Ensure course content is consistent with official course descriptions in the *Undergraduate Bulletin* and revise course descriptions as needed.
- Revise the mission statement to more clearly align it with the major's learning outcomes.
- Revise POL 409 capstone course to include POL 225 as an additional prerequisite.
- Revise POL 210 into a 300-level course.

Administration/Facilities:

- Address space needs for future hiring of full-time faculty (additional resources).
- Establish a student computer lab near the Department suite (additional resources).
- Increase recruitment of Political Science majors to our internships.
- Develop and implement additional strategies to recruit students to the major.

POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR SELF-STUDY

**Department of Political Science
John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

Fall 2016

Appendices

Appendix A - POL 101 Content Guidelines

Appendix B - Peer Institution Curriculum

Appendix C - Five-Year Hiring Plan

Appendix D- Faculty Scholarship

Appendix E - Political Science Assessment Reports

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR POL 101 FALL 2009 (revised)

Based on input from POL 101 instructors, the learning outcomes for the class have been changed significantly beginning FALL 2009.

There are now only six required units that must be covered in each class (Constitution, Federalism, Congress, Presidency, Judiciary, Political Behavior). What you choose to do beyond these units, if anything, is up to you (so long as it still falls within the course description). For example, you might choose to organize the course solely around these six units, you might choose to add material beyond these six units (e.g., one might choose to add a week or so on civil liberties, another might choose to incorporate more material on elections, another might choose to discuss some policy issue, etc.), or you might choose to add some class projects or student presentations.

With regard to the six required units, the learning outcomes are designed to be goals for the course and not rigid mandates. These are intended to represent the core knowledge that students should gain from this course, so you should make every effort to incorporate as many of these as possible into your class. You need not cover each one of these in a classroom setting, as they also can be addressed through assigned reading (maybe giving the students direction). Finally, while exams should focus on learning outcomes, all learning outcomes need not be addressed on exams.

As with any new endeavor, modifications to the units and/or learning outcomes may have to be made in future semesters based on experience. Please make note of any suggested changes as the semester progresses.

Learning Outcomes -- Students will be familiar with the following:

1. The Constitution

- a. The definition of “democracy,” and how it differs from other forms of government.
- b. The philosophical and political significance of the Declaration of Independence.
- c. The historical origins of the U.S. Constitution.
- d. The primary areas of agreement and disagreement at the Constitutional Convention, and the most important compromises made at the Convention.
- e. The basic principles of our constitutional system of government
- f. The most important arguments for and against the ratification of the Constitution and they were resolved.
- g. The process through which formal changes to the Constitution are made and how the meaning of the Constitution evolves over time outside of formal changes.

2. Federalism

- a. What federalism is and how it differs from other systems of government.
- b. The advantages and disadvantages of a federal system of government.

- c. How federalism is expressed in the constitutional framework (e.g., express, reserved and implied powers, etc.).
- d. How federalism has changed in the years since the ratification of the Constitution.
- e. The roles federal courts, particularly the Supreme Court, play in defining the relationship between the different levels of government in our federal system.
- f. How the federal government can shape policies at the state level.
- g. How contemporary politics has affected trends in the size and power of the federal government.

3. Congress

- a. How seats are apportioned in Congress and why the Senate is a malapportioned chamber.
- b. The major types of “gerrymandering” and the consequences of each.
- c. How interpretations of the Commerce Clause and Elastic Clause have changed the scope of congressional power over time.
- d. The influences of parties (and party leaders) and committees over legislation in Congress.
- e. The differences between types of committees (standing, select, joint, conference, authorizing, and appropriating).
- f. How the Rules Committee, Unanimous Consent Agreements, and filibusters affect debate and the proposal of amendments.
- g. Pork barrel projects, how they get enacted, and why members of Congress seek them.
- h. If not done in the context of the above, be sure students know the steps of the legislative process, including the factors affecting members’ voting decisions.

4. The Presidency

- a. The founders’ debate on the structure of the presidency (e.g., unity vs. plurality, length of term, etc.).
- b. The roles of the President under Articles I and II of the Constitution and what powers the President is given to fulfill these roles.
- c. How war powers are defined in the Constitution and how the President and Congress have interacted in the arena of military conflict.
- d. How executive agreements, executive orders, and executive privilege are examples of implied powers.
- e. How the uses of veto powers changed over time.
- f. The characteristics that define the modern presidency.
- g. Divided and unified government, and how they impact presidential powers.
- h. How the President uses “going public” to influence Congress and other political actors.

5. The Federal Judiciary

- a. The different types of courts and the roles each plays in the judicial system.
- b. How the federal judicial system is organized (and role of Constitution and Congress in organizing) and its jurisdiction

- c. How federal judges are selected and why the process has become increasingly politicized.
- d. How courts make policy when exercising judicial power and limitations on the courts' policymaking powers compared to other branches.
- e. Judicial activism and judicial restraint.
- f. The importance of the courts' power of judicial review.
- g. How cases reach the Supreme Court and the steps the Court takes to resolve them.
- h. The checks on the exercise of judicial power.

6. Political Behavior

- a. What are political ideologies, how they organize the political world for individuals, and how ideologies of liberals and conservatives differ?
- b. How party identification develops in an individual and its influence on behavior.
- c. Political socialization and the role it plays in developing political attitudes and opinions in individuals.
- d. The factors that influence the opinions that an individual holds
- e. Information shortcuts individuals employ to make sense of the political world, and how effective they are.
- f. The factors that are most related to voting turnout; that is, the types of individuals more or less likely to vote.
- g. The costs and benefits of voting
- h. Retrospective voting
- i. The importance of party identification to voting.
- j. Factors that affect outcomes in presidential elections and other types of elections.
- k. The functions of political parties, and how they assist political candidates and officeholders and the benefits they provide to citizens and voters.
- l. Definition of political parties, and why they form.

APPENDIX B – PEER INSTITUTION CURRICULUM

School	Foundation Courses	Capstone Requirement	Research Requirement	Concentrations or Specialization
John Jay	Yes, students must complete a course in 5 different fields.	Yes, students must complete a 400-level course in their concentration.	Yes, students must complete POL 225 and POL 409	Yes, students must complete 12 hours in their concentration.
Hunter	No, but students are required to take at least 3 credits (1 course) in each of 4 subfields	No, but students must Complete at least 9 credits (3 courses) at the 300- or 400-level;	No	None
City College	Yes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Government & Politics. Political Ideas & Issues. World Politics All are required. In addition, students must take courses in each of their four subfields.	No.	No.	None.
SUNY at Albany	Yes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Politics. Comparative & International Politics. Political Theory. 	Students must take a 400-level course, and they recommend, but do not require, that the 400-level class is in the chosen subfield	No.	Yes. Students must also take at least four courses at or above the 300-level in one of five subfields.
SUNY Binghamton	Yes, 3 Introductory courses. Students may choose between American Politics, Comparative Politics, Political Theory, and International Politics	No.	No.	None.
UCLA	Yes, four lower division courses are required as "preparation for the major."	No.	Yes, a statistics course.	Yes. A concentration in one field by completing the lower division course and at least three upper division courses in that field

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

FIVE YEAR HIRING PLAN

JUNE 6, 2016

I. Introduction

The Department of Political Science submits this five year hiring plan requesting eight faculty lines. Five of these lines are to support the rapidly growing and very successful Law and Society major (LWS), two of these lines are to support the Comparative Politics/International Relations concentration in the Political Science major (POL), and one of the requests will permit us to replace our colleague, Roger McDonald, who recently announced his intention to retire in the next two years.

Each of these requests is describe more fully below with supporting data.

II. Law and Society – OMITTED

III. Comparative Politics/International Relations- Two faculty lines

We currently have a critical need for two tenure-track hires to meet the significant teaching responsibilities in Concentration D of the political science major (Comparative Politics/International Relations) (CP/IR). Our inability to offer many of these courses with full time faculty (or even offer these courses at all) is, in large part, because many of our Concentration D full-time faculty who teach these courses have significant roles in other programs at the College and University, including the International Criminal Justice (ICJ) major, the MA Program in International Crime and Justice (IC&J) and the Political Science and Criminal Justice Ph.D. programs at the Graduate Center. The recently approved Human Rights master's program, to be staffed, in large part, by full-time faculty teaching in CP/IR (Professors Kang, Andreopoulos, Rutledge, and Michel) will further reduce the availability of full-time faculty to teach undergraduate sections in CP/IR. In short, the situation we face is a good example of a problem that has been raised in the past – if the College chooses to staff new programs with faculty from existing programs, the new programs might succeed, but the existing programs will suffer. Ours is suffering.

As a result, we rely on adjunct faculty to cover an inordinate number of the sections of CP/IR. Table 3 below sets out the number of POL sections offered in CP/IR courses since Fall 2013 along with the number of those sections taught by adjunct faculty. Of the 91 sections offered in this concentration in the past three years, almost 60% (52 - 56.7%) were taught by adjunct faculty, and over 80% of a CP/IR foundation course (POL 260), required of all POL majors, was taught by adjuncts. The situation in Fall

2016 is particularly acute, with 73% of all CP/IR courses being taught by adjunct faculty. With the development of the Human Rights master's program the percentage of sections covered by adjuncts will increase even more without new faculty hires.

The table also reflects that 76% (69 of 91) sections offered in CP/IR in the past three years have been of only five courses – POL 250, POL 257, POL 259, POL 260 and POL 320. We have been forced to marshal our resources around these courses because two (POL 257 and POL 260) are foundation courses in the POL major for all students, and all five are courses offered in the ICJ major. Within ICJ, one is required (POL 259), three are among small groups of required foundation options (POL 250, POL 257, and POL 260), and POL 320 is an option. In addition, POL 320 is the only required course in the Human Rights Studies minor.¹ Thus, courses in CP/IR support the 504 majors in POL who must take one of the foundation offerings, the 89 POL Concentration D majors who must take courses in CP/IR beyond the foundation offerings, and the 576 majors in ICJ who will take CP/IR courses in POL to meet their major requirements.²

¹ To meet the demand for POL 320, we even have had to call on Professor Carmalt, not a Concentration D faculty member, to teach sections periodically. While she has expressed an interest in continuing occasionally to offer POL 320, that may not be sustainable because of the demands placed on her in the LWS major.

² Enrollment numbers are as of Fall 2015

Table 3
Political Science Concentration D (CP/IR) Course Sections Offered
Fall 2013-Fall 2016

Conc. D POL Courses	F2016	SUM2016	S2016	F2015	SUM2015	S2015	F2014	S2014	F2013	TOTALS	% Adjunct coverage
210	1			1			1		1	4	0%
246							1	1		2	0%
250	1(A1)		1(A1)	1(A1)		1(A1)	1(A1)		1(A1)	6(A6)	100%
257 (F)	1(A1)	1	2(A2)	2(A1)	1(A1)	2	2	2(A2)	2	15(A7)	47%
259	2(A2)	1(A1)	3(A1)	3(A3)	1(A1)	2(A2)	3(A1)	2(A2)	3	20 (A13)	65%
260 (F)	2(A1)		2(A1)	1(A1)		2(A2)	1(A1)	2(A2)	1(A1)	11(A9)	82%
280			1(A1)			1(A1)				2(A2)	100%
320	2(A1)	1(A1)	2(A1)	2(A1)	1(A1)	2(A1)	3(A2)	2	2(A2)	17(A10)	59%
322										0	n/a
325				1		1				2	0%
328			1							1	0%
331	1(A1)									1(A1)	100%
362			1				1(A1)	1		3(A1)	33%
450	1(A1)		1	1		1	1(A1)	1	1(A1)	7(A3)	43%
TOTALS	11(A8)	3(A2)	14(A7)	12(A7)	3(A3)	12(A7)	14(A7)	11(A6)	11(A5)	91(52)	57%
% Adjunct coverage	73%	66%	50%	58%	100%	58%	50%	55%	45%	57%	

Notes: 1) the number in parentheses represents the number of sections offered that were taught by adjuncts, so “2(A1)” means two sections were offered that semester/session, and one was taught by an adjunct; and 2) foundations courses are marked with “(F);” all students must take one of the two foundation courses.

Primarily directing our resources to offer those five courses every semester has meant that we have been unable to offer other CP/IR courses in POL. Specifically, as Table 3 reflects, five of the twelve courses we offer in CP/IR (over 40%) have rarely been offered to students in the past three years because we lack faculty. For example, POL 322 (International Organizations) has never been offered since the course was approved in 2013, and POL 331 (Politics of the Middle East) has not been offered in the past three years. One section of POL 331 – with an adjunct – will be offered in Fall 2016.

Beyond teaching contributions, the department also could use one or both of these new lines to attract someone to succeed Professor Fomerand as faculty adviser to our Model UN program when he chooses to step down. Professor Andreopoulos established the Model UN program at the College in 1999 and served as its faculty advisor until 2010. Professor Fomerand succeeded Professor Andreopoulos and has done an outstanding job mentoring the team over the past six years. Overall, the team has won awards in 13 out of 17 competitions since being established (76.5% success rate). The first award was received in 2002, the second in 2005 and the team has been winning ever since, including receiving the top award this spring. We very much hope Professor Fomerand stays with us and continues to lead the team for many years to come, but there is a possibility he may choose to retire within the five year period covered by this plan. Although he is cutting back on his teaching next academic year, he has agreed to lead the team again in the spring. However, if he chooses to fully retire in the next five years, these new lines in CP/IR could also be used to attract a full-time faculty member to step into the Model UN advisement role to succeed him. As of now, there is not a full-time faculty member available to take on this task.

Overall, the data reflect that the scope of CP/IR offerings in recent years has been reduced to a small core of courses. Those courses that are offered are, in large part, being taught by adjunct faculty. This situation will become grimmer in upcoming years as more of our faculty meet their teaching requirements in other programs. Thus, we need two new faculty focused on teaching our CP/IR offerings in the POL major. It is our expectation that both hires would need to be qualified to teach our introductory courses in Comparative Politics and International Relations and our course in Comparative Criminal Justice Systems, as well as our Senior Seminar in International Relations and Comparative Politics. In

addition, we would seek a faculty member qualified to teach our course in Middle East politics or one with another regional expertise. It would also allow us to bring in a faculty member with a research agenda addressing security studies, broadly defined. Finally, allocating two lines to us in CP/IR supports the John Jay 2020 Strategic Plan, as these new faculty would 1) prepare students for global citizenship; 2) engage in international scholarly work; and 3) promote global engagement through joint research projects and exchange programs.

IV. Replacement of Roger McDonald – One faculty line

Roger McDonald, a lecturer in our department, recently announced that he plans on retiring in two years. While we understand that the retirement of a faculty member does not guarantee that the line stays with the department, we believe that it should remain with us upon his retirement. Professor McDonald teaches a wider range of political science courses than anyone in the department and, given that he is a lecturer, also teaches more of them (he usually teaches the standard 5-4 load). His range of teaching expertise is across POL concentrations and from freshman to senior levels. Since his 2007 full-time appointment, he has taught the following courses: POL 101 (Introductory course and General Education); POL 270 (POL Foundation and Concentration B); POL 273 (POL Foundation and Concentration B); POL 301 (Concentration A); POL 305 (Concentration A); POL 313 (Concentration A); POL 371 (Concentration B); POL 375 (Concentration B); and POL 420 (Concentration A). He and Professor Jacobs are the only faculty – full-time or adjunct - teaching foundation courses in political theory and courses in Concentration B (Justice and Politics). Also, he and Professor Arbour are the only full-time faculty who teach POL 101, a popular offering in general education and a prerequisite for practically all courses in the major.

At the retreat when Professor McDonald announced his future retirement, he was compared to “utility player” in baseball, i.e., someone able to play multiple positions. However, in preparing this report, it is clear he is much more valuable to the department than that. His departure will leave a gaping hole in covering courses in our political science major; thus, we believe his line should remain with our department when he retires.

V. Conclusion

We believe the data support providing eight faculty lines to the Department of Political Science over the next five years. Law and Society is in dire need of new faculty now and with its expanded curriculum, and history evidences that investment in its future will pay off. Our faculty staffing issues in CP/IR have prevented us from offering over 40% of our CP/IR courses on a regular basis over the past three years, and those courses offered are staffed primarily by adjunct faculty. Finally, Professor McDonald's line should stay with the department upon his retirement given the magnitude of courses he regularly covers.

You can feel assured that with these lines, the department will hire outstanding faculty who will be significant contributors to the department, the College, the University and, most importantly, to our students. We have an excellent track record in bringing in exceptional members of the College community, and we are certain that success will continue with these new lines.

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John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Department of Political Science
Political Science Comprehensive Assessment Plan

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APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

I. Mission Statement

The Political Science Major¹ is designed to enhance students' knowledge of politics, policy, governance, and government ranging from a global to a local perspective. The Major seeks to accomplish this mission by introducing students to the principal fields of inquiry in political science in its Foundations section, and by providing students with the opportunity to pursue a Concentration-of-Choice in one of four areas: A. Law, Courts, and Politics; B. Justice and Politics; C. American and Urban Politics and Policy; and D. Comparative/International Politics and Human Rights.

II. Learning Outcomes

Major Learning Outcomes

1. *Students will initiate, develop, and present independent research (Independent Research).*²

Students are expected to:

- Write clear thesis statements;
- Be familiar with and cite the literature relevant to their research topic;
- Collect evidence relating to their thesis;
- Draw conclusions appropriate to the findings of their research.

2. *Students will write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express cogent arguments (Effective Writing).*

Students are expected to:

- Use proper grammar and syntax in writing;
- Present ideas in an organized manner;
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the context, audience, and purpose for which they are writing;
- Ground positions and arguments in scholarly research.

3. *Students will become knowledgeable members of the community capable of reasoned judgments on political issues and ideas (Reasoned Judgments).*

Students are expected to:

- Demonstrate exposure to information representing various viewpoints with respect to political issues and debates;
- Differentiate facts and opinions with respect to political issues and debates;
- Formulate and express their own opinions on political issues;
- Present arguments in support of and in opposition to their positions;
- Demonstrate understanding of the development of their opinions referencing information and how that information is used and interpreted.

¹ To differentiate uses of the terms, “Major” and “Minor,” with an uppercase “M,” are generally used to identify the programs of study. “major” and “minor,” with a lowercase “m,” are used to identify students in those programs. The context should also indicate whether the term is used to identify a program or student, or as an adjective denote the significance (or lack thereof) of something.

² Parenthetical phrases list the short name for the learning outcome that will be used throughout the remainder of this document.

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4. *Students will demonstrate knowledge of the major subfields of political science, as represented by the Major's foundation requirements and concentrations (Subfield Knowledge).*

Students are expected to:

- Demonstrate the attainment of factual knowledge in these subfields;
- Demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to apply the major theories or approaches in these subfields;
- Demonstrate familiarity with the relevant academic sources in these subfields.

Minor Learning Outcomes

The last three learning outcomes listed for the Major, *Effective Writing*, *Reasoned Judgments*, and *Subfield Knowledge* also serve as the learning outcomes for the Minor in Political Science. The Minor is currently unstructured, requiring an additional 15 credits of Political Science courses beyond POL 101; the Minor, however, is in the process of revision, giving it a defined structure. There are no courses offered by the department that are specific to the Minor and not the Major. This, coupled with the ability of students to declare minors at any point in their academic careers, makes it impossible to provide unique assessments of the Minor. Discussions of Minor assessment will, therefore, be tied to discussions of Major assessment on these three outcomes particularly where these outcomes are assessed using student work from foundation courses.

III. Assessment Philosophy

The purpose of outcomes assessment is to enhance the learning experiences of current and future students. The Political Science Department has developed learning outcomes that represent knowledge that is necessary for political scientists and that represent the requisite skills and knowledge that make students marketable for the variety of careers suited to Political Science majors. Our assessment program is designed to generate qualitative and quantitative information that will be used to identify the Political Science Major's strengths and weaknesses. That, in turn, allows us to identify areas where improvements to our program might be necessary or desirable. Once implemented, the changes can be examined for effectiveness through future outcomes assessment.

In this respect, the assessment program is expected to facilitate the Political Science Department's current practice of program examination and curricular revision. The most recent program self-study and external review highlighted areas for programmatic improvement. In response, the department has revised the Major and developed new courses to enhance student knowledge of the major subfields of the discipline and increase the program's attention to undergraduate research training. The assessment program will generate important data highlighting the program's performance on these and other objectives in light of these revisions.

Specifically, the department's assessment program reflects the structure of the Major, its recent revisions, and its participation in the general education curriculum at the college. *Independent Research* is assessed at two stages in the curriculum: in POL 225, which is a newly

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created required foundation course in research methods, and in POL 409, the Major's capstone course. As the requirement for the capstone course, research papers from POL 409 are an excellent tool to directly assess how well majors have developed research skills at the conclusion of their study in our program. Initially, only capstone papers were used to assess the Major on *Independent Research*. Now that POL 225 exists, it provides the department with an opportunity to assess research skills earlier in the program and examine the development of these skills between the foundation "level" and the capstone.

Capstone papers are also very appropriate for assessing the Major on *Effective Writing* and *Reasoned Judgments*. This is not, however, the only place where writing and critical thinking skills are assessed. The department has adopted a holistic approach to assessing these skills. Student work is to be collected from the capstone and lower level foundation courses. Both sets of skills will be assessed using the same instruments, as described in this document. The use of a consistent instrument will allow the department to examine how student writing and thinking progress at each level of study in the program. Instead of only assessing capstone papers and finding, for example, that writing skills need improvement, the analyses described here will afford us the ability to tailor curricular revisions when needed to different points in the curriculum.

Student work from foundation courses is also used to assess the Major on *Subfield Knowledge*. Given the design of the Political Science Major, this point in the program is the natural place to assess the knowledge developed by students with respect to the major subfields of political science. Briefly, students are required to take foundation courses in five areas. It is in these courses that all majors develop knowledge of the subfields of political science. Students then opt into a concentration, listed in the mission statement above, in which they take higher level courses to improve their research and writing skills and develop more detailed knowledge in their area of concentration. While more knowledge is attained for each particular concentration in these higher level courses, it is in the foundations courses that **all** majors share the learning experience. As noted above, assessments of *Effective Writing*, *Reasoned Judgments*, and *Subfield Knowledge* using student work from foundation courses also apply to assessment of the Minor. In light of the issues presented above and assessment of different outcomes at different times, annual reports will rarely reference the Minor. Assessment of the Minor will, however, be given a dedicated discussion in the end of cycle report.

In addition to these assessments, the department will provide periodic assessment of POL 101, American Government and Politics, on *Effective Writing* and *Reasoned Judgments*. POL 101 is the prerequisite for the Major and it is an important part of the general education curriculum at the college. Assessment of POL 101 on these skills will demonstrate its value to the college as a general education course and provide a baseline assessment of writing and critical thinking skills to which assessments of higher level courses can be compared.

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IV. Assessment Cycle and Schedule

The Political Science Major will be assessed according to a five-year cycle. The following tables present the current (2010-2015) cycle and the next five-year cycle (2015-2020). Starting with the 2015-2016 academic year, the first year of the next five-year cycle, assessment will generally proceed as follows. In years 1 through 4, samples of student work will be collected and assessed using the tools described in this document. Annual reports and recommendations will be prepared and presented to the department and the college. The fifth year of the cycle will be dedicated to the end of cycle report, which will review the previously collected data on all learning outcomes with an eye towards more substantial curricular changes if needed or desired by the department.

Direct Assessment

Learning outcomes will be assessed directly as described in the following section using samples of student work from the courses identified below.

First Five-Year Cycle (Fall 2010 through Spring 2015)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Courses</i>	<i>Learning Outcomes</i>
Year 1: 2010-2011	POL 409	1. Independent Research 2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments
Year 2: 2011-2012	All Foundation Courses	4. Major Subfields
Year 3: 2012-2013	POL 101 (2011-2012) All Foundation Courses (2011-2012)	2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments
	*Report on the Political Science Minor (outcomes 2, 3, and 4) using results from Major courses in years 2 and 3	
Year 4: 2013-2014	POL 225 POL 409	1. Independent Research
Year 5: 2014-2015	Year 5 will be devoted to the creation and discussion of the end of cycle report. The end of cycle report will compile the previous annual reports in the cycle and recommend curricular changes to be discussed during the Major's five-year review.	

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Second Five-Year Cycle (Fall 2015 through Spring 2020)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Courses</i>	<i>Learning Outcomes</i>
Year 1: 2015-2016	POL 225	1. Independent Research
	POL 409	2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments
	Foundation Courses A-C	2. Effective Writing
	POL 235	3. Reasoned Judgments
	POL 270	4. Subfield Knowledge
	POL 273	
	POL 206	
	POL 234	
Year 2: 2016-2017	POL 101	2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments
	Foundation Courses D-E	
	POL 257	2. Effective Writing
	POL 260	3. Reasoned Judgments
	POL 214	4. Subfield Knowledge
	POL 215	
	POL 220	
Year 3: 2017-2018	POL 225	1. Independent Research 2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments
	POL 101	2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments
	*Report on the Political Science Minor (outcomes 2, 3, and 4) using results from Major courses in years 2 and 3	
Year 4: 2018-2019	1 300 courses in each subfield (dependent on course offerings)	2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments 4. Subfield Knowledge
	POL 409	1. Independent Research 2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments
Year 5: 2019-2020	End of Cycle Summary Report	

Indirect Assessment

Learning objectives will also be assessed using responses to items in the *National Survey of Student Engagement* and the *John Jay College Student Evaluation of the Major*. Items from these surveys have already provided an important complement to direct assessment results and, in a few cases, allowed the department to place direct assessment results in context. These

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indirect assessment instruments will primarily be used in Year 1 and Year 2 assessments, which encompass direct assessment of all four learning outcomes. The department may develop additional indirect instruments if needed.

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V. Direct Assessment Instruments

Direct assessment of the four Major learning outcomes, as well as the three of these outcomes applicable to the Minor, will be conducted using a separate scoring rubric for each outcome. These rubrics, presented in Appendix B (pp. 15-19), are largely drawn from the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) project of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). To be more specific, the AAC&U has developed VALUE rubrics for the assessment of several intellectual, practical, and social skills. For each skill, written communication for example, the rubric lists several items on which student work can be assessed. For each item, there are four levels of proficiency: benchmark, milestone 1, milestone 2, and capstone. Each successive level corresponds to a higher level of student work. We adapted VALUE rubrics for three learning outcomes, as described in the following subsections, to use as common instruments for courses at various levels.

Assessment Categories and Departmental Standards

In general, student work is placed in one of three categories for every rubric item. We use a common set of categories referring to departmental expectations for student work: **exceeds**, **meets**, and **fails to meet** expectations. Descriptions of work that fall under each of the categories are presented in each of the rubrics. In our first assessment plan and the 2010-2011 assessment report we used the following categories: Exceptional, Satisfactory, Near Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory. Despite the change in terminology, the meanings of the categories are equivalent. Exceptional corresponds with Exceeds Expectations; Satisfactory corresponds with Meets Expectations; Unsatisfactory corresponds with Fails to Meet Expectations, which also encompasses the Near Satisfactory category.

With respect to department standards for assessment results, we do not have a set percentage of students that we expect to meet expectations. We hope, although do not expect, that 100% of our students at least meet departmental expectations on every learning outcome. In every assessment report, we will discuss the percentage of students that at least meet expectations in the context of the learning outcomes assessed and, when that percentage falls short of 100%, we will recommend the appropriate steps to improve student performance.

Learning Outcome 1: *Independent Research*

The first Major learning outcome listed above states that students will initiate, develop, and present independent research. To assess the Major on this outcome, we score student work from the two required courses in the Major that explicitly address research skills: POL 225, which is our introductory research course, and POL 409, the Major capstone, which requires students to produce an independent research paper.

The rubric for *Independent Research* is presented in Table B1 (p. 16). It was adapted from the VALUE rubric for Inquiry and Analysis, which the AAC&U defines as follows: “Inquiry is a systematic process of exploring issues, objects or works through the collection and analysis of evidence that results in informed conclusions or judgments. Analysis is the process of breaking complex topics or issues into parts to gain a better understanding of them.” In addition to the items from this rubric, we include one item from the Problem Solving VALUE rubric, “Propose Solutions

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/ Hypotheses.” Taken as a whole, the seven items on our rubric encompass the research process from the selection of research topics to the drawing of conclusions based on analyses.

There are four descriptions listed for each item, each corresponding to a different assessment category. The top row of the rubric identifies the category appropriate to each course level for a given description. For example, with respect to topic selection, student work that identifies a manageable topic that is either too narrowly focused or excludes relevant aspects of the topic (the third description) would be scored as “Exceeds Expectations” if the student work came from a 100-level course, “Meets Expectations” if the work were from a 200 or 300-level course, or “Fails to Meet Expectations” if the work came from a 400-level course. The layout of this rubric is identical to the rubrics for *Effective Writing* and *Reasoned Judgments*; the description of this rubric, therefore, also applies to the rubrics for those two learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome 2: *Effective Writing*

The second Major learning outcome listed above states that students will write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express cogent arguments. For the Major, we assess *Effective Writing* twice during the cycle. First, using student work from POL 225 and POL 409 and second, using a sample of student work from all foundation courses. Assessments from this second round will also serve as assessment on this learning outcome for the Minor. As noted above, we also conduct assessment of POL 101 on *Effective Writing*.

The rubric for *Effective Writing* is presented in Table B2 (p. 17). It was adapted from the VALUE rubric for Written Communication and assesses student work on the following items: context and purpose for writing, content development, application of disciplinary conventions to all aspects of the writing, use of sources and evidence, and control of syntax and mechanics.

Learning Outcome 3: *Reasoned Judgments*

The third Major learning outcome listed above states that students will become knowledgeable members of the community capable of reasoned judgments on political issues and ideas. We assess *Reasoned Judgments* contemporaneously with *Effective Writing* on the same samples of work. Specifically, we assess the Major on *Reasoned Judgments* using student work from POL 225 and POL 409, the Major and the Minor using a sample of student work from all foundation courses, and for POL 101.

The rubric for *Reasoned Judgments* is presented in Table B3 (p. 18). It was adapted from the VALUE rubric for Critical Thinking, which the AAC&U defines as follows: “Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.” Student work is assessed on the following items: explanation of issues to be considered critically, use of evidence, analysis of the context in which positions are presented, the extent to which the student’s position accounts for the complexities of the issue, and the connection between the conclusions drawn and the evidence presented.

A Note on Assessing the First Three Learning Outcomes

Independent Research was previously assessed in the 2010-2011 academic year using

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student work from only the Major capstone course. Direct assessment was conducted using a rubric developed specifically for the capstone course that included items for *Independent Research*, *Effective Writing*, and *Reasoned Judgments*. That rubric can be found in Appendix D (pp. 23-26). We decided to change the scoring rubrics for two reasons. First, as noted, the original rubric was developed specifically for the capstone course. As our thinking and planning with respect to assessment has developed, the value of assessing learning outcomes at different levels, not just the capstone, became apparent. This required rubrics with items and criteria that could be applied to courses at various levels. Second, the development of POL 225 has given us the opportunity to assess *Independent Research* both at the capstone level and at a lower level. Related to the first point, for *Independent Research* specifically, we wanted a rubric that could be applied to both POL 225 and POL 409 so that we could track the progression of student work and assess the impact of the new course, POL 225, on performance in POL 409.

Learning Outcome 4: Subfield Knowledge

The final Major learning outcome listed above states that students will demonstrate knowledge of the Major subfields of political science, as represented by the Major's foundations requirements and concentrations. *Subfield Knowledge* is assessed in the second year of the cycle using a sample of student work drawn from all foundation courses offered during the academic year. *Subfield Knowledge* has already been assessed in the current cycle; those findings are in the 2011-2012 assessment report. These assessments will also contribute to assessment of the Minor, which is discussed in the end of cycle report.

The rubric for *Subfield Knowledge* is presented in Table B4 (p. 19). This rubric was not adapted from any other rubrics. The AAC&U does not have a rubric to assess this type of student learning. The rubric was, however, developed with a similar style. We assess student work on four items relevant to the learning outcome: the extent to which students demonstrate the attainment of factual knowledge, demonstrated understanding of theories in the subfield(s) addressed by the courses, the ability to apply those theories, and the use of literature relevant to the subfield. Descriptions of each skill level (exceeds, meets, or fails to meet expectations) in the rubric are phrased in general terms. This was done so that the rubric could be applied to work written for courses in any subfield of political science (e.g., American Politics, Political Theory, International Relations).

VII. Indirect Assessment

The assessment reports for the first two years of each cycle include responses from Political Science majors to items from the *National Survey of Student Engagement* and the *John Jay College Student Evaluation of the Major*. Appendix C (p. 20-22) presents these items and the learning outcomes onto which each item maps. As new instruments become available, or are developed by the department, the changes will be noted in the relevant assessment report.

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS**Appendix A****Curriculum Map for the Political Science Major and Minor**

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The curriculum map links the learning outcomes of several courses in the Political Science Major, primarily foundation and other required courses, to the learning outcomes of the Major. Note that, even if the learning outcomes of a course map onto a particular program learning outcome, that course is not necessarily used to assess that program learning outcome. All of the courses listed here are also used for assessment of the Political Science Minor except POL 225 and POL 409, which are highlighted to denote their exclusion from the curriculum map for the Minor.

Courses	Program Learning Outcomes			
	1. Initiate, develop, and present independent research	2. Write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express cogent arguments	3. Become knowledgeable members of the community capable of reasoned judgments on political issues and ideas	4. Demonstrate knowledge of the major subfields of political science
	Course Learning Outcome			
POL 101 American Government and Politics		Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze arguments and present logical and coherent arguments through written assignments.	Synthesize the material from the course to develop opinions regarding the proper role of the government in society.	Gain understanding of the following: the foundations and framework of the U.S. government; American political institutions and their role in policy-making; the roles of citizens, political parties, interest groups, and the media in the operation of the American system of government.
POL 206 Urban Politics	Conduct independent research on urban politics, write a research paper, and present findings in class.	Write a research paper on issues specific to urban politics.	Analyze major trends in urban policies including fiscal policy, education, housing, public health, transportation, economic development and community revitalization. Identify and analyze the most pressing urban problems and the different policy approaches taken to address them.	Identify and apply key theories of urban politics. Demonstrate knowledge of urban governmental structures and understand the impact of federalism on urban politics and policy.

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Courses	Program Learning Outcome			
	1. Initiate, develop, and present independent research	2. Write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express cogent arguments	3. Become knowledgeable members of the community capable of reasoned judgments on political issues and ideas	4. Demonstrate knowledge of the major subfields of political science
	Course Learning Outcome			
POL 214 Political Parties, Interest Groups and Social Movements	Conduct independent research on political parties, interest groups, and social movements.	Discuss the formation, organization, and influence of political parties, interest groups, and social movements through written assignments.	Evaluate the institutions citizens use to influence politics and policy.	Examine the ways that parties, interest groups, and social movements affect political decision making, and the obstacles to that influence.
POL 215 U.S. Congress	Conduct independent research on congressional districts, their representatives, and congressional elections.	Evaluate the operation of the U.S. Congress, the roles of Congress and its members, and the role of issues in elections through written assignments.	Evaluate the operation of the U.S. Congress, the roles of Congress and its members, and the role of issues in elections through written assignments.	Describe and evaluate the structure, organization, and operation of Congress. Examine the influence of elections and voters on congressional behavior. Describe and evaluate the relationship between Congress and other branches and levels of government.
POL 220 The American Presidency	Conduct independent research on a former president, presidential elections, and the role of the president in public policy.	Discuss the effective use of executive power, the relationship between the president and the public, and the president's role in policymaking through written assignments.	Discuss the effective use of executive power and the president's role in policymaking with respect to specific issues through written assignments.	Describe and evaluate the role and evolution of the Executive Branch. Examine the influence of elections and voters on the president's behavior. Describe and evaluate the relationship between the president and other branches and levels of government.
POL 225 Introduction to Research in Politics	Write proper research questions, thesis statements, and hypotheses. Conduct guided research on a substantive topic in political science.	Write a literature review as part of a research project, properly cite information in research projects, and write a properly formatted reference section.	Evaluate information including scholarly articles, news sources, websites, and blogs.	

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Courses	Program Learning Outcome			
	1. Initiate, develop, and present independent research	2. Write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express cogent arguments	3. Become knowledgeable members of the community capable of reasoned judgments on political issues and ideas	4. Demonstrate knowledge of the major subfields of political science
	Course Learning Outcome			
POL 234 Introduction to Public Policy		Examine specific policy areas such as health care, the environment, anti-poverty initiatives, immigration and education through written assignments.	Demonstrate understanding of the central actors, institutions, processes and issues associated with the formation of public policy.	Examine the major policy issues confronting contemporary society through the lens of political science.
POL 235 Judicial Process and Politics		Demonstrate the ability to read and brief court cases and apply concepts. Demonstrate the ability to think critically and analytically about the political and legal arguments surrounding the interpretation of the Constitution and the role of the Supreme Court.	Demonstrate the ability to think critically and analytically about the political and legal arguments surrounding the interpretation of the Constitution and the role of the Supreme Court.	Examine the role of courts and public law through the study of the constitutional powers of the federal government.
POL 257 Comparative Politics		Assess questions of state entitlements and obligations to its citizens historically and comparatively. Examine and analyze scholarly writing and arguments in comparative politics through paper assignments.	Analyze the relationship between the state and citizens' social needs in areas like housing, health care, retirement, and wages.	Identify and examine processes and concepts related to different political systems.
POL 260 International Relations		Describe and discuss arguments in academic articles, the evidence supporting the authors' conclusions, and offer critique and analysis.	Through written work, demonstrate understanding of how political power, culture, identities, ideologies, and institutions shape global politics. Make connections between the concepts addressed in class and current events.	Recognize, understand, and apply the major theories (realist, liberal, constructivist, and radical) and basic concepts of international relations.

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Courses	Program Learning Outcome			
	1. Initiate, develop, and present independent research	2. Write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express cogent arguments	3. Become knowledgeable members of the community capable of reasoned judgments on political issues and ideas	4. Demonstrate knowledge of the major subfields of political science
Course Learning Outcome				
POL 270 Political Philosophy		Analyze the notion of justice and, in particular, the various ways in which justice has been described by important writers concerned with political philosophy.	Analyze the significance of the differences that exist among the major schools or political thought, past and present.	Analyze the notion of justice and, in particular, the various ways in which justice has been described by important writers concerned with political philosophy.
POL 278 Political Sociology		Critically analyze political thought with particular attention to such values as liberty, democracy, equality, security, stability, and law through written assignments.	Systematically examine the underlying assumptions and logical coherence of normative political thought.	Compare traditional and contemporary political theories in terms of priorities of values and political culture.
POL 375 Law, Order, Justice and Society		Develop the capacity to evaluate and argue about fundamental political questions and improve ability to write expository interpretive essays.	Enhance the ability to read and interpret complex texts.	Gain a rich understanding of fundamental alternatives concerning law, political order, and justice that have formed the great dialogue in Western political philosophy.
POL 409 Colloquium for Research in Government and Politics (Capstone)	Develop and present an independent research paper in political science. Demonstrate familiarity with the relevant literature of a subfield. Draw conclusions appropriate to findings.	Present and discuss the scholarly debates relevant to the research topic. Present arguments favoring and opposing different conclusions.	Present and discuss the scholarly debates relevant to the research topic. Present arguments favoring and opposing different conclusions.	Demonstrate understanding of debates within the various subfields of political science through examination of the relevant literature and its application to independent research.

Appendix B

Direct Assessment Rubrics

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Table B1.
Rubric for Learning Outcome 1: *Independent Research*

Item	100-Level:	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations
	200-Level:	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Fails to Meet Expectations
	300-Level:	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Fails to Meet Expectations
	400-Level:	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Fails to Meet Expectations	Fails to Meet Expectations
Topic selection		Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses potentially significant yet previously less-explored aspects of the topic.	Identifies a focused and manageable/doable topic that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that while manageable/doable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable.
Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views		Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.	Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.
Design Process		All elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are skillfully developed. Appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks may be synthesized across disciplines or relevant subdisciplines.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are appropriately developed, however, more subtle elements are ignored or unaccounted for.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are missing, incorrectly developed, or unfocused.	Inquiry design demonstrates a misunderstanding of the methodology or theoretical framework.
Propose Solutions / Hypotheses (Problem Solving Rubric)		Proposes one or more solutions/hypotheses that indicates a deep comprehension of the problem. Solution / hypotheses are sensitive to contextual factors as well as all of the following: ethical, logical, and cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one or more solutions/hypotheses that indicates comprehension of the problem. Solutions / hypotheses are sensitive to contextual factors as well as the one of the following: ethical, logical, or cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one solution/hypothesis that is “off the shelf” rather than individually designed to address the specific contextual factors of the problem.	Proposes a solution/hypothesis that is difficult to evaluate because it is vague or only indirectly addresses the problem statement.
Analysis		Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence, but the organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, or similarities.	Lists evidence, but it is not organized and/or is unrelated to focus.
Conclusions		States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings.	States a conclusion focused solely on the inquiry findings. The conclusion arises specifically from and responds specifically to inquiry findings.	States a general conclusion that, because it is so general, also applies beyond the scope of the inquiry findings.	States an ambiguous, illogical, or unsupportable conclusion from inquiry findings.
Limitations and Implications		Insightfully discusses in detail relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Discusses relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Presents relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Presents limitations and implications, but are possibly irrelevant and unsupported.

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Table B2.
Rubric for Learning Outcome 2: *Effective Writing*

Table B2.					
Rubric for Learning Outcome 2: <i>Effective Writing</i>					
<i>Item</i>	<i>100-Level:</i> <i>200-Level:</i> <i>300-Level:</i> <i>400-Level:</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i> <i>Exceeds Expectations</i> <i>Exceeds Expectations</i> <i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i> <i>Exceeds Expectations</i> <i>Meets Expectations</i> <i>Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i> <i>Meets Expectations</i> <i>Meets Expectations</i> <i>Fails to Meet Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations</i> <i>Fails to Meet Expectations</i> <i>Fails to Meet Expectations</i> <i>Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Context of and Purpose for Writing <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).	
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.	
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields.</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.	
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.	
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.	
Table B3.					

Table B3.

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Rubric for Learning Outcome 3: Reasoned Judgments					
Item	100-Level: 200-Level: 300-Level: 400-Level:	Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations
Explanation of issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.	
Evidence <i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i>	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. 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 taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.	
Influence of context and assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.	
Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.	
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.	

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Table B4.

Rubric for Learning Outcome 4: *Subfield Knowledge*

<i>Item</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Factual Knowledge	The work demonstrates the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield and expresses how this knowledge contributes to understanding of the subfield respective of the assignment. E.g. the work correctly identifies the United States as a presidential system and expresses the implications of this for U.S. politics.	The work demonstrates the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield respective of the assignment, but does not relate these facts to an understanding of the subfield. E.g. the work correctly identifies the United States as a presidential system without relating this fact to broader theories / approaches in comparative politics.	The work does not demonstrate the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield respective of the assignment. E.g. the work incorrectly identifies the United States as a parliamentary system.
Knowledge of theories / approaches in the subfield	The work demonstrates deep understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield respective of the assignment. Deep understanding is demonstrated through recognition of assumptions and limitations of the theory / approach. The work applies one or more of the theories / approaches (e.g. to the analysis of an issue) and acknowledges the context to which the theory / approach is applied.	The work demonstrates basic understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield respective of the assignment. Basic understanding is demonstrated through full and accurate statement or description of the theory / approach. The work applies one or more of the theories / approaches (e.g. to the analysis of an issue) irrespective of the context to which they are applied.	The work demonstrates less than basic understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield. Theories / approaches are misstated, not mentioned in the work, or described incompletely. The work does not apply any theories or adopt any approaches relevant in the subfield or theories / approaches are incorrectly applied within the assignment.
Application of theories / approaches in the subfield	E.g. the work applies a theory to the analysis of an issue acknowledging that alternative approaches may be appropriate in different contexts. The work includes information from a variety of academic and, possibly, nonacademic sources relevant to the subfield and respective of the assignment.	E.g. the work does not acknowledge the potential importance of situational context in the application of the theory / approach. The work includes information from at least one academic source in the subfield and may include relevant information from nonacademic sources.	The work does not include or includes minimal information from sources relevant to the subfield.
Literature in the subfield			

Appendix C

Indirect Assessment Instruments

Table C1. Items from the 2008-2009 National Survey of Student Engagement				
<i>Item (Location in Survey)</i>	<i>Learning Outcome</i>			
<i>How often have you done each of the following: (Table 2)</i>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Made a class presentation	X			
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas ... from various sources	X			
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignments...		X		
Included diverse perspectives in class discussions or writing assignments			X	
Put together ideas or concepts from different courses...			X	
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members...			X	
Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course				X
Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations				X
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own				X
Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of...				X
<i>How much has your coursework emphasized... (Table 3)</i>				
Synthesizing and organizing ideas...		X		
Making judgments about the value of information...		X		
Applying theories or concepts...		X		
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea...			X	
Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings...				X
<i>How much reading and writing have you done: (Table 4)</i>				
Number of written papers or reports 20 pages or more	X			
Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	X			
Number of written papers or reports fewer than 5 pages		X		
Number of books read ... for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment			X	
<i>Which of the following have you done... (Table 5)</i>				
Work on a research project with a faculty member...	X			
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue			X	
Tried to better understand someone else's views...			X	
Learned something that changed the way understood an issue or concept			X	
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment				X
<i>Contributed to your development in the following areas: (Table 9)</i>				
Speaking clearly and effectively	X			
Thinking critically and analytically	X			
Analyzing quantitative problems	X			
Writing clearly and effectively		X		
Voting in local, state, or national elections			X	
Learning effectively on your own			X	
Solving complex real-world problems			X	
Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills				X
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds				X
Developing a personal code of values and ethics				X
Contributing to the welfare of your community				X

Table C2. Items from the Fall 2009 John Jay College Student Evaluation of the Major				
Item (Location in Survey)	Learning Outcome			
<i>To what extent have courses in your Major: (Page 81)</i>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Helped you to speak clearly and effectively	X			
Taught you to think critically and analytically	X			
Taught you to write clearly and effectively		X		
Helped you to acquire a broad general education			X	
Helped you learn to solve complex real-world problems			X	
Helped you to acquire job or work-related knowledge or skills				X
Helped you to acquire specific knowledge about an academic field				X
<i>Considering the classes... how much writing have you done? (Page 81)</i>				
Number of written papers or reports 20 pages or more	X			
Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	X			
Number of written papers or reports less than 5 pages		X		
<i>Rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below:</i>				
This Major is providing me with preparation for my future professional work				X
The Major is providing me with preparation for further study				X
I see connections between the general education courses... and the courses... in the Major				X
Courses in this Major provide a great deal of depth in their subject matter				X
Studying this Major has changed the way I understand an issue or concept				X
<i>Comments on the best things about the Major where appropriate. (Page 85)</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>Comments on the biggest problems in the Major where appropriate. (Page 86)</i>	X	X	X	X

Appendix D

**Original Rubric for *Independent Research, Effective Writing, and Reasoned Judgments*
Specific to the Capstone Course**

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

<i>Section</i>	<i>Qualities</i>	<i>Points</i>
<u>Introduction</u>		Total Points: 8
Thesis Statement	1. Thesis is clear and appropriate.	4
	2. Thesis is appropriate, but unclear.	3
	3. Thesis is incomplete (i.e. missing an explanation).	2
	4. Thesis is inappropriate to the topic.	1
	5. Lacks a thesis statement.	0
Research Frame	1. Research is framed w/respect to prior work and as an important question.	3
	2. Research is framed as an interesting or important question.	2
	3. Research is framed w/respect to prior work	1
	4. Research is not placed in context.	0
Reference to Conclusions	1. Foreshadows or references eventual conclusions.	1
	2. No reference to eventual conclusions.	0
<u>Literature Review</u>		Total Points: 16
Types of Sources	1. Cites appropriate academic/scholarly research.	3
	2. Cites appropriate, popular work on the topic.	2
	3. Cited work is inappropriate to the topic.	1
	4. Little-to-no literature cited.	0
Treatment of the Literature	1. Sources are synthesized into thematic discussions.	3
	2. Sources are discussed individually, but appropriately.	2
	3. Sources are discussed in an unorganized manner.	1
	4. No literature cited.	0
Relationship between Literature and Research	1. Discussion is appropriate and identifies gaps in the literature.	3
	2. Discussion of the literature is appropriate to the research question.	2
	3. Discussion of the literature is not related to the research question.	1
	4. No literature cited.	0
Presentation of Supporting Arguments	1. Arguments lead to a supportive position and are supported by empirical evidence or the citation of appropriate work.	4
	2. Arguments and support are offered, but are not connected to the research.	3
	3. Arguments are offered and defended, but not supported by empirical evidence or the citation of appropriate work.	2
	4. Arguments are offered, but are undefended.	1
	5. Author does not offer any arguments.	0
Presentation of Alternative Arguments	1. Arguments are presented and discussed with reference to empirical evidence or the citation of appropriate work.	3
	2. Arguments are presented and discussed without reference to empirical evidence or the citation of appropriate work.	2
	3. Arguments are presented, but are not discussed or minimally discussed.	1
	4. Author does not present opposing arguments.	0
<u>Analyses & Conclusions</u>		Total Points: 22
Phenomena	1. Phenomena are identified and clearly defined.	3
	2. Phenomena are identified, but not clearly defined.	2
	3. Phenomena are identified, but not defined.	1
	4. No phenomena identified.	0
Proposed Relationships	1. Clear, directional relationship expected.	3
	2. Clear identification of dependent and independent phenomena.	2
	3. Proposed explanations for phenomena are unclear.	1
	4. No relationships identified.	0

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Methodology	1. Methods are innovatively applied to the research question.	3
	2. Methods are appropriate to the research question.	2
	3. Methods are inappropriate to the research question.	1
	4. No information analyzed.	0
Discussion of Results	1. Results are presented, discussed, and have clear implications.	5
	2. Results and discussion are appropriate to the research question; discussion is not connected to prior work.	4
	3. Results and discussion are inappropriate to or incompletely address the research question.	3
	4. Discussion of results is unorganized.	2
	5. Results are presented, but not discussed.	1
	6. No results from original analyses.	0
Appropriateness of Conclusions	1. Conclusions are appropriate to the results and research question.	4
	2. Conclusions reference results, but are inappropriate to or incompletely address the research question.	3
	3. Conclusions do not reference results.	2
	4. Conclusions are inappropriate to the results.	1
	5. No conclusion written.	0
Context of Conclusions	1. Conclusions are based on the independent research of the author, respective of factual information and the opinions and arguments previously cited.	4
	2. Conclusions are based on research without referencing prior work.	3
	3. Conclusions are based on prior work without referencing research.	2
	4. Conclusions do not reference ideas, reference evidence, or place ideas in the context of prior work.	1
	5. No conclusion written.	0
<u>Writing Style & Format</u>		Total Points: 17
Grammar and Syntax	1. Few/no grammatical or syntactical errors.	3
	2. Some/few errors; no distraction to the reader.	2
	3. Several errors; mild distraction to the reader.	1
	4. Several grammatical and syntactical errors; distracting to the reader.	0
Use of Language	1. All/practically all language is used properly.	2
	2. Some improper use of words / language.	1
	3. Paper is poorly written; many words are used improperly.	0
Use of Jargon	1. All terms are well-defined and used properly.	3
	2. Terms are ill- or undefined, but most are used properly.	2
	3. Terms are defined, but used improperly.	1
	4. Technical terms are undefined and used improperly.	0
Organization of Writing	1. Paper is organized logically; sections are labeled; paragraphs are appropriate with good transitions between them.	3
	2. Sections are labeled; paragraphs are an appropriate length for their content.	2
	3. Paper follows a basic progression; paragraphs may be too long or short.	1
	4. Paper is unorganized; ideas do not follow a logical progression and several ideas are inappropriately placed together.	0
Citation Format	1. Citations are consistent follow an accepted format.	3
	2. Citations are proper, but inconsistent.	2
	3. Literature is improperly cited.	1
	4. No literature cited.	0
Reference / Works Cited Page	1. References are present, correctly formatted, and properly organized.	3
	2. References are present and correctly formatted, but unorganized.	2
	3. References are present, but incorrectly formatted.	1
	4. References are missing.	0

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

The following table maps items from the original rubric to the first three Major learning outcomes. The final row lists the number of total points available for each learning objective. Departmental standards, which follow, provide the score ranges for each assessment category. Percentages represent the percent of available points a paper must receive to fall under a particular assessment category.

<i>Rubric Item</i>	<i>Independent Research</i>	<i>Effective Writing</i>	<i>Reasoned Judgments</i>
<i>Introduction</i>			
Thesis Statement	X		
Research Frame	X		
Reference to Conclusions	X		
<i>Literature Review</i>			
Types of Sources			X
Treatment of the Literature			X
Relationship between Literature and Research			X
Presentation of Supporting Arguments			X
Presentation of Alternative Arguments			X
<i>Analyses & Conclusions</i>			
Phenomena	X		
Proposed Relationships	X		
Methodology	X		
Discussion of Results	X		
Appropriateness of Conclusions	X		
Context of Conclusions			X
<i>Writing Style & Format</i>			
Grammar and Syntax		X	
Use of Language		X	
Use of Jargon		X	
Organization of Writing		X	
Citation Format		X	
Reference / Works Cited Page		X	
<i>Learning Outcome Total Points:</i>	26	17	20

<i>Assessment Category</i>	<i>Independent Research</i>	<i>Effective Writing</i>	<i>Reasoned Judgments</i>
<i>Exceptional</i> [85% - 100%]	23-26	15-17	17-20
<i>Satisfactory</i> [70% - 85%]	19-22	12-14	14-16
<i>Near Satisfactory</i> [60% - 70%]	16-18	11	12-13
<i>Unsatisfactory</i> [0% - 60%]	0-15	0-10	0-11

**John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Department of Political Science**

**Political Science Major Assessment Report
2011-2012 Academic Year**

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS**Revised 10/2/12**

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Overview and Summary of Assessment Activities

The Political Science Department discussed the findings in the 2010-2011 Assessment Report in its October 12, 2011, meeting. The Department was favorably disposed towards the recommendations in that report and the creation of a 200-level introductory course in research methods in particular. A new course proposal was created, submitted to, and approved by the Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee and the College Council. The new course, POL 225, Introduction to Research in Politics, is a required course in the revised Political Science Major, effective fall 2012, and will start being offered in spring 2013.

This report covers assessment activities from the 2011-2012 academic year. The fourth learning outcome, knowledge of the subfields of political science, was directly assessed using samples of student work from foundation courses in the major. The learning outcome was indirectly assessed using responses to the Student Evaluation of the Major survey in 2009, which is the most recent year for which these data are available. This report includes the following:

- Description of the learning outcome assessed (p. 2);
- Description of the direct assessment procedure, including the sampling procedure and rubric used for scoring student work (p. 3);
- Presentation and discussion of direct assessment results (p. 4);
- Presentation and discussion of indirect assessment results (p. 6);
- Recommendations (p. 7);
- Appendix material (p. 9).

Learning Outcome Assessed

During the 2011-2012 academic year, the Political Science Department assessed what is listed as the fourth learning outcome in the Revised Major Assessment Plan³, which is as follows:

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the major subfields of political science, as represented by the major's foundations requirements and concentrations.

Students are expected to:

- Demonstrate the attainment of factual knowledge in these subfields;
- Demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to apply the major theories or approaches in these subfields;
- Demonstrate familiarity with the relevant academic sources in these subfields.

The current version of the Political Science Major, which is the version being assessed here, requires students to take at least one course in four out of five foundation categories: (A) American Institutions, (B) Public Law, (C) Political Theory, (D) Urban Politics, and (E) International/Comparative. It is through these foundation categories that major students gain

³ A revised assessment plan, including an updated assessment schedule, updated procedures, and new rubric will be drafted before the beginning of the fall 2012 semester.

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exposure to political science as a discipline; major students opt into concentrations that roughly parallel the foundation categories.

Starting in fall 2012, the new version of the Political Science Major will be operative. With respect to foundation courses, the new version is similar to the current version. There are still five foundation categories, which have been reordered and, in a few cases, renamed. The new foundation categories are: (A) Law, Courts, and Politics (B) Political Theory, (C) Urban Politics and Public Policy, (D) International/Comparative, and (E) American Politics. The new foundation categories include many of the courses from the current categories. In some cases, there are new courses, which are replacing existing courses. For example, in the Political Theory category, the option to take POL 375 has been replaced with POL 273. Students in the new version still, however, have the option to take POL 270. Additionally, students in the new version of the major are required to take one course from all five categories instead of in four out of five. Changes to the major, as well as changes to assessment procedures, are noted in the aforementioned Revised Assessment Plan.

Direct Assessment Procedure

Direct assessment of this learning outcome (“Subfield Knowledge”) was conducted using samples of written work drawn from foundation courses offered in the 2011-2012 academic year. The following are the foundation courses offered by the department. Courses marked with an asterisk (*) had student work included in direct assessment. Note that direct assessment included work from every foundation category. A complete list of sections from which work was included, as well as the type of assignment used, is given in **Table A1**, which is located in the appendix to this report.

Category A. American Institutions

Political Science 215 U.S. Congress

Political Science 220 The American Presidency*

Category B. Public Law

Political Science 230 Principles of Constitutional Government*

Category C. Political Theory

Political Science 270 Political Philosophy*

Political Science 375 Law, Order, Justice and Society*

Category D. Urban Politics

Political Science 203 Municipal and State Government

Political Science 206 Urban Politics*

Category E. International/Comparative

Political Science 257 Comparative Politics*

Political Science 260 International Relations*

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Samples were also drawn from both spring 2012 sections of POL 278, Political Sociology, which is part of Concentration B, Justice and Politics.

Instructors of foundation courses in spring 2012 were asked to submit three randomly selected papers, if a paper was assigned, from each section of a foundation course they taught. Additional samples of student work were drawn from final exams offered in fall 2011. In total, the sample is comprised of 58 examples of student work representing 42 students in 14 course sections.⁴

Student work was directly assessed using the rubric presented in **Table A2**. Drawn from the expectations listed with the learning outcome, the rubric is used to assess student work on four items. For each item, student work is placed in one of three categories: exceeds expectations, meets expectations, and fails to meet expectations. Returning to the four items, the first, *Factual Knowledge*, assesses the degree to which students demonstrate the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield. Students are expected to at least communicate factual information correctly. Expectations are exceeded where students correctly communicate this information and an understanding of how this information relates to the subfield more broadly. The second and third items split the second bullet point listed above. The second item, knowledge of theories or approaches in the subfield (*Knowledge of Theories*), assesses the degree to which students demonstrate understanding of theories in the subfield, relative to the assignment. Students are expected to accurately describe the theory or approach. Expectations are exceeded where students accurately describe the theory and recognize the assumptions or limitations of the theory. The third item, application of theories or approaches in the subfield (*Application of Theories*) assesses how well students apply theories or approaches in the subfield in the context of the assignment. Students are expected to correctly apply theories or approaches. Expectations are exceeded where students pay particular attention to the context in which the theory is being applied. The fourth item, literature in the subfield (*Literature*), assesses the extent to which the student demonstrates familiarity with literature in the subfield. Students are expected to draw on information from at least one academic source and, potentially, non-academic sources in the context of the assignment. Expectations are exceeded where students use information from a variety of sources relevant to the subfield.

Direct Assessment Results

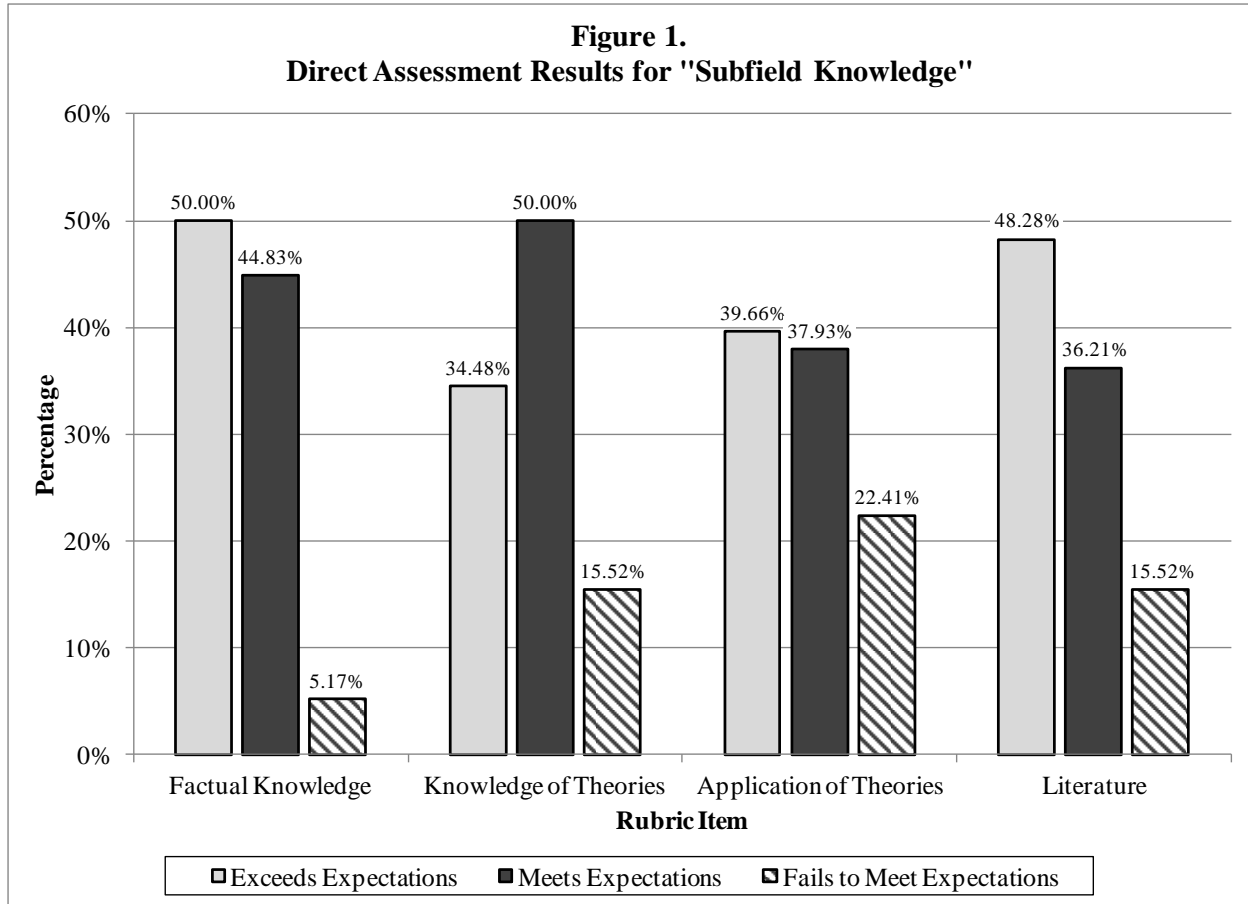
Direct assessment results for all four rubric items are presented in **Table 1**. They are also graphically presented in **Figure 1**. Students performed extremely well on all four aspects of Subfield Knowledge assessed through the rubric. Table 1 provides the percentage of students in each of the three assessment categories as well as the combined percentage of students who at least met expectations. Student performance was best on *Factual Knowledge*. 94.83% of the sample at least met expectations with fifty percent of students exceeding expectations. Student performance was also very high on *Knowledge of Theories* and *Literature*. On both items, 84.48% of the sample at least met expectations with 34.48% and 48.28% exceeding expectations on each item respectively. Student performance was lowest, although still high, on *Application of Theories* with 77.59% of the sample at least meeting expectations.

⁴ 31 sections of foundation courses were offered in the 2011-2012 academic year.

Table 1. Direct Assessment Results for “Subfield Knowledge”				
<i>Category</i>	<i>Factual Knowledge</i>	<i>Knowledge of Theories</i>	<i>Application of Theories</i>	<i>Literature</i>
Exceeds Expectations	50.00% (N=29)	34.48% (N=20)	39.66% (N=23)	48.28% (N=28)
Meets Expectations	44.83% (N=26)	50.00% (N=29)	37.93% (N=22)	36.21% (N=21)
Exceeds or Meets Expectations	94.83% (N=55)	84.48% (N=49)	77.59% (N=45)	84.48% (N=49)
Fails to Meet Expectations	5.17% (N=3)	15.52% (N=9)	22.41% (N=13)	15.52% (N=9)
Note: Cells present the percentage of the sample assessed at each category. The number in parentheses is the raw number of student works corresponding with the percentage. Note that this is not the raw number of students; for some exams, more than one essay per student may have been used for assessment.				

In any academic discipline, it is not only important that students develop a set of skills, but that these skills are developed in the context of the discipline; that students attain knowledge of the facts and theories of the discipline and gain familiarity with the literature of the discipline. In this respect, Political Science students perform extremely well. Our students are very proficient at demonstrating the attainment of factual knowledge. Furthermore, many students demonstrate the ability to place this knowledge in the broader context of a subfield of the discipline. Students by and large demonstrated knowledge of the relevant literature in the context of their assignments. Students were able to at least accurately describe, and in large measure, apply the major theoretical approaches of the different subfields in the discipline.

Concerning the application of theories, it is interesting that a larger percentage of the sample exceeded expectations here than on *Knowledge of Theories*, where overall student performance was higher. This is primarily due to some students acknowledging the utility of alternative approaches without explicitly discussing the assumptions or limitations of the theory under consideration. The lower overall performance on *Application of Theories* is discussed in the “Recommendations” section below.



Indirect Assessment Results and Discussion

The overall high level of student performance on direct assessment measures is complemented by student perceptions of the faculty and their opinions on the curriculum as expressed through responses to the Student Evaluation of the Major. Responses to the items relevant to “Subfield Knowledge” are presented in **Table 2**.

Concerning the curriculum, 80.1% of student respondents expressed that their courses have contributed some or very much to the acquisition of knowledge about political science. 96.5% agree or strongly agree that their courses provided a “great deal of depth.” 87.4% feel that studying political science changed the way they understand issues and concepts.

Looking at the survey responses, one could conclude that the high level of student performance is certainly due to the efforts of the students, but also to the work of the faculty, who received similarly positive evaluations from the students. 90.7% of respondents agree or strongly agree that “most faculty members prepare carefully for their courses.” Nearly equal percentages of respondents rate the faculty good or excellent on the quality of teaching (87.2%), teaching ability (87.2%), and knowledge and experience (87.3%). Nearly two-thirds of respondents rate the teaching methods of the faculty as good or excellent. While not listed in Table 2, the survey also asks open ended questions concerning the best and worst things about

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the major. With respect to “Subfield Knowledge,” the open ended responses again complement the high level of student performance. Student comments most frequently placed the curriculum and the faculty among the best aspects of the major; these were in fact the two most frequently offered sets of comments.

Table 2. Select Items from Responses to the 2009 Student Evaluation of the Major				
<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>Response Set and Percentages</i>			
To what extent have courses... helped you to acquire specific knowledge about an academic field (p. 81)	<u>Very Much</u> 39.1%	<u>Some</u> 41.0%	<u>A Little</u> 9.1%	<u>Not at All</u> 10.8%
Courses in this major provide a great deal of depth in their subject matter (p. 81)	<u>Strongly Agree</u> 33.5%	<u>Agree</u> 63.0%	<u>Disagree</u> 3.5%	<u>Strongly Disagree</u> 0.0%
Studying this major has changed the way I understand an issue or concept (p. 81)	49.7%	37.7%	12.7%	0.0%
Most faculty members prepare carefully for their courses (p. 82)	28.9%	61.8%	5.8%	3.5%
Rate the... quality of teaching in the major (p. 80)	<u>Excellent</u> 32.3%	<u>Good</u> 54.9%	<u>Fair</u> 0.0%	<u>Poor</u> 12.8%
... teaching ability of faculty in the major (p. 82)	28.8%	58.4%	9.3%	3.5%
... knowledge and experience of faculty in the major (p. 82)	45.1%	42.2%	12.7%	0.0%
... teaching methods of faculty in the major (p. 82)	17.3%	45.6%	30.2%	6.9%
... quality of feedback from faculty about your course performance in the major (p. 82)	10.5%	34.9%	28.9%	25.7%
Note: The items presented here were considered most related to student performance on “Subfield Knowledge.” Percentages reflect the responses of the 23 Political Science/Government majors participating in the survey.				

The final item listed in Table 2 presents the only negative evaluation from the students relevant to “Subfield Knowledge.” In rating the quality of feedback from faculty on course performance, 10.5% say they have received excellent feedback. A plurality (34.9%) rate the quality of feedback as good. 28.9% and 25.7% rate the quality of feedback as fair or poor respectively. This is addressed further in the “Recommendations” section.

Recommendations

Students performed very well on the direct assessment measures. Furthermore, the Political Science curriculum and faculty receive highly positive evaluations from the students. Given these results, this report does not offer the kinds of large curricular adjustment seen in last year’s assessment report. Students are adequately demonstrating the attainment of knowledge of the subfields of political science and large percentages of students are exceeding expectations on all four rubric items. Given these results and our recent revision of the Political Science Major, the faculty is happy with the curriculum, especially the structure of the foundation courses component. In an effort to further expose students to all of the subfields in political science, students in the revised major are required to take at least one course from all five foundation

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areas. In the previous version of the major, students were required to take at least one course in four of these five areas. It is our hope that this exposure to an additional subfield will further increase the abilities of students to express factual knowledge and to understand and apply theories in the discipline.

The only area of concern, if one exists, is that 22.41% of the sample failed to meet expectations on *Application of Theories*. In reading through samples of student work, it was evident that the ability to apply theories (and to demonstrate “Subfield Knowledge” broadly) is correlated with aspects of information literacy addressed by other learning outcomes of the major. Part of the purpose of the recently approved introduction to research methods is to teach students how to read and evaluate information, especially from academic sources. Thus a longer term recommendation is to let that course begin to operate in spring 2013 and see what impact it has on students’ ability to apply theories in their work.

In the short term, it may be useful to consider this result in concert with the indirect assessment results. In the indirect assessment, it was noted that students are most critical of the quality of feedback they receive from faculty. Better feedback on assignments could boost student performance on *Application of Theories* and other items. This should be true within courses (i.e. receiving good feedback on one assignment that can be applied to the next) and between courses (i.e. feedback from multiple courses, given the extent to which students attend to that feedback, reinforcing the same set of skills). This, however, needs to be a conversation held in the department addressing faculty perceptions of the feedback they give, perceptions of student attentiveness to feedback, and what can and should be done to improve the quality work of those students who do not appear to meet expectations. The Major Coordinator will present these results and recommendations, as well as begin this conversation, by the second Political Science Department meeting of the 2012-2013 academic year.

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Table A1.
Courses Used for Outcomes Assessment

<i>Course</i>	<i>Semester</i>	<i>Sample Type</i>
POL 220-01	Spring 2012	Research paper
POL 206-01	Spring 2012	Research paper
POL 230-01	Spring 2012	Research paper
POL 230-02	Fall 2011	2 Exam Essays
POL 257-01 & 02	Fall 2011	3 Exam Essays
POL 260-01 & 02	Spring 2012	Research paper
POL 270-01 & 02	Fall 2011	Exam Essay
POL 278-01 & 02	Spring 2012	Paper
POL 375-01 & 02	Spring 2012	Paper

Note: The assignments from which samples of student work were drawn are available from the Major Coordinator upon request.

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Table A2.
Rubric Used for Directly Assessing Subfield Knowledge

<i>Item</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Factual Knowledge	The work demonstrates the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield and expresses how this knowledge contributes to understanding of the subfield respective of the assignment.	The work demonstrates the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield respective of the assignment, but does not relate these facts to an understanding of the subfield.	The work does not demonstrate the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield respective of the assignment.
	E.g. the work correctly identifies the United States as a presidential system and expresses the implications of this for U.S. politics.	E.g. the work correctly identifies the United States as a presidential system without relating this fact to broader theories / approaches in comparative politics.	E.g. the work incorrectly identifies the United States as a parliamentary system.
Knowledge of theories / approaches in the subfield	The work demonstrates deep understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield respective of the assignment.	The work demonstrates basic understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield respective of the assignment.	The work demonstrates less than basic understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield.
	Deep understanding is demonstrated through recognition of assumptions and limitations of the theory / approach.	Basic understanding is demonstrated through full and accurate statement or description of the theory / approach.	Theories / approaches are misstated, not mentioned in the work, or described incompletely.
Application of theories / approaches in the subfield	The work applies one or more of the theories / approaches (e.g. to the analysis of an issue) and acknowledges the context to which the theory / approach is applied.	The work applies one or more of the theories / approaches (e.g. to the analysis of an issue) irrespective of the context to which they are applied.	The work does not apply any theories or adopt any approaches relevant in the subfield or theories / approaches are incorrectly applied within the assignment.
	E.g. the work applies a theory to the analysis of an issue acknowledging that alternative approaches may be appropriate in different contexts.	E.g. the work does not acknowledge the potential importance of situational context in the application of the theory / approach.	
Literature in the subfield	The work includes information from a variety of academic and, possibly, nonacademic sources relevant to the subfield and respective of the assignment.	The work includes information from at least one academic source in the subfield and may include relevant information from nonacademic sources.	The work does not include or includes minimal information from sources relevant to the subfield.

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS**John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Department of Political Science****Political Science Major Assessment Report
2012-2013 Academic Year****Writing and Critical Thinking in the Major****Writing and Critical Thinking in POL 101****Revised 6/30/13**

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Summary of Assessment Activities

Results from the 2011-2012 assessment report were presented and discussed via email in September and October 2012. Results from the Fall 2012 assessment report on the minor, which also has implications for the major, were presented and discussed in a department meeting held on February 4, 2013. The recommendations from both reports, with comments updating the department's progress, are as follows:

- Over the longer term, assess how the writing and critical thinking skills of students are affected by POL 225, Introduction to Research in Political Science, which was first offered in Spring 2013.

POL 225 was first offered Spring 2013. It will be some time, at least the next academic year, before the department will observe the effects of this course on student work across the major. Assessments using work from POL 225 will be part of the 2013-2014 report.

- In the short term, identify ways to improve the feedback students receive on their writing.

This discussion was part of the larger discussion on writing in the major held during the department's day-long retreat held May 17, 2013. Specific recommendations are presented in the Recommendations section at the end of this report.

- The Major Coordinator will attend the Faculty Development Workshop on "Effective Feedback for Writing Assignments" being held on March 20, if space is available.

The workshop was rescheduled on a day the coordinator could not attend. An email sent to the facilitator of the workshop for any materials that could be shared did not receive a response.

- The Department will pilot a survey in two course sections, to be selected by the Major Coordinator, during the Spring 2013 semester gauging student perceptions of the feedback they receive from faculty.

A survey, including items on feedback was piloted in POL 225. A revised survey will be administered, with the permission of instructors, in Fall 2013.

- The Department will schedule a day-long meeting to be held early in the next academic year, at which the Department will discuss assessment and faculty perceptions of student writing and the Major Coordinator present information from the aforementioned workshop.

Mentioned in the second item, this retreat was held on May 17. Recommendations from the retreat are presented in the appropriate section.

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Learning Outcomes Assessed

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the Political Science Department assessed what are listed as the second and third learning outcomes in the Major Assessment Plan, which are as follows:

2. Students will write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express cogent arguments (“Effective Writing”).
3. Students will become knowledgeable members of the community capable of reasoned judgments on political issues and ideas (“Reasoned Judgments”).

Assessment results are presented separately for the major and for POL 101, American Government and Politics, which is a general education course and the prerequisite for the major.

Assessment Procedures

Direct Assessment of the Major

Direct assessment was conducted using samples of written work drawn from the following courses offered in the 2011-2012 academic year:

Political Science 206 Urban Politics
 Political Science 220 The American Presidency
 Political Science 230 Principles of Constitutional Government
 Political Science 257 Comparative Politics
 Political Science 260 International Relations
 Political Science 270 Political Philosophy
 Political Science 278 Political Sociology
 Political Science 375 Law, Order, Justice and Society

In Spring 2012, instructors were asked to submit three randomly selected papers, if a paper was assigned, from each section of a course they taught. Additional samples of student work were drawn from final exams offered in Fall 2011. In total, the sample is comprised of **58 examples of student work** representing 42 students in **14 course sections**.

Student work was directly assessed **by the Major Coordinator** using the rubrics for “Effective Writing,” presented in Table 1, and “Reasoned Judgments,” presented in Table 2.⁵ The rubrics were adapted from the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics, an initiative of the Association of American Colleges & Universities, for Written Communication and Critical Thinking respectively. For “Effective Writing,” we assess student work on the following items: context and purpose for writing, content development, application of disciplinary conventions to all aspects of the writing, use of sources and evidence, and control of syntax and mechanics.

⁵ All tables appear at the end of this report, immediately following the Recommendations section.

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For “Reasoned Judgments,” student work is assessed on the following items: explanation of issues to be considered critically, use of evidence, analysis of the context in which positions are presented, the extent to which the student’s position accounts for the complexities of the issue, and the connection between the conclusions drawn and the evidence presented.

Direct Assessment of POL 101

The same procedure was followed for assessing student work in POL 101. POL 101 instructors in Spring 2012 were asked to submit three randomly selected examples of student work from the sections they teach. The assessment results are based on **30 examples** drawn from **8 sections** of POL 101. Student work was scored using the same rubrics described above.

Indirect Assessment

Indirect assessments of the major and POL 101 are based on responses of John Jay Political Science majors to the 2008-2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which are the most recent data available from this instrument. Results are presented in the NSSE for first year students and seniors separately, which makes NSSE a good instrument for comparing students in the major to those students who would have likely only taken POL 101.

Direct Assessment Results

Effective Writing

Direct assessment results for “Effective Writing” are presented in Table 3. **Overall, both major and POL 101 students perform well with the clear mode being “meets expectations.” In four of the five items, at least 80% of major students and at least three-quarters of POL 101 students meet or exceed expectations.** Major and 101 students appear to have the greatest difficulty using sources to support arguments in their writing, but there is noticeable and statistically significant improvement between 101 and major students. Also, on all items, except *Content*, a larger proportion of major students exceed expectations than 101 students. For *Content*, the proportion of major students that exceed expectations is only 1.03 points lower and the proportion meeting expectations is 5.4 points higher.

Reasoned Judgments

Direct assessment results for “Reasoned Judgments” are presented in Table 4. As with writing, **students performed well on this learning outcome with at least 80% of both major and 101 students meeting or exceeding expectations on three of the five items.** Consistent with the assessment of writing, student performance was worst on *Evidence*, which assesses students’ ability to use information to investigate an argument or conclusion. While this item is closely related to *Sources* in “Effective Writing,” there is an important difference. *Sources* provides a means of assessing which sources students use; *Evidence* is an assessment of how

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these sources are used. Also consistent with the results for *Sources*, the performance of major students was much better than that of 101 students.

Conclusions is the other item on which more than 20% of both sets of students failed to meet expectations. The item assesses the extent to which conclusions drawn in the work are logically tied to the information presented. Many of the 24.14% of major students that failed to meet expectations wrote conclusions that were, at best, based only on information that supported the conclusion, even if the student presented information in the work that did not support the conclusion. Several of these conclusions resembled the less than satisfactory conclusions present in work drawn from POL 101. Many of the conclusions in 101 papers were vastly oversimplified versions of introductory sentences that were loosely tied to information presented in the paper. Very few conclusions from 101 papers (6.67%) linked the conclusion to information presented in the paper.

A Note on the Use of Sources and Evidence in POL 101 Assignments

These items are highly related in the assessment of work from major students; for work from 101 students, these items are nearly indistinguishable in practical terms, explaining the identical percentages of 101 students in each assessment category for both items. Part of the underperformance of 101 students on these items in particular is due to the assignments themselves. More than half of the POL 101 assignments included here did not *explicitly* ask students to include outside research. Many students, however, did include (and identify) information drawn from outside research, especially, but not limited to, the course textbook.

Indirect Assessment

As noted earlier, the mean scores on each item are presented separately for first year respondents and seniors. While “first year” does not necessarily mean “freshman,” it is expected that the responses of first year students are typically of students in POL 101. For the items presented in Table 5 and Table 6, there are remarkably few differences between first year students and seniors. This report will not speculate about the meaning of the minor differences that do exist on some items; the differences are small and not likely to be statistically significant.

Effective Writing

Mean responses suggest that students prepare between “sometimes” and “often” two or more drafts of a paper before submission. Students also report that their coursework emphasizes synthesizing ideas, judging the value of information, and applying theories or concepts to practical problems “quite a bit.” Students also believe that their experiences have helped them develop the ability to write clearly and effectively “quite a bit.”

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Reasoned Judgments

On the NSSE, students report gaining experience with examining diverse points of view. Students say they often include diverse perspectives in discussions and assignments and often combine information from different courses. Students also report that they sometimes discuss ideas from courses with faculty outside of class and that their coursework emphasizes the analysis of the basic elements of ideas and theories at least “quite a bit.” Student responses also suggest that their course experiences are enhancing their personal intellectual and political development. Students report reading between 1-4 and 5-10 unassigned books during the school year. Students also say that they often examine the strengths and weaknesses of their views on issues, consider issues from the perspective of others, and learn things that change their understanding of issues and concepts. Lastly, students say that their experiences contributed “quite a bit” to their interest in local, state, and national elections and their ability to learn effectively on their own. To a lesser extent, students report that their major courses helped them learn to solve complex real-world problems.

Relation of Direct and Indirect Results

For the most part, student opinions match the results of direct assessment, reflecting the relatively large proportion of students that at least meet expectations. There is, however, likely to be some variation in how the skills identified in Table 5 and Table 6 (e.g., synthesizing and organizing ideas) are addressed in coursework and how instructors expect students to demonstrate these skills. While students report that they synthesize ideas frequently in their coursework, this is not showing up in the direct assessment results. It is reasonable to expect that the use of sources and evidence is related to the synthesizing of ideas. This, however, is where student performance is lowest.

Recommendations

Students performed well on the direct assessment measures, but, as noted in previous reports, student performance on “Effective Writing” and “Reasoned Judgments” can be improved. The results suggest areas for improvement for both major students and in POL 101. The introductory section of this report noted the discussion of writing skills at the department’s day-long retreat. That discussion produced the following recommendations:

- The department will investigate the possibility of obtaining writing assistance for students. Suggestions included:
 - Applying for a Writing Fellow
 - Hiring a graduate teaching fellow to free-up resources that can be used to hire a writing tutor based within the department
- Recognize the needs of students whose native language is not English and refer students, as appropriate, to the Center for English Language Support

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- Improve the feedback students receive on their writing. Suggestions included:
 - Use services like Turnitin.com to correct the grammar of written work
 - Selective use of drafts and/or make-up papers, allowing students to improve their grade on a paper by correcting the errors in their writing

Only the first item directly produces an action that can be taken by the department to improve student performance on these two learning outcomes. The last two have to be implemented as appropriate by faculty in context of their courses, but faculty can weigh-in on how they are addressing the development of these skills in the courses they teach. **Concluding this discussion, the department will take the following actions (an expected completion date is given in parentheses):**

- **The Major Coordinator will communicate these results to POL 101 instructors and request that they explicitly include use of outside research in at least one course assignment (by summer 2013).**
- **The Major Coordinator will administer a revised survey on feedback received by students as permitted by course instructors (by winter 2014).**
- **The department will investigate the possibility of obtaining writing assistance for students (by winter 2014).**
- **The Major Coordinator will solicit responses from the faculty on how they provide feedback to students and whether they have adopted new procedures in light of recent departmental discussions. These responses will be reported in the next assessment report (by Spring 2014).**

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Table 1.
Rubric for Learning Outcome 2: Effective Writing

Item	100-Level: 200-Level: 300-Level:	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations</i>
		<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations</i>
Context of and Purpose for Writing <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).	
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.	
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields.</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.	
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.	
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.	

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Table 2.

Rubric for Learning Outcome 3: Reasoned Judgments

<i>Item</i>	<i>100-Level:</i> <i>200-Level:</i> <i>300-Level:</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i> <i>Exceeds Expectations</i> <i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i> <i>Exceeds Expectations</i> <i>Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i> <i>Meets Expectations</i> <i>Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations</i> <i>Fails to Meet Expectations</i> <i>Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Explanation of issues		Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Evidence <i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i>		Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. 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 taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
Influence of context and assumptions		Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)		Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)		Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.

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Table 3. Direct Assessment Results for “Effective Writing”					
<i>Category</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Conventions</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Syntax</i>
<u>Major Courses</u>					
Exceeds Expectations	15.52%	18.97%	8.62%	32.76%	31.03%
Meets Expectations	70.69%	62.07%	81.03%	39.66%	58.62%
Exceeds or Meets Expectations	86.21%	81.03%	89.66%	72.41%	89.66%
Fails to Meet Expectations	13.79%	18.97%	10.34%	27.59%	10.34%
<u>POL 101</u>					
Exceeds Expectations	6.67%	20.00%	4.17%	13.33%	23.33%
Meets Expectations	90.00%	56.67%	87.50%	33.33%	56.67%
Exceeds or Meets Expectations	96.67%	76.67%	91.67%	46.67%	80.00%
Fails to Meet Expectations	3.33%	23.33%	8.33%	53.33%	20.00%

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Table 4. Direct Assessment Results for “Reasoned Judgments”					
<i>Category</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Influence of Context</i>	<i>Student's Position</i>	<i>Conclusions</i>
<u>Major Courses</u>					
Exceeds Expectations	12.07%	22.41%	15.52%	16.00%	10.34%
Meets Expectations	68.97%	48.28%	68.97%	74.00%	65.52%
Exceeds or Meets Expectations	81.03%	70.69%	84.48%	90.00%	75.86%
Fails to Meet Expectations	18.97%	29.31%	15.52%	10.00%	24.14%
<u>POL 101</u>					
Exceeds Expectations	33.33%	13.33%	16.67%	10.00%	6.67%
Meets Expectations	50.00%	33.33%	63.33%	80.00%	60.00%
Exceeds or Meets Expectations	83.33%	46.67%	80.00%	90.00%	66.67%
Fails to Meet Expectations	16.67%	53.33%	20.00%	10.00%	33.33%

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Table 5. Items from the National Survey of Student Engagement (2008-2009) Learning Objective 2 (Effective Writing)		
Item	Cohort	Mean Score
<i>In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</i> (1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very Often)		
• Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in:	First Year:	2.8
	Seniors:	2.3
<i>During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities?</i> (1=Very Little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a Bit, 4=Very Much)		
• Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships:	First Year:	3.3
	Seniors:	3.1
• Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions:	First Year:	3.3
	Seniors:	3.3
• Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations:	First Year:	3.3
	Seniors:	3.1
<i>During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done?</i> (1=None, 2=1-4, 3=5-10, 4=11-20, 5=More than 20)		
• Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages:	First Year:	2.7
	Seniors:	3.1
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?</i> (1=Very Little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a Bit, 4=Very Much)		
• Writing clearly and effectively:	First Year:	3.3
	Seniors:	3.3

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Table 6. Items from the National Survey of Student Engagement (2008-2009) Learning Objective 3 (Reasoned Judgments)		
Item	Cohort	Mean Score
<i>In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</i> (1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very Often)		
• Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments:	First Year:	3.3
	Seniors:	3.4
• Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions:	First Year:	3.0
	Seniors:	2.9
• Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class:	First Year:	2.0
	Seniors:	2.3
<i>During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities?</i> (1=Very Little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a Bit, 4=Very Much)		
• Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components:	First Year:	3.3
	Seniors:	3.3
<i>During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done?</i> (1=None, 2=1-4, 3=5-10, 4=11-20, 5=More than 20)		
• Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment:	First Year:	2.6
	Seniors:	2.6
<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?</i> (1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very Often)		
• Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue:	First Year:	3.0
	Seniors:	2.9
• Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective:	First Year:	3.2
	Seniors:	3.2
• Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept:	First Year:	3.3
	Seniors:	3.0
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?</i> (1=Very Little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a Bit, 4=Very Much)		
• Acquiring a broad general education:	First Year:	3.4
	Seniors:	3.3
• Voting in local, state, or national elections:	First Year:	2.3
	Seniors:	3.0
• Learning effectively on your own:	First Year:	3.3
	Seniors:	3.1
• Solving complex real-world problems:	First Year:	2.9
	Seniors:	2.6

**John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Department of Political Science**

**Political Science Major Assessment Report
2013-2014 Academic Year**

Independent Research in the Major

**With Notes on Advising and Responses to the
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Rubric**

DRAFT

Created 6/17/13

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Summary of Assessment Activities

The 2012-2013 assessment report and feedback from the College Wide Assessment Committee were shared with the faculty via email in July 2013. Results and recommendations from the assessment report were presented and discussed in department meetings held on September 11, 2013, and December 10, 2013. Three of the recommendations from this report, with comments updating the department's progress, are as follows:

- The Major Coordinator will administer a revised survey on feedback received by students as permitted by course instructors.

The survey was administered and results are presented and discussed in this report.

- The department will investigate the possibility of obtaining writing assistance for students.

In Fall 2013, the department created the position of Writing Coordinator (WC). Part of the WC's responsibilities included assisting students who were referred by members of the faculty. The department discontinued the position after the semester because, given the time commitment, it was an inefficient and ineffective way of addressing the writing needs of students.

In addition to department-wide efforts, a number of faculty incorporate methods for improving writing suggested in the 2012-2013 report (e.g., assigning drafts, allowing revisions).

- The Major Coordinator will solicit responses from the faculty on how they provide feedback to students and whether they have adopted new procedures in light of recent departmental discussions.

This discussion will be proposed once the department has had the opportunity to review the responses to the feedback survey administered to students.

Learning Outcomes Assessed

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Political Science Department assessed the first learning outcome listed in the Major Assessment Plan:

4. Students will initiate, develop, and present independent research (*Independent Research*).

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Assessment Procedures

Direct Assessment of the Major

Direct assessment was conducted using samples of written work drawn from sections of POL 225 (Introduction to Research in Politics) and POL 409 (Colloquium for Research in Government and Politics), which is the capstone course of the major, offered during the 2013-2014 academic year. Both courses are explicitly focused on student research and both are required of all major students in the current version of the major. **31 papers** are taken from POL 225 and **30 papers** are taken from POL 409, totaling **61 papers** in the sample.

Student work was directly assessed by the **Major Coordinator** using the rubric for “Independent Research,” presented in Appendix A.⁶ The rubric was adapted from the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubric for Inquiry and Analysis, including one item from the Problem Solving VALUE rubric, “Propose Solutions / Hypotheses.” Taken as a whole, the seven items on the rubric encompass the research process from the selection of research topics to the drawing of conclusions based on analyses.

Given that student work from different levels is assessed using the same rubric, it is important to note how different categories relate to one another.⁷ The VALUE rubrics present four categories of performance: benchmark, milestone 2, milestone 3, and capstone. For our purposes, we equate the VALUE categories to our assessment categories as follows:

<u>VALUE</u>	<u>200-level</u>	<u>400-level</u>
Benchmark	Fails to Meet Expectations	Fails to Meet Expectations
Milestone 2	Meets Expectations	Fails to Meet Expectations
Milestone 3	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations
Capstone	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations

This translation demonstrates how students are expected to progress with respect to the learning outcome. Students, for example, who meet expectations in POL 225, but do not demonstrate further development of a particular skill, would fail to meet expectations in POL 409. Likewise, students that exceed expectations at a level of Milestone 3 in POL 225 would only meet expectations in POL 409.

Indirect Assessment

Indirect assessment of the major is based on responses of major students to a survey titled, “Feedback on Writing Assignments,” written by the Major Coordinator and administered in several Political Science courses at the beginning of the Spring 2014 semester.⁸ While the survey is geared towards writing skills, student perceptions of the feedback they receive on written work are certainly relevant to *Independent Research* as a learning outcome. More often

⁶ All tables, figures, and appendices, in that order, appear at the end of this report, immediately following the discussion of the WASC rubric.

⁷ This can also be gleaned from the headings of the rubric.

⁸ The survey is included as Appendix B.

than not, writing assignments in Political Science courses include a research component. The feedback that students receive on these assignments, therefore, has the potential to develop their research skills as well as their writing skills.

Surveys were administered to students in course sections at the 200, 300, and 400-levels. The results include responses from 128 Political Science majors (27% of major students registered for the Spring 2014 semester) at various stages in their academic careers. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by the number of Political Science courses they have taken at John Jay and their class standing. No group appears underrepresented in the sample except for freshman. This is expected given that students do not usually take courses in their major until they are sophomores.

Direct Assessment Results

Overall Results

Table 2 presents the results of direct assessment of *Independent Research*. A sample of student work drawn from POL 225 and POL 409 was scored on the seven-item rubric presented in Appendix A. Tables 2 through 4 use abbreviations for these items, defined as follows:

- Topic: assesses the level of creativity and focus of the research topic;
- Knowledge: assesses the level of depth in the discussion of existing knowledge or research, as well as the extent to which information from sources is synthesized together;
- Design: assesses the completeness and development of the research design and methodology;
- Hypotheses: assesses the level of comprehension of the problem present in the proposed solutions, arguments, or hypotheses;
- Analysis: assesses the degree to which evidence is organized to reveal important patterns related to the focus of the research;
- Conclusions: assesses the synthesis of evidence into conclusions responding to the research topic;
- Limitations: assesses the extent to which the research process is critiqued and the discussion of how results apply to a broader context.

In general, students perform well with respect to *Independent Research*. Over half of students in the sample exceed expectations on “Topic,” “Knowledge,” and “Conclusions.” Over eighty percent of students at least meet expectations on five of the seven rubric items. The two items for which this is not the case are “Design” and “Limitations,” suggesting students need additional instruction in developing proper research designs, using various research methods correctly and appropriately, and providing fuller discussions of the limitations of their research and the broader implications of their findings. In one way, the two results dovetail. If students are exhibiting problems appropriately applying a specific research design, they are likely also experiencing difficulties critiquing that design.

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Impact of POL 225 on Research in the Capstone

POL 225 was developed in response to the Department's perceptions of student needs with respect to conducting independent research. POL 225 was first offered in Spring 2013 and has been offered every semester since. To assess the impact that POL 225 has had on the development of students' research skills, we offer Tables 3 and 4.

While not directly related to the impact of POL 225 on POL 409, Table 3 does provide an analysis of student progression through levels of proficiency for each item in the *Independent Research* rubric. The last column shows the difference between the percentage of POL 409 students that exceed (400-level proficiency) or meet (300-level proficiency) expectations and the percentage of POL 225 students that exceed expectations (300-level proficiency or higher). Positive differences, therefore, indicate students are at least maintaining a high level of proficiency, as demonstrated in POL 225. The results are very positive. On all but two items, students show gains in research proficiency between the 200 and 400-levels. On "Knowledge," the difference of -0.65 is negligible. On "Conclusions," there is a 10.43 point decrease. In looking at performance in the courses individually, students performed well on this task in POL 225. Students in POL 409, however, appeared stuck at the 200-level proficiency.

It is difficult at this stage to directly assess whether students who have taken POL 225 exhibit greater proficiency in conducting independent research in POL 409. There have not been many students in POL 409 yet that have also taken POL 225, but there have been some. Table 4 presents some limited statistical evidence of the positive impact of POL 225 on conducting independent research. The next couple of academic years will likely afford greater opportunities for this type of direct assessment whereas we expect a more equal mix of students in POL 409 who have and have not taken POL 225.

Table 4 presents the mean scores on all seven rubric items for the five POL 409 students in the sample that took POL 225 and the twenty-five POL 409 students that did not. The scores range from 1 to 3 with higher scores implying greater proficiency on the particular rubric item. The last column of Table 4 presents the differences between the means of students that took POL 225 and students that did not. Students that took POL 225 had a higher mean on all seven items; three of these differences are significant for at least the 10% level (on "Topic," "Knowledge," and "Conclusions"). Students that have taken POL 225 appear better able to select a creative, focused topic, provide better synthesis of the existing literature, and draw sounder conclusions based on their research.

Relating these results to those previously discussed, students in POL 409 who have not taken POL 225 appear to need additional instruction in drawing conclusions based on their findings. On one level, this deficiency in skill development will likely disappear over time; with each semester, the proportion of students in POL 409 who have not taken POL 225 will necessarily decrease. For now, POL 409 instructors can provide instruction on how to properly draw conclusions based on inquiry findings; this will develop the skill for "non-225" students and reinforce the skill for "225" students. In the future, instructors can tailor their lectures towards the development of more academically rigorous discussions in written work.

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Indirect Assessment Results

Indirect assessment of *Independent Research* is conducted through a survey administered to students asking for their evaluations of the feedback they receive on their written work in Political Science courses. Students were asked to rate the quality of feedback they have received, using a four-point scale (poor, fair, good, and excellent), on three dimensions: overall feedback, feedback on content, and feedback on writing. The results are presented in Figure 1. Students rate the quality of the feedback they receive highly. The modal response, which is also the majority response, to all three questions is “Good.” Around 30% of students rate the quality of feedback in each question as “Excellent.” On overall feedback, 80.2% of students rate quality at least “Good.” On content feedback and writing feedback, the equivalent percentages are 87.4% and 83.5% respectively.

Additionally, students were asked how frequently, using a five-point scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always), they read the feedback they receive and apply that feedback to future assignments.⁹ These results are presented in Figure 2. Looking at the last two sets of bars, over 90% of students report reading and applying the feedback they receive at least “Often.” The clear modal and majority response to both questions is “Always.”

Beyond these overall results, we looked for variation in responses related to three academic characteristics on which students were asked to place themselves: the number of Political Science (POL) courses taken at John Jay, class standing, and major concentration. Responses did not vary significantly by the number of POL courses taken or by concentration, but there were some significant differences related to class standing. On Questions 5 and 6, ratings of overall quality of feedback and ratings of quality of feedback on content respectively, seniors tend to offer more positive ratings and freshman tend to offer more negative ratings.¹⁰ Similar results are observed for student perceptions of the frequency with which they are assigned to write drafts of writing assignments (Question 9) and are allowed to revise their work to improve their grades (Question 10). On both questions, perceptions of frequency increases with class standing.¹¹ Interestingly, no significant differences emerged on the frequency of reading or applying feedback.

Taken with the direct assessment results, the indirect results speak positively about faculty development of student research skills. The survey results are particularly important in this respect because both of the major’s research-oriented courses employ a significant amount of scaffolding to teach research skills. This implies numerous opportunities for students to receive feedback on the work they will later add to their research projects. According to these results, students are largely satisfied with the quality of the feedback they receive on their written work. Students report that they read and apply that feedback at a high level of frequency. The direct assessment results show that students are at least meeting expectations in large proportions for practically all of the rubric items.

⁹ The survey also asked about the frequency with which students were assigned multiple assignments, assigned drafts, and given the opportunity to revise their work to improve their grades. Reading and applying feedback are, however, the primary focus of this report.

¹⁰ The Pearson χ^2 statistics are 30.10 ($p < 0.001$) and 18.13 ($p = 0.034$) for questions 5 and 6 respectively.

¹¹ The Pearson χ^2 statistics are 22.27 ($p = 0.035$) and 24.98 ($p = 0.015$) for questions 9 and 10 respectively

Recommendations

Students performed well on the direct assessment measures and note satisfaction with the feedback they receive according to the indirect assessment measures. The results suggest a couple of minor steps that can be taken to further improve these results:

- **The Major Coordinator will continue the discussion of writing and research skills with the faculty in the context of the feedback survey. Themes of this discussion will include faculty satisfaction with student application of feedback and what, if any, major-wide adjustments are appropriate to improving the development of students' skills (by Spring 2015).**
- **The Major Coordinator will arrange a meeting with POL 225 and POL 409 instructors to discuss ways that both courses could be restructured so that students in POL 409 can further develop the skills they started building in POL 225 (by Spring 2015).**

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

A Note on Advising in the Major

Given the emphasis placed on advising in the major by the Office of Undergraduate Studies, we include this brief note as an initial and indirect assessment of advising in the major. Prior to the Spring 2014 semester, the Major Coordinator asked faculty involved with advising in the major to provide a tally of students advised during the Spring semester. Advising done by the Coordinator in the Fall 2013 semester is added to these figures yielding the estimates presented in the next paragraph.

Major advisors, including the Coordinator and Department Chair, communicated with over 150 students during the 2013-2014 academic year, representing close to one-third (31.6%) of major students registered in the Spring 2014 semester. Of these, at least twenty students sought advice multiple times on multiple issues.

Responses to the WASC Rubric

In the May 6, 2014, meeting of Undergraduate Coordinators, the Director of Outcomes Assessment, Dr. Virginia Moreno, asked program coordinators to score their use of capstone experiences for assessing program learning outcomes using a rubric developed by WASC. The responses for Political Science are as follows:

Criterion

Relevant Outcomes and Lines of Evidence Identified

Highly Developed

Valid Results

Highly Developed

Reliable Results

Emerging

Results Are Used

Developed

The Student Experience

Initial

Table 1.
Distribution of Respondents to the Feedback Survey

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Political Science (POL) Courses Taken at John Jay</i>		
1 to 3	48	37.50%
4 to 6	27	21.09%
7 to 9	39	30.47%
10 or more	14	10.94%
<i>Total</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>100.00%</i>
<i>Class Standing</i>		
Freshman (0-29 credits)	11	8.59%
Sophomore (30-59 credits)	29	22.66%
Junior (60-89 credits)	48	37.50%
Senior (90 credits or more)	40	31.25%
<i>Total</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>100.00%</i>

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Table 2. Direct Assessment of <i>Independent Research</i>				
<i>Rubric Item</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds + Meets</i>	<i>Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Topic	54.10%	31.15%	85.25%	14.75%
Knowledge	62.30%	27.87%	90.16%	9.84%
Design	31.15%	36.07%	67.21%	32.79%
Hypotheses	0.00%	81.97%	81.97%	18.03%
Analysis	29.51%	52.46%	81.97%	18.03%
Conclusions	50.82%	37.70%	88.52%	11.48%
Limitations	13.11%	40.98%	54.10%	45.90%
Note: Scores reported in this table include the full sample: 31 examples of student work from POL 225 and 30 from POL 409.				

Table 3. Student Progression through Levels <i>Independent Research</i>			
<i>Rubric Item</i>	<i><u>225</u> Exceeds</i>	<i><u>409</u> Exceeds + Meets</i>	<i>Difference (409 – 225)</i>
Topic	77.42%	80.00%	2.58%
Knowledge	80.65%	80.00%	<i>-0.65%</i>
Design	48.39%	56.67%	8.28%
Hypotheses	0.00%	70.00%	70.00%
Analysis	38.71%	73.33%	34.62%
Conclusions	87.10%	76.67%	<i>-10.43%</i>
Limitations	12.90%	63.33%	50.43%
<p>Note: This table presents an analysis of student progression through levels of proficiency for each item in the <i>Independent Research</i> rubric. The difference is between the percentage of POL 409 students that exceed (400-level proficiency) or meet (300-level proficiency) expectations and the percentage of POL 225 students that exceed expectations (300-level proficiency or higher). Positive differences, therefore, indicate students are at least maintaining a high level of proficiency demonstrated in POL 225.</p> <p>Bolded differences indicate increases in student performance; <i>italicized</i> differences indicate decreases in student performance.</p>			

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Table 4. The Effects of POL 225 on Research Skills Exhibited in POL 409			
<i>Rubric Item</i>	<i>225</i>	<i>Non-225</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Topic	2.60	2.00	0.60**
Knowledge	2.60	2.16	0.44*
Design	2.00	1.64	0.36
Hypotheses	1.80	1.68	0.12
Analysis	2.00	1.92	0.08
Conclusions	2.20	1.84	0.36*
Limitations	2.20	1.68	0.52
Total Score	15.40	12.92	2.48*
Observations	5	25	
<p>* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$ (one-tailed tests)</p> <p>Note: This table presents difference in means tests between the mean scores of POL 409 students in the sample that have taken POL 225 and students that have not taken POL 225. Each proficiency level is coded as follows: fails to meet expectations = 1; meets expectations = 2; exceeds expectations = 3. For any given rubric item, the mean score can range from 1 to 3. The difference between mean total scores is also examined. The range for total scores is 7 (scoring 1 on all items) to 21 (scoring 3 on all items).</p>			

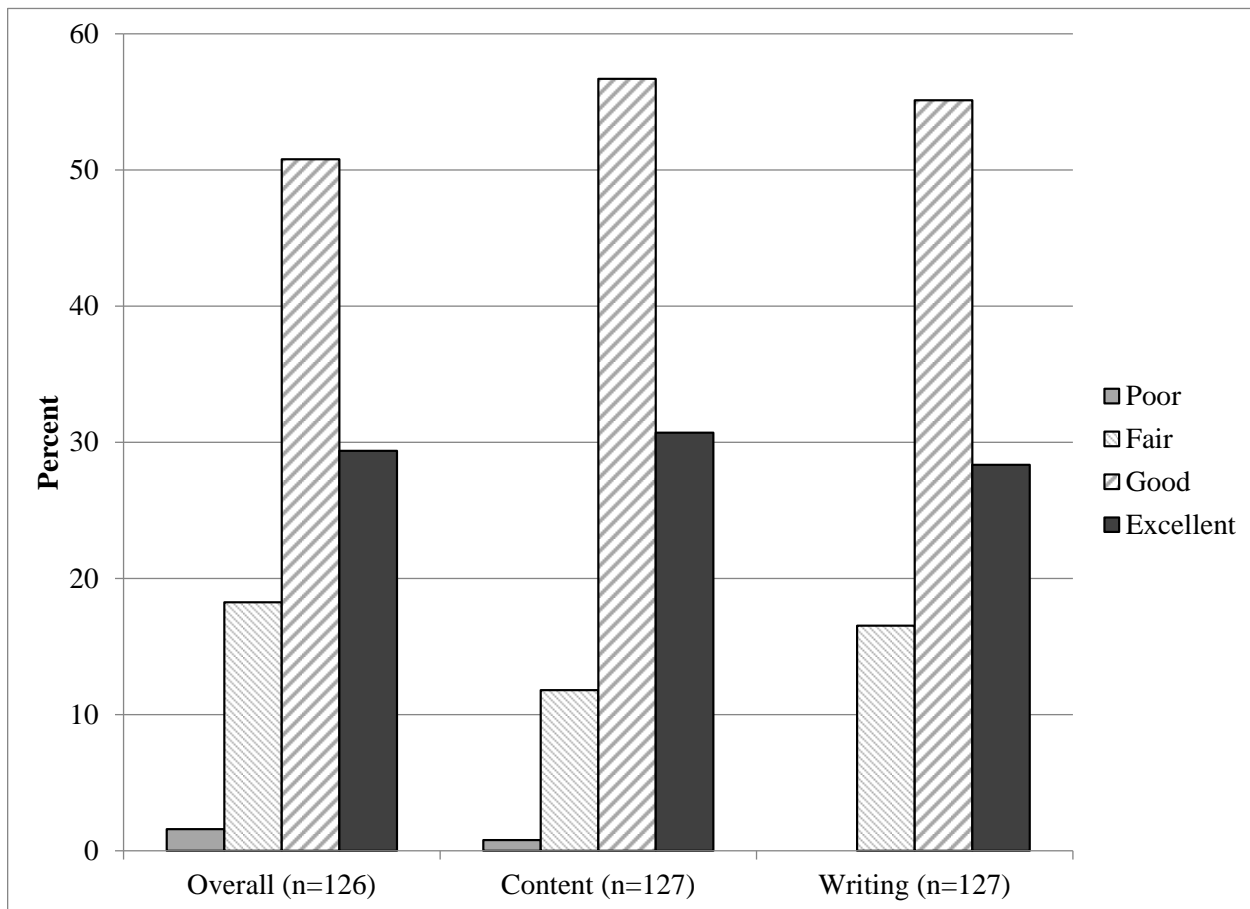


Figure 1.
Student Evaluations of Feedback Received on Writing Assignments

Note: Figure 1 graphs responses to questions 5 through 7 of the “Feedback on Writing Assignments” survey. Question 5 asks students to rate the overall quality of feedback received. Question 6 asks students to rate the quality of feedback on the content of their assignments. Question 7 asks students to rate the quality of feedback on their writing.

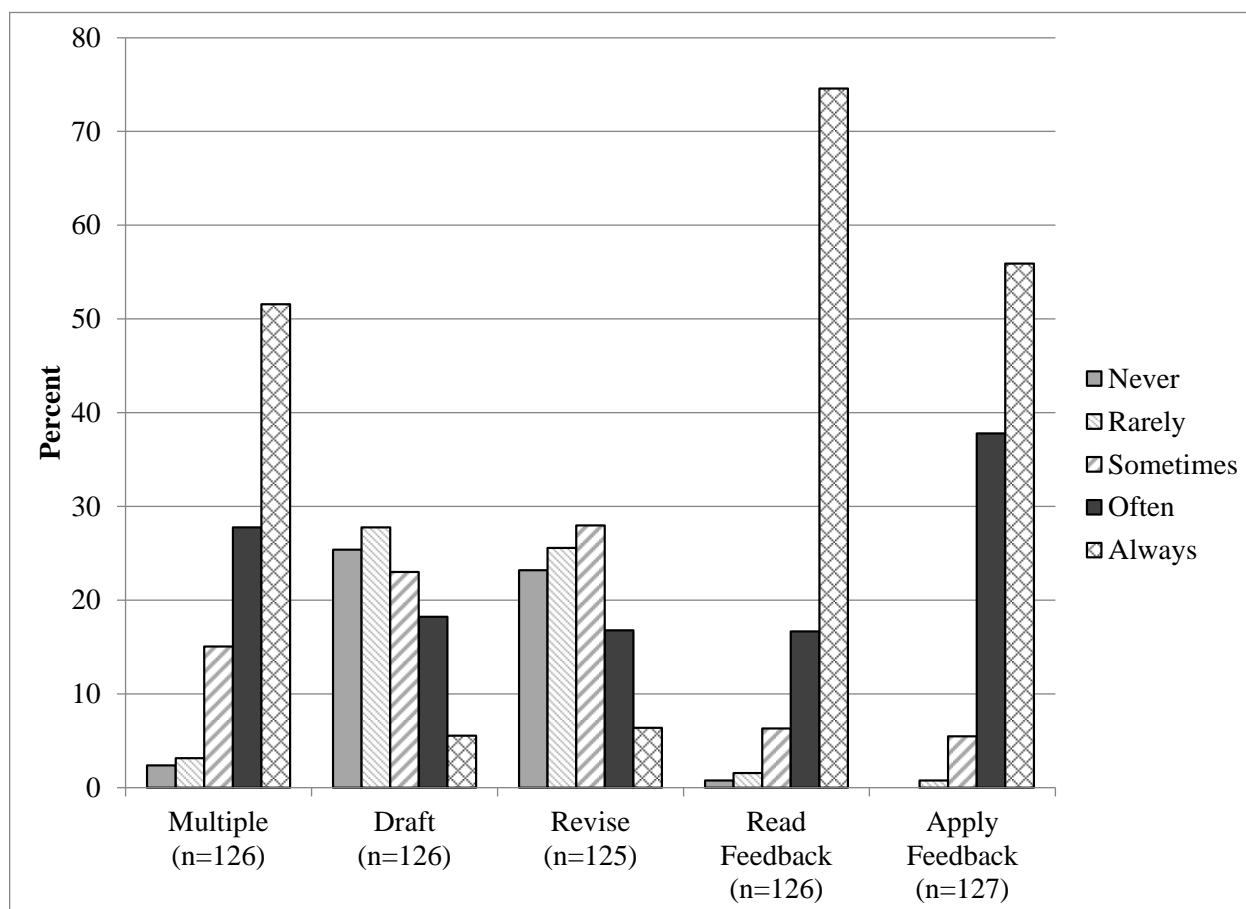


Figure 2.

Student Perceptions of the Frequency of Types of Assignments and their Use of Feedback

Note: Figure 2 graphs responses to questions 8 through 12 of the “Feedback on Writing Assignments” survey. Question 8 asks students how often their Political Science courses have required multiple writing assignments. Question 9 asks students how often their Political Science courses have required a draft. Question 10 asks students how often their Political Science courses have allowed them to revise assignments to improve their grades. Question 11 asks students how often they read the feedback given on their writing assignments. Question 12 asks students how often they apply the feedback given on their writing assignments.

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Appendix A: Rubric for Learning Outcome 1: Independent Research

<i>Item</i>	<i>POL 225: POL 409:</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>	<i>Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Topic selection		Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses potentially significant yet previously less-explored aspects of the topic.	Identifies a focused and manageable/doable topic that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that while manageable/doable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable.
Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views		Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.	Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.
Design Process		All elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are skillfully developed. Appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks may be synthesized across disciplines or relevant subdisciplines.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are appropriately developed, however, more subtle elements are ignored or unaccounted for.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are missing, incorrectly developed, or unfocused.	Inquiry design demonstrates a misunderstanding of the methodology or theoretical framework.
Propose Solutions / Hypotheses (Problem Solving Rubric)		Proposes one or more solutions/hypotheses that indicates a deep comprehension of the problem. Solution / hypotheses are sensitive to contextual factors as well as all of the following: ethical, logical, and cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one or more solutions/hypotheses that indicates comprehension of the problem. Solutions / hypotheses are sensitive to contextual factors as well as the one of the following: ethical, logical, or cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one solution/hypothesis that is “off the shelf” rather than individually designed to address the specific contextual factors of the problem.	Proposes a solution/hypothesis that is difficult to evaluate because it is vague or only indirectly addresses the problem statement.
Analysis		Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence, but the organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, or similarities.	Lists evidence, but it is not organized and/or is unrelated to focus.
Conclusions		States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings.	States a conclusion focused solely on the inquiry findings. The conclusion arises specifically from and responds specifically to inquiry findings.	States a general conclusion that, because it is so general, also applies beyond the scope of the inquiry findings.	States an ambiguous, illogical, or unsupportable conclusion from inquiry findings.
Limitations and Implications		Insightfully discusses in detail relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Discusses relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Presents relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Presents limitations and implications, but are possibly irrelevant and unsupported.

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Appendix B: Feedback on Writing Assignments

First, thank you for taking the time to look at this survey. The Department of Political Science is interested in your opinions about the feedback you have received from instructors on writing assignments. Please note that your responses to EVERY QUESTION in this survey are VOLUNTARY. That is, you may choose to not answer any question or questions you do not wish answer. Your responses are also ANONYMOUS. You do not have to identify yourself anywhere on the survey. Please circle your answers unless you are asked to provide a longer response. **If you have filled out this survey in another course, please do not fill it out now.**

First, we would like to know a little about you as a student.

1. How many Political Science (POL) courses have you taken at John Jay College (please include courses you are currently taking)?

1 to 3

4 to 6

7 to 9

10 or more

2. What is your current class standing?

**Freshman
(0 to 29 credits)**

**Sophomore
(30 to 59 credits)**

**Junior
(60 to 89 credits)**

**Senior
(90 or more credits)**

3. If you ARE a Political Science MAJOR, what is your Concentration?

**A
Law, Courts, and
Politics**

**B
Justice and
Politics**

**C
American and
Urban Politics and
Policy**

**D
Comparative/
International Politics
and Human Rights**

4. If you are NOT a Political Science major, what is your major? _____

4a. Are you a Political Science MINOR?

[YES]

[NO]

Turning now to feedback, please answer the following questions considering **all of the Political Science courses** you have taken. Feedback includes the comments, written or verbal, one receives on work. Feedback can be given before an assignment is completed and when graded assignments are returned. Feedback on work can serve two purposes. First, feedback on graded assignments provides an explanation for the grades received. Second, feedback on assignments before and after they have been completed can improve performance on future assignments.

5. Please rate the OVERALL quality of the feedback you have received from instructors on your written work in the Political Science courses you have taken.

[Excellent]

[Good]

[Fair]

[Poor]

PLEASE TURN OVER

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

6. Please rate the quality of the feedback you have received on the content of your assignment (how your work addresses the topic of the assignment, its questions, and/or its prompts).

[Excellent] [Good] [Fair] [Poor]

7. Please rate the quality of the feedback you have received on your writing (grammar, spelling, organization, etc.).

[Excellent] [Good] [Fair] [Poor]

8. In the Political Science courses you have taken, how often have you been required to complete more than one writing assignment?

[Always] [Often] [Sometimes] [Rarely] [Never]

9. In the Political Science courses you have taken, how often have you been required to submit a draft?

[Always] [Often] [Sometimes] [Rarely] [Never]

10. In the Political Science courses you have taken, how often have you been allowed to revise a completed assignment to improve your grade?

[Always] [Often] [Sometimes] [Rarely] [Never]

11. How often do you read the feedback on your written work given by instructors?

[Always] [Often] [Sometimes] [Rarely] [Never]

12. How often do you apply any of the feedback you have received to future writing assignments?

[Always] [Often] [Sometimes] [Rarely] [Never]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS**John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Department of Political Science****Political Science Major Assessment Report
2014-2015 Academic Year****Fifth Year Summary Report**

APPENDIX E – POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Summary of Assessment Activities

The 2013-2014 assessment report was shared with the faculty via email in September 2014. Results and recommendations from the assessment report were presented and discussed in the department meeting held on September 9, 2014. The recommendations from this report, with comments updating the department's progress, are as follows:

- The Major Coordinator will arrange a meeting with POL 225 and POL 409 instructors to discuss ways that both courses could be restructured so that students in POL 409 can further develop the skills they started building in POL 225.

This meeting, arranged and chaired by Prof. Monica Varsanyi, was held April 16, 2015. Instructors shared their experiences teaching each course and discussed a variety of methods for improving students' research skills, including their ability to engage in independent research. Prof. Varsanyi will draft a document, to be circulated to the faculty, highlighting research related concepts that faculty could reinforce in the courses they teach.

- The Major Coordinator will continue the discussion of writing and research skills with the faculty in the context of the feedback survey.

This discussion was continued in the context of the aforementioned meeting with POL 225 and POL 409 instructors. Prof. Varsanyi presented a summary of the meeting to the department in our April 22, 2015, department meeting. Prof. Sidman presented draft results showing the positive impact of POL 225 on overall student performance.

Assessment Procedures

Direct Assessment of the Major

As this is the fifth year summary report, there is no new direct assessment of student work included here. This report presents direct assessment results from the last four years, and for all four learning outcomes of the major. A list of courses and sample sizes used for direct assessment is presented in **Table 1**.¹² The results are discussed in the Direct Assessment Results section of this report. Rubrics used for direct assessment are presented in **Appendix A**. As a reminder, the learning outcomes of the major are:

5. Students will initiate, develop, and present independent research (*Independent Research*).¹³
6. Students will write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express cogent arguments (*Effective Writing*).

¹² All tables and figures are presented after the Conclusions and Recommendations section in the order in which they are discussed in the text. Appendix A begins after the presentation of tables and figures.

¹³ Parenthetical phrases list the short name for the learning outcome that will be used throughout the remainder of this document.

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7. Students will become knowledgeable members of the community capable of reasoned judgments on political issues and ideas (*Reasoned Judgments*).
8. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the major subfields of political science, as represented by the Major's foundation requirements and concentrations (*Subfield Knowledge*).

In the first assessment report of the major (2010-2011), we assessed the major on the first three learning outcomes applying a rubric designed by the Major Coordinator to student work from the capstone course. After 2010-2011, that rubric was abandoned in favor of rubrics that could be used to assess student work at various levels, and not just work performed in the capstone. Items from the original rubric are mapped onto items from the rubrics that the department currently uses in order to present the original assessment of the first three learning outcomes relative to assessment results generated after that first year. This mapping is presented in **Appendix A**.

Indirect Assessment

We include two sets of indirect assessments of the major: discussion of survey results and an analysis of course grades focusing on the impact of POL 225. For the discussion of survey results, we include previously reported data from the 2009 John Jay Student Evaluation of the Major, with selected items grouped into the four learning outcomes, and data from the 2012 version of the same survey. We restate the 2009 results, which have been presented in previous assessment reports. For each item, we also include the results from 2012 and, most importantly, the difference between 2012 and 2009. The discussion highlights changes in student evaluations of the major.

For the analysis of course grades, we begin with results presented in the 2013-2014 assessment report showing the impact of POL 225 on performance in POL 409. New to this report is a statistical analysis of grades in POL courses during the Fall 2014 semester, examining differences between students who have and have not taken POL 225.

Direct Assessment Results

Figures 1a through 4 are structured similarly. Each set of bars depicts student performance on a given rubric item. Rubric items are indicated along the horizontal axis in bold type. Courses from which the results are derived are indicated along the horizontal axis in regular type with the year in which the outcomes were assessed for that course. For example, "409 (2011)" refers to assessment results from POL 409 presented in the 2010-2011 assessment report. All assessment results relating to a particular rubric item are presented in chronological order. Each bar contains three regions. The bottom, white region represents the percentage of students that fail to meet expectations. The middle region with diagonal black lines represents the percentage of students that meet expectations. The top, black region represents that percentage of students that exceed expectations. Each percentage is listed in its proper region

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(normal type for “fails to meet expectations,” italics for “meets expectations,” and bold for “exceeds expectations”). All bars total to 100%.

Figures 1a and 1b present the assessment results for *Independent Research*, which was originally assessed in 2010-2011 and 2013-2014. Over time, combining POL 225 and POL 409 students in 2013-2014, student performance has improved on all aspects of the outcome, except “Limitations,” which was not assessed in 2010-2011. Looking only at performance in POL 409, student performance has improved in “Topic Selection,” “Propose Solutions/Hypotheses,” “Analysis,” and “Conclusions.” The percentages of students who fail to meet expectations decreased by 18.3, 36.7, 11.6, and 1.7 points on each item respectively. Student performance declined slightly on “Existing Knowledge” and “Design Process,” where the percentage of students failing to meet expectations increased by 3.3 and 5 points respectively. Improving student performance is at least partially due to the creation of POL 225, which formally introduces research skills and emphasizes these aspects of research. The 2010-2011 assessment results also led some instructors, especially those teaching POL 409, but others as well, to more heavily emphasize thesis statements and arguments in their course assignments.

Figure 2 presents the assessment results for *Effective Writing*, which was originally assessed in 2010-2011 and 2012-2013. Unlike *Independent Research*, which included assessments from the same course (POL 409) at two points in time, differences in results for *Effective Writing* and *Reasoned Judgments* could be due to time, more specifically the intervention of changing the major, or due to course level (400 versus 100 and 200-level courses). This leaves some of our conclusions unclear until the next assessment cycle allows for more explicit comparisons. On “Context for Writing,” “Sources and Evidence,” and “Syntax and Mechanics” we find that performance declined between 2011 and 2013. Viewed differently, however, we can report that students improved between taking 200-level foundation courses and the capstone (the percentage failing to meet expectations declined 7.2, 22.8, and 26 points on each item respectively).

We think this latter explanation is more reasonable for “Context” and “Syntax.” Both of these items are more particular to the writing process and less intertwined with research skills. We would, therefore, expect that students become better writers as they progress from the 200 to the 400-level. The result for “Sources” is more likely temporal and related to the decline reported for the “Existing Knowledge” item as part of the *Independent Research* outcome. “Content Development” and “Disciplinary Conventions,” which includes organization of the work, are, like the use of existing sources, more closely related to the research process, at least the way this process is taught in POL 225 and POL 409. We are comfortable concluding, based also on anecdotal evidence, that the improvement of students over time on these items (declines in failing to meet expectations of 9.3 points and 26.4 points respectively) reflects genuine improvement in writing skills.

Figure 3 presents the assessment results for *Reasoned Judgments*, which was originally assessed in 2010-2011 and 2012-2013. As on *Independent Research*, student performance on *Reasoned Judgments* has improved on nearly every item over time. Unlike with writing skills, all of the aspects of *Reasoned Judgments* are related to research skills. As research skills have improved over time, so have critical thinking skills as assessed through the *Reasoned Judgments*

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learning outcome. Between 2011 and 2013, the percentage of students failing to meet expectations declined 26.2 points on “Explanation of Issues,” 7.6 points on “Evidence,” 50.7 points on “Student’s Position,” which includes the development of arguments and hypotheses, and 23 points on “Conclusions.” Student performance declined slightly on “Influence of Context,” where the percentage failing to meet expectations increased by 7.2 points.

Figure 4 presents the assessment results for *Subfield Knowledge*, which was originally assessed in 2011-2012. The paragraphs that follows were originally presented in the 2011-2012 assessment report.

Students performed extremely well on all four aspects of *Subfield Knowledge* assessed through the rubric. Student performance was best on “Factual Knowledge.” 94.8% of the sample at least met expectations with fifty percent of students exceeding expectations. Student performance was also very high on “Knowledge of Theories” and “Literature.” On both items, 84.5% of the sample at least met expectations with 34.5% and 48.3% exceeding expectations on each item respectively. Student performance was lowest, although still high, on “Application of Theories” with 77.6% of the sample at least meeting expectations.

It is important that students develop a set of skills in the context of the discipline; that students attain knowledge of the facts and theories of the discipline they study and gain familiarity with its literature. In this respect, Political Science students perform extremely well. Our students are very proficient at demonstrating the attainment of factual knowledge. Furthermore, many students demonstrate the ability to place this knowledge in the broader context of a subfield of the discipline. Students by and large demonstrated knowledge of the relevant literature in the context of their assignments. Students were able to at least accurately describe, and in large measure apply, the major theoretical approaches of the different subfields in the discipline.

Indirect Assessment Results: Survey Results

This section of the report discusses responses to the John Jay Student Evaluation of the Major in 2009 and 2012, focusing on how these responses have changed over time. In 2009, 23 Political Science majors responded to the survey; in 2012, that number was 120. For both years, we include the same items grouped into the four learning outcomes of the major. The results are reported in **tables 2** through **5**. Overall, and consistent with the direct assessment results, student perceptions of the major and its faculty have improved over time.

The indirect assessment of all four learning outcomes includes questions asking students the extent to which courses in the major have “done something,” where this something could be the development of a skill, the acquisition of knowledge, etc. Students respond using a four-point scale including: very much, some, a little, and not at all. **Table 2** (*Independent Research*) reports that the percentage of students saying that their major courses very much “helped them to speak clearly and effectively” increased by 13.9 points (all of the other percentages declined). For “thinking critically and analytically,” the combined percentage of some and very much increase 5 points. For “writing clearly and effectively,” the percentage of students responding

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that major courses helped them very much increased 20.7 points (**Table 3, *Effective Writing***). The percentage responding very much to the “acquire a broad general education” item increased 2.1 points (all other percentages declined or did not change) and the combined percentage of some and very much to “learn to solve complex real-world problems” increased 15.2 points (**Table 4, *Reasoned Judgments***). Lastly, the percentage of students feeling that major courses have very much helped them acquire specific knowledge about an academic field increased 12.4 points, with all other percentages declining (**Table 5, *Subfield Knowledge***).

Another set of items common to multiple outcomes ask students the extent to which they agree with listed statements on a four-point scale including: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. An increased percentage of students agree (or strongly agree) that studying Political Science has changed the way they understand an issue or concept (4.4 points; **Table 4, *Reasoned Judgments***; **Table 5, *Subfield Knowledge***). Relatedly, the percentage of students strongly agreeing that faculty members prepare carefully increased by 5.1 points (**Table 5, *Subfield Knowledge***). On a mostly positive note, the final item of this set asks students how much they agree that major courses provide a great deal of depth in their subject matter. The percentage of students agreeing declined 14 points; some of that opinion shifted to disagree, which increased 3.6 points, but more of it shifted to strongly agree, which increased 9.4 points (**Table 5, *Subfield Knowledge***).

The last set of items we discuss ask students to rate various aspects of the faculty on a four-point scale including: excellent, good, fair, and poor. All of these items are presented in **Table 5** as indirect assessments of *Subfield Knowledge*. We observe a similar dynamic on the first two items presented (quality of teaching and teaching ability of faculty). On both, there appears to be a shift from poor to fair and from good to excellent, suggesting positive movement in evaluations, although not as positive as a reduction in both poor and fair complemented by increases in good and excellent. This is what we observe for the last three items. Between 2009 and 2012, the percentage of students who rate the knowledge and experience of the faculty as good or excellent increased 5.9 points. The percentage of students who rate the teaching methods of faculty as good or excellent increased 21.6 points. The percentage rating the quality of feedback they receive from faculty as good or excellent increased an enormous 31.3 points, with most of that decline coming from students who rated the quality of feedback as poor.

Indirect Assessment Results: Effects of POL 225

By far, the most significant change to the major resulting from our assessment activities is the development of POL 225, *Introduction to Research in Politics*. 225 was developed in large part as a response to the findings detailed in our 2010-2011 assessment report. That report presented assessment results for *Independent Research*, *Effective Writing*, and *Reasoned Judgments* using capstone papers as samples of student work. The results indicated that a significant proportion of students were not exhibiting the level of research, writing, or critical thinking skills expected of them once they had reached that point in the curriculum. The purpose of 225 is to formally introduce students to the empirical research process early in the curriculum (the department recommends that students take 225 in the sophomore year) and, in doing so, *explicitly* foster the development research, writing, critical thinking, and information literacy

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skills.

225 is not meant to be the only course where these skills are developed. The hope is that the early, formal introduction of these skills will teach students how to further cultivate these skills in all of their other courses. While the immediate focus of 225 is on teaching students how to properly conduct research, the hope has been that students will begin developing all of the skills they will need to make them better students. For example, in learning how to properly read an academic journal article, students can better understand the assigned reading in other courses. The evidence of the benefits of 225 is presented in the Direct Assessment Results section. As noted above, student exhibition of research skills in the capstone has improved on several aspects of these skills since the addition of 225 to the major.

Table 6, which originally appeared as Table 4 in the 2013-2014 assessment report, presents some limited statistical evidence of the positive impact of 225 on conducting independent research. As of last year, there still had not been many students taking the capstone that had previously taken 225. The next couple of academic years will likely afford greater opportunities for this type of direct assessment whereas we expect a more equal mix of students in the capstone who have and have not taken 225.

Table 6 presents the mean scores on all seven rubric items for five capstone students in the sample that took 225 and twenty-five capstone students that did not. The scores range from 1 to 3 with higher scores implying greater proficiency on the particular rubric item. The last column of **Table 6** presents the differences between the means of students that took 225 and students that did not. Students that took 225 had a higher mean on all seven items; three of these differences are significant for at least the 10% level (on “Topic,” “Knowledge,” and “Conclusions”). Students that have taken 225 appear better able to select a creative, focused topic, provide better synthesis of the existing literature, and draw sounder conclusions based on their research.

In addition to improving work in the capstone, 225 is expected to improve student performance in all major courses. To test this argument, data were collected from CUNYFirst for Political Science majors in major courses during the Fall 2014 semester, and a random effects model was estimated nesting course grades within students. The dependent variable is the course grade, coded as the GPA equivalent of the letter grade (e.g., A = 4.0, A- = 3.7). The model includes a number of student and course characteristics available through CUNYFirst as independent variables.

Six student characteristics are included in the model. First, we include the cumulative GPA of the student as of Spring 2014, the semester immediately prior to Fall 2014. Second, we include a dummy variable indicating whether the student took POL 225 prior to Fall 2014. We expect both variables to positively affect course grades in Fall 2014. We also include the interaction between cumulative GPA and having taken POL 225, expecting the effect of the interaction to be negative. That is, the impact of formal introduction of research skills should decrease with the observed performance of the student. Put another way, taking 225 should have a stronger impact on students who do not typically perform at a high academic level (a B student should improve more after taking 225 than an A student). Third, we include a dummy variable

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indicating female students. Fourth, we include the total number of credits earned by the student. Fifth, we include the number of credits the student is attempting in Fall 2014. Sixth, we include a dummy variable indicating transfer students. We expect the effects of the first three of these variables to be positive; we expect transfer students to exhibit lower course grades on average.

We also control for four course characteristics: days on which the course is run, the location of the classroom, whether the course runs at night, and the level of the course. We include days using dummy variables for Tuesday/Thursday courses and Wednesday/Friday courses (Monday/Wednesday courses comprise the excluded category). Location includes dummy variables for North Hall and Westport (the New Building is the excluded category). Course level includes three dummy variables indicating 200, 300, and 400-level courses (100-level is the excluded category). We have no expectations for any of these except course level; all three course level dummy variables should have negative effects on course grades given that the effects are relative to 100-level courses. The results are presented in **Table 7**.

Table 7 demonstrates a number of interesting effects. First, the Lagrange Multiplier χ^2 , listed at the bottom of the table, is significant suggesting that the intercept does vary for students. Second, a few of the control variables are significant and possibly worth investigating on a larger scale. As expected, the more credits a student has amassed, the better on average she performed in Fall 2014 POL courses. Students taking Tuesday/Thursday courses performed significantly worse than their peers, receiving roughly one letter grade step lower in courses on average (e.g., a B- compared to a B). Students taking courses in Westport performed significantly better by about the same magnitude.

More to the point, prior GPA, having taken 225, and their interaction are all statistically significant. The results suggest that taking 225 has its largest (positive) effects on students who previously had lower GPAs. As **Figure 5** demonstrates, an increase in prior GPA causes an increase in Fall 2014 course grades for both 225 and non-225 students. Holding prior GPA constant, students that have taken 225 receive higher course grades than non-225 students until prior GPA is between 3.3 and 3.4, a roughly B+ average. At this point, the curves for 225 and non-225 students intersect and students that have not taken 225, and have a prior GPA of 3.4 or greater, appear to receive better course grades.

We examine the differences between 225 and non-225 students more explicitly in **Figure 6**, which plots the difference in course grades between 225 and non-225 students and includes 90% confidence intervals for the difference. **Figure 6** shows that taking 225 significantly improves the future course grades of students up to a prior GPA of 2.9, just shy of a B average. After that, there are no significant differences between 225 and non-225 students. For students with the lowest prior GPA (about 1.4), the average effect of taking 225 on course grades is 0.7, roughly two letter grade-steps (i.e., a D+ to a C). Even at the highest prior GPA where taking 225 still significantly affects course grades, taking 225 increase course grades by 0.2 on average, almost a whole letter grade-step (i.e., B to B+).

Conclusions and Recommendations

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The Political Science major has undergone several significant changes in the last five years. This report, and others during this five-year assessment cycle, has discussed the effects of POL 225 on student performance on the learning outcomes of the major. The introduction of POL 225 is significant, but only one part of these changes. POL 225 was introduced as part of a revision to the major, which became operative as of the Fall 2012 semester. In addition to requiring students to take this introductory research course, the department removed several courses offered by other disciplines from the major, required students to take courses in all five of the major's foundation categories (instead of four out of five), and increased the number of credits students are required to take in their concentration from 12 to 15. The department has introduced a number of new courses, several of which are offered at the 300-level. The department has also added several new faculty members, complementing our already outstanding faculty. All of these changes, informed by regular assessment, are responsible for moving student performance in a positive direction on nearly every metric presented here.

While performance has improved, the most recent assessments of research skills, particularly in POL 409, show that a significant proportion of students fail to meet expectations in several areas. Creating a research design and proposing solutions or hypotheses are two areas that stand out, with 43.3% and 30% of students failing to meet expectations respectively. To address the development of research skills throughout the curriculum, we offer two recommendations:

- **Prof. Varsanyi will circulate a document suggesting research related concepts that all faculty could reinforce in their courses.**
- **The department will investigate different models for the delivery of POL 409 allowing instructors greater opportunities to work individually with students in the development of their research projects.**

One of the major issues raised in the aforementioned meeting of POL 225 and POL 409 instructors is the difficulty in providing enough project-specific feedback to individual students. POL 409, which typically seats 25 students per section, is built around students conducting independent research. Developing a research design, including the crafting of testable arguments, is a process that requires a significant amount of personalized feedback. In a class of 25 students, instructors are limited in the amount of personalized attention they can provide to each student.

The department would like to investigate the possibility of running sections of POL 409 with smaller enrollment caps. Fewer students will give instructors greater ability to work more closely with individual students in the development of their capstone research projects, and by extension the development of their research skills.

While the fifth year summary report would typically be a vehicle for recommending broader curricular adjustment, we do not do so here for two reasons. First, we are generally satisfied with the trajectory of the major. We instituted major changes three years ago and are pleased with the impact those changes are having. This, however, does not preclude a discussion

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of large and small curricular adjustment. That conversation will happen at the end of the next academic year. The Political Science major is scheduled to engage in its self-study in 2016-2017. We decided to hold a retreat at the end of the Spring 2016 semester, partly to set an agenda for our self-study. These assessment results, in addition to data collected next year, will be part of that discussion.

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Table 1.
Courses and Sample Sizes Used for Direct Assessment

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Course (Year)</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>
Independent Research	Figure 1a	POL 409 (2011)	60
		POL 225 (2014)	31
	Figure 1b	POL 409 (2014)	30
Effective Writing	Figure 2	POL 409 (2011)	60
		POL 101 (2013)	30
		POL 206 (2013)	58
		POL 220 (2013)	
		POL 230 (2013)	
		POL 257 (2013)	
		POL 260 (2013)	
		POL 270 (2013)	
		POL 278 (2013)	
		POL 375 (2013)	
Reasoned Judgments	Figure 3	POL 409 (2011)	60
		POL 101 (2013)	30
		POL 206 (2013)	58
		POL 220 (2013)	
		POL 230 (2013)	
		POL 257 (2013)	
		POL 260 (2013)	
		POL 270 (2013)	
		POL 278 (2013)	
		POL 375 (2013)	
Subfield Knowledge	Figure 4	POL 206 (2013)	58
		POL 220 (2013)	
		POL 230 (2013)	
		POL 257 (2013)	
		POL 260 (2013)	
		POL 270 (2013)	
		POL 278 (2013)	
		POL 375 (2013)	

Note: The year listed in the parentheses is the year of the Spring semester of the academic year during which work from that particular course was collected. For example, POL 409 (2011) means that student work from collected from POL 409 during the 2010-2011 academic year.

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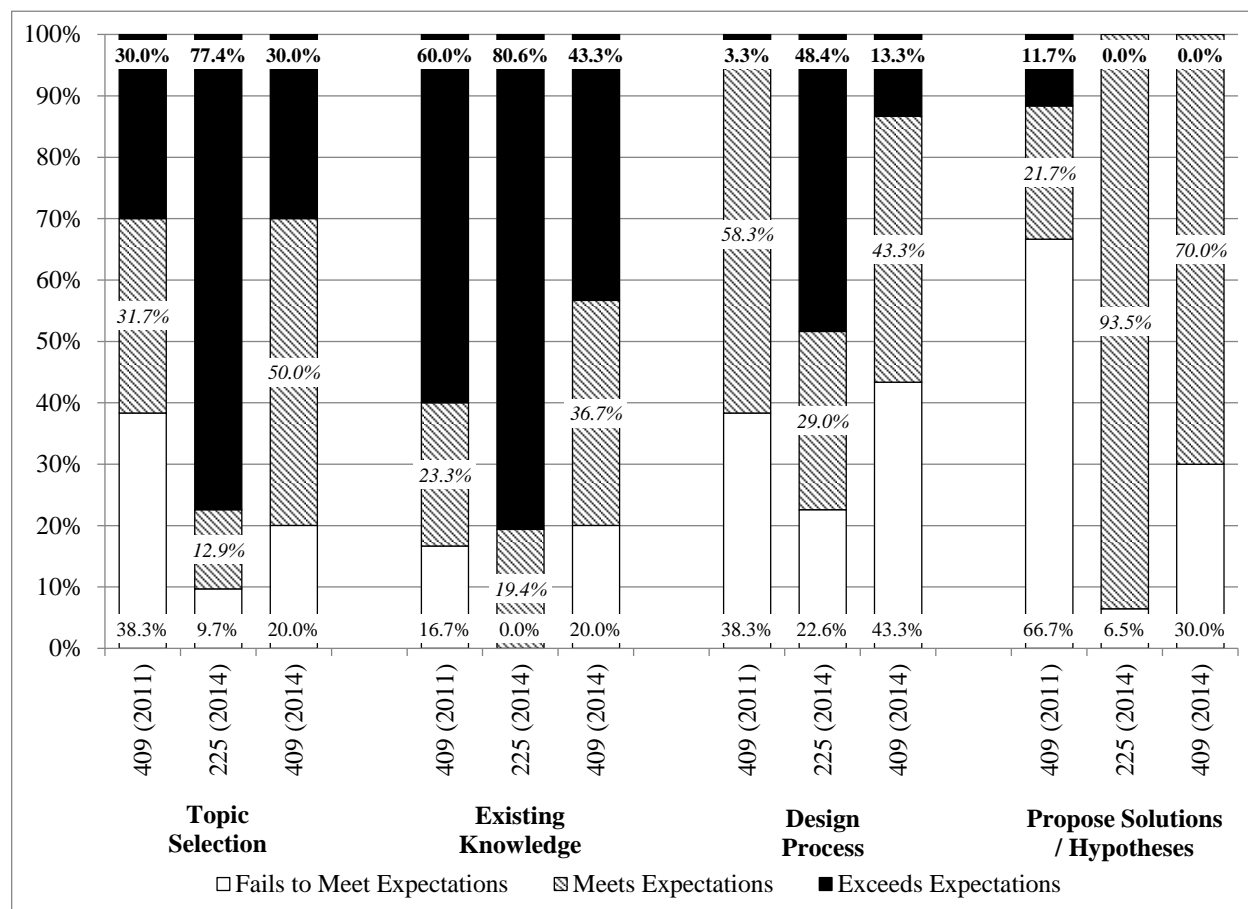


Figure 1a.
Assessment Results for *Independent Research* by Rubric Item

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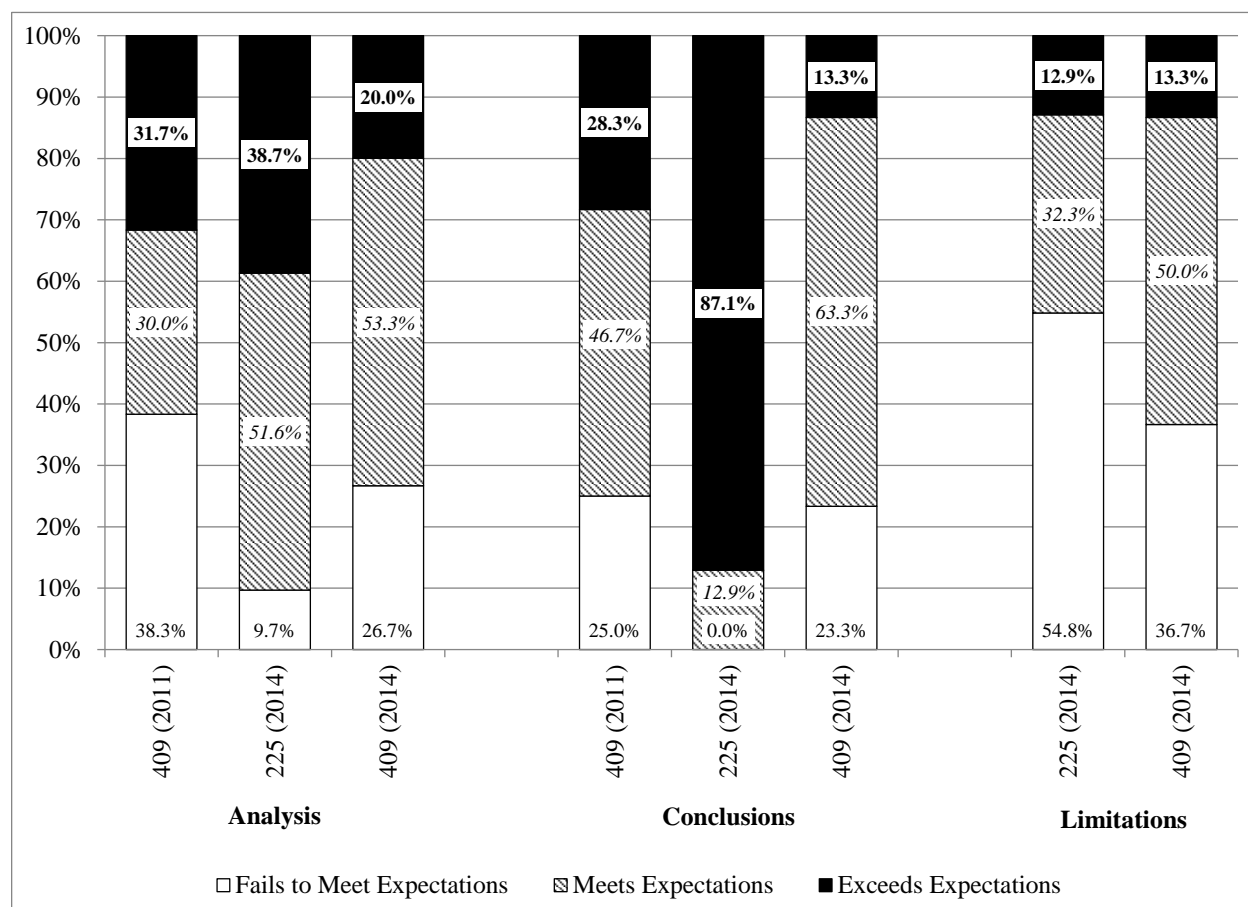


Figure 1b.
Assessment Results for *Independent Research* by Rubric Item

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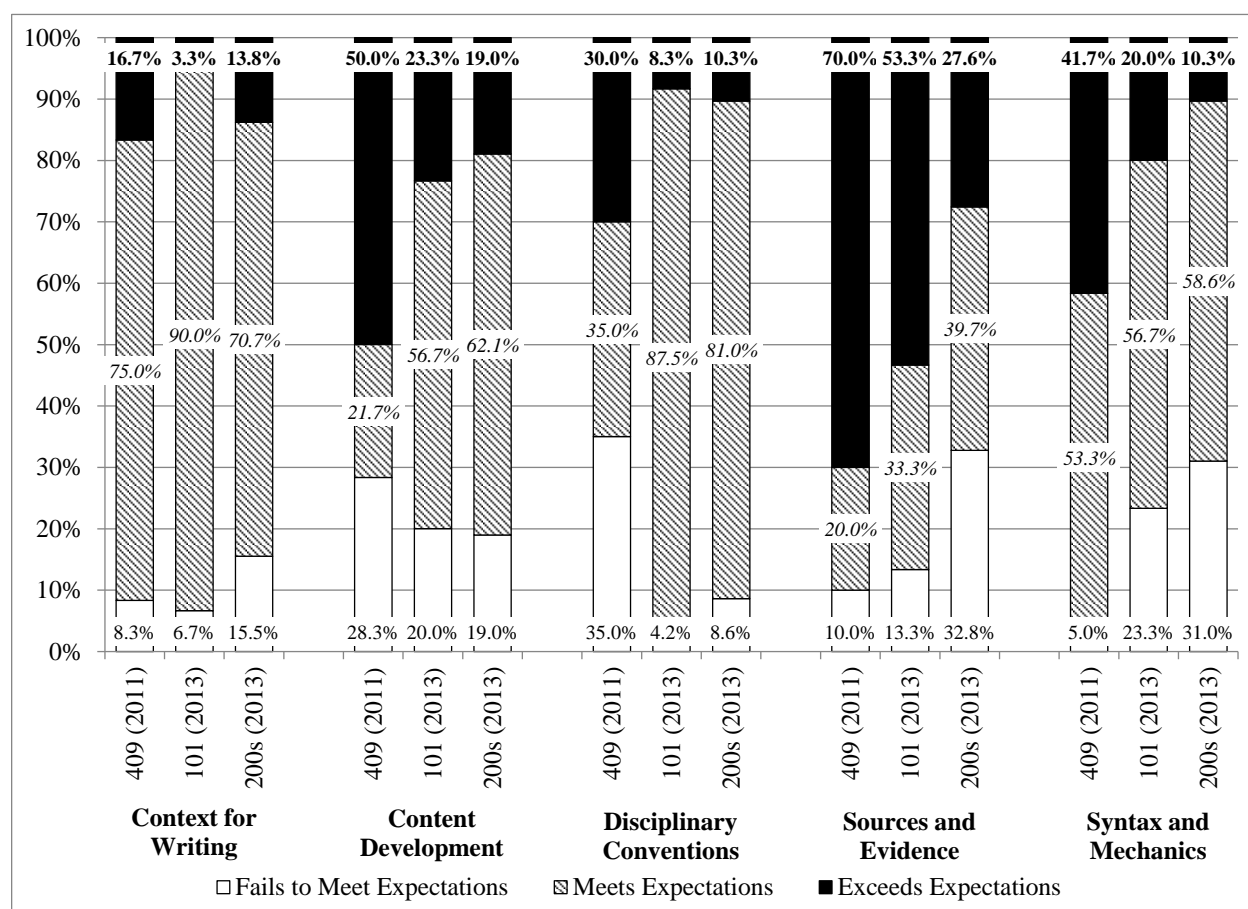


Figure 2.
Assessment Results for *Effective Writing* by Rubric Item

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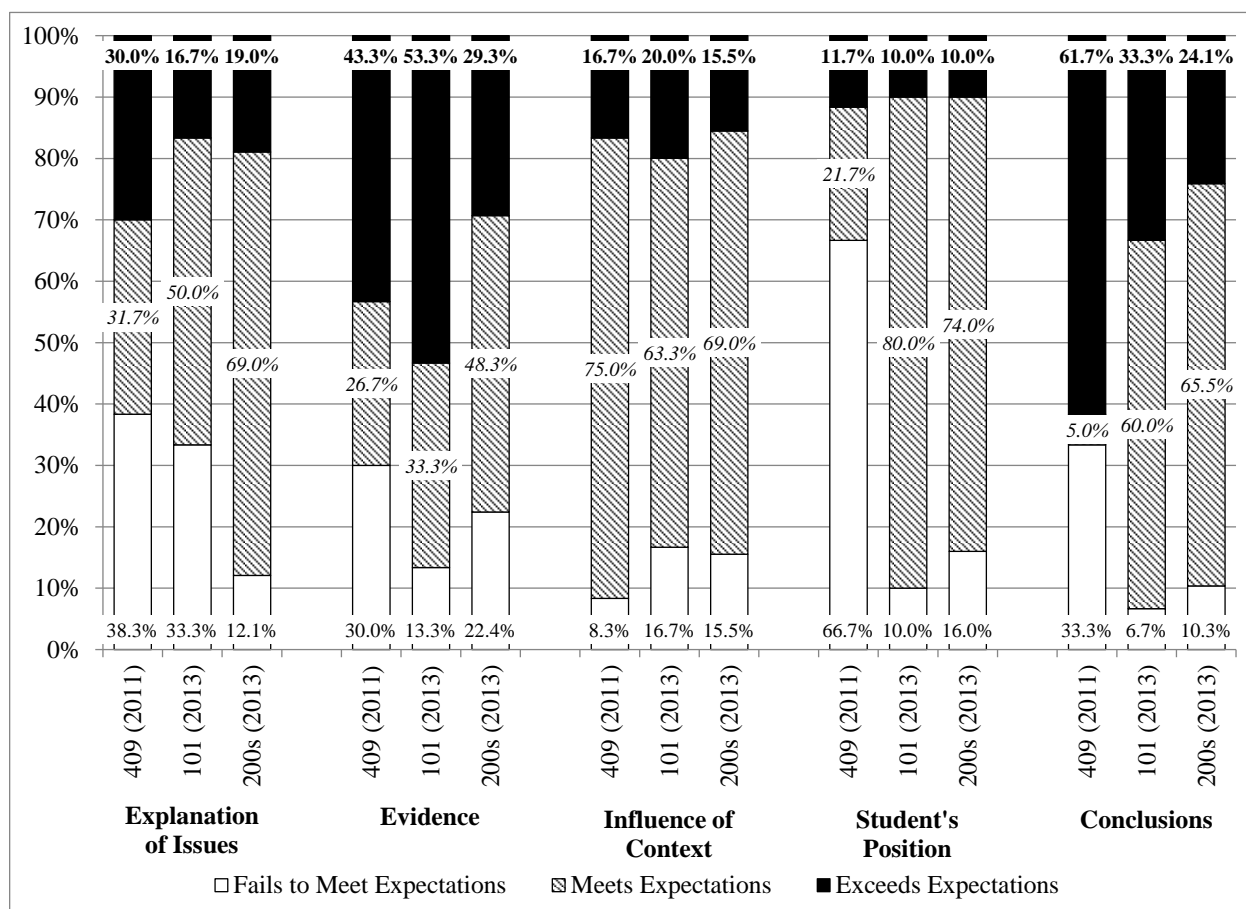


Figure 3.
Assessment Results for *Reasoned Judgments* by Rubric Item

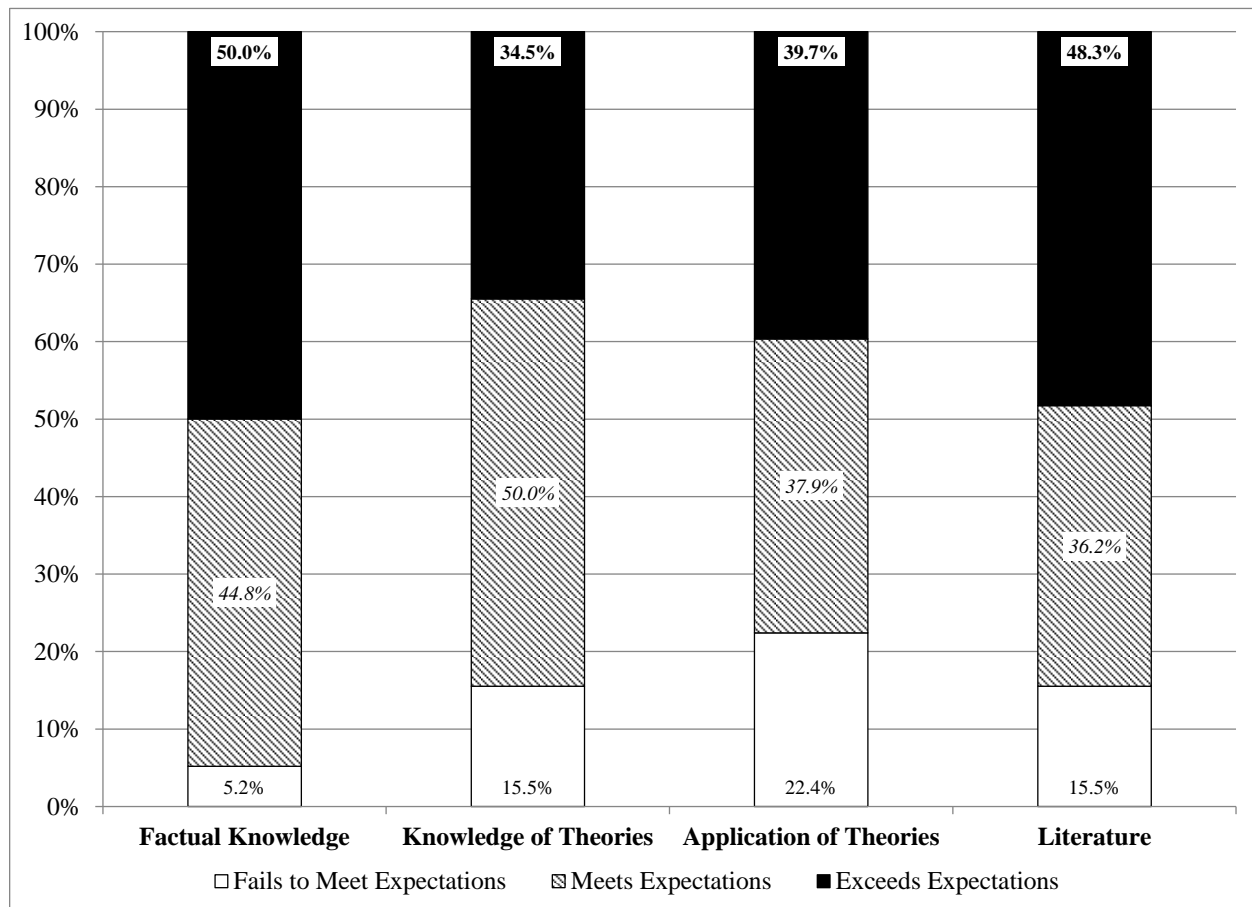


Figure 4.
Assessment Results for *Subfield Knowledge* by Rubric Item

Table 2. Indirect Assessment Results for <i>Independent Research</i>						
<i>To what extent have courses in your major:</i>						
		<i>Very Much</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>A Little</i>	<i>Not at All</i>	
Helped you to speak clearly and effectively?	2009	28.8%	39.8%	16.4%	15.0%	
	2012	42.7%	35.9%	10.7%	10.7%	
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	13.9%	-3.9%	-5.7%	-4.3%	
Taught you to think critically and analytically?	2009	57.9%	23.5%	15.0%	3.5%	
	2012	56.3%	30.1%	6.8%	6.8%	
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	-1.6%	6.6%	-8.2%	3.3%	
<i>Considering the classes you have taken this semester, about how much writing have you done?</i>						
		<i>7 or More</i>	<i>4 to 6</i>	<i>2 to 3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>
Number of written papers or reports 20 pages or more	2009	3.4%	3.4%	18.3%	8.6%	66.2%
	2012	3.1%	0.0%	9.2%	26.5%	61.2%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	-0.3%	-3.4%	-9.1%	17.9%	-5.0%
Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	2009	13.0%	21.4%	43.1%	18.7%	3.8%
	2012	10.2%	26.5%	42.9%	8.2%	12.2%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	-2.8%	5.1%	-0.2%	-10.5%	8.4%

Table 3. Indirect Assessment Results for <i>Effective Writing</i>						
Learning Objective 2: Effective Writing <i>To what extent have courses in your major:</i>						
		<i>Very Much</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>A Little</i>	<i>Not at All</i>	
Taught you to write clearly and effectively?	2009	25.9%	42.5%	18.6%	13.0%	
	2012	46.6%	35.0%	6.8%	11.7%	
	$\Delta('12\text{'09})$	20.7%	-7.5%	-11.8%	-1.3%	
<i>Considering the classes you have taken this semester, about how much writing have you done?</i>						
		<i>7 or More</i>	<i>4 to 6</i>	<i>2 to 3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>
Number of written papers or reports less than 5 pages	2009	24.7%	8.8%	37.4%	7.1%	22.0%
	2012	31.6%	16.3%	36.7%	8.7%	7.1%
	$\Delta('12\text{'09})$	6.9%	7.5%	-0.7%	1.6%	-14.9%

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Table 4. Indirect Assessment Results for Reasoned Judgments					
<i>To what extent have courses in your major:</i>					
		<i>Very Much</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>A Little</i>	<i>Not at All</i>
Helped you to acquire a broad general education	2009	53.2%	33.0%	6.8%	7.1%
	2012	55.3%	32.0%	6.8%	5.8%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	2.1%	-1.0%	0.0%	-1.3%
Helped you learn to solve complex real-world problems	2009	38.6%	26.8%	31.1%	3.5%
	2012	42.7%	37.9%	7.8%	11.7%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	4.1%	11.1%	-23.3%	8.2%
<i>Rate how much you agree or disagree with...</i>					
		<i>St. Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>St. Disagree</i>
Studying this major has changed the way I understand an issue or concept	2009	49.7%	37.7%	12.7%	0.0%
	2012	45.9%	45.9%	5.1%	3.1%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	-3.8%	8.2%	-7.6%	3.1%

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Table 5. Indirect Assessment Results for Subfield Knowledge					
		<i>Very Much</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>A Little</i>	<i>Not at All</i>
To what extent have courses... helped you to acquire specific knowledge about an academic field	2009	39.1%	41.0%	9.1%	10.8%
	2012	51.5%	38.8%	1.9%	7.8%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	12.4%	-2.2%	-7.2%	-3.0%
		St. Agree	Agree	Disagree	St. Disagree
Courses in this major provide a great deal of depth in their subject matter	2009	33.5%	63.0%	3.5%	0.0%
	2012	42.9%	49.0%	7.1%	0.0%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	9.4%	-14.0%	3.6%	0.0%
Studying this major has changed the way I understand an issue or concept	2009	49.7%	37.7%	12.7%	0.0%
	2012	45.9%	45.9%	5.1%	3.1%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	-3.8%	8.2%	-7.6%	3.1%
Most faculty members prepare carefully for their courses	2009	28.9%	61.8%	5.8%	3.5%
	2012	34.0%	58.3%	6.8%	1.0%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	5.1%	-3.5%	1.0%	-2.5%
<i>Rate the...</i>		<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Quality of teaching in the major	2009	32.3%	54.9%	0.0%	12.8%
	2012	36.0%	47.7%	12.6%	3.6%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	3.7%	-7.2%	12.6%	-9.2%
Teaching ability of faculty in the major	2009	28.8%	58.4%	9.3%	3.5%
	2012	40.8%	47.6%	10.7%	1.0%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	12.0%	-10.8%	1.4%	-2.5%
Knowledge and experience of faculty in the major	2009	45.1%	42.2%	12.7%	0.0%
	2012	45.6%	47.6%	5.8%	1.0%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	0.5%	5.4%	-6.9%	1.0%
Teaching methods of faculty in the major	2009	17.3%	45.6%	30.2%	6.9%
	2012	27.2%	57.3%	14.6%	1.0%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	9.9%	11.7%	-15.6%	-5.9%
Quality of feedback from faculty about your course performance in the major	2009	10.5%	34.9%	28.9%	25.7%
	2012	27.2%	49.5%	21.4%	1.9%
	$\Delta('12-'09)$	16.7%	14.6%	-7.5%	-23.8%

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Table 6. The Effects of POL 225 on Research Skills Exhibited in POL 409			
<i>Rubric Item</i>	<i>225</i>	<i>Non-225</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Topic	2.60	2.00	0.60**
Knowledge	2.60	2.16	0.44*
Design	2.00	1.64	0.36
Hypotheses	1.80	1.68	0.12
Analysis	2.00	1.92	0.08
Conclusions	2.20	1.84	0.36*
Limitations	2.20	1.68	0.52
Total Score	15.40	12.92	2.48*
Observations	5	25	
<p>* p < 0.1; ** p < 0.05 (one-tailed tests)</p> <p>Note: This table presents difference in means tests between the mean scores of POL 409 students in the sample that have taken POL 225 and students that have not taken POL 225. Each proficiency level is coded as follows: fails to meet expectations = 1; meets expectations = 2; exceeds expectations = 3. For any given rubric item, the mean score can range from 1 to 3. The difference between mean total scores is also examined. The range for total scores is 7 (scoring 1 on all items) to 21 (scoring 3 on all items).</p>			

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Table 7.		
Random Effects Model of Student Grades in Fall 2015		
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>Std. Err.</i>
<u>Student Characteristics</u>		
Cumulative GPA (Sp. 2014)	1.075**	0.113
Took POL 225 Prior to Fall 2014	1.251**	0.558
225 x Cumulative GPA	-0.375**	0.178
Female	-0.109	0.102
Total Credits	0.006**	0.002
Credits in Term	0.010	0.016
Transfer Student	-0.030	0.106
<u>Course Characteristics</u>		
Tue./Thu.	-0.378**	0.072
Wed./Fri.	-0.316	0.281
North Hall	-0.087	0.087
Westport	0.350*	0.210
Night	-0.056	0.077
200-level	-0.517	0.343
300-level	-0.093	0.351
400-level	-0.583	0.360
Intercept	-0.346	0.491
Observations (Course Grades)	542	
Students	246	
Avg. Courses/Student	2.2	
Overall R ²	0.330	
Wald $\chi^2_{(15)}$	190.95**	
LM Test for Random Effects: $\bar{\chi}_{(1)}$	17.97**	
* p < 0.1 ** p < 0.05		
Note: The dependent variable is the letter grade given in POL courses during the Fall 2015 semester converted to its numerical equivalent (e.g., A=4.0).		
The random effects model nests student course grades within students.		

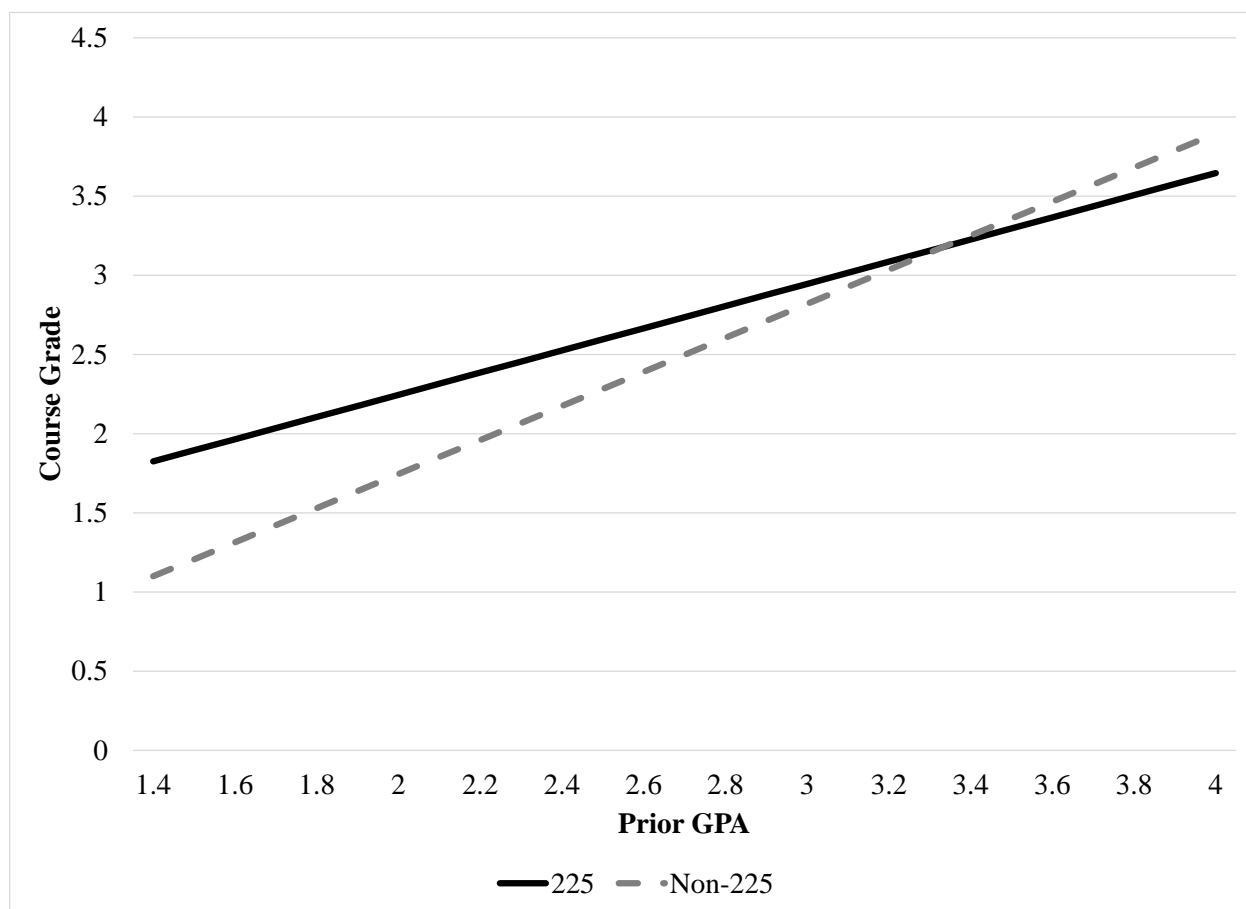


Figure 5.
Effect of Spring 2014 GPA on Fall 2014 Course Grades for 225 and Non-225 Students

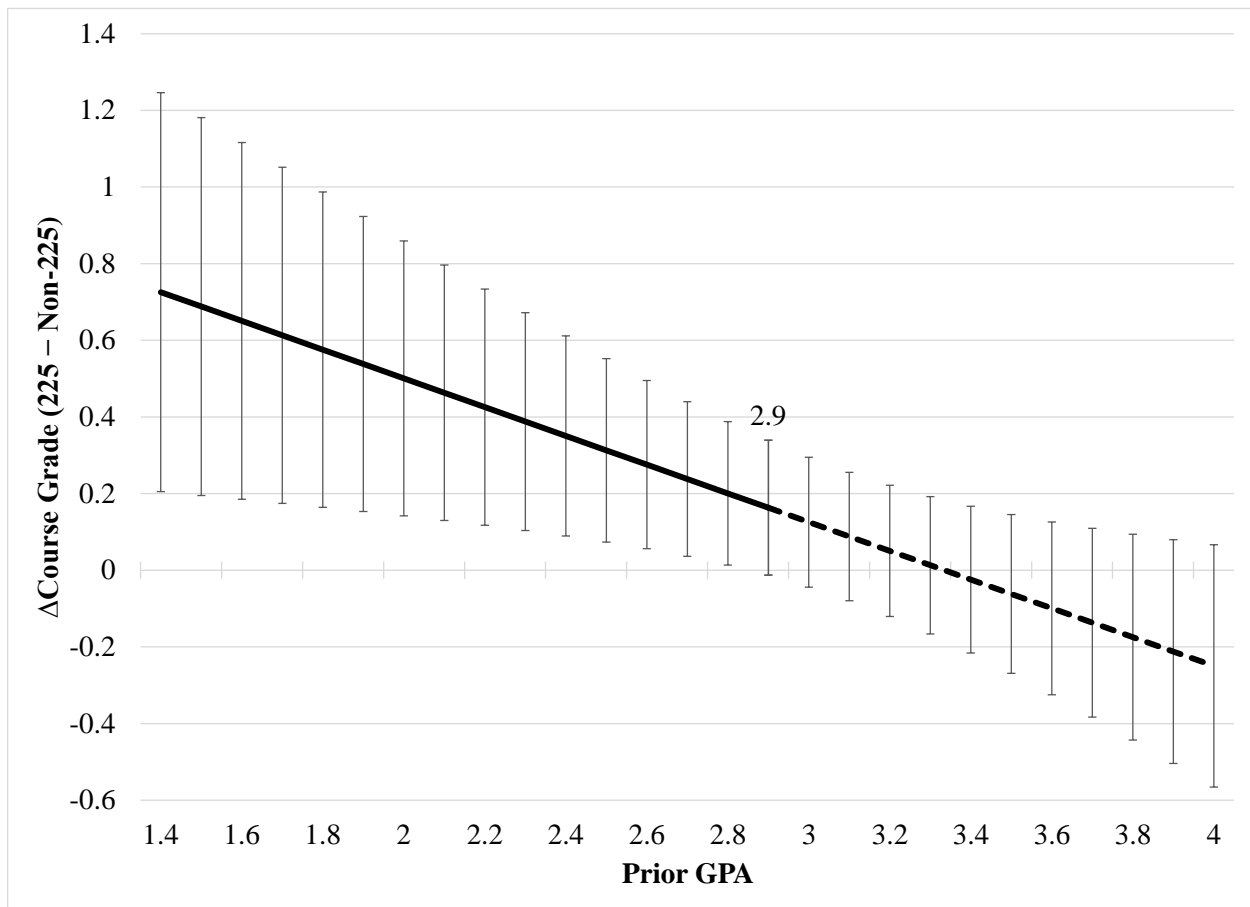


Figure 6.

Difference in Fall 2014 Course Grades between 225 and Non-225 Students

Note: Error bars signify 90% confidence intervals for the difference between 225 and non-225 students. The difference is positive and significant until prior GPA equals 2.9; the difference is not significant thereafter.

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Appendix A:
Rubrics used to Assess Learning Outcomes of the Political Science Major

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Mapping of Original Rubric Items to Current Rubric Items

<i>Original Rubric Item</i>	<i>Current Rubric Item</i>
<i>Introduction</i> Thesis Statement Research Frame Reference to Conclusions	Research: Topic Selection Judgments: Explanation of Issues Writing: Context/Purpose for Writing (none)
<i>Literature Review</i> Types of Sources Treatment of the Literature Relationship between Literature and Research Presentation of Supporting Arguments Presentation of Alternative Arguments	Writing: Sources & Evidence Research: Existing Knowledge (none) Judgments: Evidence Judgments: Evidence
<i>Analyses & Conclusions</i> Phenomena Proposed Relationships Methodology Discussion of Results Appropriateness of Conclusions Context of Conclusions	(none) Research: Propose Solutions/Hypotheses Judgments: Student's Position Research: Design Process Research: Analysis Research: Conclusions Judgments: Conclusions & Related
<i>Writing Style & Format</i> Grammar and Syntax Use of Language Use of Jargon Organization of Writing Citation Format Reference / Works Cited Page	Writing: Control of Syntax & Mechanics Writing: Control of Syntax & Mechanics Writing: Control of Syntax & Mechanics Writing: Content Development Writing: Disciplinary Conventions Writing: Disciplinary Conventions
Note: This table maps items from the original rubric, as applied to capstone papers, to the rubrics developed after 2010-2011 to assess the first three learning outcomes. The information listed in the "Current Rubric Item" column lists a short name for the rubric (e.g., Writing for Writing Effectively) and a short name for the item. The original capstone rubric and all four rubrics that are used currently are presented on the following pages.	

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Original (2010-2011) Rubric for Learning Outcomes 1 through 3

<u>Introduction</u>		Total Points:	<u>8</u>
Thesis Statement	1. Thesis is clear and appropriate. 2. Thesis is appropriate, but unclear. 3. Thesis is incomplete (i.e. missing an explanation). 4. Thesis is inappropriate to the topic. 5. Lacks a thesis statement.		4 3 2 1 0
Research Frame	1. Research is framed w/respect to prior work and as an important question. 2. Research is framed as an interesting or important question. 3. Research is framed w/respect to prior work 4. Research is not placed in context.		3 2 1 0
Reference to Conclusions	1. Foreshadows or references eventual conclusions. 2. No reference to eventual conclusions.		1 0
<u>Literature Review</u>		Total Points:	<u>16</u>
Types of Sources	1. Cites appropriate academic/scholarly research. 2. Cites appropriate, popular work on the topic. 3. Cited work is inappropriate to the topic. 4. Little-to-no literature cited.		3 2 1 0
Treatment of the Literature	1. Sources are synthesized into thematic discussions. 2. Sources are discussed individually, but appropriately. 3. Sources are discussed in an unorganized manner. 4. No literature cited.		3 2 1 0
Relationship between Literature and Research	1. Discussion is appropriate and identifies gaps in the literature. 2. Discussion of the literature is appropriate to the research question. 3. Discussion of the literature is not related to the research question. 4. No literature cited.		3 2 1 0
Presentation of Supporting Arguments	1. Arguments lead to a supportive position and are supported by empirical evidence or the citation of appropriate work. 2. Arguments and support are offered, but are not connected to the research. 3. Arguments are offered and defended, but not supported by empirical evidence or the citation of appropriate work. 4. Arguments are offered, but are undefended. 5. Author does not offer any arguments.		4 3 2 1 0
Presentation of Alternative Arguments	1. Arguments are presented and discussed with reference to empirical evidence or the citation of appropriate work. 2. Arguments are presented and discussed without reference to empirical evidence or the citation of appropriate work. 3. Arguments are presented, but are not discussed or minimally discussed. 4. Author does not present opposing arguments.		3 2 1 0
<u>Analyses & Conclusions</u>		Total Points:	<u>22</u>
Phenomena	1. Phenomena are identified and clearly defined. 2. Phenomena are identified, but not clearly defined. 3. Phenomena are identified, but not defined. 4. No phenomena identified.		3 2 1 0
Proposed Relationships	1. Clear, directional relationship expected. 2. Clear identification of dependent and independent phenomena. 3. Proposed explanations for phenomena are unclear. 4. No relationships identified.		3 2 1 0
Methodology	1. Methods are innovatively applied to the research question. 2. Methods are appropriate to the research question. 3. Methods are inappropriate to the research question. 4. No information analyzed.		3 2 1 0
Discussion of Results	1. Results are presented, discussed, and have clear implications. 2. Results and discussion are appropriate to the research question; discussion is not connected to prior work.		5 4

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	3. Results and discussion are inappropriate to the research question.	3
	4. Discussion of results is unorganized.	2
	5. Results are presented, but not discussed.	1
	6. No results from original analyses.	0
Appropriateness of Conclusions	1. Conclusions are appropriate to the results and research question.	4
	2. Conclusions reference results, but are inappropriate to the research question.	3
	3. Conclusions do not reference results.	2
	4. Conclusions are inappropriate to the results.	1
	5. No conclusion written.	0
Context of Conclusions	1. Conclusions are based on the independent research of the author, respective of factual information and the opinions and arguments previously cited.	4
	2. Conclusions are based on research without referencing prior work.	3
	3. Conclusions are based on prior work without referencing research.	2
	4. Conclusions do not reference ideas, reference evidence, or place ideas in the context of prior work.	1
	5. No conclusion written.	0
Writing Style & Format		Total Points: 17
Grammar and Syntax	1. Few/no grammatical or syntactical errors.	3
	2. Some/few errors; no distraction to the reader.	2
	3. Several errors; mild distraction to the reader.	1
	4. Several grammatical and syntactical errors; distracting to the reader.	0
Use of Language	1. All/practically all language is used properly.	2
	2. Some improper use of words / language.	1
	3. Paper is poorly written; many words are used improperly.	0
Use of Jargon	1. All terms are well-defined and used properly.	3
	2. Terms are ill- or undefined, but most are used properly.	2
	3. Terms are defined, but used improperly.	1
	4. Technical terms are undefined and used improperly.	0
Organization of Writing	1. Paper is organized logically; sections are labeled; paragraphs are appropriate with good transitions between them.	3
	2. Sections are labeled; paragraphs are an appropriate length for their content.	2
	3. Paper follows a basic progression; paragraphs may be too long or short.	1
	4. Paper is unorganized; ideas do not follow a logical progression and several ideas are inappropriately placed together.	0
Citation Format	1. Citations are consistent follow an accepted format.	3
	2. Citations are proper, but inconsistent.	2
	3. Literature is improperly cited.	1
	4. No literature cited.	0
Reference / Works Cited Page	1. References are present, correctly formatted, and properly organized.	3
	2. References are present and correctly formatted, but unorganized.	2
	3. References are present, but incorrectly formatted.	1
	4. References are missing.	0

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Rubric for Learning Outcome 1: Independent Research

<i>Item</i>	<i>100-Level: 200-Level: 300-Level: 400-Level:</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Topic selection	Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses potentially significant yet previously less-explored aspects of the topic.	Identifies a focused and manageable/doable topic that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that while manageable/doable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable.	
Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views	Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.	Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.	
Design Process	All elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are skillfully developed. Appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks may be synthesized across disciplines or relevant subdisciplines.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are appropriately developed, however, more subtle elements are ignored or unaccounted for.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are missing, incorrectly developed, or unfocused.	Inquiry design demonstrates a misunderstanding of the methodology or theoretical framework.	
Propose Solutions / Hypotheses (Problem Solving Rubric)	Proposes one or more solutions/hypotheses that indicates a deep comprehension of the problem. Solution / hypotheses are sensitive to contextual factors as well as all of the following: ethical, logical, and cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one or more solutions/hypotheses that indicates comprehension of the problem. Solutions / hypotheses are sensitive to contextual factors as well as the one of the following: ethical, logical, or cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one solution/hypothesis that is “off the shelf” rather than individually designed to address the specific contextual factors of the problem.	Proposes a solution/hypothesis that is difficult to evaluate because it is vague or only indirectly addresses the problem statement.	
Analysis	Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence, but the organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, or similarities.	Lists evidence, but it is not organized and/or is unrelated to focus.	
Conclusions	States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings.	States a conclusion focused solely on the inquiry findings. The conclusion arises specifically from and responds specifically to inquiry findings.	States a general conclusion that, because it is so general, also applies beyond the scope of the inquiry findings.	States an ambiguous, illogical, or unsupportable conclusion from inquiry findings.	
Limitations and Implications	Insightfully discusses in detail relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Discusses relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Presents relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Presents limitations and implications, but are possibly irrelevant and unsupported.	

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Rubric for Learning Outcome 2: Effective Writing

<i>Item</i>	<i>100-Level: 200-Level: 300-Level: 400-Level:</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Context of and Purpose for Writing <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).	
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.	
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields.</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.	
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.	
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.	

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Rubric for Learning Outcome 3: Reasoned Judgments

Item 100-Level: 200-Level: 300-Level: 400-Level:	Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations
Explanation of issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Evidence <i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i>	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. 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 taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
Influence of context and assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.

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Rubric for Learning Outcome 4: Subfield Knowledge

<i>Item</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Factual Knowledge	<p>The work demonstrates the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield and expresses how this knowledge contributes to understanding of the subfield respective of the assignment.</p> <p>E.g. the work correctly identifies the United States as a presidential system and expresses the implications of this for U.S. politics.</p>	<p>The work demonstrates the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield respective of the assignment, but does not relate these facts to an understanding of the subfield.</p> <p>E.g. the work correctly identifies the United States as a presidential system without relating this fact to broader theories / approaches in comparative politics.</p>	<p>The work does not demonstrate the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield respective of the assignment.</p> <p>E.g. the work incorrectly identifies the United States as a parliamentary system.</p>
Knowledge of theories / approaches in the subfield	<p>The work demonstrates deep understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield respective of the assignment.</p> <p>Deep understanding is demonstrated through recognition of assumptions and limitations of the theory / approach.</p>	<p>The work demonstrates basic understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield respective of the assignment.</p> <p>Basic understanding is demonstrated through full and accurate statement or description of the theory / approach.</p>	<p>The work demonstrates less than basic understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield.</p> <p>Theories / approaches are misstated, not mentioned in the work, or described incompletely.</p>
Application of theories / approaches in the subfield	<p>The work applies one or more of the theories / approaches (e.g. to the analysis of an issue) and acknowledges the context to which the theory / approach is applied.</p> <p>E.g. the work applies a theory to the analysis of an issue acknowledging that alternative approaches may be appropriate in different contexts.</p>	<p>The work applies one or more of the theories / approaches (e.g. to the analysis of an issue) irrespective of the context to which they are applied.</p> <p>E.g. the work does not acknowledge the potential importance of situational context in the application of the theory / approach.</p>	<p>The work does not apply any theories or adopt any approaches relevant in the subfield or theories / approaches are incorrectly applied within the assignment.</p>
Literature in the subfield	<p>The work includes information from a variety of academic and, possibly, nonacademic sources relevant to the subfield and respective of the assignment.</p>	<p>The work includes information from at least one academic source in the subfield and may include relevant information from nonacademic sources.</p>	<p>The work does not include or includes minimal information from sources relevant to the subfield.</p>

**John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Department of Political Science**

**Political Science Major Assessment Report
2015-2016 Academic Year**

Year One, Cycle 2

Introduction

This year marks the beginning of a new five-year assessment cycle for the Political Science Major.¹⁴ The first five years of assessment in the major focused specifically on our senior capstone course and a new 200-level methods course that we designed to improve results in the capstone course based on assessment results. In this next five year cycle we will continue to focus on this sequence of courses (POL 225 and POL 409), but we will also devote significant attention to using the Foundation courses for our major in order to assess our Learning Objectives. Furthermore, we plan to assess 300-level courses in each subfield, as the assessment results and anecdotal data from faculty indicate that there is a skills loss for students between POL 225 and POL 409. Thus this five year cycle seeks to examine these different factors in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the path our students take from their Foundation courses to their senior capstone course.

Learning Outcomes Assessed

During the 2015-2016 academic year, the Political Science department assessed all four learning objectives for the major:

9. *Students will initiate, develop, and present independent research (Independent Research).*¹⁵
10. *Students will write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express cogent arguments (Effective Writing).*
11. *Students will become knowledgeable members of the community capable of reasoned judgments on political issues and ideas (Reasoned Judgments).*
12. *Students will demonstrate knowledge of the major subfields of political science, as represented by the Major's foundation requirements and concentrations (Subfield Knowledge).*

Assessment Procedures

Direct Assessment

Direct Assessment of six courses was conducted by the Major Coordinator during the 2015-2016 academic year.¹⁶ These courses were

POL 225 (Introduction to Research in Politics)

POL 409 (Colloquium for Research in Government and Politics)

POL 234 (Introduction to Public Policy)

POL 235 (Judicial Processes and Politics)

POL 270 (Political Philosophy)

¹⁴ The new assessment plan by year is in Appendix A

¹⁵ Parenthetical phrases list the short name for the learning outcome that will be used throughout the remainder of this document.

¹⁶ Although POL 206 was due to be assessed this year an error was made by the Major Coordinator so instead it will be assessed next year.

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POL 273 (Western Political Thought)

POL 225 and POL 409 comprise our research series, with POL 225 providing the methods training that students in POL 409 will use in completing their senior capstone projects. The other courses are required courses that students must take to meet their Foundation requirements in the major.

A total of 61 assignments were assessed by the Major Coordinator across these different courses.¹⁷ Student work from POL 225 and POL 409 were assessed following the Fall 2015 semester and comprised 28 total papers. These were final research papers. The other courses were assessed following the spring semester and comprised 33 student papers. These papers included final research papers, final exams and court observation assignments. The Major Coordinator assessed the various pieces of student work using rubrics developed by the previous Major Coordinator (Prof. Andrew Sidman); these rubrics are available in Appendix B.

Direct Assessment Results

Table One reports the assessment results for Learning Outcome 1, Independent Research, which was assessed only in POL 225 and POL 409.

<i>Independent Research</i>	Exceeds	Meets	Fails
Topic Selection ¹⁸	46%	24%	30%
Existing Knowledge	61%	28%	11%
Design Process	64%	21%	15%
Propose Solutions/Hypotheses	57%	32%	11%
Analysis	57%	25%	18%
Conclusions	50%	25%	25%
Limitations and Implications	28%	32%	40%

Table One: Learning Outcome One: Independent Research

In general, students perform well with respect to *Independent Research*. Over half of students in the sample exceed expectations on “Existing Knowledge,” “Design Process,” “Propose Solutions,” “Analysis, and “Conclusions.” Over eighty percent of students at least meet expectations on four of the seven rubric items. The three items for which this is not the case are “Topic Selection,” “Conclusion” and “Limitations,” suggesting students need additional instruction in choosing appropriate research topics and providing fuller discussions of the limitations of their research and the broader implications of their findings. The findings on “Conclusions” and “Limitations” are likely connected; if students are struggling to write logical conclusions based on their data then they will certainly struggle to critique their own findings.

Table Two reports the assessment results for Learning Outcome 2, Effective Writing; this was assessed across all courses used in this assessment cycle.

¹⁷ For samples of the assessed student work please contact the Major Coordinator.

¹⁸ Topic Selection was only assessed using data from POL 409 as the students in POL 225 are assigned their topic and, indeed, all work from the same topic.

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<i>Effective Writing</i>	Exceeds	Meets	Fails
Context and Purpose	48%	51%	1%
Content Development	44%	51%	5%
Genre and Disciplinary Conv.	46%	43%	11%
Sources and Evidence	48%	43%	9%
Syntax and Grammar	49%	34%	17%

Table Two: Learning Outcome Two: Effective Writing

In general, students perform well with respect to *Effective Writing*. On 3 of the five rubric items 90% of students Meet Expectations. Students do particularly well on “Context and Purpose” and “Content Development” The weakest result is on “Syntax and Grammar” which is widely acknowledged as a weakness across the college. However, it should be noted while this is the weakest of the rubric items, 83% of students Meet or Exceed Expectations which should be regarded as a strong positive result.

Table Three reports the assessment results for Learning Outcome 3, Reasoned Judgment; this was assessed using all courses available in this assessment cycle.

<i>Reasoned Judgment</i>	Exceeds	Meets	Fails
Explanation of Issues	61%	34%	5%
Evidence	52%	34%	14%
Influence of Context and Assumptions	33%	38%	29%
Students Position	23%	36%	41%
Conclusions and Implications	41%	36%	23%

Table Three: Learning Outcome Three: Reasoned Judgment

Reasoned Judgment is easily the Learning Objective with which our students struggle the most. While over 50% of the students Exceed Expectations on “Explanation” and “Evidence” students perform much more poorly on “Influence of Context and Assumptions”, “Students Position” and “Conclusions and Implications”. The finding on “Conclusions and Implications is perhaps not surprising as it was fore-shadowed in the results from *Independent Research*, but it is important that this finding holds true across a greater sample of courses than was used in assessing *Independent Research*. These two results together certainly suggests that students need greater instruction in writing logical conclusions that also take into consideration that implications and consequences of those conclusions. In other words, more emphasis must be placed on self-reflective critique. This finding is tied to the poor results on “Influence of Context and Assumptions” and “Students Position.” Both of these rubric items are designed to assess how well students are able to understand and analyze complexity, context and both others and their own assumptions. These findings demonstrate that throughout all these courses students need more instruction on critically analyzing the materials they are working with in order to critically analyze their own assumptions and findings.

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Table Four reports the assessment results for Learning Outcome 4, Subfield Knowledge; this was assessed using results from POL 234, 235, 270 and 273 as these are the subfield specific Foundation courses assessed this year.

Subfield Knowledge	Exceeds	Meets	Fails
Factual Knowledge	39%	55%	6%
Theories/Approaches	36%	52%	12%
Application of Theories/Approaches	36%	48%	16%
Literature	36%	58%	6%

Table Four: Learning Outcome Four: Subfield Knowledge

Students performed quite well on *Subfield Knowledge*. Over 90% of students Meet Expectations on 2 of the 4 rubric items, and over 80% of the students Meet Expectations on all the rubric items. They performed particularly well on “Factual Knowledge” and “Literature” which is not surprising as this is, in many ways, exactly what these courses are designed to teach. If there is a weakness it is on “Application” where students struggle to apply the theories they are learning in each subfield to the analysis of an issue. However, 84% of students Meet or Exceed Expectations on this item which should be regarded as a good result.

Recommendations

Students performed well on 3 of the 4 learning objectives assessed during this assessment cycle. In particular they did well on *Independent Research*, *Effective Writing* and *Subfield Knowledge*. The weakest result was on *Reasoned Judgment*. Based on this assessment the following steps will be taken to improve results on all the learning objectives with a particular emphasis on *Reasoned Judgment*:

- **The Major Coordinator will present these results at the first fall department meeting in September, 2016 and lead a discussion that focuses particularly on methods to improve results on *Reasoned Judgment*. This discussion will include a guided reflection on improving self-reflective critical thinking.**
 - **Based on this discussion new recommendations may be issued at that time. For example perhaps we will bring in someone from the Teaching Center to discuss critical thinking techniques.**
- **The Major Coordinator will arrange a meeting with POL 225 and POL 409 instructors in order to continue the on-going discussion about ways that both courses could be restructured so that students in POL 409 can further develop the skills they started building in POL 225. This action item will dovetail nicely with the Five Year Self-Evaluation the Department is undertaking during 2016/2017.**

Appendix A**Five Year Assessment Plan: 2015-2020**

Year	Courses	Learning Outcomes
Year One 2015-2016	POL 225 POL 409	1. Independent Research 2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments
	Foundation Courses A-C POL 235, 270, 273, 206 and 234	2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments 4. Subfield Knowledge
Year Two 2016-2017	POL 101	2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments
	Foundation Courses D-E POL 257, 260, 214, 215, 220	2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments 4. Subfield Knowledge
Year Three 2017-2018	POL 225	1. Independent Research 2. Effective Writing
	POL 101	3. Reasoned Judgments 2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments
Year Four 2018-2019	1 300 courses in each subfield (dependent on course offerings)	2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments 4. Subfield Knowledge
	POL 409	1. Independent Research 2. Effective Writing 3. Reasoned Judgments
Year Five 2019-2020	End Of Cycle Summary Report	

Appendix B: Rubrics Used for Assessment

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Rubric for Learning Outcome 1: Independent Research

<i>Item</i>	<i>100-Level: 200-Level: 300-Level: 400-Level:</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Topic selection	Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses potentially significant yet previously less-explored aspects of the topic.	Identifies a focused and manageable/doable topic that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that while manageable/doable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable.	
Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views	Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.	Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.	
Design Process	All elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are skillfully developed. Appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks may be synthesized across disciplines or relevant subdisciplines.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are appropriately developed, however, more subtle elements are ignored or unaccounted for.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are missing, incorrectly developed, or unfocused.	Inquiry design demonstrates a misunderstanding of the methodology or theoretical framework.	
Propose Solutions / Hypotheses (Problem Solving Rubric)	Proposes one or more solutions/hypotheses that indicates a deep comprehension of the problem. Solution / hypotheses are sensitive to contextual factors as well as all of the following: ethical, logical, and cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one or more solutions/hypotheses that indicates comprehension of the problem. Solutions / hypotheses are sensitive to contextual factors as well as the one of the following: ethical, logical, or cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one solution/hypothesis that is “off the shelf” rather than individually designed to address the specific contextual factors of the problem.	Proposes a solution/hypothesis that is difficult to evaluate because it is vague or only indirectly addresses the problem statement.	
Analysis	Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence, but the organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, or similarities.	Lists evidence, but it is not organized and/or is unrelated to focus.	
Conclusions	States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings.	States a conclusion focused solely on the inquiry findings. The conclusion arises specifically from and responds specifically to inquiry findings.	States a general conclusion that, because it is so general, also applies beyond the scope of the inquiry findings.	States an ambiguous, illogical, or unsupported conclusion from inquiry findings.	
Limitations and Implications	Insightfully discusses in detail relevant and supported limitations	Discusses relevant and supported limitations and	Presents relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Presents limitations and implications, but are possibly	

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	and implications.	implications.		irrelevant and unsupported.
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Rubric for Learning Outcome 2: Effective Writing

<i>Item</i>	<i>100-Level: 200-Level: 300-Level: 400-Level:</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Context of and Purpose for Writing <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).	
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.	
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields.</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.	
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.	
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.	

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Rubric for Learning Outcome 3: Reasoned Judgments

<i>Item</i>	<i>100-Level: 200-Level: 300-Level: 400-Level:</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Explanation of issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.	
Evidence <i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i>	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. 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 taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.	
Influence of context and assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.	
Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis / hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.	
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.	

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Rubric for Learning Outcome 4: Subfield Knowledge

<i>Item</i>	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Fails to Meet Expectations</i>
Factual Knowledge	<p>The work demonstrates the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield and expresses how this knowledge contributes to understanding of the subfield respective of the assignment.</p> <p>E.g. the work correctly identifies the United States as a presidential system and expresses the implications of this for U.S. politics.</p>	<p>The work demonstrates the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield respective of the assignment, but does not relate these facts to an understanding of the subfield.</p> <p>E.g. the work correctly identifies the United States as a presidential system without relating this fact to broader theories / approaches in comparative politics.</p>	<p>The work does not demonstrate the attainment of factual knowledge in the subfield respective of the assignment.</p> <p>E.g. the work incorrectly identifies the United States as a parliamentary system.</p>
Knowledge of theories / approaches in the subfield	<p>The work demonstrates deep understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield respective of the assignment.</p> <p>Deep understanding is demonstrated through recognition of assumptions and limitations of the theory / approach.</p>	<p>The work demonstrates basic understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield respective of the assignment.</p> <p>Basic understanding is demonstrated through full and accurate statement or description of the theory / approach.</p>	<p>The work demonstrates less than basic understanding of the major theories / approaches of the subfield.</p> <p>Theories / approaches are misstated, not mentioned in the work, or described incompletely.</p>
Application of theories / approaches in the subfield	<p>The work applies one or more of the theories / approaches (e.g. to the analysis of an issue) and acknowledges the context to which the theory / approach is applied.</p> <p>E.g. the work applies a theory to the analysis of an issue acknowledging that alternative approaches may be appropriate in different contexts.</p>	<p>The work applies one or more of the theories / approaches (e.g. to the analysis of an issue) irrespective of the context to which they are applied.</p> <p>E.g. the work does not acknowledge the potential importance of situational context in the application of the theory / approach.</p>	<p>The work does not apply any theories or adopt any approaches relevant in the subfield or theories / approaches are incorrectly applied within the assignment.</p>
Literature in the subfield	<p>The work includes information from a variety of academic and, possibly, nonacademic sources relevant to the subfield and respective of the assignment.</p>	<p>The work includes information from at least one academic source in the subfield and may include relevant information from nonacademic sources.</p>	<p>The work does not include or includes minimal information from sources relevant to the subfield.</p>